



# MARK'S MESSENGER

*The Parish Magazine of  
St Mark's Church, Broomhill and Broomhall, Sheffield*

February 2025



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## BETH KEITH



Photo of the Service of Welcome for Beth taken by Maureen Bonas

*A Service of Welcome was held at St Mark's on 15 January for the Revd Dr Beth Keith as Vicar of St Mark's, Broomhill & Broomhall and to license her as Priest in Charge of St Mary's, Walkley and Associate Priest of St John's Ranmoor. Here she answers some questions about the event.*

On January 15th I was licensed at St Mark's by the Bishop of Sheffield. It was a lovely to see the church packed out with people from St Mark's, St Mary's and further afield. Thank you to all the people involved in making it such a wonderful occasion. The service, however, did not go entirely to plan. Those of you who were able to make it will have noticed that I was not actually instituted as Vicar. The bishop did summarise why, but since the licensing I have been asked various questions which I hope to answer here.

### **Are you the Vicar of St Mark's?**

No! At the time of writing, I am not legally the vicar of St Mark's. Unfortunately, some of the legal paperwork had not been put in place in time for the licensing. That is now happening, and I will be instituted and installed by the 9th of February.

I was however licensed as priest in charge of Saint Mary's, Walkley on the 15<sup>th</sup> January and welcomed at a service at St Mary's on the 19<sup>th</sup>.

**At the licensing service, you were welcomed as vicar of St Mark's and priest in charge of St Mary's Walkley. What does it mean that you were licensed to both?**

A few years ago, when the previous vicar of St Mary's retired, the churches of St Mark's St John's and St Mary's worked together to provide clergy cover across three churches. Over the past few years St John's clergy have been covering one Sunday per month at St Mary's, and St Mark's have done the same. Matthew Rhodes, vicar of St John's, picked up some work in St Mary's Parish in particular working with St Mary's Primary School and with the cemetery.

Sue Hammersley, previous vicar of St Mark's, was made priest in charge of St Mary's and supported St Mary's with governance and administration. When the post of vicar at St Mark's was advertised, it was made clear that this post was combined with being priest in charge at St Mary's.

I will continue to lead services at St Mary's once a month, as I have been during the vacancy, but now also have responsibilities as priest in charge there. This means quite a bit of change for me and for St Mary's church. There is an excellent team of retired clergy, readers, and lay leaders at St Mary's, and St John's clergy remain involved there.

**Why was Matthew Rhodes also licensed on the 15th of January?**

For a few years now St Mark's, St Mary's and St John's have been working together in a loose partnership. We are what is referred to in Sheffield Diocese as a mission partnership. Each church works separately and together. For example, you may remember our Mission Area Weekend last September, which we worked on together.

It is becoming more common across the Diocese, that when Mission Areas are formed, incumbents (vicars) are also licensed to the other parishes in their area. So, I was licensed as an associate priest at St John's, Ranmoor, and Matthew (vicar of St John's) was licensed as an associate priest at St Mark's. The licensing is more a sign of our ongoing commitment to work together, than marking any real change. For example, Matthew being licensed to St Mark's does not make any tangible difference to his current role or work. He remains Vicar of St John's. I will (eventually) be vicar of St Mark's and together will work to support St Mary's and work together as a mission area.

## **What things does the Mission Area do together?**

On Tuesdays and Thursdays, we meet together on zoom for morning prayer. Anyone is welcome to join. St John's hosts on Tuesdays and we host on Thursdays.

On Tuesdays at 9am we join our Mission Area partners St John's, Ranmoor, on their link:

<https://zoom.us/j/816969789?pwd=ejl3ZGZvVC9QS1BTbFBRTjhCbFRiUT09>

Zoom Meeting ID: 816 969 789 Password: 662736

Zoom code for Mission Area morning prayer at 9am on Thursday:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86511848626>

Zoom ID: 865 1184 8626

We do some events together, such as Mission Area Weekend, and some joint services, e.g. Dementia friendly services. We do pulpit swaps, and the clergy across the area support each other in covering services, funerals and weddings, due to illness or annual leave. During the vacancy at St Mark's clergy from St John's have regularly covered some of our 8am BCP services. The trick seems to be finding what works, and the best ways we can support each other, and building on those aspects. Each of the churches has its own identity, its own service provision, and its commitment to the parish in which it's based.

## **Will your old job as Liberal Theologian be replaced?**

The PCC have begun discussions as to whether we will employ another member of clergy at St Mark's in the future, and what shape that role might be. We're looking at our resources and our current staff and volunteer make up. Please pray for us as we make plans for the coming year, and we'll let you know as things develop.

***Revd Dr Beth Keith,  
(soon to be) Vicar of St Mark's.***

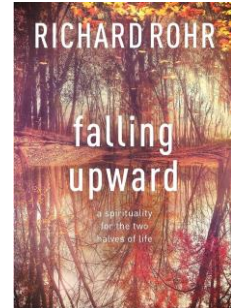
## **About our Cover Picture**

A contemporary Russian icon depicting the Holy Trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit with the Lion of Mark gazing from atop a pillar with the Bible in his grasp. This was created by Somerset based Bulgarian artist Silvia Dimitrova who is well known in Wells for her evocative 'Icons of Reconciliation' in the Bishop's Chapel and the Fourteen Stations of the Cross at Wells Cathedral.

*Photo by Michael Miller, Wells June 2024*

**REFLECTIONS ON:**  
***Falling Upward* –**  
***A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life* by Richard Rohr**

Not one to read, or even believe, the blurb on a book cover, I did however note this praise from Joanna Macey: '*Falling Upward* calls forth the promise within us and frees us to follow it into dimensions of our spiritual authenticity.' I particularly like this as *Falling Upward* is an inspiring read for 'all religions and none'.



Rohr's basic message is that, hopefully, we can experience two halves of our lives. We all go through the first – normally in the early and middle decades. We assess our competence and achievements, career, wealth, family often in a comparative and competitive spirit. We will have joys and difficulties, some severe and traumatic, but generally learning from these and our mistakes in some way. One can easily understand that some may continue to the end stuck in this mindset and possibly ending feeling disappointed and feeling 'no use to anyone' in our old age.

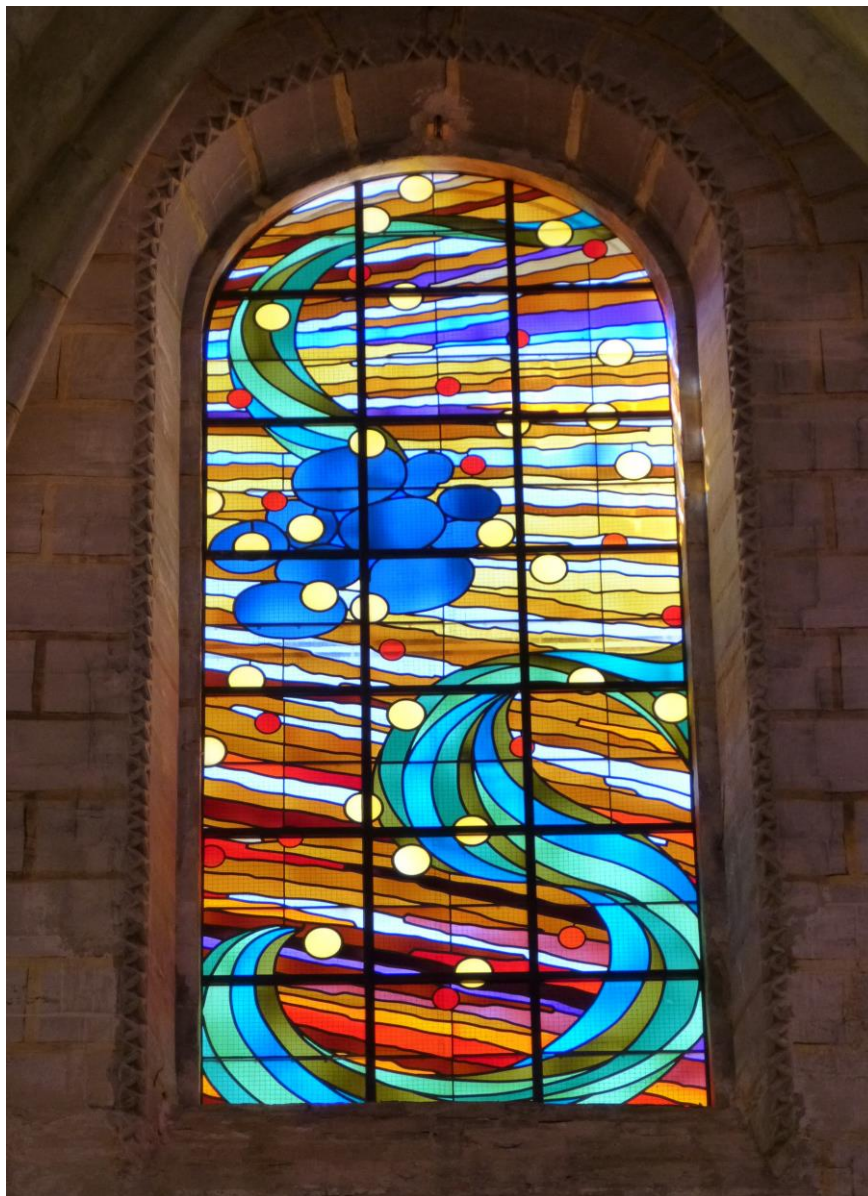
Rohr believes that it is in the 'second half of life' when we come to use our skills and experiences, learning and wisdom for ourselves but particularly for others. We can become a 'true elder'. This transition and approach can happen at any time in our lives, often as I have experienced, in a backwards and forwards or in 'upwards and downwards' fashion, many, many times. I am used to calling these 'my ages of reason' (with a nod to Sartre).

In a series of sermons on identity, at my daughter's church in West London, Rohr's writing has been explored, for example asking – 'what sort of old person' do we want to be?' For my ten-year-old grandson, this would be difficult to imagine, let alone articulate, but for me – not a problem – I have finally admitted I am there! So I have found Rohr's book particularly pertinent and perhaps poignant. I am well beyond halfway. Other questions in the sermon were 'so can we learn to forgive ourselves as God does? Can we reach a point where we are honest and accept our mistakes and our failings, and start to accept the failings in others?'

I recommend anyone of any age to read Rohr's latest offering. I think some, like me, will find it rather wordy, so you may choose, as I did, to read the long introductory summary and be selective in the chapters you choose to study in depth. It is an Inspiring and interesting read.

**Vanessa Senger**  
(December 2024)

*Falling Upward – A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life* by Richard Rohr (2011) is published by Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, available second hand from World of Books and there is a copy in St Mark's Library section F.



Cuenca Cathedral – Photo by Michael Miller

## SOMEONE WHO HELPED ME...

I invited several members of the congregation to write on the theme of 'Someone Who Helped Me'. I think you will find them very interesting and demonstrative of how much impact we or others can have when we help one another, often enabling the person helped to go on and help others themselves. It's said that 'Kindness makes the World go round.' Doing good in any way is rewarding for both the helped and the helper; there is scientific evidence backing up the health benefits. And it's simply the right thing to do.

***Michael Miller, Editor***

### ***Dilys Noble writes:***

Let me set the scene, it's some time in the 1970 when 'junior doctors really were *residents*' (the term they have recently chosen to describe themselves), that is, all hospital doctors except for consultant grade. I had been working the normal junior doctors' hours of Monday to Friday and on call alternate nights and weekends for several years. I became a Registrar in Paediatrics at the Sheffield Childrens' Hospital Casualty Department that was blissfully sessional and it felt like part-time.



Dilys at Carfield School music festival

We had a great team of junior doctors and a consultant who was way ahead of her time in making provision for women to continue in medicine and have a family life. My previous consultant at Chesterfield asked me to do some overnight on calls as their registrar had been unexpectedly given 'Gardening' leave. It was not without a certain sense of self-worth that I had accepted and fitted it around my rota, or rather managed to mess it up. M. – the more junior doctor at SCH Casualty that day – bleeped me at the hospital, no mobile phones back then and she had first called home, met my absence and was told by Lewis I was working elsewhere. The memory of that phone call lives with me and the acute anguish it caused. M. knows I am forever indebted to her as she, without question, said she would stay and do my evening shift.

Our working lives have not touched closely over the years as I escaped to General Practice but we have kept in touch. A truly remarkable person and doctor who travelled extensively and did mountaineering BC (Before Children). As a consultant she and her partner adopted 2 very traumatised children. This was a 'first' and made national news as social services grappled with the unprecedented situation of potential adopters who were not married and didn't wish to become so. It is a huge achievement to have successfully raised young independent adults and M. continues to be their lifeline alone as sadly her partner died during Covid. Her company now is two re-homed very large energetic dogs.

Covid brought us working together again as part of Sheffield Volunteer Contact Tracers, a group that tried to fill the gap left by the less than competent government and public health agencies. It got medical students involved and provided contact tracing for hospital inpatients, a group that was totally excluded by public health.

The group still meets regularly, often on line. The world has changed but true kindness is still here.

## CHURCH RECIPE BOOK SELLS IN AUSTRALIA



Having sent a copy to our son in Brisbane, a friend there has asked for a copy. Fame! There are copies on the church entrance leaflet stall if you would like a copy, donations requested.

***Pauline Miller***



## SOMEONE WHO HELPED ME...

### ***Martin Godley writes:***

In the mid-seventies having completed my 'O' Levels reasonably successfully, I was about to move school for the sixth form. I was already thinking of becoming an engineer of some kind and knew I must continue with my maths and physics studies and needed another science at A-level.



Chemistry was the obvious choice, and I started with a 'taster' in that, but somehow it didn't appeal as it seemed a dry, mostly theoretical subject. Also available were a few trial lessons in Geology. I hadn't quite realised that it was a separate science nor how useful it could be to me in the future.

'Mr K.' the geology teacher seemed a very experienced chap who had worked in the British Antarctic Survey. His party-piece at Christmas was to show colour slides of South Georgia, The Falkland Islands and the South Pole! We probably thought he was in his fifties, but he was only about fifteen years older than us. The main thing was he had bags of enthusiasm; the lab where we were taught was full of fascinating objects, rock samples, fossils, interesting posters, diagrams and the promise of field trips around the country. I came to realise that some form of outdoor engineering would be the thing for me. Geology would literally be important grounding for my later construction career.

There was a lot to learn about many rock types, plus constituent minerals and associated fossils. Mr K. made it so fascinating with plenty of illustrations and first-hand examples he'd seen and photographed, often around our region. Geology explained so much about our country, not just the landscapes but the vast range of rock types from some of the very oldest to the 'youngest', which for me explained why the Industrial Revolution started in Britain.

A summer residential field trip to South Wales had us identifying and mapping rocks and fossils of quite different types from what we saw around Sheffield. In the evenings we were strongly discouraged from going to the

pub as Mr K. was a teetotal Baptist! He warned us the nearest pub was a very long walk on dark lanes to an establishment with space for very few people. Anyway, when we found some old bicycles available for loan, we soon found a way down there! On the trip home we stopped to see a 'classic' geological location where the boundary between rocks of the 'Ordovician' and 'Silurian' periods was marked by a fossil rich 'bone-bed'. Unfortunately, this was in a car park of a public house. We couldn't park there to have a look without frequenting the establishment, could we?!

We had some great times on trips and picked up fascinating geotechnical knowledge which really was useful for my later career in Civil Engineering.

The follow-up to this is that now in retirement I'm back in touch with my former teacher Mr K... We are members of a local organisation that promotes knowledge and education in geology by means of field trips to log and record rock exposures that come to light... Look us up under 'SAGT'.

### ***Rosalind Rogerson writes:***

I often spend time looking back, remembering the many people in my life who have made their mark, influenced my future, and contributed towards my wellbeing. I'd like to tell you of two of them.

Margaret became a student of English, and her love and knowledge of poetry in particular went hand in hand with her own growth in the Christian faith. She died, aged 52, from breast cancer, and I have kept the letter she sent to friends shortly before her death in 2017.

She wrote:

*...."The timetable was truncated in January and now I've been given only a few weeks to live. I should see Easter, though.*

*....Yes, it does still seem weird and unreal. But I honestly have enough faith – certainly right now – to know that God will care for me. He loves me, and cherishes every cell in my body. His grace embraces me completely. And I still think I've got the easy part: I'm going to be with God, somewhere unimaginably wonderful, while others are left behind to pick up the pieces."...*

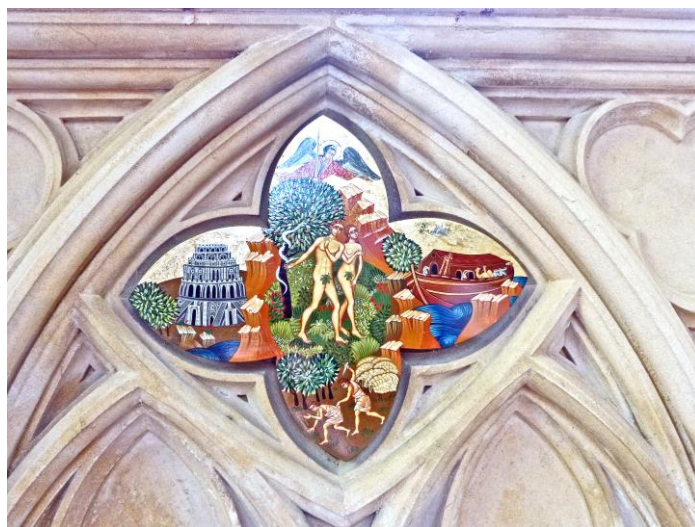
She died a week after Easter. How has Margaret helped me? Can I ignore such a testimony to faith? Could I ever be anywhere near as positive in facing death as she was?

William was inspired by poetry too – this time, poems of a deliberately Christian nature, found in hymn books. He read them as aids to devotion, for meditation and as avenues to his own prayer. What is a hymn book but a volume of poems? These are lines composed with precision, attuned to the life of the Church in all its aspects. They are the work of a galaxy of wordsmiths, from the translators of the verse of early church fathers through the trends and fashions of the centuries to the present day.

How has William helped me? He has pointed me to the ready access we have to words more poignant than most of us will ever write. Many hymns have taken hold in my memory, and become a storehouse of verses to encourage, console, admonish, and much more besides.

*Drop thy still dews of quietness,  
Till all our strivings cease;  
Take from our souls the strain and stress,  
And let our ordered lives confess  
The beauty of thy peace.*

**John Greenleaf Whittier (b. 1872)**



Wells Bishop's Palace, chapel glass,  
Photo by Michael Miller



St Mary's Abergavenny, photo Michael Miller

## SOMEONE WHO HELPED ME...

### **Philip Booth writes:**

Singing for me, only really took off in my postgraduate years at Cambridge, but after a hesitant start with a choral society, it rapidly became a major part of my life. As a student in Sheffield, I was persuaded to take part in operetta, and I came to see that much as I loved it, I didn't know much about singing. Returning to Sheffield, I took lessons with an ageing soprano in Darnall, an experience over which a veil is best drawn; but I had heard that the University's Music Department employed a soprano, Margaret Field, who also took on few private students and was highly spoken of.



Phillip Booth

Lying to my teacher in Darnall that I had been taken on by Margaret – which I hadn't – I went for an initial audition. It was not a success. I limped my way through whatever I had prepared, and Margaret rather reluctantly agreed to take me on. Where that audition had been painful, the first proper lesson was a good deal more successful. Margaret could see that she had something to work on and I began to feel confident that concentrated effort could yield results.

So began what was for me a fruitful relationship that lasted for more than ten years. Margaret introduced me to a wide range of music, and with her, I attempted to make sense of some of the most celebrated song cycles in the repertory, notably Schumann's *Dichterliebe* and Beethoven's *An Die Ferne Geliebte*. But there was plenty of other music, too. One of the things that surprised me at first was the physicality of singing, which seems now a very silly thing to say. But I guess I had vaguely imagined that singing was about having nice thoughts and opening one's mouth and letting it all pour out. What Margaret taught me was that singing engaged the whole body, and to sing well involved being acutely aware of what your body was doing, particularly in terms of stance and the control of the diaphragm, something that now we might call mindfulness. Indeed, it has always seemed to me a paradox, that to be successful in one of the great acts of human communication you had to focus intently on yourself both physically and mentally.

I later came to realise that what Margaret taught me was about much more than singing. She enabled me to develop an ability to present myself in public, to engage with those I was speaking to, and to be, in a word, mindful of what I was doing. There is little doubt that this helped me both personally and professionally. Of course, there were moments of

considerable insecurity – something as profoundly engaging as singing is bound sometimes to reveal fault lines – but these were offset by the frequent joy of making music both by myself and with others. Margaret, who has remained a friend, is someone to whom I owe an enormous debt of gratitude for enriching my life.

***Maria Oliver writes:***

When Michael initially asked me to write about ‘someone who helped me’ I couldn’t really narrow it down to a single person. I have been fortunate to have had help; physical, emotional and spiritual from a variety of people through different seasons of my life. There are those people who have been a constant presence. There are those who, if my life were a novel (I’m glad it isn’t as no one would want to read it!), it would just take up a chapter or less. That doesn’t mean their help has been less meaningful, but they were around for a shorter amount of time. I continue to be thankful for the loving community of friends at St Mark’s and those who help and support me.



Maria with her Father

At the moment my mind is full of thoughts about my Father. He died last year, and we are just approaching what would have been his 91<sup>st</sup> birthday. We were fortunate to be able to celebrate his landmark birthday last year and my parents’ 65<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary a month before he died. These are memories to be cherished but more than these are the lifetime of memories we shared. He was a loving and dedicated Father and Grandpa, and he was always someone who truly helped me (and everyone else around him too). I felt his presence by his practical involvement in everything we did. He didn’t have long conversations with people, but he demonstrated his love by assembling furniture, painting rooms, mending bikes or offering car maintenance advice, to name just a few. I always went to him first for help as he always seemed to know the answer or if he didn’t, he would find out. I like to think that he was ‘google’ before ‘google’! As a child he was always on hand for Maths homework, bedtime stories, tennis, swimming and taking me to the library. Many of the things he helped and encouraged me with as a child have stayed with me (not the Maths though)!!

I am missing him so much but am eternally thankful for the relationship we had and for his loving example.

## SOMEONE WHO HELPED ME...

### ***Boyd Morgan writes:***

For a 14-year-old, struggling with dyslexia and a reputation for being a 'naughty' student, the path to academic joy seemed a distant dream. But thanks to the unwavering support of Ms. Lapping, my English teacher, that seemingly impossible dream became a reality.

My academic journey was marked by frustration. Dyslexia made the written word a constant battle, and my classroom behaviour often fell quite short of expectations. The subject matter often felt alien, detached from the ordinary experiences I knew. Literature, in particular, seemed a formidable obstacle – a world of dense vocabulary and complex plots that my mind struggled to grasp.

This was the backdrop when Ms. Lapping walked into my life. It wasn't with a lecture or a reprimand, but with a simple, yet profound, act of engagement. She took the time to understand my struggles, not just on a pedagogical level, but on a human level. She wasn't simply teaching me the intricacies of Shakespeare; she was connecting with me.

This connection was the cornerstone of her method. She met me where I was, offering patience and understanding for my struggles with both reading and writing. Instead of berating me for my naughtiness, she searched for ways to engage me, finding avenues to connect my interests to the concepts in the syllabus. She sought to understand my thought processes and used visual aids, and alternative methods to help me break down the material, recognising the visual nature of the problems I was facing.

One aspect of her approach that particularly stood out was her caring nature. This wasn't just about academics for Ms. Lapping; it was about fostering a well-rounded individual. She patiently supported my attempts to articulate my own thoughts, encouraged my attempts at writing and, crucially, saw the potential within me, a potential that I had often failed to see myself. Her encouragement helped me discover the profound joy of engaging with literature. Suddenly, the stories weren't just words on a page; they were characters with lives and experiences intertwined with my own, each enriching my understanding of the complexities of the human condition.

We explored themes of love, loss, and redemption through the words of authors such as Dickens and Austen. Her patience taught me how to appreciate these writers and the richness of the words they employed. Ultimately, Ms. Lapping's impact extended beyond the classroom. She showed me the value of perseverance and the power of human connection. In her, I found a mentor who understood my needs and encouraged me to develop a love of learning. Her impact is not just on my academic life; it is

deeply embedded in the tapestry of my self-belief. And I feel it will sustain me long into the future. I am eternally grateful to have encountered a teacher who cared so deeply, not just for knowledge, but for the individual.

***Michael Miller writes:***

At the age of 12 I was moved from happy primary schooling in Sydney to being a day boy at a minor provincial C of E public school. There I was an outsider with an alien accent, compounded by the difference in school years so that, it being January, I entered the second term, made worse by my being far behind in Latin and then being hospitalised with appendicitis. Consequently I had to repeat a year and had miserable teenage years, hating the school's rule-bound, militaristic, religious ethos (ex-officer teachers, compulsory cadet force, weekly church parade to sung Matins). So I left school aged 19 with two grade E A-levels. I then had jobs as an office boy in a London antique dealers and as a temporary clerical officer in the Ministry of Defence. I became very depressed, not understanding that horrible affliction, and made an unsuccessful suicide attempt, ending up taken by ambulance to a mental hospital.



Michael at Redmires in  
2020

There I was assessed by the clinical psychologist with the Wechsler Intelligence Scale, discovering I was actually amongst the top 2% for IQ (confirmed by Mensa's AH6 test). When he discussed this with my parents it was a revelation, particularly to my engineer father, who at last grasped that my under-achievement was from environmental factors. I went straight from the hospital to an FE College for a happy year, making friends with the other older students, reading 50 books and gaining two good A levels in new subjects. From there it was on to Keele University where I met Pauline, my life partner of 56 years. So that psychologist turned my life around, enabling me to succeed academically and have a happier life.

Much later I had a second spell of acute depression due to an adverse work environment. Lying awake wondering how I could kill myself, I had the insight to recognise I was clinically depressed and must visit my GP. A locum spent 40 minutes talking with me, and her prescription of a fortnight's non-medicated sick leave gave me the time to heal myself, work out how to nourish and sustain my inner being to survive the work environment, and led to my joining St Mark's. So that's someone else who helped me, but that's another story! The moral is that helping someone, even if it's 'just your job', can have huge effects.



## SOMEONE WHO HELPED ME...

### *Patricia Hunt writes:*

Well – someone who helped me, more than 35 years ago, was Michael Miller through his work at the University Careers Service. Thank you Michael, and thank you for asking me to write this piece! It is taking me down memory lane.

For the first ten years of my career I was teaching, and I got to a point where I knew I had gifts and God given abilities that I wasn't using, so I met with



Michael to explore potential career developments and future possibilities. It was so very helpful to have two sessions with Michael and follow his very thorough, analytical and perceptive approach, and he opened up my mind to entering the profession of the healing work of Psychotherapy. I embarked on a foundation course to explore this further.

The Hillsborough Tragedy was only a few months later. That day I 'happened' to hear a TV request for local people to help which changed my life. I immediately experienced this as a call, and I offered help. Later that day I was asked to support the family of Tony Bland who was the 96<sup>th</sup> victim of Hillsborough. There is a very long story here, but in essence Tony lived for four years after the tragedy but never regained consciousness, and I supported the family during this time. This experience led me to decide that this was the work I felt called to do, but I knew I needed a rigorous training. I did the four year postgraduate training in Psychotherapy, in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Sheffield, which existed at that time.

Michael's help was part of what gave me the confidence to step forward on the day of the Hillsborough Tragedy, and the timing of my meetings with Michael was serendipitous.

Over the last 35 years I have worked at Share Psychotherapy serving the Sheffield community; been Head of Department at the University of Nottingham leading a Counselling and Psychotherapy team

offering a service to the 45,000 strong community of staff and students; chaired the national body for University Counselling Services; been vice chair of the UK Council for Psychotherapy; President of the European Association for Psychotherapy, and still continuing in this work in EAP's support for Ukrainian Psychotherapists; and appointed as Bishop's Advisor for Pastoral Care for our Diocese by Bishop Pete, who wished to have someone with professional experience in this role.

All of this came from my original meetings with Michael! I am profoundly grateful to him for his kindness, his expertise, and the vision of life that he opened up for me. He gave generously of his thoughtfulness and compassion at a time when this was exactly what I needed.

### **A poem by Michael Leunig (from Pat Hunt)**

*“With a bit of luck  
A duck  
Will come into your life.  
There will be a quack  
And right there at your feet  
A little duck will stand.  
She will take you by the hand  
And lead you  
Like a child with no defence;  
She will lead you  
Into wisdom, joy and innocence.  
That little duck  
We wish you luck.”*



Vista Allegre museum, Aveiro, Photo Michael Miller



St Mary's Abergavenny – Photo by Michael Miller

## **THE PALESTINIAN CHRISTIAN CRY FOR HOPE TO ALL CHURCHES – The Night Service discussion on 10 November. 2024: A report and reflection**

I first wrote this report just after our event in November, 2024. In between there has been no war-ending ceasefire in Gaza. The humanitarian efforts in Gaza have been challenged by Israel culminating with the imminent expulsion of UNRWA<sup>i</sup>. The International Court of Justice, while not ruling finally on the South African government led claim of Israeli forces committing genocide, has issued symbolic arrest warrants for some Israeli government members. The fundamental iniquity of the treatment of the Palestinian people by Israeli authorities, the focus of the Palestinian Christians in Cry for Hope, continues. All the sources I cite below have links in the footnotes.

On 10<sup>th</sup> November David Price and I each led strands of analysis of the *Cry For Hope (Cry)* document. *Cry* is a theological statement and call for Churches outside the middle-east to engage with the case that Apartheid is being employed by Israeli governments against the Palestinian people. Our expert witness, Jenny Bywater, who lived and worked as an observer with Palestinians in 2013<sup>ii</sup>, gave us an account of examples of everyday Apartheid treatment she witnessed.

Our discussion of *Cry for Hope*<sup>iii</sup>, written by Palestinian Christians in 2020, was prompted by the fact it is scheduled for discussion by the Anglican National Synod this spring.

One key feature of *Cry for Hope* is its claim that current and past governments of Israel have instituted a legal, political and military regime of Apartheid – as defined and outlawed by the UN<sup>iv</sup>. Certainly research by two Israeli Jewish Human Rights non-governmental organisations led to their judgement that Israel is committing Apartheid<sup>v</sup>. Their views were independently supported in later reports by Human Rights Watch<sup>vi</sup> and Amnesty International<sup>vii</sup>.

*Cry for Hope* very carefully asks the world-wide Church to look at evidence of Apartheid and act accordingly. The model it invokes is the *Status Confessionis*, or required statement of Christian principle in regards to a specific issue. This was used successfully by Christian South African anti-apartheid campaigners to challenge their own Churches and Churches worldwide who refused to challenge the Apartheid system and the South African government. *Cry for Hope* is calling Churches outside Palestine to act urgently and from theological principle in engaging with Israeli state actions and entrenched unequal treatment for Palestinians.

*Cry* asks that we examine the evidence and then act accordingly; it sets out actions it wishes Churches to take which include ‘study and discernment with respect to theologies and understandings of the Bible that have been used to justify the oppression of the Palestinian people.’ St Mark’s is, I suggest, a very good place to do this. I think *Cry* is asking us to reject reading the Bible as an

adjunct to ideology, where a predetermined desired outcome is arrived at by prescribing meanings in texts. This reduces our experience of the divine by imprisoning it and never expands how we live with our Creator. Instead Cry asks us to explore ‘theologies that prophetically call for an inclusive vision of the land for Israelis and Palestinians, affirming that the creator God is a God of love, mercy and justice; not of discrimination and oppression.’

So what will happen if Churches internationally do not get more involved in the campaign for justice for the Palestinian and Israeli people? Well in my view without persistent, vocal, international law-focused, and non-violent critical engagement with Israel then the Palestinians will become even more marginalised.

The eminent UK-based Israeli historian, Ilan Pappé, wrote recently how he thinks Israeli society splits into two camps over Palestinians. One camp is essentially secular, liberal, wishing for Jewish citizens to live in a democratic and pluralist society but who don’t want to encompass Palestinians in this endeavour because they sit outside the historical national identity. The second group, increasing in size and influence reject Palestinian identity, see all the land as Israel’s and will reduce the Palestinians to ‘*a bare minimum*’<sup>viii</sup>

However Pappé sees this denial as unsustainable under international scrutiny; he sees young Israeli’s leaving Israel. The locus for a movement of positive change lies within the Israeli Human Rights NGOs and the constituency of Israeli and Jewish Diaspora groups who want and campaign for a true democratic pluralist Israeli state with full Palestinian rights and a Palestinian sovereign state. I complete this on the day the ICJ has issued arrest warrants over Gaza for two members of the Israeli government.

**Marc James**

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<sup>i</sup> United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East. <https://www.unrwa.org/>

<sup>ii</sup> World Council of Churches Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel <https://www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/eappi>

<sup>iii</sup> Scroll down the splash page to see the text of the Cry for Hope document <https://cryforhope.org/>

<sup>iv</sup> Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid New York, 30 November 1973” <https://legal.un.org/avl/ha/cspca/cspca.html>

<sup>v</sup> B’TSelem, January 2021. A regime of Jewish Supremacy from the Jordan to the Mediterranean Sea; This is Apartheid.. <https://www.btselem.org/topic/apartheid> Yesh Din. 2020. The Occupation of the West Bank and the Crime of Apartheid: Legal Opinion. <https://www.yesh-din.org/en/the-occupation-of-the-west-bank-and-the-crime-of-apartheid-legal-opinion/>

<sup>vi</sup> A Threshold Crossed; Israeli Authorities and the Crimes of Apartheid and Persecution <https://www.hrw.org/report/2021/04/27/threshold-crossed/israeli-authorities-and-crimes-apartheid-and-persecution>

<sup>vii</sup> Israel’s apartheid against Palestinians: Cruel system of domination and crime against humanity <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde15/5141/2022/en/> see also Alex Cane The Amnesty Report on Israeli Apartheid: An Explainer <https://www.jewishvoiceforlabour.org.uk/article/the-amnesty-report-on-israeli-apartheid-an-explainer>

Ilan Pappé .The Collapse of Zionism. New Left Review Sidecar.

<sup>viii</sup> 21 June 2024 <https://newleftreview.org/sidecar/posts/the-collapse-of-zionism>

## ***Stop Press: Sunday, 26<sup>th</sup> January***

**Alert: Rwanda invades neighbouring Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), where St Mark's partner CongoAgri Consulting are based.**

This morning I heard the terrible news that the Rwandan army has invaded DR Congo and attacked Goma, a city of 2 million people. This follows two years of incursions and covert support for the M23 rebel group who now control a large area of mineral-rich Eastern DRC and have forced over half a million people to flee their homes.

At St Mark's we have direct links with the people there. I have worked closely with the leaders of smallholder coffee farmer cooperatives since 2008, visiting regularly and seeing the huge progress they have made, with thousands of farmers now producing high quality sustainably grown speciality coffee. Then this year St Mark's decided to co-fund a wonderful project educating young people in the challenges of climate change and enabling them to plant trees and take other practical steps to combat its effects.

Appallingly, many of these farmers and young people have now been displaced by the fighting of recent weeks. They include friends in Goma who today have been telling me via WhatsApp that they are stranded in their homes with the sound of shells and gunfire ring out around them, terrifying their children.

There are indeed many parallels with Ukraine, but sadly DRC will not receive even a fraction of the attention or support.

### **What can we do?**

We can write to our MP, demanding action against Rwanda for their blatant contravention of International Law, and asking for Britain's aid to be suspended until they withdraw their forces.

On a brighter note, if you would like to have a taste some of the amazing coffees from the DRC farmers I work with, they can currently be found for a limited time via the website of [PactCoffee.com](http://PactCoffee.com).

***Richard Hide  
(26/1/25)***

## ECO-FRIENDLY SUSTAINABLE CHURCH FLOWER ARRANGING

*Mary-Jane Ryder, St Mark's flower team coordinator writes:*



The weekly flowers at St Mark's are now provided by the Church Flower Arrangers using eco-friendly and sustainable methods and sources.

We do not use the floral foam (ie Oasis) any longer for flower arranging. This is because a block of floral foam contains the same amount of plastic as 10 plastic carrier bags and is very damaging to the environment. It can take thousands of years to completely degrade into natural elements!

This last Christmas at St Mark's, we decorated the church with arrangements using chicken wire, moss, jam jars and willow sticks to support the flowers. All these elements can be reused time and time again. In addition, the flowers are now lasting longer in Church because they stand in water rather than damp floral foam so this is a plus as well.



All our greenery is sourced locally from either our own gardens or parishioner's gardens and sometimes, the church grounds. If you have a big garden with lots of greenery I would be pleased to hear from you as we need large amounts of it at Easter, Harvest and Christmas when we decorate the whole church.

We try and buy seasonal flowers. I often buy flowers to be used in our arrangements from the discount supermarkets such as Lidl and Aldi. They both





claim to be committed to sourcing our plants and flowers from suppliers who uphold high social and environmental standards. For non-seasonal flowers they also use Fair-Trade suppliers in Kenya and Ethiopia.

We provide two fresh flower arrangements at St Marks for each Sunday (except in Lent and Advent). One in the main church, usually under the lectern, and one in the Lady Chapel. We would love to hear from you if you would like to join our flower arranging team. Advice and assistance will be given so no prior knowledge or expertise is required to join us.



Usually, the cost of the flowers each week (presently around £25) is covered by donations from church members either in memory of a loved one or to celebrate an anniversary or other event. More donors would be welcome and if you would like to fund the flowers for a particular week please contact me.

***Mary-Jane Ryder***

[mjryder.ivypark@btinternet.com](mailto:mjryder.ivypark@btinternet.com)



## Film Review:

### CONCLAVE\*

Both Pauline and I found this an utterly gripping fictional depiction, based on a book by Robert Harris and directed by Edward Berger, of the process to select a new pope. Several elements of plot intertwine as the ambitious scheming cardinals seek, at each round, to gain most votes, sometimes by underhand means. Playing against these are various “good guys” including women, who expose their machinations. The script is excellent and the settings sumptuous as a backdrop for the arcane rituals with first rate cinematography. Ralph Fiennes is brilliant as Father Lawrence who, although wishing to retire to a monastery, is nominated by the dying pope to remain as a cardinal and preside as dean over the election.



US Theatrical Release Poster



Ralf Feinnes as Thomas Cardinal

Although brilliant in its own closed world, it made me ponder our home-grown CoE election process to come, with its own tortuous format, for our next archbishop. The film also illustrates more widely how ambitious, unscrupulous men (I deliberately refer to them as male) will use any means to gain power in politics or business; sadly, as it is said, ‘scum rises to the top’, but fortunately not always and we do see many admirable, principled leaders.

Do see it if you can.

***Michael Miller***

\**CONCLAVE*: Directed by Edward Berger; Screen writer: Peter Straughan, based on the 2016 novel by Robert Harris; Cinematography: Stéphane Fontaine; Released in UK: 29 November, 2024.

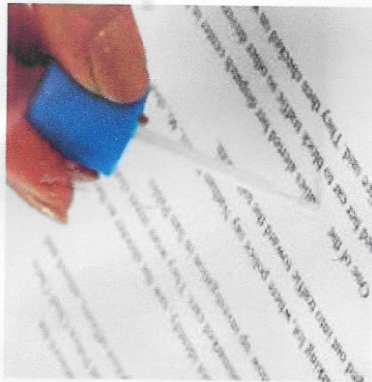
# PICTURE PUZZLE

by Andrew Sanderson

Each of the six pictures suggests a particular item or set of items. All the items are linked by a theme. The items are presented in alphabetical order going from left to right along the top row, and then again along the bottom row. The third picture is made up of two images.



TIMES NEW ROMAN  
ABCDEFGHIJKLM  
NOPQRSTUVWXYZ  
1234567890  
?!&\*.,%/:- \_



Answers: Altar, Font, Lectern, Pews, Piper Window, Steeple.

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