

LIFE

July 2022

Christ Church
Eccleston
magazine



A Reflection from Rev Gregor



The Bible story of Abraham being asked to sacrifice his only son is often a perplexing one for readers. Here, Rev Gregor Stewart, from the Eccleston Team, offers his insights into the meaning of this intriguing story.

"Whenever I read the story of Abraham, Sarah and Issac, I giggle a little to myself! Now let me put that in context. When I was at "vicar factory" (theological college), I submitted a piece of written work that was supposed to say that "Abraham and Sarah had to wait until they were in their nineties before she became pregnant" however what I actually wrote was that "they were in their nighties"! You see we look at everything through the lens of our own experiences and understanding, so when I read this story I'm reminded of that funny error. However, the story is not funny at all. When we look at this part of God's story with his people, it's easy for us to think along the lines of cruelty, disbelief, confusion. Why would God ask Abraham to kill his one and only son, that he loved, and particularly after he had waited so long for him?

Let's look through a different lens. You see human sacrifice was practiced at that time in history, now by modern standards it's abhorrent to us. However, human history is full of sacrificial killings, unfortunately it still happens today in 'civilised' countries, we now call it 'ritual killing'. So Abraham would have been aware of human

sacrifice. It's also worth noting that this wasn't a quick or hurried event, Abraham had to prepare by collecting the wood before they left and it was a 3 day journey! At one point Issac asks "where is the lamb" and Abraham responds "God will provide the lamb" and He does! So to summarise this quick intro to the story, God asked Abraham to do something that we can't begin to get our heads around, however there is more to it than first meets the eye. There is preparation involved, there is a 3 day period where the world must have seemed a very dark place, and at the last moment, God provides an alternative to Issac's death, something to take his place. So this is not a story of a cruel and horrible god, this is a story about God's love for his people, a story of the man that God tested and trusted to build up all of God's nations and tribes. It's also a story that points us towards the ultimate human sacrifice, Jesus, who is our lamb, and we know that after 3 days He defeated death and offered us the free gift of eternal life.



Well done to Mike Horton, pictured, who rang the Church Bell 70 times on each of the four days of the Jubilee, to celebrate The Queen's 70 year reign. A wonderful effort. More details of our other Jubilee celebrations inside.

A reminder that there will be no magazine in August while our editorial team enjoy a break for the Summer. With that in mind we would like to wish all of our readers a lovely summer, and look forward to sharing our September edition with you in due course.

Ringling in the Jubilee

As mentioned on our cover, the church bell rang out for four days over the Jubilee weekend bringing back happy memories for many in our community as we celebrated our Queen's 70 years on the throne.

The Lychgate looked resplendent adorned with red, white and blue ribbons, while bunting was strung from the front of Church to add to the excitement!

Gill Rimmer made a glorious Jubilee crown of flowers, which looked beautiful at the entrance to church. Many thanks to all who made cakes, suitably decorated, for the Jubilee. These were appreciated by the congregation on Sunday with some of them sent home to people who could not attend. Our mini Summer fair 'get together' took place on June 18th, as an interim event while we eagerly await the completion on the new church hall. We're happy to say it created more interest than anticipated, with many people offering their support, from gifts for the tombola to baking and craft skills. Fortunately, the weather was dry - although a little chilly for June - and visitors appreciated the warmth of the 'bistro' created in the foyer of church. A warm drink and cream teas were very popular. Youngsters enjoyed the duck hunt and one participant was 'spell bound' when Mike allowed him to ring the church bell. A future treasured memory created!

Many thanks to everyone who supported us in hosting these events, a good time was had by all.



The Stained Glass of Christ Church, by Gratten Williams

As promised, this month we will continue our fascinating exploration of Christ Church's beautiful interior, guided by Gratten Williams. And while in June we focussed on the Church's fine and historic carvings, this month we conclude Gratten's tour by looking in depth at the beautiful stained glass which is Gratten's particular area of interest. Thanks again to Gratten for the article and photographs below, we are lucky to have someone so knowledgeable to inspire us!

"Christ Church is unusually fortunate to possess a fine collection of Victorian stained glass. Few churches in the area are so completely glazed, and few can boast glass of such high quality. It might be helpful if we first look briefly at the history of stained glass, then with that as a background, we can spend some time on the windows we have in Christ Church.

In biblical times glass was regarded as an outrageous luxury to be afforded by only the most wealthy and powerful. The Romans protected their windows with wooden shutters. At about the time of the Norman conquest, the Monks of Augsburg hit on the idea of using strips of lead to create a mosaic of coloured glass to fill the windows of their church.

The next major development took place a hundred years later in Paris, where Abbe Sugar was rebuilding the great church in the Royal Abbey of St Denis. Developments in architecture allowed him to build a church much larger than before, and the window spaces could also be made larger. Pictorial windows of stained glass could beautify the church as jewels beautified its altar furnishings, but they could also teach the divine mysteries of the Christian Gospel to all who could raise their eyes to look.

Over the next two centuries the concept of stained glass spread to Cathedrals throughout this country and to many of the larger churches. Always the primary emphasis was on teaching: art and craftsmanship were geared to that end, to the glory of God, and the decorative aspects were secondary.

Sadly, the Reformation during the sixteenth century and the influence of the Puritans during the seventeenth brought this noble tradition to an end in the British Isles. The skill of the glaziers was largely lost, and when the eighteenth century saw the return of demand for pictorial windows in churches the results were akin to murals painted on glass rather

than plaster, opaque and uninspiring. This was the situation when Samuel Taylor started to plan his new Church in Eccleston.

The most prominent window in any church or cathedral is the East window, the one at the front, the one behind the altar, the one we ponder on when sharing in the Lord's Supper. The usual theme of this window is the Crucifixion but not in our Church. The first windows at the East end depicted the great Christian virtues, Faith Hope and Charity. These themes were painted onto opaque glass, the story goes that they were broken when early burglars tried to enter the church. One pane, slightly modified, remains in the window in the Vicar's vestry to give us some idea as to what the original East window would have looked like. In 1837 the current window was designed and executed using the original medieval methods of painting on coloured glass. The theme is the Good Shepherd surrounded by parables and stories from the life of Christ. For many years the lower panels were covered up by oak panels used as part of the blackout system for the church during the war. Now that these panels have been removed take some time to go and look at the detail in the window. As a member of the choir I studied the window in the North transept for many hours, through many sermons, and what a beautifully coloured and vibrant window it is. Dedicated to the memory of Mrs Penketh and her grandchildren and it shows Jesus with children as in "Suffer the little children to come unto me".



There are many other stories depicted in this window, stories of Jesus talking to, and interacting with, the poor and the outcast, and with other members of society most of us would rather not know. Study this window when you have time it's a window that reminds of the very essence of the teachings of our Lord.

The window opposite in the South transept is in memory of the founder of our church Samuel Taylor, and this is the window in our church that depicts the crucifixion and the last supper and other stories from the life of Jesus.

The first window (east end) on the North side of the nave depicts St Joseph of Arimathea and is in memory of the Reverend Robert Princep Crockett first vicar of the parish. The window includes reference to the Holy Thorn of Glastonbury.

On the South side of the nave we find two windows, one dedicated to Dorcas and one dedicated to St Luke. The St Luke window is in memory of R W Herman Director of the National Art Training School. Back on the North side we find a window depicting the fiery St Paul with the sword of the spirit in his hand bearing a scroll on which is written "Saint Paul an Apostle of Jesus Christ." Now back to the South side and alongside St Luke and Dorcas we find a window with an unusual dedication for a Church like Christ Church, it is dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary. It depicts two wonderfully contrasting scenes of Mother and child; one in the home and the other showing the infant Christ with outstretched arms foretelling his future suffering.

The two remaining windows depict the Ascension of Christ and St George, the latter being in memory of Robert Douglas Herman who died in the First World War.

The windows in Christ Church span the most important developments in Victorian Stained Glass. They are the work of accomplished artists and craftsmen of National repute and as a collection they reveal something of the developments in the art form as the century progressed. That alone makes them worthy of care and attention. But their prime reason for existing remains as it always was , to teach, to admonish, and remind us of the Gospel of Salvation and of the God to whose glory we are made."



Beautiful Baptisms

We're delighted to report that Christ Church has celebrated the Baptism of eight children since our last edition of the magazine.

On 22nd May we celebrated the Baptism of four of Lilian Mercer's grandchildren and her great-grandson, Louis, who were baptised by Rev Helen Coffey from the Eccleston Team.

Rev Gregor Stewart also came to Christ Church to perform the Baptism of siblings Aveah and Kairen.

On 29th May Ruth and Tom Hurst celebrated the Baptism of their young son Michael, aged 7 months.

The Baptism was performed by Rev Gareth Banton, another Vicar from the Eccleston Team. Rev Gareth's involvement made it a family affair, as his wife April was one of Michael's Godparents! Michael's other Godparents were Ruth's siblings, Ian and Judith. The family, including Michael's devoted big sister, Carys (pictured right) celebrated with a garden party in Gareth and April's garden. "We had a lovely day" said Ruth, "and we're grateful to all of our Church family for making Michael so welcome."



Fur on the field

Many of you will remember the wonderful Fur on the Field event that Sue Kirkham organised on the Church field a few years ago. This year the event takes place at Gamble Hall Field, on Saturday 9th July, once more in aid of Willowbrook Hospice. The details are on the adjacent poster. Do consider going along to support this wonderful event in aid of such a good cause!

Saturday 9th July 2022

FUR ON THE FIELD

12PM-3PM

**Gamble Hall Field,
St Helens, WA10 6UX**

The perfect day out for you and your dog!

Games & Stalls

Family fun including puppet show & crafts

Meet Polly, Willowbrook's therapy dog

Can your dog resist temptation alley?

Fun Dog Show: Best fancy dress, waggiest tail, cutest puppy & more!

WILLOWBROOK HOSPICE
Every Contact Counts

Please keep your dog on a lead at all times

Orchard preparing to bloom

We are so excited to share these latest progress photos from The Orchard with you. As you can see, the building is really starting to take shape now.

We're pleased to report the external brickwork is all completed, and the contractors are now busy working on the building's interior. Thanks to our roving photographer, Mike Horton, we're able to show you a first glimpse of how it's looking inside! The '



'first fix' of electrics has been finished and the internal walls and ceilings are currently being installed. Work to install wood cladding to finish the exterior will also be starting soon, so things are coming together nicely, although an exact completion date is still not yet known.

And if you're wondering what the green photograph below shows - it's how The Orchard looks from the Church field. As Jennie Platt, who took that particular photograph put it, "it fits in beautifully".

The construction team aren't the only folk who are busy where the Orchard is concerned, however! PCC members are busy, too - considering the best ways for us to mark the eventual completion of the building. Having waited for so long to have a new Church Hall, it's safe to say that we will all be keen to celebrate, so we look forward to sharing plans for an opening event with you soon.

Watch this space!



Funerals
John Tandy
Lilian Mercer

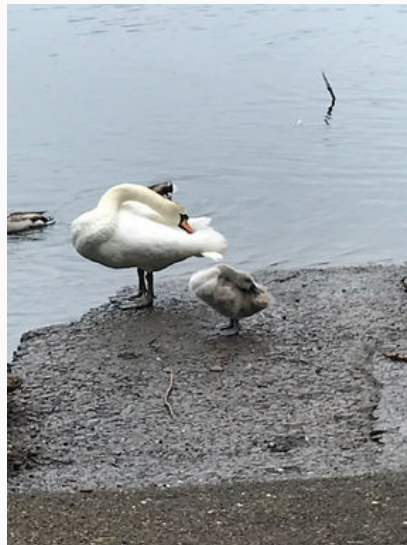
Special Moments **with Jennie Platt**

Wild flowers never fail to show their resilience. Where I fail in the garden beautiful blooms grow happily in the wild and along the roadside. Several of my attempts to grow poppies have met with limited success. As these photographs show they thrive on a pavement on Springfield Lane. The blue of a campanula, matches perfectly with the stream, as it emerges from the wall across from the Vicarage. I have had more success with foxgloves with one reaching the height of the garage. A great achievement without any help from me.

I have been enthralled with Springwatch on television. Seeing badgers being born in an artificial sett installed with cameras was a real treat. They were the size of a tangerine and a delight to watch. It was also very special to see osprey chicks in Poole Harbour, the first for 200 years. Similar success is reported from Uganda where mountain gorillas have been brought back from the brink of extinction. A few of us having been following the antics of the cygnet at Taylor Park. It seems to be very skilled at copying parents, which is surely a wise course of action. I was less enamoured with the terrapins lurking at the base of a nesting moorhen!

During June events at church were very enjoyable and as usual the support was incredible. Cakes arrived for the Jubilee bell ringing and hopefully Mike Horton may do this again in the future. The planned small 'get together' saw friends enjoy chatting and the foyer area in church became a busy place to share a cuppa. A lovely time was had by all and I hope that you all have more enjoyable experiences throughout the summer.

Best Wishes
Jennie Platt





The Holy Trinity

R	S	N	H	I	R	E	H	T	E	G	O	T	I
I	R	N	N	O	C	T	P	G	A	G	L	I	M
I	E	I	N	C	A	R	N	A	T	I	O	N	M
E	S	E	N	A	A	F	R	E	A	T	T	E	O
H	U	E	R	I	E	B	T	S	R	E	A	J	R
O	R	E	S	D	O	G	I	I	T	L	H	E	T
L	E	E	O	D	E	E	A	B	L	S	O	N	A
Y	C	E	F	E	C	A	N	E	L	R	I	I	L
S	T	E	A	J	G	O	R	R	Y	E	D	I	I
P	I	S	T	E	U	N	E	N	O	I	I	T	R
I	O	N	H	S	L	B	O	R	F	H	V	I	S
R	N	T	E	U	R	P	E	R	T	I	I	G	O
I	R	U	R	S	B	B	N	B	T	I	N	B	E
T	E	L	R	B	E	L	I	E	F	S	E	E	L

FATHER
PRAISE
IMMORTAL
DIVINE
HOLY SPIRIT
INCARNATION
STRONG
RESURRECTION
SON
BELIEF
TOGETHER
GOD
JESUS
BIBLE

Play this puzzle online at : <https://thewordsearch.com/puzzle/1162/>

In June we celebrated Trinity Sunday, so the theme of this month's word search is The Holy Trinity. Our colouring picture celebrates Summer fun as we approach the end of the school year. Happy holidays everyone!

