

Connect

the magazine for Thatcham parish

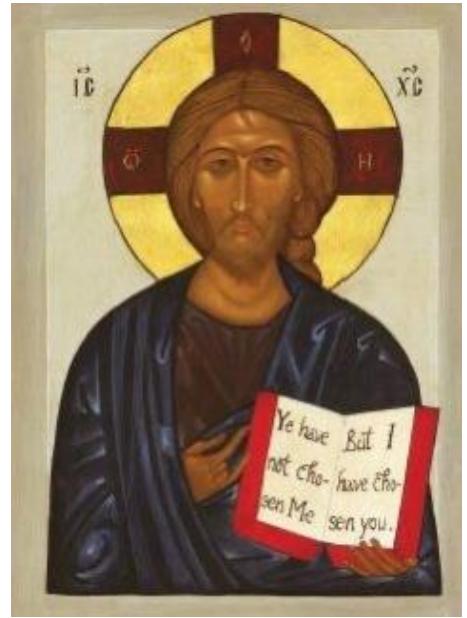


St Mary's & St Barnabas

Issue 139 July/August 2022

I have been reflecting in recent weeks on images which have stretched my imagination about God – and you can see one of these in last month's Connect. The end of June/early July is Ordination Season in the Church and that has left me thinking about some rather different images which have been important to me around the time of my own ordination.

I was trained for ministry at Westcott House in Cambridge, where the chapel was almost undecorated except for a single picture of Jesus which was not large, but which set the tone for our worship. Because of where I normally sat in chapel, I found myself sitting in front of it at most of the services I attended – morning prayer and evening prayer or compline.



The Westcott picture is a formal picture – an Icon – painted in a particular way using traditional materials. And as with all such icons it contains a Bible text – “you have not chosen me, but I have chosen you” – Jesus speaking to his disciples. And seeing that text every day somehow got it inside me – it was not my own efforts or merits which had put me on the road to ordination, but rather the call of God on my life. And now, if I ever think that I achieve in ministry by my own efforts, that text calls me back to God's faithfulness. Every



The Church of England in Thatcham

so often I find such an image or a text like that one, and they live with me. And perhaps because they are so familiar to me I assume they are familiar to other people.

These encounters with surprising images or texts can be waymarks on our journey of faith – we all have different ones, so though our faith is common, it respects also our individuality and reminds us that it is we who have been called as ourselves: we are not supposed to turn into someone else or to pretend. Though our calling as Christians is a high one, we don't have to earn it, rather we are invited to receive it as a gift.

But I have also been thinking about a different set of images – not ones I encountered by accident, but images I did choose for myself. These are on my white and gold stole, the scarf I wear when we celebrate special occasions. I mentioned these in a recent sermon reflecting on my own ordination, when I wore my stole for the first time. It was a very special symbol – something personal which reflected how I then saw the core of my own vocation to ministry.

The symbols include the flower, representing creation, coloured with rainbow colours to represent God's promises and God's faithfulness. Then, on the other side the cross, representing the cost of restoring creation to its original good state and the sacrificial love of God for the world – not in abstract, but as real care for every part and person. Wrapped around the stole, picked out in Gold to represent a crown, is a thorn, designed to bring me back to earth if I have any fantasies of grandeur. The crown of thorns is a sign of Jesus' kingship that he was given in jest, but which represents a deep truth. It is perhaps my idealistic message from my younger self, "don't get above yourself".

Sometimes it is good to step back from a busy world and to spend some time reminding ourselves what is truly important to us – about life as well as about faith. And sometimes the symbols, or pictures, or Bible verses or prayers we carry with us are just what we need to help us.

Perhaps this summer, in the later stages of COVID and its aftermath, will be a time when many of us reflect a little more on these things: maybe there will be a chance for you to notice something important or significant.

Especially for those who have been working flat out this year, here's wishing you a blessed and refreshing summer break.

Mark

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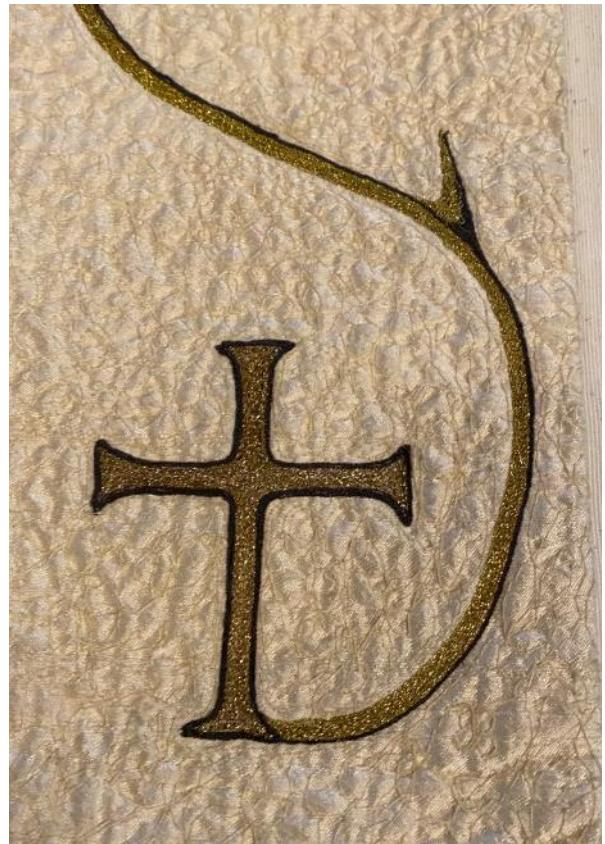
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PICTURE & CURTAIN HANGING SHELVING



Something to read

If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness.

2 Corinthians 11:30, from full reading 2 Corinthians 11:16-33.

Something to think about

'I believe that vulnerability – the willingness to be "all in" even when you know it can mean failing and hurting – is brave,' said Brené Brown, research professor at the University of Houston.

Perhaps Paul was the Brené Brown of his day, encouraging those first readers or listeners of this letter to consider another way to be in the world. The way of vulnerability and honesty rather than bravado and boasting of accomplishments.

He goes to great lengths to show his weakness, describing in detail the many times he has been in danger and great risk rather than the many achievements of his ministry.

He is being persuasive to those first Christians in Corinth to not follow the way of those who will enslave them, persuaded by another kind of boasting.

It is the liberation of weakness that we are called to even in the work of Christian Aid as we sojourn with those who are defined as the weak and marginalised of the world. Those who have been ostracised, isolated, stigmatised and oppressed.

And yet it is just such a place and in such a way that we find liberation, not enslaved to the standards and pride and boasting of the world.

Something to do

Do an act of kindness today without telling anyone about it.

An Open Invitation to Join In

We need new members on the

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Contact the Parish Office if you can help in any way.

Thank you to all who continue to support these essential parts of the fellowship of St Mary's

...and, please contact the Parish Office to add or change your details on the Church Electoral Roll or to join the STEWARDSHIP TEAM and support the activities and running costs of this Church



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Something to pray

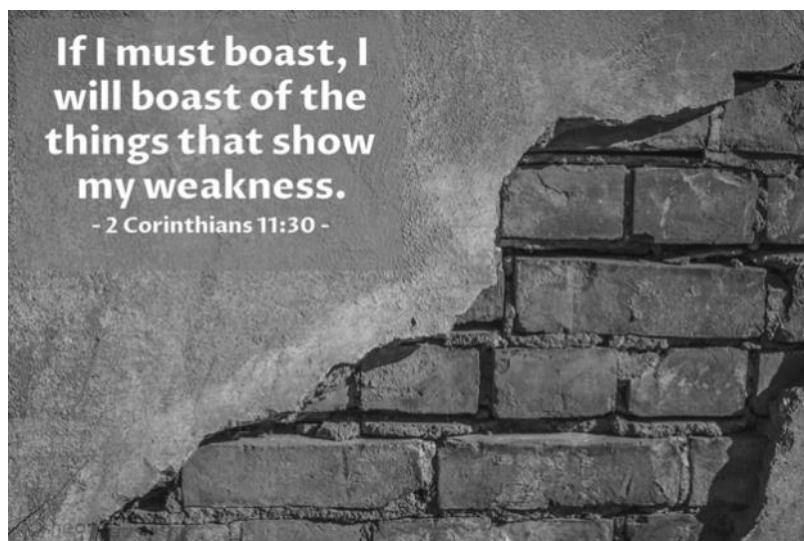
Vulnerable God

Who became weak beyond our imagining
Give us the courage to be all in
To walk humbly and live liberated
From the demands and pressures
Of boastful pride.

Amen.

Christian Aid's contributor for this 'Daily Reading' was Wendy Lloyd, faith communications coordinator for Christian Aid.

<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/pray/daily-bible-readings/>



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Forthcoming Events

- | | |
|-----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 10 July | Cream Teas |
| 17 July | Muddy Church - Thatcham
Nature Discover Centre, 2
- 3.30 pm |
| 21 July | Vintage Adventure -
Thatcham Methodist
Church, 2.30 - 4.00pm |
| 17 Jul | Choral Evensong at St
Mary's, 6.30pm |
| 10 Sep | Ride & Stride event |
| 15 Sep | Vintage Adventure -
Thatcham Methodist
Church, 2.30 - 4.00pm |
| 15-23 Oct | Arts Festival |
| 22 Oct | Craft Fair at St Marys |
| 20 Oct | Vintage Adventure -
Thatcham Methodist
Church, 2.30 - 4.00pm |

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Who's Who in the Thatcham Team Ministry

Team Rector

Mark Bennet 867342

Team Vicar - St. Barnabas

Nicola Hulks 864916

Associate Clergy:

Marion Fontaine 861742
Brenda Harland 865064
Angela Brennan 07498 801479

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Ann Watts 864567
(not Wednesdays)

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29 Exmore Road,
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Future copies

Connect is published ten times a year and is available from St. Mary's and St. Barnabas Churches, Thatcham, or by post from the Parish Office, tel. 864567.

Article Deadline

Please give articles for the **September** edition to Steve Rice (860431) or any of the clergy or churchwardens or email julie@dunwell.org by **15th August**.



Services at St. Mary's Church

Sundays

8.00 am **Sunday Service**

10.00 am **Sunday Service**

6.30 pm **Sung Evensong**
(1st Sundays only)

Wednesdays

9.45 am **Holy Communion**

10.30 am **'ABC'** (Adults, Babies, Children)

Every Weekday

9.30 am **Morning Prayer** (In the chapel)



St Mary's is fitted with an Induction Loop.
If you wear a hearing aid, switch to the 'T' position to benefit from the system

www.stmarysthatcham.org.uk

Inspired by the love of Christ to build God's kingdom



Services at St. Barnabas Church

(meeting in Thatcham Park School)

10.00 am Sunday Service

www.stbarnabasthatcham.weebly.com

Serving to Build Community



For the Record...

Baptism

12 Jun	Hudson Cole Banbury
26 Jun	Harli Grace Leigh Bird
	Charlotte Samantha Timmins
	Leah Morgan Timmins

Weddings

25 Jun	Craig Willoughby and Crystal Hutchins
02 Jul	Colin Williams and Kirsty Wheeler

Funerals

16 Jun	Ian Witham	77
20 Jun	Hilary Harmsworth	74
01 Jul	Lillian Cook	100



July/August prayers

*Loving Heavenly Father,
Hear our prayers for the church and the world.*

We lift our hearts in adoration and praise to you, our great High Priest and esteemed majesty who knows all things, is all things and has power over all things.

Dear Lord, we pray for the work of the church, as it engages with peoples of all faiths and none. Equip your servants as they share your message of love, salvation and hope to all who would hear it.

Give wisdom, discernment and insight to all who preach and teach the Gospel – the Good News – of your amazing sacrifice to save mankind from itself. We cannot thank you enough for this once-for-all, never-to-be-repeated act of selfless love as Jesus hung on the cross and paid for our salvation with his life.

But praise be to God! Jesus was resurrected and is now at the right hand of his Heavenly Father, and having sent his Holy Spirit to live in us and guide us, looks upon each one with compassion and grace, none of which is deserved and cannot be earned. Lord, we take this moment and reflect upon your amazing love for us remembering the words of the Psalmist ***"Be still and know that I am God".*** (Psalm 46 v 10)



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PLEASE SUPPORT YOUR CHURCH JOIN the STEWARDSHIP SCHEME

Speak to Chris Watts (01635) 864567

We pray for the world, so incredibly beautiful, diverse and governed by the forces of nature, which you have given to us to steward. As we marvel at the work of your hands, made out of nothing, we are dismayed that humankind has, over the centuries, neglected, ravaged and polluted its resources in some cases to the point of extinction. We ask that the leaders of the world work together to resolve some of issues that contribute to climate change so that future generations need not suffer from the effects of decisions made today

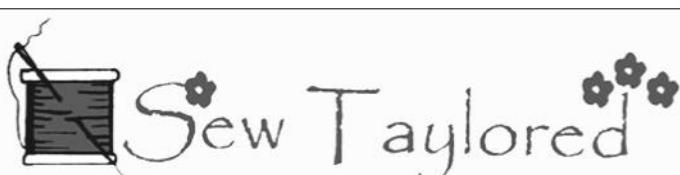
We lift up to you all who suffer in body, mind or spirit. Chances are that we all know someone who needs physical healing; relief from mental torment; struggles to keep a roof over their heads, heat their home or provide food for themselves and their families; anyone who feels isolated and is powerless to help themselves. We pray for all in such dire straits asking that you would have compassion and draw closer to them that they might know your presence and comfort.

We pray and give thanks for charities like Christian Aid, the West Berkshire Food Bank and Two Saints hostel providing much needed relief to anyone unfortunate enough to need their help. We also bring before you those places overseas that suffer from famine, drought, lack of clean water, doctors and medical aid. We pray that those who have might give to those who do not have, and so make a fairer world in which we all must co-exist. May your church be at the forefront of all efforts to bring this to life.

Lord, as we journey with you, we will inevitably get it wrong sometimes and depart from your will and your way. **"All have sinned and fallen short of God's glory"** (Romans Ch 3 vs 23). Forgive us and help us lead a life of service to you using the gifts and abilities that you have given us. Keep us in the faith to which you have called us.

As we head to the summer months and holiday season, may we take this time to refresh and recharge our batteries. We thank you for all the blessings we have in you, our loving and faithful Heavenly Father. May we know your peace and joy always.

Amen



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C A M E O

(come and meet each other)

CAMEO is for anyone, lonely, bereaved, lives on their own, or would like to chat...

...every Monday 2pm to 4pm in St Mary's Church Meeting Room for a chat over a cup of tea and cake.



**Theresa - 865067
or Ann Dykes
863199**

C A M E O

Yes ladies and gentlemen, CAMEO is back, after 2 very long years we are now up and running, it is great to be back to have quizzes, games, singalong, bingo and of course lots of catching up with lots of talking, tea, coffee and cake. Lots of people have returned with a few new faces, but sad to say a few people have passed away or moved away ...we miss them.

Last Monday we had our celebration of the Queen's Jubilee, the hall was covered in bunting, tables decorated in red, white & blue, flowers all hand made it all looked wonderful, to start things off we had a Jubilee quiz and really got the brain cells working, then had high tea with cakes most home made and tea/coffee, with a really good raffle to finish things off. It was lovely to be back all together again, thank you to all the helpers and cake bakers without you things would not happen.

I would like to thank all the people that donated blankets, we have enough at the moment and of course the weather has changed, but I am sure they will be very useful come Autumn and Winter, again thank you.

Today (13th June) we played what is called guess what is in the sock, all good fun and lots of good guesses, a few teams got them all correct it is not as easy as it sounds. The next big item is the garden party that will be held 27th June hopefully the weather will hold, thank you Ann & Roger for the loan of their garden which I am sure will be enjoyed by everyone. I feel another quiz coming on!! If you would like to attend Monday afternoons 2 - 4pm either turn up or call Theresa - 865067, Ann - 863199 and Viv - 820718 for more details - helpers always needed. Have a good summer everyone and take care

Theresa

A Time for Tony Baldwin

Recollections at a Thanksgiving Service for the life of Tony, held at St Mary's on Thursday 23rd June 2022

Tony was often seen on his walks around Bowling Green Road and collecting for various charities. He was quiet, studious man with many books. His background was in Medical Physics for the Middlesex Hospital, but I knew Tony as an 'Esperantist' (International Language) and member of our Reading and District Club. He used to listen to the Stoke Radio Broadcast. 'Li estas membro hut klabe ky audio Radio Stoke en la internacio linguo'. He was a member of former curate Revd Denis Smith's Thatcham Theological Thinkers (T.T.T.) and also an interdenominational House Group which broke new ground for the Christadelphians and well as Green Lane Church (Free Independent Evangelical Church). This illustrated that he was a deep thinker and held strong views that the churches should come together as one.

I visited him regularly in his last years and on the last occasion he managed to make tea and looked forward to further discussions. Sadly after his efforts at house clearance, he told me that would not be able to move to be near his family.

Keith Wallace of Elmshurst Road also made visits to see him and Tony was greatly encouraged by drawings from the three young girls next door.

Graeme Panting - 23 June 2022

CREAM TEAS @ St Mary's

**Sunday 10th July
from 3.30pm**

Come and support our mission charities

- USPG — medical training and services in Africa
- The Children's Society — safeguarding and supporting children and young people



Ride + Stride, 10th September 2022

Ride + Stride is a national event which takes place every year on the second Saturday in September to raise money for the maintenance of our treasured churches. Last year, Berkshire's Riders and Striders raised over £24,000 which is an improvement on our previous results. This is the only major fund-raising event of the Berkshire Historic Churches Trust (BHCT) of the year and it aims to exceed that figure in 2022. Fifty percent of funds raised was returned to nominated churches who took part.

R+S is BHCT's major fund raiser in the year and gathering maximum sponsorship is the purpose. There are two ways that riders and striders can gather sponsorship – either by asking people to complete the sponsorship form and handing over cash or a cheque, or by going on-line and joining in the fund raising on a JustGiving campaign page. Many riders do both but we are encouraging as much use of JustGiving as possible.

You can go by yourself or in a group, any time between 10am and 6pm and many people make a



day of it. There are so many wonderful and interesting churches to visit, many will be open and offering refreshments too.

There is also the Daphne Barnes-Phillips trophy which is awarded to the most successful church each year – this is a splendid silver cup and currently resting with St Peter's Woolhampton as they raised the most sponsorship in 2021.

Your nominated church will benefit hugely as they will receive half of your sponsorship. The remaining 50% goes to Berkshire Historic Churches Trust which in turn makes generous grants to churches in need.

Please make St Mary's your nominated church.

More details will be provided closer to the event from your local co-ordinator
Chris Watts – 01635864567 or
chrisjwatts2@gmail.com
or from the BHCT Ride & Stride website <http://www.berkschurchestrust.org.uk/ride-and-stride>

United Service of Remembrance

*Sunday 17th July at 3pm,
London Road Cemetery*

ABC Toddler Group Summer Dates

July 27th – no ABC

Dates for **August** when ABC is meeting:
3rd, 17th and 31st

September:

No session on 7th
Term begins on 14th

We meet at 10.30am
at St Mary's Church



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Vintage Adventure

A time of fun, making friends, singing, informal Christian worship, activities, drinks and homemade cakes

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Theme: Creation Celebration & Holidays

Thursday, 21 July 2022

2.30-4.00pm

Thatcham Methodist Church

(Chapel Street, RG18 4QL)

Book your place: contact Karen on 07444 851606 or email: pastoraldevelopmentworker@outlook.com



Mousefest!

St Mary's Church, September 17-18th 2022

Mousefest is a joint fundraising project between Thatcham URC & St Mary's.

If you can help in any way, please let us know.

Esther Lewis - URC and Kate Jones - St Mary's

Email thatchammousefest@gmail.com, Tel **01635 861332**



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