

People and Parish

February 2024



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Heath and Reach
with St Michael, Eggington



Team Rector: Vacant

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St Michael's Eggington**

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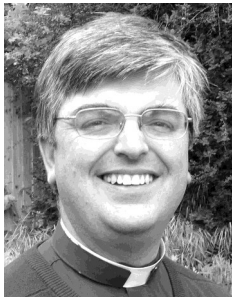
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All copy to reach Editor by 15th of the month, please

Thought for the Month



THE BOOKS OF THE LAW

Ah, the Law. Nobody's favourite topic! No-one likes having their freedom curtailed, and St Paul seems to suggest that the Law even brings sin and death! Which, if you've ever tried to read all the five Biblical books of the law, seems entirely possible! If it doesn't bring death, it certainly brings both blood and boredom; a most unwelcome combination!

Of course, when Christians talk of 'the books of the Law', we mean two related things. One is the first five books of the Bible, which are known in Hebrew as the Torah, and are considered by Jews to be the most holy part of Scripture. But 'the Law' itself is wider than just that, because it includes all the laws that God gave to His children to govern how they should live, both within and beyond the Bible. Also of course some of those five Biblical books contain history and narrative, not just legal rules.

The first book – Genesis – is almost all history (or mythology, if you prefer), while Exodus and Numbers are about half and half, and Leviticus and Deuteronomy are virtually all 'law'. But the history in these first five books (the story of what happened) also counts as part of the Law, because a lot of it from Exodus onwards is about Moses (who traditionally wrote these first five books) and everything that God did and revealed through him.

Now, the Law really is a gracious and loving gift of God, to help us hear and follow His call. But that isn't how Christians think of it, because both Christians and Jews are so good at twisting what God gives us. We so easily turn His grace into our own cleverness and personal glory, making God's gifts into ways of judging each other. The Corinthians did it with Spiritual gifts in the New Testament, and many Jewish Pharisees and Sadducees did it with the Law in Jesus' day. But God gave His children the Law in the first place to help them live lives of holiness and thus make space for Him.

Unfortunately, over time, as St Paul testifies, the Law became a barrier. It became a way of turning grace (what God does for us) into 'works' (what we do for God). It became a way of imagining that we earn God's favour by our own behaviour, rather than

because He loves us. This wasn't what the Law was meant to do but, human nature being what it is, we turned a gift into a judgmental straitjacket that created barriers and restrictions between God and most of His children.

This is why Jesus spent so much time arguing with self-appointed guardians of the Law about the ways in which they were misrepresenting God. They didn't like this very much, and it became one of the reasons why they were so keen to crucify Him! Mention of Jesus reminds us that Christians believe that God has given us a greater gift than the Law; He has come Himself in Jesus, to embody and perfect the Law. But the Law itself is not therefore rendered useless or obsolete: it has simply been fulfilled or consummated. It still has worth and value. The Law is still God's reminder that the whole of our life, day and night, is holy and precious to Him, and that we should try every second of every day, to live lives of love and service.

But it is also true that in a sense the Law is a vain effort: no matter how big it gets (and it is very big indeed – 'the Law' for Jews includes not just the five Biblical books, but also all the sixty or more volumes of commentary upon it called the Talmud), it can never be all-encompassing. Human life is just too various to be entirely circumscribed in words. So instead Christians no longer have the Law as our chief guide: as St Paul insists, we live by and in the Spirit, by whom we are guided, rather than by the words of the Law. (This is true for many Jews as well: for them, the Law is a continuing conversation between God and His children).

But we are all still prone to sin. And the problem with inspiration (being guided by the Spirit) is that because we are still selfish sinners, we are very prone to distorting the Spirit, just as much as we twist the Law. 'God told me to do it' is not always a proper defence; often we say in reply, 'Oh no He didn't'. This means that we still need law to govern how we live and behave towards each other, because we are not very good at listening to the Spirit, and we need law for when we disagree. If we had no law, then Bishops, Vicars, or Churchwardens could do whatever they liked: surely a nightmare scenario!

Nowadays we see that the Law is not the end of God's commandments, but only the beginning. Law must always evolve, but underneath it is the basic principle of the Spirit, which is summed up as well in the two Great Commandments that are called the Summary of the Law (also called the Shema, meaning "Hear"): that we should love the Lord our God, and our neighbours as ourselves.

Revd. Bernard

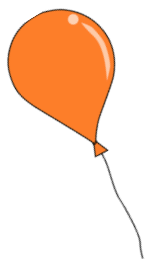
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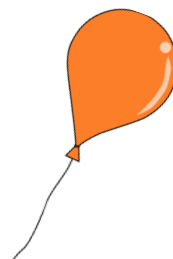
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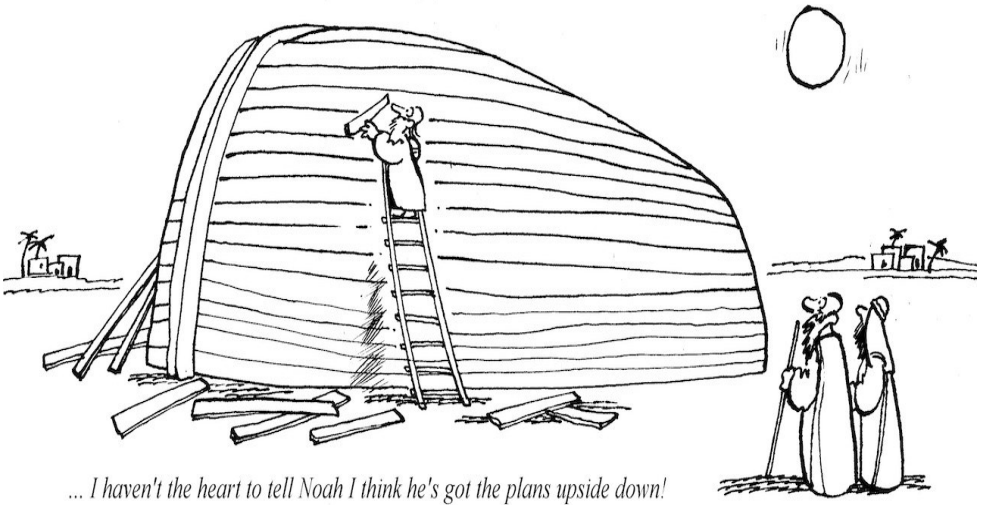
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... I haven't the heart to tell Noah I think he's got the plans upside down!

The annual subscription to the magazine of £8 is now due. If you collect your magazine from church, please put your money in an envelope and hand it to a Church Warden. If your magazine is delivered, please hand the money to your distributor.

If you are not a regular subscriber and would like to become one, please complete the details below and return to the Parish Office, The Church Hall, Leighton Road, Heath & Reach LU7 0AA with the annual subscription of £8.00 (cheques payable to St Leonard's PCC)

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Bible Wordsearch — Moses

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Moses
father
leave
Egypt
bush

attention
mountain
Paraoh
sheep
run
Hebrew
body
Sinai

brother
killed
Midian
Aaron
princess
married
people
never

THE CLOCK

By Maura Kelly

As another day begins to dawn
A piercing sound I hear
It is the clock beside my bed
That screams at me so near

And as I place my hand upon it
To block its constant cry
The noise is stopped at once – hooray!
So I lay down and sigh

But as I snuggle deep within
The comfort of my bed
The motion of the clock I hear
‘Get up, you’re not yet dead’

Tick tock, tick tock
The rhythm of the clock
As the time of day is racing by
I shout out loud ‘please stop’

But the clock it does not listen
It covers up its ears
So once again I raise my voice
‘Be quiet, I’m sleeping here’

Then the clock becomes defiant
As time is on its side
And as its hands turn round and round
I slide down the bed to hide

But even in the darkness
Trapped and all alone
The calling of the clock surrounds me
In the bedroom of my home

And so we start to argue
As it tries to get its way
‘Get out of bed you lazy thing
Get dressed and start your day’

This clock it does annoy me
But what is it I can do?
Then suddenly a thought pops up
I’ll drop it down the loo!

Then its petty voice can’t wake me
In the early morning light
And work will be a distant dream
As I roll over and say ‘goodnight’!

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Mr Mackenzie kept forgetting his PIN

On why rural church-goers like to freeze in church

The Rectory

St. James the Least

My dear Nephew Darren

Winter certainly exposes the difference between those of you who live in cities and us rural folk. While you bask in your centrally heated flat, and complain about the half an inch of slush outside, we country folk wear overcoats in our houses, open all doors and windows to let the heat in and battle through snow drifts, measured in feet, to get the morning paper.

Colonel Wainwright has acquired a new toy: a snow blower, of sufficient power that I believe it could clear the Antarctic. He kindly volunteered to clear the paths around the church. Working outwards from the church door, the path to the church soon became snow-free. Unfortunately, he only realised when his job was complete that the blown snow then formed a ten-foot drift under the lych gate.

Miss Margison, ever helpful in the worst sense of the word, decided to unfreeze the pipes in the church hall. A blow torch was not the ideal solution, although the resulting burst did make some rather attractive ice sculptures round the kitchen equipment. The village badminton team that uses the hall has now temporarily changed sport to ice hockey.

Inevitably, congregations have soared. There is nothing like adversity for making people want to prove they have the moral fibre to overcome it. Much satisfaction seems to be obtained on discovering who has not dared venture out, which is taken as judgement on their strength of character. The Prentices upstaged most people by arriving on a sleigh. Mr Prentice was warmly wrapped in a travelling rug, while his wife pulled it. As they both explained, they couldn't possibly let the pony work in such conditions.

What I momentarily thought was applause during my sermon was merely people keeping their hands warm and the hymns were drowned out by the stamping of feet. Our organist complained that the cold made his fingers so numb that he couldn't play properly – although I didn't notice that things were much different from normal.

No, my dear nephew, a few flakes of wet snow may close *your* car park for health and safety reasons, but we shall continue to triumph heroically over adversity. We return home after Mattins, knowing we have proved our Christian commitment in being utterly uncomfortable.

Your loving uncle

Eustace



St Michael's Eggington

by

Harry Sear

The editorial instruction for contributions to this column was "History all around us, shaping the worshipping community in Ouzel valley". These are the thoughts of Harry Sear. Long time villager and occasional member of the congregation.

History is not a static thing, it is the record of an ever changing scene. History is made by each and everyone every second. So the Worshipping Community of the Ouzel Valley continually has the power to shape itself. When I was a boy, Eggington had a Congregational Chapel, a Methodist Chapel, and of course St Michaels. All three denominations had reasonable but slowly declining congregations, each keeping itself to itself. So even in such a small community people worshipping the same God and believing in the same Christian Principals stayed apart because of the man made dogma of organized religion. I cannot think that Jesus would have been impressed. But that was the history that they created which ended in their demise.

St Michaels, possibly by virtue of it having the majority of followers and the backing of a much richer C of E behind it alone remains as the Spiritual Focus. But St Michaels today struggles to get posteriors onto pews and only with the efforts of a dedicated few struggles to survive. Social history is moving on. People do not feel the need for regular worship and have new pastimes more enticing than Sunday worship. This evolution of social history cannot be turned back and to thrive the Worshipping Community has to catch the new wind and sail forward and make new history. People still feel the need for a Spiritual Focus to be there if they need it. People in these confusing and uncertain times are showing an increasing need to experience a regular feeling of community, to get together and not feel alone. There must of course be time allowed for the traditionalist believers to worship. But like it or not the Church must realize the people of today do not, in the main, want the liturgy bound Church of the past. They want joy, positivity, music, energy, levity, brevity, prayer more relevant to today, nourishment for the spirit, time to take stock, guidance and encouragement as to how we can together go forward to help others and make a difference. Cake and coffee also help. I always imagine this was the scene of Jesus preaching to the thousands in Galilee, followed by loaves and fishes. Jesus' overriding message was for LOVE, FOR-GIVENESS AND PEACE. He seems very distant at the moment.

QUIZ NIGHT in Eggington Village Hall, 7:00pm, Saturday 2nd March. Tickets £8 from Angela Dyer 210240.

SMILE coffee mornings are in the church at 11:00am on the first Wednesday in the month. All are welcome to call in and have a chat with a hot drink and a biscuit.

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‘Lenten Valentines’

This month both Ash Wednesday and Valentine’s Day fall on the same day! The link between the two can be summed up in terms of the nature of real love! Lent, beginning on Ash Wednesday, focuses on learning to love God more, as we give Him space in our lives. This is what Jesus found when He was led into the desert by the Spirit to be tempted by Satan. (Luke 4:1-13).

Jesus was tempted to turn stones into bread. Yet loving God and His word comes before satisfying physical desires.

Satan tempted Jesus to worship him. However, worshipping God is an expression of loving God and serving Him.

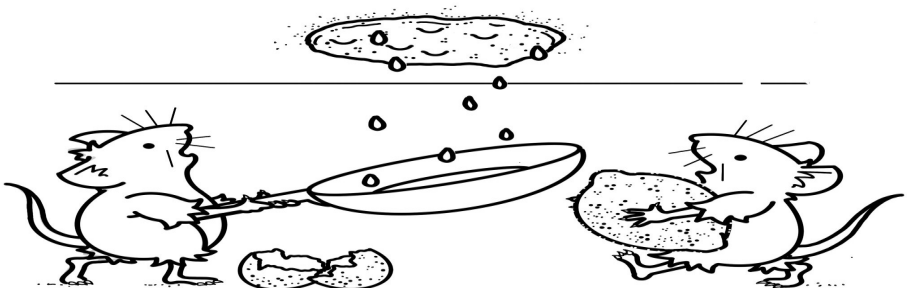
Finally, He was tempted to put God to the test, by jumping off the Temple. Real love for God does not put Him to the test, but wants to obey Him.

Lent also teaches us how to live out the love of God in practical ways, as we follow Jesus in the way of the Cross. We see this clearly demonstrated in the life and death of Saint Valentine.

Valentine was a Christian who demonstrated the importance of sharing God’s love with others. We know little about him, except that he was a priest who lived in the 3rd Century AD and that he was martyred on 14th February. Emperor Claudius felt that soldiers in the Roman Army were distracted from their duty by their wives, and so had attempted to outlaw marriage. It is believed that Valentine married couples in secret, which is why today we celebrate our love for one another on his day.

In trying to understand the meaning of her revelations from God, Julian of Norwich found:

‘What, do you wish to know your Lord’s meaning in this thing? Know it well, love was His meaning.’



Holy Days—1st February – Seiriol, saint of Puffin Island, Anglesey

You can find traces of old saints in most corners of the British Isles, but Seiriol is one of the only two saints connected to Anglesey, and certainly the **ONLY** saint connected to Puffin Island.

It was back in the 6th century that this gentle abbot first settled in Penmon, and built a little church. His ruined beehive cell still survives there today, as does the well from which he drew water, both for his own use, and also for baptising local people.

Like many other Celtic saints, Seiriol would have travelled by sea. So he felt comfortable near the coast on Anglesey, on low-lying land. Although he lived as a simple hermit, Seiriol soon attracted followers, and eventually he decided to establish a small monastery. He chose to build it on nearby Ynys Seiriol, now called Puffin Island.

That little monastery on Puffin Island saw some scary action in 632, when Edwin of Northumbria was chasing the Welsh king, Cadwallon, and ended up besieging him on the island. Cadwallon was finally conquered, and history moved on, but the monastic ruins of Seiriol's little monastery are still there today.

Seiriol seems to have been a purely local saint who never attracted a very great number of followers. The only known dedications to him are at Penmon and Puffin Island. But Seiriol's life and work are still a testimony today. He is a gentle and encouraging reminder of what an impact even a simple local Christian can achieve, by simply being faithful to Jesus Christ in the place where he is.

Romance, love, marriage and all that stuff – *the way children see it....*

What is the right age to get married?

No age is good to get married at. You got to be a fool to get married. – Freddie, age 6

How can a stranger tell if two people are married?

You might have to guess, based on whether they seem to be yelling at the same kids.
– Derrick, age 8

What do you think your mum and dad have in common?

Both don't want any more kids. – Lori, age 8

When is it okay to kiss someone?

When they're rich. – Pam, age 7

The law says you have to be eighteen, so I wouldn't want to mess with that. – Curt, age 7

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A Warden's Tale

Christmas at St Leonard's

We have had a memorable Christmas period at St Leonards with the usual joyous events. A large congregation attended the Toy Service on the 3rd December, we took the toys to the Salvation Army who do a sterling job in distributing them to children who would otherwise have nothing. Can you imagine a Christmas without even a Christmas cracker? The army members were surprised and really grateful for the large amount of toys generously given by you. Talking with members of the group has really opened my eyes to the disadvantaged people of our community and has made me grateful to have been blessed with what I have.

On the 7th I played Santa to the children of Little Fishes Play Group. A role that gives me great joy and a real privilege to be the Great St Nicholas if only for a short while. On the 10th Christingle candles and oranges were displayed as the congregation celebrated the future birth of our Saviour.

On the 17th saw St Leonards come alive with the sound of our favourite Carols. The atmosphere was enhanced by candlelight all around.

We held our Crib Service on the 24th in the afternoon. Local children were given the Holy figures to take to the Manger when prompted. Considering there was no practice the ceremony went well although the three Kings ended up in the manger when they ought to be left riding from the east. Baby Jesus was presented to the Crib by a delightful but nervous little girl. I hope that she remembers this for years to come.

Now Christmas is past and another year has begun, another birthday another wedding anniversary beckons. Possibly weddings and Christenings too. Who knows what 2024 will bring all, these celebrations that meant so much when I was a young man seem to have mellowed as I have entered my twilight years. My 18th Birthday I remember well, Oh how I was going to become rich and famous, if only I should get a break. If only someone would give me a chance, I could release my potential and become a legend that everyone looks up to, Mum and Dad would be so proud and my old teachers would say, "How did that happen?". We can dream though and by the age of 21 I guess I had accepted that my fate was in the hands of a greater power and I just had to make the best of what was offered to me. I had a job that paid my way and later fate arranged that I should be enjoying an evening partying at the Bossard Hall on the same evening as my future wife. I had accepted an invitation by my friends Phil and Wendy to the Football Club Annual Disco. They had also invited another of their friends, a pretty young lady by the name of Linda. As a young man with his mind on romance I moved in close to this lovely young lady and Linda shuffled further away to the end of the bench. Not a good start to a relationship that has lasted almost fifty

years and as they say, the rest is history.

I am now approaching my 79th Birthday and it has taken that long to realise I now have something that is greater than fame and fortune, it's called contentment. I have no idea what the future holds for me now and I honestly don't worry about it. Life has been good to me and I have overcome some really dark moments but never have I doubted the love of God. If you had asked me why I believed in God I couldn't have told you, I still can't, but since becoming a part of the Church I now feel I understand how God works. Oh how I had this wisdom when friends argued, "How can there be a God when there is so much trouble in the world? How can there be a God when we have so many natural disasters that cause untold misery for thousands? There is no answer to that, but understanding why we have been given the opportunity to wonder at Gods creation and to treat it with respect in all its forms goes a long way in understanding the meaning of life.

I feel if we should play our part in caring for each other and Gods creation it will go a long way in creating a legacy that our children will inherit as they in turn will have the same responsibility to their children.

God bless you all and thank you for reading my ramblings.

Warden Richard

Quotes of the Month, With Lent in mind...

Great eagles fly alone; great lions hunt alone; great souls walk alone – alone with God. - *Leonard Ravenhill*

No man ever said, at the end of his days, 'I have read my Bible too much, I have thought of God too much, I have prayed too much, I have been too careful with my soul.' - *J C Ryle*

Nature forms us; sin deforms us; school informs us; Christ transforms us. - *Anon*

It costs to follow Jesus Christ, but it costs more not to. - *Anon*

Happy moments, praise God. Difficult moments, seek God. Quiet moments, worship God. Painful moments, trust God. Every moment, thank God. - *Anon*

God denies a Christian nothing but with a design to give him something better. - *Richard Cecil*

If God brings you to it, He will bring you through it. - *Anon*

The heart of man is like a creeping plant, which withers unless it has something around which it can entwine. - *Charles James Apperley*

THE SILVER LINE

A helpline for older people

0800 4 70 80 90

“Like child abuse, loneliness carries a stigma, especially for an older generation too proud to ask for help. I hope by creating a helpline for older people The Silver Line will enable them to break through the stigma of loneliness, and thus save lives and comfort and protect older people in need.” Esther Rantzen.

The Silver Line is a free confidential helpline which provides; information and signposting to services, community and voluntary support across the country; a friendship service to combat loneliness; and a means of empowering those who may be suffering abuse.

If you are feeling isolated or lonely, there is not only the helpline, but a telephone befriending service, where you are matched to a trained volunteer, who will phone on a weekly basis for friendship at a time convenient to you. So if you feel that you would benefit from the services of The Silver Line, please do not hesitate to call our 24/7 helpline on 0800 4 70 80 90.

St Leonard's Parish Prayer

Living God, you have given us St Leonard
as an example of one who extended himself
to relieve the difficulties of others;
help us to know in our hearts the love you have for us all
so we may reach out in genuine empathy
to those in our community
who feel lonely, grow together as a people
united in concern for each other and love for you. Amen

Supporting those in need on Church Action on Poverty Sunday

This year Church Action on Poverty Sunday is on 11th February, when Christians around the country are urged to remember those in real need.

Perhaps one of the most serious impacts of poverty is the dire state of homelessness. The numbers are staggering. More than 300,000 people are homeless in the UK; 119 families in England are made homeless every single day; and 140,000 children are currently without a home. The figures are the highest on record.

When you picture a homeless person, he or she will probably be a rough sleeper; but rough sleeping is only one manifestation of homelessness, and not the most frequent one.

Homelessness ranges from living on the streets, to living in emergency accommodation, in women's shelters, and in other temporary accommodation.

Homelessness is not always a visible problem. But the cost-of-living crisis, record rents hikes, stretched local services and withdrawal of emergency Covid measures have led to more people falling into desperate positions than ever before this past year.

Green Pastures is one organisation who is working to enable Christians to make a difference. It has been housing the homeless for 25 years, and it exists to help Christians do their bit to tackle the growing homelessness crisis.

Green Pastures has grown to now house more than 1500 formerly homeless people across the UK, in more than 100 towns and cities. To fund property purchases, Green Pastures has raised more than £47 million in funding, through everyday people who lend them some of their savings and receive interest in return. This model enables the organisation to buy property and work in partnership with local ministries to directly impact the lives of people in need.

God's army

Dewey was in front of me coming out of church one day, and the minister was standing at the door, as he always is, to shake hands. Suddenly he grabbed Dewey by the hand and pulled him aside. The minister said sternly, "Dewey, you need to join the Army of the Lord!"

Dewey replied, "I'm already in the Army of the Lord, Pastor."

The minister retorted: "Then how come I don't see you except at Christmas and Easter?"

Dewey replied in a whisper: "Well, I'm in the secret service."

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HAPPENINGS!

Wednesday 7th February
COFFEE MORNING
St Michael's Eggington at 11.00am



Thursday 8th February
COFFEE MORNING
St Leonard's Church Hall
10.00am to 12.00noon

Saturday 10th February 2024
MEN'S BREAKFAST
St Leonard's Church Hall
8:30am



Saturday 17th February 2024
AN EVENING OF MUSIC AND LAUGHTER
St Leonard's Church Hall at 7.30pm

Saturday 2nd March 2024
Quiz Night
Eggington Village Hall at 7.00pm
Tickets £8 - 01525 210240

For more information on any of these events,
phone 01525 377047

The Very First Valentine Card – a legend

The Roman Emperor Claudius II needed soldiers. He suspected that marriage made men want to stay at home with their wives, instead of fighting wars, so he outlawed marriage.

A kind-hearted young priest named Valentine felt sorry for all the couples who wanted to marry, but who couldn't. So secretly he married as many couples as he could – until the Emperor found out and condemned him to death. While he was in prison awaiting execution, Valentine showed love and compassion to everyone around him, including his jailer. The jailer had a young daughter who was blind, but through Valentine's prayers, she was healed. Just before his death in Rome on 14th February, he wrote her a farewell message signed 'From your Valentine.'

So, the very first Valentine card was not between lovers, but between a priest about to die, and a little girl, healed through his prayers.

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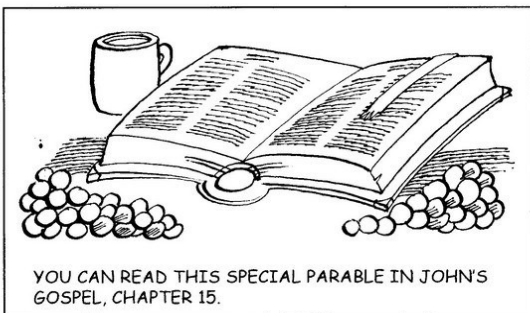
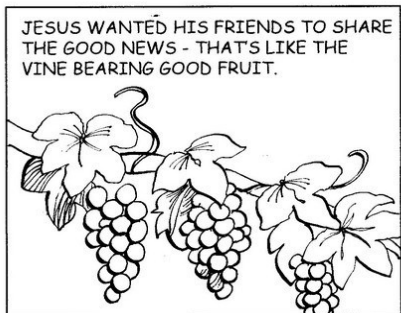
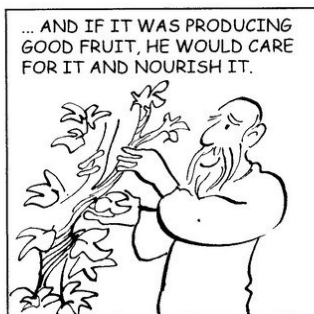
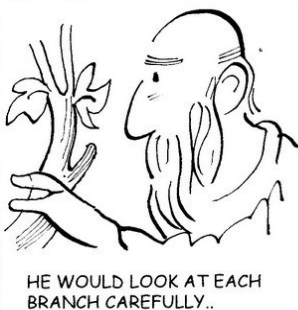
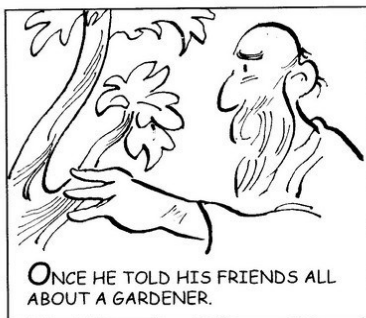
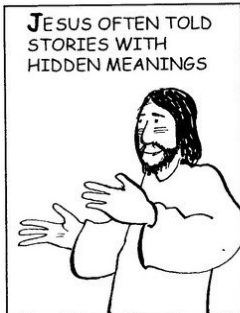
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The gardener and the Vine



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ingo!

Not to be confused with the excruciating advert around The Chase!!

'INGO' must be the 4 most used and abused combination of letters in the English language. I won't go into the **'BINGO'** aspect as if you, like me, cringe every time the above said advert comes on – wonder how much they had to bribe The Chasers to take part? What happened to good old housey-housey!

DINGO – the Australian wild dog. The name Dingo comes from the native Dharug language used by the indigenous peoples around the Sydney area.... With the female equivalent being **'TINGO'** meaning bitch!

JINGO is next on the list – not a particularly new word and has changed meanings in the past but now associated with loud patriotism. There is also a theory about it being a medieval Basque word *Jainko*, being the Basque word for God. We Scots also could have a claim to it by our words 'Jings' or 'by Jings'.

And of course, the late lamented Terry Pratchett had words for it: **JINGO** : **DISCWORLD GOES TO WAR**. As two armies march, Commander Vimes of Ankh-Morpork City Watch faces unpleasant foes who are out to get him . . . and that's just the people on his side. The enemy might be even worse!

KLINGO(n) – no, I am not going where no man has gone before !!!

LINGO could very well come from the old Latin *Lingua* – as in *Lingua Franca*. This is a language used for communication between people do not share a native language but have need of communication – originally developed for trading purposes. I often feel like that when listening to kids' communication nowadays.

PINGO – OK, so who immediately thought of the little penguin character Pingu?? However there is another **PINGO** - a rare type of pond created at the end of the last ice age. As the glaciers retreated areas of hard packed ice were left and with 'global warming' over the centuries and as the ice melted, we got **PINGO** ponds.

RINGO – for those of us of a certain age – needs no explanation!

WINCO – Redolent of 'Cats Eyes Carrington' and Dam Busters – had to be included for that reason alone! (yes, I know !)

As always random but hopefully it'll raise a smile or wake up the 'leettle gray cells' as Poirot would say.

Carol Wyatt

Worship at St Leonard's and St Michael's

All 11.00am services at St Leonard's will also be broadcast via "Zoom"

Check Church website for late changes

St Leonard's

4th Feb

08.00am

11.00am

2nd Sunday before Lent

Holy Communion (Order 1 traditional)

Family Service

6th Feb

07.00pm

Holy Communion

11th Feb

11.00am

Last Sunday before Lent

Parish Communion (Order 1)

13th Feb

07.00pm

Holy Communion

14th Feb

07.00pm

Ash Wednesday

Holy Communion

18th Feb

08.00am

11.00am

1st Sunday of Lent

Holy Communion (Order 1 traditional)

Parish Communion (Order 1)

20th Feb

07.00pm

Holy Communion

25th Feb

11.00am

2nd Sunday in Lent

Parish Communion (Order 1)

27th Feb

07.00pm

Holy Communion

St Michael's

4th Feb

09.30am

2nd Sunday before Lent

Parish Communion

18th Feb

09.30am

1st Sunday of Lent

Parish Communion