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Gabriel

The Parish of The Good Shepherd, Ashton-under-Lyne



St. James



St. Peter



St. Michael and All Angels

JULY 2021

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Editorial

This month should see the start of the Tokyo Olympics, having been postponed from last year due to the Coronavirus pandemic. A number of New Testament letters refer to Olympic sport including Hebrews: 'Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith' (Hebrews 12:1-2).

The Christian life is compared to a long-distance race, but despite the struggles and obstacles, there is a great crowd of witnesses cheering us on. We have a heavenly Father who loves us and a Saviour who has run the race before us. If we keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, He will enable us to finish the race.

During the 1992 Barcelona Olympics, the British athlete Derek Redmond was running in the semi-finals of the 400 metres. About 250 metres from the finish his hamstring tore. He fell to the ground in pain and stretcher bearers came over to him. However, Redmond was determined to finish the race and so he started hopping toward the finishing line. Suddenly Jim Redmond, Derek's father, ran out of the stands towards him. "You don't have to do this," he told his son. "Yes, I do," said Derek, to which his father said, "We're going to finish this together." They completed the lap with Derek leaning on his father's shoulder. As they crossed the finish line, the spectators rose to give Derek a standing ovation. Although he didn't win an Olympic medal, Derek Redmond finished the race with his father at his side. Let's not forget the encouragement we have to finish the race!

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The views expressed in articles in this magazine are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Parish of The Good Shepherd. The editor reserves the right to amend articles as appropriate, for editorial purposes. Please consider writing something for the magazine yourself! And, if you have any comments to make on the Magazine you can contact the editor, Roger Farnworth on 0161 330 2771 or talk to a member of your DCC or PCC who will pass on any comments that are made.

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The Parish Prayer

Father God, whose Son came to bring love and peace to the world, help us to grow in faith and share our hope and joy with all whom we meet, so that we can work together to build your kingdom in Ashton, welcome new people into our churches, and be relevant to those around us, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

www.goodshepherdashton.org

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Child-like Faith

July 2021 sees the end of another school year but a school year that has been so very different for our children and young people. Attendance at school has often been governed by the actions of others. So many have missed out on time in the classroom. The year is ending without the usual focus on tests and exams.

It is good to spend a little time reflecting on what our children and young people bring to us and how we might learn from them.

Here are three quotes about children:

A child can ask questions that a wise man cannot answer. ~Author Unknown

While we try to teach our children all about life, our children teach us what life is all about. ~ Angela Schwindt

Children find everything in nothing; men find nothing in everything. ~Giacomo Leopardi.



That last quote is, I think, about children's capacity to wonder at what they encounter, as opposed to our adult cynicism. ... At times children have the capacity to cut through the nonsense and get to the heart of the matter. So often, children are transparent when adults are, at best, clouded and insecure.

This is why, I think, Jesus talks in Matthew 11 of God revealing things to children that are hidden from the wise and learned. Sometimes the only appropriate response to things we encounter is that of wonder and praise.



Sometimes things are just beautiful, any attempt to explain them diminishes them. Adults can find it difficult to accept that children's faith is real. The truth is that children have not yet encountered the cynicism which destroys faith. They can still wonder at the seemingly unexplained, and they know that God is there for them.

Here are a few little stories (culled from elsewhere) to enjoy:

*A Sunday School asked her young class to learn Psalm 23. She gave them a month. One young lad was excited about the task, but he just couldn't remember the Psalm. After much practice, he could barely get past the first line. On the day the children were going to recite the psalm in front of the congregation, he was really nervous. His turn came and he stepped up to the microphone. He said proudly, **"The Lord is my shepherd . . . and that's all I need to know!"***

When a mother saw a thunderstorm forming in mid-afternoon, she worried about her seven-year-old daughter who



*would be walking home from school. Deciding to go to meet her, she saw her daughter walking nonchalantly along, stopping to smile whenever lightning flashed. Seeing her mother, the little girl ran to her, explaining happily, **"All the way home, God's been taking my picture!"***

*A foundation stage teacher was watching her children drawing. She would occasionally walk around to see each child's artwork. As she wandered round the classroom, she stopped by one little girl who was working hard. She asked what her drawing was. The girl replied, "I'm drawing God." The teacher paused and said, "but **no one knows what God looks like.**" Without missing a beat, or looking up from her drawing the girl replied, **"They will in a minute."***

God does not call Christians to be childish, but he does ask us to be child-like in our faith: full of

wonder, love and praise; open to seeing the beauty in everything and everyone; honest about ourselves and the world around us; willing to learn and grow; always asking questions and seeking knowledge; playful; full of hope; able to overcome grudges because we don't hold onto things for too long; able, because we have learnt to trust God even in the worst of times, to see the good in every circumstance; able, because we trust God, to come through adversity in his grace and strength and power.

Try to make room for a child-like faith: seek to find God in every encounter you have with others;

seek to receive God's promises for yourself once again.

Let's allow children to teach us about wonder, about life and joy and hope, and ultimately about faith as well. For, in doing so, I believe that we will discover that the last verses of the reading from Matthew are true. Let's hear and hold onto Jesus own words:

"Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

Rev'd Roger Farnworth

Rev'd Sheila Cant

I am delighted to join The Good Shepherd ministry team for a few months. By the time the magazine goes to 'print' I will have lead services in all of the churches and hopefully got to know some of you. My worship style is quite relaxed and calm and my sermons tend to be interactive and relevant to today's challenges. I love working with schools, and I am already involved with the Parochial School doing zoom assemblies. I have been ordained for 6 years being an Ordained Local Minister (OLM) and am now exploring new Parishes for my ministry. I am looking forward to hearing about all the amazing events and activities you have and being out and about in the local communities, when Covid allows.

My prayers for you all. Stay safe, God loves you.

Sheila

July Services

Our churches are open for public worship. We are required to keep services as short as possible, follow social distancing rules and all government restrictions and safety advice. Also, it may be necessary to change or cancel any of these services at short notice should government or local guidance change. Please check our weekly sheets or with your wardens for up-to-date information.

Please note that those who are extremely clinically vulnerable/shielding, or who have symptoms of a continuous cough or a high temperature or loss of or change to sense of smell or taste, should not attend church.

Sundays

9.30am Holy Communion or Morning Prayer St Gabriel and St James
11.00am Holy Communion or Morning Prayer St Michael and St Peter
St James on Sunday Afternoon 4.00pm 11th and 25th July

Thursdays

3.30pm Evening Prayer or Holy Communion Holy Trinity

Please be aware of the need to maintain social distancing and wear your mask in church unless you are exempt from doing so.

We shall continue to send out, either by post or email, a weekly sheet containing prayers and readings for each Sunday and the readings for the following week.

Choral Evensong
6.30pm Sunday 4th July 2021
St Michael's Church



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How collective worship is the heartbeat of Church of England Schools



The Church of England's Chief Education Officer, the Revd Canon Nigel Genders, has been commenting on the recently updated guidance for the Church of England's collective worship in schools.

“One of the most rewarding parts of my role is the opportunity to visit schools across the country and join in inspirational and uplifting collective worship, led by children and young people.

“This Spring the Church of England published updated guidance for collective worship in schools. This is mainly a resource for Church of England schools, but one which can be helpful to all schools.

“State schools in England are required to provide a daily act of collective worship which is ‘wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian

character’. Although there is scope for schools to apply for an exemption to that depending on their particular circumstances, very few overall seem to do so.

“That’s perhaps not surprising as schools tell us that, whatever the legal obligations, daily collective worship has proved a powerful tool in bringing pupils together. For Church of England schools that means Christian worship and that will remain the case.

“The guidance builds on the Church of England's Vision for Education, which is to be ‘deeply Christian’ while ‘serving the common good.’ In collective worship terms, this means opening the rich traditions and modern expressions of Christian worship to people of all faith backgrounds in a way which does not presume a particular starting

point, so is invitational and inclusive as well as inspiring.

“Children can expect the worship they encounter in a Church school to be formational; to enable pupils and adults to consider big questions about who we are and why we do what we do. It should call us to action, to thinking and behaving differently. We suggested that schools take care that pupils and adults do not feel ‘compelled to sing strongly confessional lyrics’. But it became clear that the word ‘confessional’ had been misunderstood – one rather over-the-top newspaper column even tried to claim that this meant we were ‘purging’ hymns of Christian content. Far from it.

“Christians often speak about ‘confessing’ their personal faith in God. The use of ‘confessional’ here was simply meant to recognise that whilst most will enjoy singing their heart out, schools should not insist that everyone must join in and should take care with what is appropriate, depending on their context.

“So, for example, insisting all pupils sing ‘All to Jesus, I surrender’ in a school where the majority of pupils are devout followers of another faith, as is the case in some of our Church school, might seem unnecessarily exclusive when there



are lots of other inspirational Christian content to choose from. We have changed the wording of the guidance to make this clear.

“Parents value this approach, as it encourages thinking differently, and reflecting the behaviour and actions of individuals and communities. Inspirational collective worship should lead pupils to become courageous advocates of causes and encourage them to think searchingly about their faith, beliefs and/or philosophical convictions.

“We want pupils to leave school with an understanding of Christianity having encountered Jesus Christ through worship in a way that enhances their lives, whatever their faith standpoint.

“Around one million children attend Church of England schools which shows that parents and pupils clearly welcome what is on offer. Collective worship is at the heart of this, and we are committed to providing this in a way which is accessible to all.”

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Sayings

I have a dream	Martin Luther King
I am just a pencil in God's hands – he uses me.	Mother Theresa
It was the best of times, it was the worst of times.	Charles Dickens
It is a far, far better thing that I do, than I have every done; it is a far, far better rest that I go to than I have every know.	Charles Dickens
We never miss the water till the well runs dry.	Proverb
The impossible, or seemingly impossible, is just the possible waiting to happen	B Bowden
I believe in God because God believes in me.	B Bowden
Oh I know I am going to die, but I'm not frightened, it's an adventure.	Billy Connolly
Love is our ultimate aspiration in a broken world.	B Bowden
When people are laughing, they are not worrying.	Bobby Ball

Barry Bowden

Parish Notices

From the June registers:

Funerals

Fernando Rodrigues Christelo
Hilda Longley

There were no baptisms or weddings in June

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Free national phonenumber bringing worship and prayer

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, recently launched a free national phonenumber to bring worship and prayer into the homes of those without access to the internet.

Daily Hope, which is available 24 hours a day on 0800 804 8044 – offers music, prayers and reflections as well as full worship services from the Church of England.



CONTACT DETAILS

CLERGY: (*usual day off)

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The Vicarage, Westbury Street, Ashton OL6 9NL

330 2771

Revd Sheila Cant, Associate Priest

336 1566

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Fairly Traded Tea and Coffee and to work for justice for the world's poor

