



# Yours

Magazine of  
The United Church  
Winchester

**NOVEMBER 2021**



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## Tim's Musings: What is Mission? ... a short(ish) answer

On Sunday 10th October we began the third and final section of our discipleship course. Written by Tim Clifford and entitled 'Live It', the emphasis of this final section is the practical outworking of our faith in Christ Jesus. What we **know** and **nourish** now has to be put into practice. The first session, 'Sharing in God's Mission' poses the age-old question: 'What is Mission?' It's a question you could write an entire book on. Indeed, there are many, many Christian authors who have done just that. My concern is that we can sometimes spend too much time trying to define mission, when we could be out there doing it.

The service I led on the 10th, and the reflections shared at the following Tuesday's *Going Deeper* house group, have helped clarify my thinking on this. Therefore, I'd like to suggest the following. If our lives, individually and corporately, faithfully aspire to embody the characteristics that Paul describes as 'the true marks of a Christian' in Romans 12, then God's mission simply happens. It requires no further discussion on definition.

To test this out, I've framed some verses from Romans 12 in modern language, making them aspirational statements that embody what is 'kingdom' or 'missional' living. Each verse should start with the words 'A True Christian', and as this is a work in progress, I'd be extremely grateful for any feedback you feel able to give.

A True Christian:

1 ... accepts that life is a gift from God, to be given back to God in service and worship as a living sacrifice.

9 ... is genuine, delighting in what is good, and turning aside from evil.

10 ... loves others equally and demonstrably.

11 ... is passionate about serving God.

12 ... engages with life hopefully, yet acknowledges the reality of suffering, persisting in prayer as a response to them both.

- 13 ... cares for those in need, whether friend or stranger, in equal measure.
- 14 ... holds dear those they have come into conflict with, praying for them and resisting the temptation to bear a grudge.
- 15 ... is mindful of the emotional needs of others.
- 16 ... is humble, always willing to listen and learn, not engaging in gossip, and not thinking of themselves as better than others.
- 17 ... counts to ten when they have been hurt by someone, and reflects carefully on the right way to respond.
- 18 ... pursues peace, wherever possible, in all situations.
- 20 ... doesn't withhold help just because they've fallen out with someone, but sees them as even more deserving of their care.
- 21 ... does not overcome evil with evil, but overcomes evil with good.

Discuss!

In Christ, Tim

## Editorial.

This month we are introducing two new features: Readers' letters and a Brief Encounter. Let us know what you think. We will try and introduce something new in each edition over the coming months, and we welcome your suggestions as well. We are grateful to Mike Holt for his Autumn photo on our front page—what beautiful colours! We have an enchanting piece by Carol Jessop on her hobby, an intriguing article on farm machinery for Harvest by Chris Young, thoughts on Halloween and an article on Gladys Aylward. Rosie MacMullen has sent a thought-provoking poem for Remembrance Day and we share an extract from an interview with Emma Hardy MP. Give your reactions by contributing to the letters page and share what you or your group is up to. We're all interested!

The Yours Team—Sophie Armstrong, Bob Lord and Dorothy Lusmore

## Your letters ...

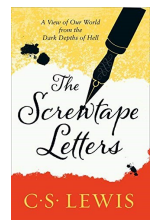
### Abbotts Barton House Group Service



I was so excited by the service by the Abbott's Barton house group in September. It was so inclusive and inspiring, starting with the history of the village churches (Chronicles read by Rosie McMullen) when the congregations were quite noisy and unruly, partly due to cider, but sang heartily. At a later date, the beautiful singing of the Winchester Cathedral choristers, then a description of the Roman Catholic service with the same Mass enjoyed by congregations in every part of the world.

Next the reminiscence of the musical "Saints Alive", which I remember being performed in the church, and the rather dull reaction to it by the congregation! Then the description of it being performed in Winchester prison and the enthusiastic response – clapping and cheering by the inmates! There followed the description by C S Lewis in his book "The Screwtape Letters" of how he loathed hymn singing but, when he saw a shabbily dressed man singing a hymn with such joy, his face alight, C S Lewis felt humbled.

We are all different and this was illustrated by the bible reading about the different parts of the body which are all equally important. All kinds of music are important to different people. Reference was made by Tom Belshaw to recording music and he showed a picture of a mixing console with all various parts working together. A reference was also made to the Taizé community by Christine and Robin Cook who bravely sang a verse of "O Lord hear my prayer", then led the congregation to complete the hymn, followed by prayers including a sung version of the Lord's prayer.



We are so blessed in the church to have our own minister, Tim Searle, who is young and caring for all of us and many in the congregation who are not afraid to lead when needed.

Val Hillier

## Taizé prayer

In October Yours Jill Cook wrote:

*I like Taizé chants. I like 'Lord hear my prayer'. But is it necessary? Do we have to ask God to hear us? If the last line was 'Help me listen to You' I would find it more meaningful. What do you think?*

*Jean Giles' response this month is:*

I agree wholeheartedly with Jill. I feel uncomfortable singing the words although I find the tune appealing.

### A different view of Communion.

Lily's reaction to the words used in the communion service did not shock me because I have heard similar so many times over the years.

What still disappoints me is the fact that so many clergy are unwilling to acknowledge the way children interpret the words. I have long been aware of the problem they present for children who are not old enough to understand figurative language, but only think in concrete terms- in other words they call a spade a spade, and so blood is the thick runny red stuff that appears when you cut yourself., and you don't want to drink it! Indeed, I share Lily's abhorrence at some of the words that are used in some communion hymns and liturgies



Perhaps I should explain how I came to hold quite an extreme view. I grew up attending a Baptist Church, albeit one with a liberal approach to theology, and deeply committed to working closely with the full spectrum of Christian churches in the locality. I belonged to the local Girl Guides and had to attend church parade at the parish church in one of the highest Anglo-Catholic churches in London, where I found the services totally incomprehensible.

I did a practical primary teacher training course, specialising in history, but with a share of RE, taught by a very liberal RE department. For my local history study I researched the nonconformist congregations in Berkshire in the 1600s, so I am very aware our Presbyterian, Congregational and Baptist ancestors went to prison for the right to worship freely in their own way, including interpreting the bread and wine as enabling symbols, not as being “consubstantiated” i.e being bread and wine, but when consecrated by an ordained priest, becoming at the same time the Body and Blood of Christ.

I stayed on to upgrade to a B.Ed and opted to specialise in educational psychology, learning the (then) latest theories about how children understand and learn.

With this background, I see the bread and wine as symbols that help me to reflect reverently on Jesus’ sacrifice, and his living Presence; **his living Presence through his Spirit in his people**, not located in the bread or wine itself. In my head, if not aloud I always say “The body of Christ was broken.....”

My first job was in an inner-city Anglo-Catholic school, and whilst I respected the views of the devout senior staff, I struggled with some of the worship services the children had to endure. Matters came to a head at Corpus Christi. Some of the teachers were so outraged by language the children took literally, “so Miss, are Christians really cannibals?” that they themselves rejected Christianity outright. Incidentally cannibalism was one of the accusations made against the early church.

Some years ago Debbie asked me to preach while she led the children’s groups preparing them for all-age communion. Preparing for that sermon I interviewed two friends, one Baptist, one Roman Catholic. What was wonderfully clear was that each of them found their form of Communion, the Mass or The Lord’s Supper, enabled them to be deeply aware of the presence of God with them in a special way. Though so very different, both services enabled a similar deep spiritual experience.

As we struggle to find words to express the holy mystery beyond words, we must be careful that our words do not mislead or get in the way. I love the words we used at the nine o'clock communion because I find them meaningful. And the Communion service the first Sunday in October I found really helpful. Surely it is important not to distress children by language that conjures up the wrong picture. What matters is that we are enabled to be aware of the Presence of Our Lord, and that we do not put up barriers that prevent others from being open to that experience.

Pat Fry

## News of the United Church Family

On 13<sup>th</sup> October we celebrated the long life of Evelyn Penny in a thanksgiving service in church. Evelyn died back in March but very few were able to attend her funeral due to restrictions. This subsequent service was our opportunity to remember



her in style. We had lots of singing, memories and some photos too. It was lovely to see so many people there for such a joyful occasion.

In December 2010 the church presented a photograph album to Evelyn to mark 66 years of service to Junior Church. It contains photos ('then' and 'now') contributed by hundreds of 'her' children. It shows a fascinating slice of United Church history. It was on show after the service and we are delighted that Evelyn's family has now donated it to the church. We are touched and very grateful for the gift.

Several members of the congregation now live in care homes. Generally, restrictions on visiting have become more relaxed now, so visiting should be much easier than it was. I know that visits would be greatly welcomed by all. To be on the safe side, before you visit, I suggest you check with each individual home as to how things are currently working.

**Helen McTiffin, Pastoral Co-ordinator**



## Link to Hope.

A huge thank you to all who have donated filled boxes, knitted and sewn items. Each box costs £3 for postage so any donations are always appreciated.



Do check out 'Facebook' and 'Link to Hope' web site '[www.linktohope.co.uk](http://www.linktohope.co.uk)'. It is very informative and these items are luxuries to these people and so appreciated. They live in poor conditions with no running water or electricity, which is hard for us to imagine.

If you have a completed a shoe box this can now be left at church ready for collection in the next week.

Thank you everyone.

Ann Coleman and Yvonne North

## Environment

It was wonderful to see 'Winchester Green Week' so well supported this year. The week ended with a service at the Cathedral. Winchester churches each made a pledge to be greener. I feel this is the year we can really make a change to make a difference and our churches can lead the way. We ALL need to get involved. Do not miss the new BBC series 'The Earthshot Prize' presented by Prince William and David Attenborough. They say 'This is a moment of Hope, not fear'. This is what we all need HOPE for a better world.



A zero waste shop in Winchester 'Earthian' in Parchment Street has just won two local awards. It specialises in plastic free organic and low waste products. Take your own containers. It is well worth a visit.

Have you got the 'Nextdoor' app on your phone? A great way to find local information especially if you want to rehome items you no longer need. Also information on where to take specific recycling items.

Ann Coleman

## Brief Encounter with Sue and Tim Clifford.

What is the first news/historical event you can recall from your early life?

Tim: The 1966 World Cup Final – Come on England!

Sue: Neil Armstrong walking on the Moon

One bit of advice you'd give to your younger self?

Tim: Work hard to 'get on' with people  
(even those who don't share your views)

Sue: Take the opportunity to travel as  
much as you can

Who was your first hero?

Tim: My Grandfather (Ernie – a big influence on my life)

Sue: David Attenborough

What is your favourite saying or quotation?

Tim: 'Fine words butter no parsnips' (i.e. actions speak louder than words)

Sue: 'There's nought so queer as folk' (a Yorkshire girl)

What is your favourite piece of music?

Tim: Mozart's Requiem

Sue: 'Stars' by Simply Red

If you could spend a day in one city or place at one moment in history, where and when would that be?

Tim: Lincoln Memorial, August 28<sup>th</sup> 1963 – Martin Luther King Jr said, 'I have a Dream'.....

Sue: Akhenaten became Pharaoh circa 1351 BCE



**Where is your favourite place to be?**

**Tim & Sue: on the Kampenwand mountain in the Bavarian Alps – where we have a house**

**Where do you feel closest to God?**

**Tim: when I'm singing hymns  
and praying as I'm hiking**

**Sue: when I'm in any quiet space**



## **Space in the City**

As I reported in the April Yours, the committee of 'Space in the City' had met, and arranged a further meeting in September. I can now report on our further discussions, trying to come to terms with the disruption caused by Covid 19.

We agreed that we should aim to plan for a few 'in person' meetings in the early months of 2022, streamed online for those who cannot attend. These will be at the usual time of 12.30, held in St Lawrence since our technician is more familiar with the equipment there. You may know that our excellent supplier of sandwiches, Snackattack, has ceased trading, so we may just provide drinks and invite people to bring their own sandwiches.

The outline plan, subject to confirmation, is to hold one 'taster' session in February, with the Revd Michael Jackson, formerly CEO of the St John's charity. He will talk about his recently published book 'Still love left'. Then, in May, we hope to have three talks by Andreas Andreopoulos on Orthodox Christianity. The series planned for last year to mark the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Florence Nightingale could follow in the autumn.

Watch this space for further developments!

**Graham Rolfe**

## News October 2021.

**Christian Member of Parliament** Sir David Amess was fatally stabbed at a Methodist church on 15 October while holding a constituency surgery. He was an MP for nearly forty years and held in great respect by politicians from all parties. A committed Christian, he was an animal welfare specialist and led campaigns to ban cages for game birds and the transport of live animals for export. Fr Jeff Woolnough, parish priest of St Peter's Catholic church in Leigh-on-Sea, said Sir David was "a great, great man, a good Catholic and a friend to all". "Sir David was everything you could want from an MP and now we've lost him" a constituent said.



**Strictly Come Dancing** contestant Rhys Stephenson prays with his partner before they take to the floor his pastor has revealed; Nancy agreed when he asked her to pray with him before they perform. Revd David Anderton said that it was wonderful when people share their faith on the public stage as it shows others that "Christians are normal". He urged people to pray for those who are in the public eye, such as Rhys and fellow Strictly contestant Dan Walker, who is also a Christian. "We need to keep them all in our prayers because there is a vulnerability for them being in the public eye, we need to recognise it, and we need to support them" he said.



**Sarah Sands, the former editor of BBC Radio 4's Today programme** has recently admitted she wanted to delete the 'Thought for the Day' faith slot and move it to Newsnight. The slot is presented by different religious leaders from across the UK and from different faiths. It offers a faith perspective on issues happening in the news. "Thought for the Day is a very peculi-

ar moment in a news programme and when I first arrived at the Today programme I said, 'Give it to Newsnight, put it somewhere else' ”.

**Britain's Tyson Fury has praised God** after retaining his heavyweight boxing world title in a classic fight with Deontay Wilder on 9<sup>th</sup> October. Speaking to BT Sport, the heavyweight boxer said it was Jesus who gave him the strength to continue fighting after he was on the brink of defeat in the fourth round. “First of all, I would like to say thank you to my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. In the mighty name of Jesus on this fight tonight again,” Fury said.

**Songs of Praise**, the longest-running television religious programme in the world, celebrates its 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary this month. A special service took place in Westminster Abbey on 3 October and a programme recounting the history of the programme on 21 September. These can be viewed again on iplayer or youtube.

**Archbishop Desmond Tutu** celebrated his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday this month.



**The University of Nottingham** has rejected the appointment of a Catholic chaplain and prevented him from taking up his post. Father David Palmer tweeted his condemnation of assisted dying as a response to Matt Hancock's Bill. He also criticised abortion as slaughter, emphasising the Catholic teaching that life begins at conception. The university defended its decision stating that its concern was not his views but the manner in which they were expressed. They also questioned his ability to pastorally support someone who was considering euthanasia. Fr Palmer is considering legal action against the university.



**Former addict to head Boy's Brigade** Rev Dez Johnston, who worked as a bouncer and struggled with drugs and alcohol before becoming a Christian, is the new president of the Christian youth organisation Boy's Brigade.

## Baby steps.

Following the tragic death of Sir David Amess MPs of all parties are in our thoughts. There is an enthralling interview in the Methodist Church Hope & Anchor series on YouTube with Emma Hardy who is a Methodist Labour MP. She is a former teacher and mother of two children. Here is an extract.



*Trey Hall: I imagine it must be quite difficult for you personally to try and change the system, there being so many setbacks. How do you stay motivated through that?*

*Emma Hardy MP: We share an amazing team that I work with and I try and share the good news. We have a real buzz when we have a win, when we've managed to sort housing out for someone or when we've solved a problem, even this lady with this nightmare tree she had. You know, whatever it might be, we try and share the positives and share the wins. Sometimes it's baby steps towards the goal that we're trying to achieve. Sometimes we get there and sometimes there's a set back. It's about not giving up.*

*.....just because someone says no, it doesn't mean it's the end.*

*Trey Hall: I love it. Politically, someone said once of the Christian story – if it's bad news, it's not the end. If we're in a tough time, that's not the end. We hope, we pray, we're looking on the horizon for something much more glorious, but it's still hard, that's why you need the swimming and the time off and when you get those wins to celebrate them well.*

Emma Hardy goes on to talk about finding common ground with MPs of other parties. You can find the interview by searching Hope & Anchor Emma Hardy on YouTube or clicking [here](#)

## REMEMBRANCE DAY—GERMAN PRISONERS BY JOSEPH LEE

When first I saw you in the curious street.  
Like some platoon of soldier ghosts in grey.  
My mad impulse was all to smite and slay,  
Or spit upon you – tread you ‘neath my feet.  
But when I saw how each sad soul did greet  
My gaze with no sign of defiant frown,  
How from tired eyes looked spirits broken down,  
How each face showed the pale flag of defeat,  
And doubt, despair and disillusionment,  
And how were grievous wounds on many a head,  
And on your garb red-faced was other red;  
And how you stooped as men whose strength was spent  
and knew that we had suffered each as other,  
I could have grasped your hand and cried “My brother!”

### House Groups

**Looking to join a house group?** Then look no further! Here’s the list of our current house groups, and who to contact if you’re interested in joining one:. ... **and remember, you can join any group (space allowing), regardless of where you live!**

St Cross – fortnightly on Mondays at 2pm – contact Tim Clifford

Going Deeper (online house group via Zoom) – fortnightly on Tuesdays at 2pm – contact Tim Searle

South Wonston – fortnightly on Tuesdays at 7.30pm – contact Dorothy Lusmore

Teg Down – fortnightly on Tuesday at 8pm – contact Rob Grigorian

Abbots Barton – weekly on Thursdays at 4pm – contact Tom Belshaw

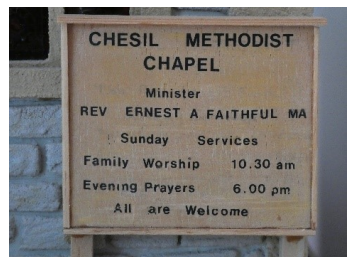
Fulflood – fortnightly on Fridays at 7.30pm – contact Pauline Brooks

## My Miniature World

It is over 30 years ago that I built my first dolls house. It was a 1/12<sup>th</sup> Georgian House kit. I joined the South Hants Dolls' House Club. I was thrilled to find that I wasn't odd and that it was ok to love all things tiny even when grown up.

The idea was to have just the one house which would become the home of many finished projects over the next few years and not take up too much room. What was I thinking? I now have nine finished buildings and one under construction. They include three houses, a toy shop, a department store, a lighthouse, a gypsy caravan, a conservatory with miniature flowers and a Portuguese bar following a trip to Porto pre Covid. They do take a lot of space even though they are 1/12<sup>th</sup> scale. (not as much as my husband's model railway).

A Wesleyan Chapel, which is modelled on one near Reading, has pride of place in the lounge and like the others has a story set in a particular moment in time. As we have just celebrated Harvest, the story of the chapel set at Harvest Time in 1975 is an appropriate one to share.





## Chesil Methodist Chapel in 1975

The Rev Ernest Faithful has just stopped off at the chapel on his way home from Bible Study at the village hall to see how harvest preparations are coming on. Next Sunday it will be 100 years since the chapel was first opened and the newly renovated chapel is ready for Harvest Sunday. A local pop group called Dream On is performing a song in the morning service. Pippa, Lisa and Bruce are having a run through. Ernest hopes their music is not as loud as their clothes. The chapel is looking good with produce already displayed and Gloria arranging flowers with her baby Moses asleep beside her. Ernest sees that there are still tickets for the harvest



supper on the table. Unusually for a Methodist chapel there is an icon behind the pulpit and a copy of Da Vinci's Last Supper on the wall.

He must now go and see the children in the gallery. They are such little angels sitting so quietly drawing their Harvest pictures.

Anyone wishing to see the chapel or any of my other buildings, please call me.

Carol Jessop

Have you got a hobby you would like to share.? Send it to [yours@ucw.org.uk](mailto:yours@ucw.org.uk).

## Autumn days when the grass is dewy (StF 121, adapted for today by Tim Searle)

Autumn days when the grass is dewy,  
and the silk inside a chestnut shell,  
flap-jack melting in your mouth cos it's so chewy.  
all these things I love so well.

*So I mustn't forget,  
no, I mustn't forget  
to say a great big thank-you,  
I mustn't forget.*

Clouds that look like familiar faces,  
and a winter's moon with frosted rings,  
smell of coffee as I fasten up my laces,  
and the song the blackbird sings

Whipped-up spray that is rainbow-scattered,  
and a swallow curving in the sky,  
shoes so comfy though they're worn-out and they're tattered,  
and the taste of apple-pie.

Scent of gardens as I pull on a welly,  
and a minnow darting down a stream,  
down-hill freewheel when my legs have turned to jelly,  
and a win for my home team.

### **This month's bible verse.**

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 15:13

## Gladys Aylward (1902–1970)

Gladys Aylward was a missionary in China and Taiwan during much of the last century. She worked to end the traditional Chinese practice of binding women's feet, led a large group of orphans out of occupied China, and set up orphanages in Hong Kong and Taiwan. A true example that great things can be achieved with no qualifications or resources.



She was born in 1902 in North London and Left school aged fourteen to work as a shop assistant, but later went into domestic service as a housemaid. After becoming a Christian at eighteen, she read a newspaper article about the people of China needing to hear the gospel and so applied to join the China Inland Mission. After three months at their training school she was asked to leave – she was not academic and failed to achieve the standards required. She initially returned to domestic service but wanting to serve God in practical ways, spent time working amongst poor women in Swansea. However, her drive to become a missionary in China remained strong and in 1930 she decided to spend her life savings on a passage to China. Unable to afford the passage by ship, she travelled via Trans-Siberia Railway intending to connect with the Trans-Manchurian railway. However, this rail link was closed as China was at war with Russia. Eventually reaching Vladivostok, she was able to escape on a ship to Japan and then on to China, arriving in 1932.

Gladys joined Jeannie Lawson, an elderly missionary in need of assistance, at Yangcheng in Shensi province. They set up a hostel, named 'The Inn of the Eight Happinesses', for travelling mule trains, providing a chance for them to talk to the muleteers about Jesus. The men were suspicious and did not come so Gladys went out and hijacked mule trains by guiding the leading mule into the courtyard. All the other mules followed so the muleteers stayed under sufferance - but eventually out of choice.

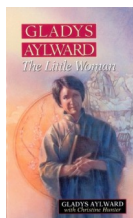
Although not initially accepted by the locals, she earned the trust of the local Mandarin who appointed her Inspector of Feet - the Chinese tradition of Footbinding was banned but the ban was not followed by the traditional villagers. Gladys was able to go into women's living quarters to inspect their feet and this gave her opportunity to teach about Jesus. She became a Chinese citizen in 1936 and became known as Ai wei deh - a corruption of Aylward, meaning "Virtuous Woman".

Gladys became a respected figure among the local people and began taking in orphans, adopting several children herself, five officially, but many unofficially. She intervened in a prison riot and persuaded the authorities to improve conditions, assuring them that this would reduce the incidence of future riots. [During her time there she helped a Chinese colonel in the intelligence service who became a great friend](#)

In 1938 the village was shelled by the Japanese and about a hundred orphans were sent to safety in Sian. In 1940, when the fighting intensified, the Inn was bombed and although she was wounded by a bullet, Gladys herself led another hundred orphans out of war-torn China through the mountains to safety. They crossed the Yellow River in boats arranged by a Chinese Officer when no other boats were available – truly an answer to prayer! On arrival in safety, Gladys' strength gave out and she collapsed with Typhoid fever.

With her five adopted children, she settled in the north of the country, continuing her missionary work, and was appointed 'Biblewoman' at the Chinese Seminary in 1945. She returned to England in 1949 and gave talks about her mission for several years until the death of her mother. Gladys then planned to return to mainland China but because of the political changes this was impossible, so she went to Hong Kong and then Taiwan, settling in Taipei where she set up an orphanage in 1957. In 1963 she was the subject of the television programme 'This is Your Life' with Eamonn Andrews and the 'Big Red Book'. Returning to Taipei, she died there of influenza on January 2, 1970.

In 1957, Alan Burgess wrote a book about her, *The Small Woman*. It was



condensed in *The Reader's Digest*, and made into a film called *The Inn of the Sixth Happiness*, starring Ingrid Bergman.

Gladys was not happy at her portrayal by a very tall, blonde actress when she was only 5ft in height and dark haired! She wrote her own book – '*The Little Woman*'. Both books are in print and readily available.

Find out more details of her life and story – 'The Small woman with a Great God' [here](#).

Recording of Gladys speaking [here](#).

Her personal testimony [here](#).

Contributed by the South Wonston House Group.

## What should we do about Halloween?

The festival of Halloween has a long and strange history and probably causes more disagreement about its celebration than any other. It is a Christian and a Pagan festival and both are quite ancient. The name is a shortened form of All Hallow's Eve, the day before All Saints Day on 1<sup>st</sup> November when all believers who have died are remembered - 'the church triumphant' in heaven, and, All Soul's Day on 2<sup>nd</sup> November when some churches remember those who have died but not yet reached heaven - a day when souls were released. In some traditional churches in the UK a special service is held either on a weekday, or on the nearest Sunday, when all those church members who have died during the preceding year are remembered and names read aloud.

Globally there are many customs connected with the dead. It was believed that at the time of the Autumn Equinox the division between life and death is broken down and, in many cultures, the dead may return to visit their relatives on this night. There are various celebrations in countries around the world - the strongest probably being 'the Day of the Dead' in Mexico and other South American countries. It is the custom to picnic in the cemetery and clean graves, light candles, and reflect. Halloween has traditionally been a time of prayer, in Ireland and England children would visit houses asking for cakes in return for prayers. Since mediaeval times special cakes, called Soul Cakes, were baked and ready for when visitors arrived and around the world food would be given to the poor. The custom of going door to door to pray was called 'Souling' and lasted until the earlier part of the last century when the popularity of Halloween celebrations faded in England and was superseded by Guy Fawkes Night on November 5<sup>th</sup>. Dressing in fancy dress originated when those who feared visits from the dead disguised themselves so as to be unrecognised - called 'guising' in Scotland.

Halloween traditions crossed the Atlantic in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century with Irish immigrants and has returned with a different emphasis. In recent years, with influence from the USA, and commercialism, there has been

a huge resurgence of Halloween celebrations, seeing growth in 'trick or treat', fancy dress as ghosts, zombies, evil spirits, or witches and the telling of horror stories. Shops, schools and houses are adorned with spiders and cobwebs and made look frightening. In 2013 around £230m was spent on celebrating Halloween in the UK but by 2019 the figure had risen to £475m and is expected to rise further. There has also been an increase in Halloween-based events such as Ghost Hunts in Britain's most haunted venues, often including dinner, and Fright Night at Thorpe Park where there are dark mazes and pretend ghosts and ogres.

So how should the church react to all this?

Many Christians give it a wide berth, it is seen as a day to celebrate, or imitate, evil and there are concerns that people may be lured into witchcraft by the apparent harmlessness of events – the trivialisation of the demonic could be damaging. There are also concerns around the physical safety of 'trick or treat' with safeguarding issues as well as vulnerable residents being worried by possible anti-social behaviour. Celebrating Halloween in schools, particularly with young children is seen as a way of allaying their fear of scary things and 'monsters under bed' – by dressing up as ghosts



they are no longer afraid – the Scooby Doo mentality whereby the seemingly terrifying monster is just Mr Jones from next door in disguise. Is it a good thing to teach children bad things do not really exist or should they be helped to face and overcome them?

*\*\*Halloween may be seen as an evolution of an ancient pagan festival, but does it have that meaning today? Many Christians warn against Halloween because it seems to celebrate the darkness, rather than the light, but perhaps it gives the opportunity to share the good news that Jesus overcomes the darkness. Some churches recommend avoiding the festival completely while others host light parties as an alternative where children dress up as super-heroes and play games to celebrate the light. These events have the fun aspects while*

*avoiding anything spooky or dark. But does this miss the chance to respond to the darker side of life with the gospel message? The horror movie genre becomes more and more popular and perhaps if we are familiar with the culture of horror we may have opportunities for important conversations about difficult subjects – what is it about human nature that underlies our fascination with the darkness? – if there really is a thing called ‘evil’ in the world how do we respond?’*

Perhaps we should think back to the time when, rather than ‘trick or treat,’ homes were visited to offer prayers for family members – a time of prayer rather than tricks. The problem faced by many is that the evil and sinful may blend in with the innocent and harmless so we must use discernment when thinking through these issues and use it again as a time of prayer. Acknowledging Halloween celebrations may just give us a chance to talk about fear, death, and sin and to show God’s solution through Jesus.

*He has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, **Colossians 1.13:***

*\*\* from Christianity Magazine October 2021.*

*Dorothy Lusmore*

## **We Plough the Fields and Scatter**

### ***Some Reflections on the Hymn, Together with Pedestrian and Tractor Powered Soil Cultivations***

Like many, I found it a terrific joy and a palpable benefit when we were able to start singing again; how much greater this benefit when it is a hymn we can remember right back into our childhood. Could I suggest that such are cherished even more when they are hymns which we sing only at certain seasons of the year?

We Plough the Fields and Scatter would be one such hymn, thus it was with added gusto that I participated in singing the same recently at our Harvest Thanksgiving Service. In addition to my early years I found myself thinking of more recent times at Sparsholt College and Sparsholt village. This was because I had taken a one furrow plough, together with some sheaths of

wheat into St Stephen's Church at Sparsholt Village for the purposes of their harvest service.

Ploughs, there being several types, are extremely useful pieces of equipment with a very long history, the smaller ones sometimes being used in horticultural or gardening situations. For example, work that would take many hours with a spade might be achieved in, say, just three minutes, with a plough mounted on the rear of a suitable tractor. In many instances, if the ground can be ploughed, this would be preferable to subjecting the land to a rotary cultivator, often slightly erroneously referred to as a 'rotavator,' which is the more common form of powered cultivational equipment to be found in a horticultural setting. In addition to such machines 'cultivating' a soil in the widest sense, like many gardening activities, the work can also provide a certain amount of exercise for the operative in terms of walking and as you fight to keep the smaller ones on course. This being better than sitting in an air-conditioned tractor cab listening to your favourite music, or so we are told.

However, historically, there could also be exercise afoot of a more questionable nature. On more than one occasion I had reason to use a certain Howard Gem rotary cultivator which many would view as the 'Rolls-Royce' of rotary cultivators. It was the last machine I used in my life with a starting handle. Do you remember your father or uncle using those with the cars of your childhood days, together with the backfiring of that era? If you do it probably puts you in a certain age bracket.



This particular Howard Gem could spring some nasty surprises on the novice operative; I am talking here about work practices before the Risk Assessment Regulations of the 1990s.

It could start up backwards! Let me emphasise here that I am not describing a gearbox fault, the engine was running backwards; which meant you had



three reverse gears and one very slow forward gear. Do not worry, this cannot happen with your modern car – (says he). In this case it was possible as the engine was a two-stroke diesel. It was most likely to happen if you did not turn the starting handle with sufficient force.

Add to this the hazard that the starting handle was quite capable of breaking your thumb if it was not being held properly, together with quite a powerful engine on the end of a pair of handlebars and you have a piece of equipment that most people were quite respectful of. Oh, and another golden rule, never start such a piece of equipment unless you know how to stop it. Sounds simple, but you would be surprised how many people do just that. It can be a long wait for that tank of fuel to run out.

If you would like more information on Howard Gems, there is a highly informative website at the following site: [howardgem.webs.com/](http://howardgem.webs.com/)

But to return to ploughing and the hymn. As I was singing this, I started thinking, 'this is not completely at one with modern opinion'. I am not talking theologically here, but rather the whole practice of ploughing, or indeed, on a smaller scale, digging the garden. These two ancient practices are now being subjected to serious questioning as to their efficaciousness. I thus thought, I will try and update this hymn. Now I can feel some of you getting hot under the collar at this moment; indeed if I remember rightly, I felt 'someone' had already slightly 'tinkered' with it as we sang it. So here goes; how about:

'We Minimum Till and Direct Drill The Good Seed on the Land'?

You read it here first.

For me there are three interests that are in a confluence here; hymns, cultivations and the machinery associated with such cultivations. Being a member of classic vehicle organisations I know how seriously such organisations take the preservation of the original specifications, be it of a car, bus or a rotary cultivator. Turn up at a Concours d'Elégance with a car that has the wrong sort of wiring loom in it or matt paint on the radiator when it should be semi-gloss and you will be 'demoted' from the Concourse Class to the

Condition Class. Does not a similar sensitivity exist with some when it comes to preserving the original words of hymns?

Let me try to redeem myself by sharing with you a truly remarkable plough, which I certainly could not have carried in the back of my car, or even in the college lorry as it has forty-four furrows!

Ladies, gentlemen and junior readers I present to you what is understood to be the largest *steam driven* plough that has ever existed. The reality of this was brought to my attention by one the classic vehicle groups I belong to.



150 CASE of  
REALIZING THE DREAM

Anderson

Do remember this is a modern project. For those with less time, the plough is attached at 10.30 minutes into the recording [here](#).

The full background to this project by Kory Anderson can be found [here](#).

There are many things about steam power that people find appealing; for my own part, I think one of the things is that it sounds as if the machinery is 'breathing' at a human pace. The slower rhythm compared to the petrol or diesel engine somehow allows you to hear in a more sympathetic way the work the engine is doing.

Chris Young

## Men's group.



The next Men's Group meeting will be Tuesday 30th November. As usual at The Queen Inn on Kingsgate Road, Winchester from 7 pm. Richard Coleman 7739793489



## Comedy corner.

A minister was visiting the homes of his parishioners. At one house it seemed obvious that someone was at home, but there was no answer to his knocks at the door. He took out a business card on which he had printed 'Revelation 3:20' and stuck it through the letterbox. The following Sunday, he found that his card had been returned in the offering plate with the addition 'Genesis 3:10.'



Still working from home?



The deadline for December Yours is Friday 19 November.

All contributions welcome. Send to [yours@ucw.org.uk](mailto:yours@ucw.org.uk).



## **Services for November 2021**

**In-person and Live-streamed**

### **7<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER**

**10.30 am Morning Worship (HC)**      **Revd Tim Searle**

### **14<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER**

**10.30 am Morning Worship**      **Revd Tim Searle**

### **21<sup>ST</sup> NOVEMBER**

**10.30 am Morning Worship (CM)**      **Revd Dr Howard Mellor**

### **28<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER**

**10.30 am Morning Worship**      **Revd Tim Searle**

*This Preaching Plan is subject to change in response to changes in Covid-19 Restrictions.*