

BEVERLEY MINSTER MAGAZINE

APRIL 2016 | £1.00

The Parish Magazine of Beverley Minster, All Saints' Routh, St Paul's Tickton, St Leonard's Molescroft and St Peter's Woodmansey



THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

Can beings of opposite natures unite in a concord of harmony?

There is a harmony, for instance, among the seasons: spring follows winter, summer follows spring and autumn follows summer. The four seasons have contrasting characteristics, one brings cold, the next brings heat, one signals the beginning of life, another its end. Yet they all render equal service to the human race. They are all equally useful.

Since my favourite season is spring, a new beginning, I thought it would be an idea if we could invite God to spring clean our souls: asking the Holy Spirit to renew our minds, eliminate clutter in our life and in our minds and to create space to focus on what's truly important.

There has always been our Maker to unite different elements and to make of them a complete harmony.

Remember that even a brief encouraging comment or small act of kindness can make a significant positive difference in someone's life. So the answer to my question is yes we can. If we seek God's Glory, rather than our own, we build and see more harmony with one another.

Wendy Dell

EDITORIAL

Welcome to the APRIL edition of the
Minster Magazine.

Contributors this month are:

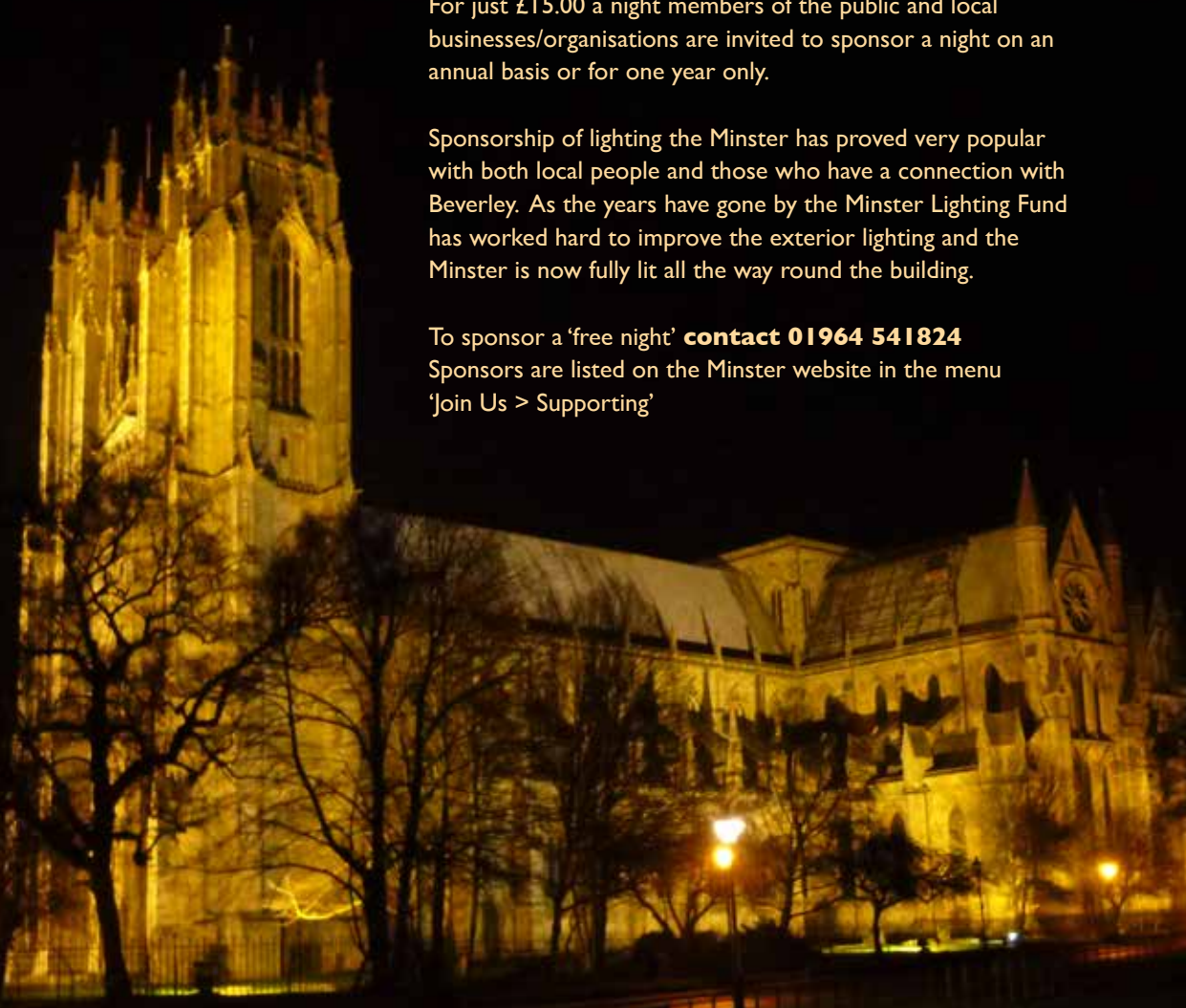
Sally George, Jeremy Fletcher, Barbara Gilman,
Terry Munro, Jeannie McMillan, Gareth Atha,
Wendy Dell, Steve Rial and Paul Hawkins, MN
and Robert Edwards.

The cover photo shows our Head Virger, John Dell,
who retired at the end of March. More on page 4.

Contributions for the next edition to:

julian.neaum@gmail.com

FLOODLIGHTING THE MINSTER SPONSORS IN APRIL (from the Minster website)

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For just £15.00 a night members of the public and local businesses/organisations are invited to sponsor a night on an annual basis or for one year only.

Sponsorship of lighting the Minster has proved very popular with both local people and those who have a connection with Beverley. As the years have gone by the Minster Lighting Fund has worked hard to improve the exterior lighting and the Minster is now fully lit all the way round the building.

To sponsor a 'free night' **contact 01964 541824**

Sponsors are listed on the Minster website in the menu 'Join Us > Supporting'



THE VICAR'S PAGE

JEREMY FLETCHER

Jeremy's letter now appears as 'The Vicar's Blog' on our website and it is also available for those who receive our free eNewsletter by email.

'There is', says the writer of Ecclesiastes in the Old Testament, 'nothing new under the sun.' One of my favourite features in our excellent magazine is Sally George's trawl through the archives. And, after my article last month asking people to respond to the challenges we face around staffing and volunteering, Sally found just such a plea from the Vicar here in 1949, the Revd Collwyn Hargreaves.

At that stage he had just one colleague: a Lay Reader. I was interested to see that Tickton was looked after by the Vicar of Hornsea. Then, as now, it was clearly difficult to find people willing to take on onerous and demanding volunteer roles. When I'm tempted to have a rosy view of the past, I will remember this piece, and be grateful to those who responded to the call, rebuilding the church and community and nation after the rigours and challenges of war.

I'm very pleased to say that people have responded superbly to my call to pray. At the Annual Parochial Church Meeting on April 11 there will be (at least) five candidates for Churchwarden. There is a proposed way forward for our financial life, with John Bull continuing to manage the accounting processes, supporting another Treasurer within a strengthened Finance Committee. We made an appointment of a new Head Virger, who will hopefully start on 1 May.

All our 'Try Praying' booklets (we had 500) have now been taken, and we are praying for amazing things to happen as people 'use them and lose them'. And the 'Pilgrim' Course which resumes in early April includes people who wish to mark their new faith by being confirmed. There are some young people who wish to make their faith public too.

For all this we must thank God. Nothing can be accomplished without prayer, and I would call you again to pray passionately and often about the many opportunities we have for mission and ministry. It remains the case that we have fewer clergy and readers than we did five years ago, and that will not change quickly. But my call to prayer was not a complaint, just as the call in 1949 was no complaint either. It was a recognition of changed circumstances, and a prayer that we might recognise what might need to change as a result.

God is faithful, and I rejoice in the tangible signs of that faithfulness. So let's be bold, and flexible, and look forward. Who knows what God may do?

Jeremy

My pictures this month are from Archbishop Sentamu's Pilgrimage of Prayer, Witness and Blessing, in the Beverley Deanery from March 1 - 6. Among many events the Archbishop visited Tickton School, walked through the snow into Beverley, and led our 'Try Praying' launch with Churches Together.



ON THE VERGE OF RETIREMENT



When John Dell first came to Beverley Minster, he was overawed by its size and found it daunting. Yet 31 years later, it had become so familiar to him as a regular worshipper that he felt he could apply for the post of virger. On his first day in the job, he decided to explore - by himself - all the unfamiliar parts of the vast historic building: every nook, cranny, staircase and hidden corner, thankfully keeping in radio contact with the then head virger,

David Wilson, especially when he found himself in total darkness going down the precarious steps within the chimney stack. Two years later, he became head virger himself, and now, after 16 years in the role he loved, and about to retire, knows every stone like the back of his hand. The Minster is like a second home.

In his teens, he drifted away from his Roman Catholic upbringing and although he still believed in God, he had grown to dislike the structure of the Catholic church. Meeting, and then 3 years later, marrying Wendy in 1971 brought him into the Anglican church and they set up home in Beverley. He would accompany her to festival services at the Minster- Christmas and Easter, a little wary of getting drawn in. It took his 5 year old daughter Rebecca's direct question one day, "Daddy, why don't you come to church with us every time?" to persuade him to attend regularly, at first keeping very quiet at the Sunday 8 am communion, then gradually attending the later services. As his commitment to the church grew, he became a sidesperson and a server.

John was an altar boy with a good treble voice at the Catholic church in East Hull where he was born and grew up, the youngest of 3 boys. Childhood was a very happy time, with East Park a short distance away and brothers and cousins to play with at every opportunity. He loved his school life too, although he thinks now he was probably dyslexic, which meant that he never did very well at English, while excelling at maths. A scholarship was therefore not possible. His dad, to whom he was very close, was always encouraging, especially at disappointing times like this. Keep on going was his motto; someone or something good will turn up. So John left school at 15 to begin an apprenticeship at Hull College as a joiner, which he found fulfilled his numerical and creative side. (He had decided against training as a wood machinist as too many had lost fingers!) Joinery was a good choice: it took him into a career with the local caravan industry and all the intricate work that entails; he was never out of a job and he acquired a lifelong skill, which he has used to great effect at his home.

Over the years, things changed within the caravan business, and for the last two years while still working at Swifts, but less happily, John trained as a driving instructor - (he's always believed that most jobs are possible, with help and encouragement). He enjoyed the independence

of running his own school, as well as earning more to support his daughters through university. Once they were settled in careers of their own, the considerable drop in income on becoming a virger was easier to manage. What made the job for John was not about money - it was the people. He learned the ropes quickly under the expert guidance of David Wilson and worked with supportive colleagues. For many of the Minster's hundreds of visitors, the virgers are the first point of contact, easily recognisable in distinctive maroon jersey, with bunches of keys jangling from their belts. Listening to and dealing with the needs of often very troubled people on a regular basis has strengthened John's faith over the years, even in the most difficult aspects of the job, such as assisting at funerals, (especially if he has known the person who died), when mourners express strong emotions, usually anger, and ask a lot of challenging questions. John has always believed that emotions are God-given, and the greatest of them all is love. That conviction has helped him to relate to people in whatever circumstance - whether they are complaining or making unreasonable demands or turning up to visit at midnight. The most enjoyable occasions are the civic services and the weddings. He feels honoured to meet brides at the west door and put them at their ease- he usually has a little joke with them and tells them that if they change their minds as they process up the nave aisle, they can just slip out through the last door on the left - (none ever has!).

Retirement is eagerly looked forward to. With his positive attitude to life and seemingly boundless energy, John has lots of plans. Firstly he hopes to spend more time with his family of 7 ladies:- wife Wendy, daughters Rebecca and Fiona and 4 granddaughters, who all live a long way from Beverley. Secondly, he is learning to cook - from scratch, using a book that Rebecca and her husband gave him. Results so far have gone down well and nothing has ended up in the bin or the dog. Thirdly, he will be very glad to have more time for gardening, which he loves. He and Wendy have joined the Minster Walkers, as they both like to keep fit. They are also enthusiastic campers, so they will be going on more holidays to favourite places: the Dales, Cornwall, France, Spain and Italy. But Thursdays on the golf course will remain sacrosanct, as they have been while a virger. As a long-time member of the 'God Squad' - a group of Minster members, John will prioritise his golf and, with Wendy, all the social events at the 19th hole.

Virger John Dell's broad smile will be greatly missed - also his patience, helpfulness, humour and forbearance. It is not at all surprising that he has hundreds of thank you letters at home. As he reflected on his life, he explained how he has often questioned aspects of faith but never doubted, and how God has provided guidance for him time and time again, usually through other people. He is convinced that the role of the church is to support individuals on their journey of faith, and that's what he has always tried to do.

We wish him every blessing in his retirement and congratulate him and Wendy on nearly 45 years of very happy marriage. MN

MEN'S BREAKFAST GROUP



John and Wendy Dell receive thanks and gifts at a bring and share lunch.
[Photos by Liz Grove]



At our meeting in the Parish Hall on 12 March 2016 we welcomed a group of men from Willerby Methodist Church. In all about 25 of us enjoyed bacon butties and took part in a discussion on the *Try Praying* initiative.

It was interesting to hear that David Hill, the originator of *Try Praying*, had attended Willerby Methodist in his time in East Yorkshire.

Rex Robinson, who was at work with Linda catering for the Marriage Course being held in the Peter Harrison Room, was granted ten minutes leave to share with us his exciting experience of *Try Praying* in a hospital ward.

We were challenged

- to use the booklet ourselves and see what happens.
- to pass the booklet on to someone else.

The advice on this is "Pray about who to share *Try Praying* with, and expect our Father in heaven to bring someone to mind. It might be someone unexpected. Someone who has been waiting a long time to get to know Jesus."

An excellent time of fellowship was had by all with everyone expressing a desire to have more contact and joint events.

The Willerby Group are having an *Awayday* at the Minster on 11 June and we have been asked to join them for both breakfast and the rest of the day! Details to follow.

The response was encouraging in that it has given us the incentive to contact other Men's Groups in Beverley and District and expand the joint meetings with joint Awaydays/Conferences.

A contact list is being compiled and we will arrange visits as and when we can, to spread our vision of encouraging men to actively *Work for Christ* in the area.

Robert Edwards

THE SEAL'S CHILD

A short story set in the Hebrides

Robbie knew about the island. He knew where puffins flocked on the steep cliffs. He knew the best caves where the sea gurgled green and blue. He knew the long stretch of white sandy beach where he could run and jump and shout. He knew where the seals gathered with their white furry pups. They gazed at him with dark, limpid eyes, partly afraid, like babies stranded on the rocks. Robbie knew where to find flounders and crabs and tiny sand eels. He knew where strangely-shaped shells dwelt in the pools. But ... despite all this, Robbie did not know where his mother was.

At school, alone and often fearful, children taunted him:- "Where's your mammy then?", they'd say, pinching his arms or pulling his hair. Robbie cried:- "She's away -- she's coming soon". But the children continued:- "You live with Old Granny Mairi; you haven't got a mammy!"

Sometimes the boys peered into his face. "Look at his eyes" they'd shout. "Sure, you've got a selkie (seal) for a mammy". At this point, all gave chase and Robbie ran off, feeling little stones and sand on his legs as boys and girls pursued him.

Breathless, angry and tear-stained, Robbie headed back to the croft which stood isolated on a bit of land above the cliffs. Grannie Mairi still worked the place. She dug her peats, gathered seaweed and spun yarn from her few sheep. She dried herring and knitted jumpers for Robbie. She stood at the door in her black shawl, watching as the boy stumbled and ran towards the house. She knew that once again there had been questions about his mother.

She waved and shouted to him:- "Robbie - Robbie baloch heag (little man). Gabhaibh air ur socair! (calm down)." Granny Mairi's first language was Gaelic. Robbie hated it and didn't respond immediately. He sat in a heap in the garden. Finally he rushed at her, hugging her skirt and sobbing:- "Granny, granny, where's my mammy; when is she coming?"

As the old woman stroked his hair, she remembered the day when her daughter Catriona put a crying bundle into her arms saying:- "Will you look after him, mammy, and raise him here on the island?"

She had left soon after on a Loganair flight to Glasgow. Granny never saw or heard from her again.

The neighbours said:- "Mairi-Jean has got her daughter's child and he doesn't even have a name!". Granny Mairi was an elder of the Kirk and she begged the minister to baptise the baby. The boy was christened Robert James, after her late husband. With his father unknown and his mother gone, Robbie knew only his granny and the island. But as he grew, he began to ask about his mother. "She's in Glasgow" said the old woman. "One day she will come".

On winter evenings by the fire, glowing red and hot with the peat, the door shook in the wind, as if a hand had lifted the latch. Robbie jumped up hoping it was her

When spring came Robbie headed down to a part of the beach where the sea splashed against low rocks and tiny crabs scuttled under stones. Here the seal cows gathered with their furry pups crying to each other above the roar of the ocean and the scream of the gulls. Robbie lay flat on his stomach in

the sand, imitating the movement of the seals, using his arms as flippers. One day, a large seal with almost blond fur and whiskers, came very close to him. She uttered a plaintive cry, and when Robbie looked more closely, he saw a motionless pup. It was dead. He cautiously inched forward, making sounds which resembled the young seals. The seal mother came towards him, bleating and then rolling on her back. With great joy, Robbie jumped up, and reaching out, stroked her head. "You can be my mammy" he whispered to the creature. When he set off along the beach he looked back and saw the seal following at a distance. He skipped and ran to the croft. He could not wait to tell Granny Mairi. As he climbed up to the garden, the seal followed.

Granny was sleeping, dreaming of her wedding day and how the guests sang and danced on the way to the kirk. How happy she was on that day and later when her children were born. Catriona was the last. Granny remembered holding the baby tightly when she heard the news that her husband Robert, had been lost at sea. She went down to the beach, wrapping the child in her shawl. It was a wild, stormy day and the sea crashed at her feet. She didn't feel it. She didn't feel how wet she was. Her heart and soul longed to join him. She stood clutching her daughter, bereft, alone and lamenting. Some said to her:- "The seal women have taken your husband!". But Granny Mairi had responded angrily:- "Robbie would not go with them - he loved me" and she wept out loud. It was a time of anguish and only her youngest child, Catriona, brought her comfort.

The old woman awoke with a start as Robbie crashed through the door, shouting :- "Granny, granny -- a seal mammy followed me - look she's in the garden!". Granny Mairi hurried to the open door and there, below, amongst



the vegetables, lay the seal, waiting as if to be invited in. Granny rushed out shaking her apron and waving her arms. The seal slid off down to the beach. Granny Mairi turned angrily to Robbie, grabbing his shoulders and shaking him:- “Don’t you go near the selkies again -- they bring evil to the house -- they --”. She stopped as she caught sight of a piece of paper pinned to the door. Robbie and she looked at the note. It was from Isla at the store and said:- “Mairi-Jean - you have a visitor arriving on the Loganair at three o’clock - Tioraidh (cheers), Isla”.

“It will be your Auntie Maggie” said Granny Mairi, ushering Robbie to the foot of the stairs. “She thinks I haven’t done a baking and will have no cakes to give her,” she laughed, “and I have a cupboard full and more!”. She turned to Robbie:- “Away upstairs to put on your kilt and tie and a clean shirt mind - gres ort (hurry up) now, it’s a good step to the airport.”

For once Robbie responded promptly. He could not wait to see the plane coming in to land and run over to the cockpit to shout to the captain. Granny Mairi called upstairs:- “It may be Hamish McAllister at the controls today, ma wee man, you can sit in the pilot’s seat!”. The old lady had just finished tidying her hair and putting on her coat and hat when the boy appeared, resplendent in his tartan. Hair brushed and immaculate, he stood gazing at her. Granny caught her throat and tears sprang into her eyes:- “Will you look at you -- Ah, Robbie, your grandad would have been so proud -- you will soon sing the psalms as he did -- you will” she broke off as she put on her gloves, and said to herself:- “What if it isn’t Maggie? What if it’s someone else?” Her heart leapt and her whole body trembled. Could it be--?

“Come on Granny -- come on!” shouted the boy, “we must set off.”

The pair walked along the road, looking at the cliffs and the sea pounding below. Sunshine sparkled on the waves and a salty wind blew in their faces as they headed down to the airstrip to meet the visitor. Granny Mairi gazed ahead. She dared not believe what her heart was telling her. Could it really be? In less than an hour she would know. She watched Robbie jumping and skipping ahead of her and she sighed:- “The boy needs his mammy,” she said, “but then it might only be Maggie after all!”

When they arrived at the airstrip, the plane was already on its final approach. It was a brilliantly sunny afternoon. The sea glowed, the air was warm and the white sand glittered. The aircraft swooped down like a hungry seabird, eventually coming to a halt on the beach. A group of people surged forward to meet the passengers. Robbie wanted to do the same particularly when he saw that it was Hamish at the controls. But Granny restrained him. Her heart was pounding and she was afraid to look as people left the aircraft. Hamish shouted across to her:- “Who’s that bonny lad wi’ you, granny?”. “Ciamar a tha sibh?” (How are you?), responded Granny in Gaelic. “Gle math, tapadh leat (Very well, thank you)”. Then turning to Robbie who had arrived at the cockpit window:- “There’s a surprise for you ma wee man!”

Granny saw Auntie Maggie suddenly emerge clutching a heavy bag and laughing:- “Mairi-Jean, Mairi-Jean, Ciamar a tha sibh? I’ve brought cakes - you won’t have made any for sure!”

Granny’s heart sank. She did not even rise to the ‘cake’ banter. Auntie Maggie grabbed

Robbie’s hands. “But for you, Robert James, I’ve got a special surprise - “

Then, the little boy saw her, a woman just emerging, the last passenger to step onto the island, an apparition, blonde and beautiful, in a flowery dress. Auntie Maggie held Robbie’s shoulders and whispered:- “Here’s your mammy, Robbie.”

Robbie screamed and flung himself at her, his tears wetting her dress. “Mammy, mammy, you’ve come!”. Catriona gathered him up as if he was a baby, holding him tightly and rocking him. She wept out loud saying:- “My little man.”

Granny Mairi saw her daughter and her tears flowed. She held Catriona and Robbie, unable to speak, almost unable to breathe. This was the dream she had had so often, the prayer she had repeated at the kirk, the longing of the heart which never gives up hope. This was her daughter returned at last. The three stood, clinging to each other as if on the edge of the earth. A wild wind suddenly whipped up the sand. They were as tiny specks on the immense beach. It was the moment the lost one returned to her home.

Grandmother, daughter and son set off, singing the old songs and laughing, whilst Auntie Maggie followed with the cakes:- “What a Ceilidh (party) it will be tonight!”, she said. When they had gone and the aircraft had left on its return flight, the beach was deserted except for one shape, which emerged from the sea, like a siren. The creature gazed at the three as they disappeared along the road. Her eyes followed them longingly. She opened her mouth and uttered a long piercing cry, which echoed about the rocks and pools and reached Robbie’s ears. He turned momentarily, looking back and there, at the water’s edge, was a seal.

Jeannie McMillan



SAINT LUKE'S WORDS ABOUT JESUS - 3

The songs or Canticles in the first chapters of Luke are unique in the four Gospels. The only thing that can be compared with them is the Prologue to John's Gospel, which is however very different both in style and content as it looks back to what God has been doing since the 'beginning' and culminates with the 'Word made flesh' that is the Christ. The two major canticles in Luke are different from this in many ways but it does contain an important cross-link to them with John's emphasis on his namesake, John the Baptist. It's a strange link, in that the Magnificat (*Lk 1:46-55*) arises from Mary's visit to John the Baptist's mother before he or Jesus is born -- and the Benedictus (*Lk 1:67-79*) is part of the celebration of John's birth. Both are profoundly Jewish songs and are filled with as yet unfulfilled prophecies -- as if they had already happened.

Indeed, the canticles are remarkable in that they make very little direct reference to Jesus at all. An exception can be made for the Nunc Dimittis (*Lk 2:29-32*) which, short as it may be, obviously refers directly to the baby Jesus brought to the Temple in His mother's arms. Otherwise we are left, even two millennia on, with the same magnificent hopes, but not fulfilments. Mary's first statement that "all generations shall call me blessed" is true for a large proportion of Christians, but after that we find a sad division between hope and fulfilment! The proud are still far from being put down and humility and meekness are rarely the means to worldly elevation. Many of the hungry are tragically still remote from being filled with good things and the rich, far from "being sent empty away" are in possession of 95 per cent of worldly wealth.

The Magnificat becomes even more difficult (humanly speaking) when we learn more about Mary. Artists' impressions of the Annunciation usually depict her as a beautiful, young, adult woman. From almost all study of the period and

place, we need to see her instead as a twelve and a half years old girl. This was the normal age for the sort of betrothal described in the gospels. It also implies that Jesus was born when His mother was about 13. In that case, for her to possess the educational level and literary skill to produce a work like the Magnificat would seem to be almost miraculous -- and perhaps they were! Indeed, however much or little we know about its origins, the Magnificat remains a treasured part of the Church's liturgy and music.

The Benedictus has both things in common with and major differences from the Magnificat. For instance Luke describes it as a 'prophecy'. The first part has considerable similarities to the earlier canticle, both beginning with what is largely a description of things that God has done -- things He should be praised for. But then the tone changes, as the text refers to the infant John the Baptist's future mission and its relationship to that of the yet to be born Messiah.

Finally we have the mini-canticle, Nunc Dimittis. In its few verses it combines both prayer and prophecy in the presence of the infant Christ Himself. It remains moving in its demonstration of a faithful old man's sense of fulfilment, which is then echoed by the praises of the equally aged Anna. Indeed the Nunc Dimittis represents an example of the valuing of age in the Jewish/Christian traditions which go back to numerous events in the Old Testament.

Next month we will consider John the Baptist's ministry, the Baptism of Jesus, His temptations and the start of His ministry. In anticipation of this it would be good if you could read chapter three of the Gospel and chapter four as far as verse 14.

Terry Munro



TO MAKE YOU THINK

“GOD..... DO SOMETHING!!”

The Lord is King! who then shall dare
Resist His will, distrust His care?
Or murmur at His wise decrees,
Or doubt His royal promises?
The Lord is King! child of the dust,
The Judge of all the earth is just ...

(Josiah Conder 1789-1855)

This old hymn was still occasionally sung with gusto at the reformed evangelical gatherings of my youth. Though dated to all but the more conservative Christian minds even at that time, the ethos of the hymn did have one overwhelming advantage: it greatly simplified intercessory prayer. Back then every request to the Almighty always included, without any exception whatsoever, the words “if it be thy will.” Whatever happened, you were covered. This in turn bred a kind of fatalistic attitude towards supplicatory prayer: if you didn’t get the answer you wanted, well, it just wasn’t God’s will. You might not understand why, but that didn’t matter. You’d prayed, and that was what counted. You’d understand one day, when Christ either returned or took you to be with him in heaven. Until then, you just had to keep going with “if it be thy will”. Sometimes you’d strike lucky and it would be God’s will. But a lot of the time “prayer meetings” as they were called, were purely mechanical exercises and mind-numbingly boring. However, at least they were straightforward. You rarely had great expectations; therefore you were rarely disappointed.

All that has since changed. Nowadays my own interactions with God usually end in a frustrated shout. I glanced warily at the pile of little blue-green booklets with “trypraying” stamped across the front cover. Sheer curiosity, plus the hype the booklet had received, led me to transfer a copy to my pocket. (Well, there seemed to be plenty to

go around). When I got it home, the booklet enjoined me to read it one day at a time. Naturally I sat down and read it from cover to cover. You need to know what you’re getting into.

“Your Big Issue”. That would appear to be the first thing I was getting into. To my surprise, there were nine blank lines allocated for users to write about it. What, I asked myself, could I safely write there in view of the fact that I was supposed to be giving the booklet away in a week’s time? I wondered whether the author(s) had thought about this. It couldn’t be anything too personal if it was going to be read by somebody else. Might get around. Would need to be something a tad more speculative. Something more abstract. Above all, something safe.

How about “My Big Issue With Intercessory Prayer”? Actually, I have three issues with intercessory prayer. i) If God is sovereign, won’t he do what he wants anyway? Did Josiah Conder have a point? I was once told about a prayer meeting – not in Beverley - where one person was praying out loud while someone else was frantically muttering “No, Lord! No, Lord!” under their breath. What was the Almighty supposed to do, other than ignore them both and decide for himself?
ii) God knows what’s on my mind – why do I have to keep telling him?
iii) My prayers are so repetitive ...

For a long time I have had by my laptop a note about a young Christian mother in Pakistan who has been languishing in prison since 2009 on trumped up charges of insulting the name of Muhammad. She was sentenced to death, but the sentence was suspended by the Pakistan Supreme Court pending an appeal process. The Supreme Court has

now agreed to hear her appeal, but the date and the outcome are uncertain. During her seven years of confinement she has developed serious medical problems and is being housed in solitary confinement in a windowless cell – “for her own protection”. She has – unsurprisingly – become very despondent. Even if she is eventually released, there is a very real possibility that she will be murdered on the outside. She has received death threats, as have her husband and children who are in hiding. Whenever I power up my laptop I try and remember to remind God about her. It’s the same every time, and goes something like this: “Now listen up, God - you know the situation. I’ve signed the petitions, sent messages and emails to the authorities as requested. Now it’s down to you – so just **get on with it!** (Please.)” You can see straightaway how this situation – and my prayer, if it can be called that – relates to each of the three issues concerning intercessory prayer raised in the previous paragraph.

Intercessory prayer has some things in common with playing the lottery. There’s always the chance you might hit the jackpot (experience a miracle); more often you’ll pick up small wins along the way (receive unexpected but gratifying answers to less spectacular prayers). A lot of the time intercessory prayer will, like playing the lottery, be stultifyingly repetitive and frustrating. But at least you’re in with a chance.

One of the sections in the little blue-green booklet deals with persistence in prayer. But the heading chosen is not Persistence or Perseverance as you might expect. It’s “Nerve”. It features the parable of the guy who comes banging on his neighbour’s door at midnight demanding bread for unexpected visitors and is told from the bedroom window to take a hike. But the banging persists, and in the end the householder staggers down to the kitchen, rummages around in the freezer, and finally extracting a Warburton’s Toastie White, flings it out into the night - “Defrost it yourself!” - before slamming the door shut. Presumably Jesus was trying to explain that this is what God is not like. Yet the parable clearly praises persistence. Sheer “nerve” in fact. The question is, *Why?* Why can’t you simply leave a request on file with God, as it were, and trust him to deal with it in his own time and in his own way? If the Almighty isn’t worn down by the continual nagging that he seems to want, I certainly am!

Barbara Gilman

FROM THE ARCHIVES

In the Beverley Minster Magazine for April 1949 Reverend Collwyn Hargreaves sent out a plea to his parishioners for help in 'keeping things going'. Just as our vicar last month made a similar request and under the same sort of circumstances. Rev. Hargreaves had only a Reader, Rev. F. B. Bates to help him serve the parish. Tickton had been taken care of by the Vicar of Hornsea for morning service and the evening service Captain W.H. Hughes from the Victoria Barracks was Lay Reader. Beverley did not have such a large population in 1949, in fact the figures quoted in 'Victoria County History' are around 19,000 and today the population is upwards of 29,000 and growing. If you stand with your back to the church door at Woodmansey and look out over the fields towards Beverley, there is to be a vast number of houses built in the next few years which shows how badly the church needs help to serve and welcome the new families in the area. Whilst looking in the Victoria County History I couldn't help note how small the population of Beverley was in 1801 at just 12,000 people.

Rev. Hargreaves has this to say, writing from the Minster Vicarage on 14th March, 1949:-
I am convinced that Christian life and fellowship are being weakened through inactivity. There is always the loyal few who spend the greater part of their spare time in keeping things going. But there are far too many others who, for one reason or another, are unable to say what they are doing to pull their weight. I am not suggesting that they are shirking their responsibilities. It has probably never occurred to them that there ought to be something definite that they undertake as fellow workers together with Christ.

I have worked in Parishes for twenty-five years. Hundreds of times I have been driven almost to distraction trying to find people who will undertake work of the greatest importance and value. But I cannot call to mind a single instance of being stopped by someone who said, "Here am I. Tell me. What can I do?" I do not blame anyone for this. I believe it is the result of the impression that the Christian

Church is established to serve us, and not we the Church.

It often happens that when one makes statements in writing those who read them get a different impression from that which was intended. What I have written to you is not in any sense a complaint, or a reflection upon the loyalty and sincerity of any one of you. It is an attempt to take you into my confidence; to give you a better understanding of our needs and problems; and to encourage you to see that there is a place of great usefulness for you, if you have not already found it.

As was relevant in 1949, so it is today, the need to pray for a solution and for help:-

I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it.

John 14:13-14

Sally George



CURATE'S CORNER

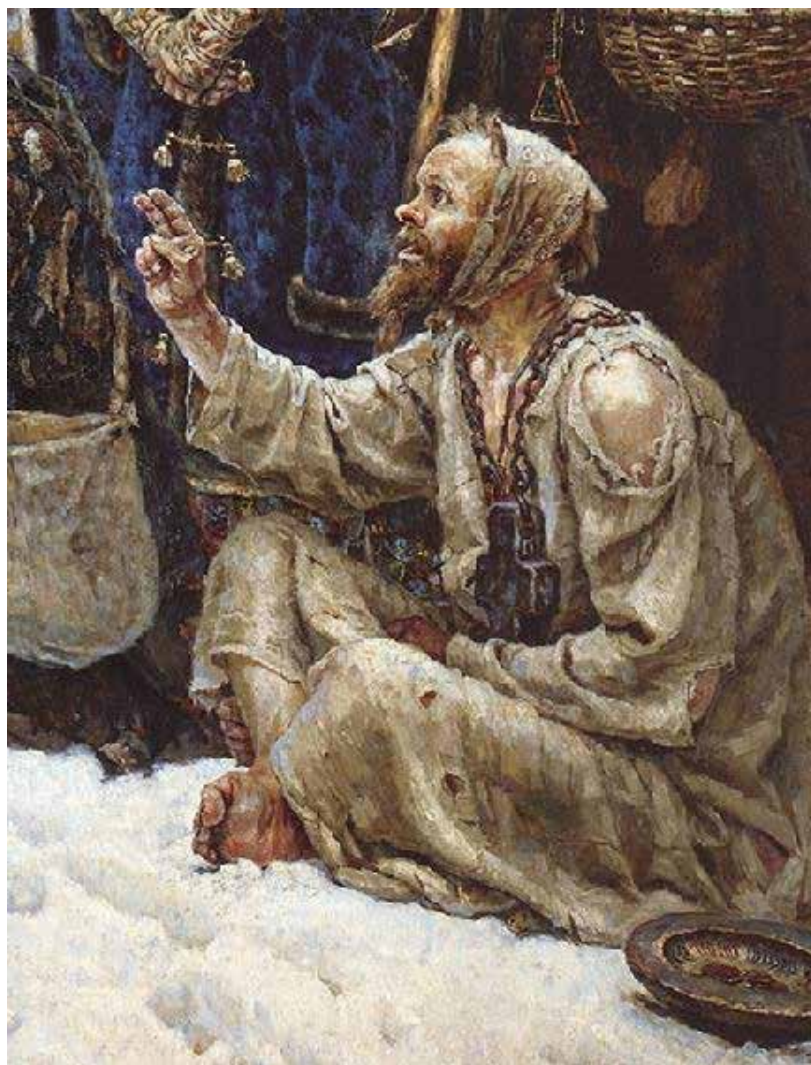
GARETH ATHA

April is here, and traditionally it will start with April Fool's Day, an opportunity to have some light hearted fun playing pranks on one another. On one memorable April Fool's day back when I was a student, my flatmates and I decided that we would go all out and plan some serious pranks for one another: getting spare keys for bedrooms and moving all the furniture around, or even taking it onto the grass outside the halls of residence. They also included taking all the light bulbs out of the room (which they did to me), and even putting a tea bag in a shower head, so that when you showered, you could smell tea but couldn't find where it was coming from (I was proud of that one; accomplished with a little help from a friend who was studying food science). All of these were light hearted and taken in very good part, and we all had a good laugh about them in the student bar that night.

Sometimes it can be fun to "play the fool", and some well timed and thoughtful foolery can go down well. Often however we have a much more negative idea of "fool" or "foolhardiness". We use the term as an insult to describe somebody who has done something silly or stupid, or dangerous. It's a very old insult, which is even mentioned in the Bible. Jesus himself says in Matthew 5:22 that there are dire consequences to calling somebody a fool. Perhaps because of this negative view of foolishness, it is an aspect of our discipleship which we tend to overlook. Yet there is within Christianity the tradition of the holy fool, those characters who deliberately flout all of society's expectations in order to present a religious point. St Francis was one such person, who chose radical poverty to in order to become closer to Christ. Another would be Julian of Norwich, who effectively walled herself up as an anchorite and gave people pastoral care through a small opening in the wall of her cell. There is also a saint known as Abba Simeon. After spending many years in the desert, he entered the city of Emesa (now the ruined city of Homs in Syria) and began to do "foolish" things like extinguishing all the candles in the church and throwing dried nuts at passers by. Despite his foolish behaviour however, he is said to have been able to cure people of various ailments.

Simeon and other holy fools have sought to communicate the love of God in surprising ways, and throughout Christian history they have expressed the Christian message and the love of God in new and challenging ways. Many people would also argue that Jesus was the holy fool par excellence, he chose a radical method of communicating the love of the Father, which went against the mainstream. Jesus' ministry was all the more effective precisely because it didn't fit into anybody's preconceived ideas of what it should be like.

Those training for ordained ministry are taught about various models of ministry, which have their basis either in Christ's actions or those of his followers. These include wounded healer, the shepherd, and



the holy fool. We are taught how to incorporate aspects of all of these models into our ministry, because they are all valuable and all have a valid place in ministry and spirituality.

As we go through April, let us learn from these holy fools, and perhaps become a little bit more foolish ourselves. I'm not sure throwing dried nuts at passers by on Highgate would be a good idea, but we do believe in an unconventional God, who does surprising things and always seeks to communicate His love to us in new and fresh ways. Let us learn to express our love for him to those around us in new ways, in ways which might surprise. I think we should also not be afraid to be a little bit scary sometimes as well. Salvation is a scary thing; to know that someone, even God, loves us enough to want such a personal and intimate relationship with us that He would give of himself to achieve this relationship, can frighten us. If our love for the world scares us a little bit, then it's no bad thing. I encourage you to embrace the foolish this month and see how God uses that to communicate His love. You never know, we ourselves might be the ones he is trying to communicate His love to.

Have a happy, blessed, and foolish month.

THE REGISTERS OF BEVERLEY MINSTER

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Baptisms

At Beverley Minster
28 February 2016

Phoebe Hope Dearing

Weddings

At Beverley Minster
20 February 2016
20 February 2016

Matthew James Davison and Elena Kryzova
Mark Campbell Robinson and Charlotte Marie Tuthill

Funerals

28 February 2016
03 March 2016
09 March 2016

Jack Taylor (87)
Shirley Tattersall (80)
John Michael (Mike) Starr (88)

MINSTER MAINTENANCE



THE MINSTER WELL

Recently John Dell, Head Virger, asked Paul and myself if we could raise the Minster Well lid for him before he took retirement. This we kindly carried out and whilst the lid of the well was opened we plumbed the depth of the water. It was 29 inches deep, eight inches more than last registered in 2012. The overall condition of the well was inspected and is in a very solid state for its age.

Steve Rial & Paul Hawkins

**Beverley
Minster**
MAGAZINE



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