

# **St Mary the Virgin**

**The Anglican Church  
serving the Parish of Beddington**

## **Parish Magazine**



**July/August, 2021  
Fifty-fourth edition**



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# Worship at church



**St Mary's Church is now open for a said Sunday 9:30 Eucharist and some weekday services in tandem with our online services.**

**Social distancing regulations in places of worship are still in operation. This means space is limited so you should book in advance for our Sunday service either by emailing [930@stmarysbeddington.org.uk](mailto:930@stmarysbeddington.org.uk) or calling and leaving a message on 07947 736372. Face coverings (masks not visors/shields) must be worn in church.**

# Worship at home

**We are continuing to publish audio and text worship resources for use at home. We invite you to use the Service of the Word at 9:30 am on Sunday You are welcome to pray these services at whatever time suits you best. Morning prayer via Zoom is also available each Wednesday.**



## *The Reverend Andrew Fenby*

A couple of years ago I set myself the task of working my way through the Dickens novels I hadn't yet read, which was, basically, all of them— apart from the small part of *A Tale of Two Cities* I'd got through as a youth before giving up. It took a good few months, was an education and a joy; and I don't think I did what I often do, which is to start unconsciously imitating whatever I'm reading at any particular time, in my sermons. I do read quite a few boring books, which goes a long way to explaining my preaching. Anyway, I don't remember any 'lawks' or 'Gawd bless ya Nell' sneaking into the pulpit when I was devouring Dickens, but if it did, I'm sorry.

Those books had all the things you might expect: humour, pathos, sentimentality, purple prose, puns, parody and literary pyrotechnics (as well as lists and alliteration). And, which I really wasn't expecting, a number of lesbian and gay characters. Yes, seriously. Now, being a good Victorian, there is no actual sex in Dickens- for any character- but then get down to the nitty gritty and sex is not really what being LGBT is all about, any more than those thousands of people who have come to St Mary's chocolate box to be married only ever cared about their wedding night, or in the post-Victorian world language of the Common Worship marriage service 'the delight and tenderness of sexual union'. There's more involved than whatever happens or doesn't between the sheets. But back to Dickens. The LGB characters are there: you may not want them to be, you may have read the tales yourself and never noticed them, but there they are if you but have the eyes to see. I won't list them here, but you can always send me a postcard with the request if you really want to (or easier still Google it). And you will discover, they are there, if you have eyes to see.

So it is with so many things that are always there: we never see them, we never notice. That's just how we are, it's how our brains work. And it's doesn't have to be a problem: after all, it's why, (in our own eyes at least) we've been, as a species, so successful that we can plausibly claim to rule the world. All because we only see what it's useful to see, what we expect to see— and ignore the rest.

We don't see the world as it is: we build up an idea of what the world should be like and then we see that. We open our eyes every morning and, in a very real sense, see what we expect to see. What we see and what is actually there are very often not the same thing. Endless psychological experiments have shown this: I can bore you with them as well after I've finished telling you about the barber in Martin Chuzzlewit: just put it on another postcard.

However, rather than some dry social science lab stuff, I know you'd rather hear about my dog. He's a shiba inu, so people tend to notice him; he's a dog not a bitch, though I sometimes wonder; and because his collar is pink, everyone we meet calls him 'she'. Even before he had his operation and the anatomical evidence was more plentiful that it is now. Even when I pointedly call him 'good boy' in their hearing. Still a she. We see what we expect to see. We know that pink is for girls, so when we see pink, we expect a girl. Even when it's clearly a male dog.

It's very, very difficult for us to step outside our brains, and to be fair it might be scary and a bit messy if we could. It's difficult. And if for hundreds of years we've built up a culture of expecting and ignoring, if we teach it and preach it, if we reinforce it every day from our birth on, it's more difficult yet.

So, if you are reading your Bible and chance upon King David's lament for Saul and his son Jonathan:

*I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan; greatly beloved were you to me; your love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women.*

well, probably ninety-five per cent of readers will think something like 'what close friends they were.'

That's what the world's like, so they're seeing what they expect to see. But the remaining five per cent will read it and know something quite different is going on, because their particular experience of the world— and so what they expect to see of the world— is different. Who knows what the exact nature of David and Jonathan's relationship was, whether it had a physical expression or not? We don't know, we can't know. And we really don't need to, because we know that relationship was loving, and it was wonderful and, for David at least, far surpassed the love he experienced with any of his many wives.

The LGBT characters are there in the Bible: you may not want them to be, you may have listened to the Scriptures read and never noticed them, but there they are if you but have ears to hear and eyes to see. If we sidestep our habitual obsessing about sex, they suddenly emerge from the blur: Ruth and Naomi, David and Jonathan, The Centurion's Servant, the young man at Gethsemane, the Ethiopian eunuch.

We have all been taught all sort of things about the Bible: what it means, what it doesn't mean, what it says and doesn't say. But nobody has a monopoly of truth and nobody has a monopoly of the Bible. The Bible is and always has been open to many, various and changing interpretations. In the Scriptures people have found support for the status quo, the superiority of men over women, the institutions of slavery and apartheid, the divine right of kings and the duty to obey authority however unjust, the sanctity of marriage and the family. Those very same scriptures have given hope, succour, comfort and determination to oppressed people throughout history, to women, to African American slaves, the Latin American poor, the Dalits of India, LGBT people everywhere. And to other people who live largely quiet lives, who find themselves bowed down before the trials and sorrows that inevitably mar the of our days.

The Bible has always been open to many various and changing interpretations because the Bible tells us about God, but is not God. You can't trap the truth of God in paper pages. God is love, not a book. The Bible has always been open to many various and changing interpretations and God is more than capable of embracing them all. God is love, not a book.

*Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.*

The Scriptures are a big collection of books. It takes even longer to read them than all of Dickens' novels. Put them together in the one binding, and the Bible is a big book. And there is room in there for *everyone* .

# Two exhibitions to see this summer

We've been encouraged to visit central London this summer. Both to support the many businesses which have been hurt by Covid, but also to visit the many London sights and events which are now much quieter as fewer overseas tourists visit the UK. Two exhibitions worth visiting are the Thomas Becket exhibition at the British Museum and Epic Iran at the Victoria and Albert Museum.

## Thomas Becket – Murder and the Making of a Saint

On 29 December 1170 Thomas Becket was hacked down in Canterbury Cathedral by four knights. Becket was one of the most powerful figures of his time, serving as royal chancellor and later as Archbishop of Canterbury. He wasn't particularly devout or saintly, but once in his new position he vigorously defended the interests and rights of the Church. Initially a close friend of Henry II, the two men became engaged in a bitter dispute that culminated in his violent death. His murder was considered a scandalous act of sacrilege and, within days, miracles were being attributed to Becket, many connected to the healing power of his spilt blood, which led to his canonisation as a saint by the Pope. Devotion to him quickly became widespread throughout Europe.



This special exhibition (until 22 August) presents Becket's journey from a merchant's son in Cheapside to an archbishop, and from a revered saint in death to a 'traitor' in the eyes of Henry VIII more than 350 years later.

This is a great opportunity to see wonderful artefacts associated with Becket; from illuminated manuscripts, some of which include eyewitness accounts of the murder, to jewellery and sacred reliquaries (one containing bits of his skull). The exhibition features objects from the BM collection as well as loans from UK and European sources. Chief of them is the stunning stained glass Miracle Window from Canterbury Cathedral, which glows in fantastical blues and assorted greens and yellows and purples. This may be the first time in 800 years that it's been possible to see the lively detail of the stories in the glass this close up.

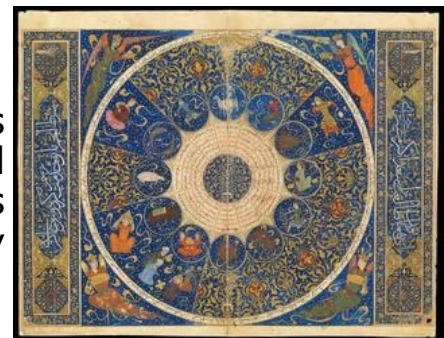


There are also objects he owned – Thomas's own seal and an illuminated gospel he commissioned. There are treasures from his time including a twelfth-century mitre, thought to be one he left in France in his exile, and an alabaster panel showing his consecration, with traces of its vivid colours. But it's not just static objects; there's also an effective dramatic rendering of the murder projected on the wall.

<https://www.britishmuseum.org/exhibitions/thomas-becket-murder-and-making-saint>

## Epic Iran

This major exhibition at the V&A explores 5,000 years of Iranian art, design and culture, bringing together over 300 objects from ancient, Islamic and contemporary Iran.



It shines a light on one of the greatest historic civilisations, its journey into the 21st century and its monumental artistic achievements, which remain unknown to many. Epic Iran explores this civilisation and the country's journey into the 21st century, from the earliest known writing – signalling the beginning of history in Iran – through to the 1979 Revolution and beyond.

John Curtis, co-curator, observes: "There's a big appetite in this country for knowing more about Iran. It's true that on the political stage Iran has an unfortunate reputation, but everyone who has been to the country will know people are warm and friendly and anxious to make contacts with the West. People want to see the positive side of Iran".

And what this exhibition does is tell the story of the country over time. It features ten sections set within an immersive design that will transport visitors to a city, complete with gatehouse, gardens, palace, and library. It is made up of 10 sections, including The Persian Empire spanning the Achaemenid period, Change of Faith which focuses on the role of Islam in Iranian culture, and Literary Excellence looking at Persian poetry. Bridging the 1940s to the present day, the final section Modern and Contemporary Iran covers a period of dynamic social and political change in Iran.

John Curtis again: It's only quite recently that people are recognising that Iran has got this wonderful, rich artistic tradition,

wonderful cultural heritage stretching back many, many, many years,... What you see here gives everybody a rounded picture of the great civilisations of Iran."

To see this blockbuster show until 12 September go to

<https://www.vam.ac.uk/exhibitions/epic-iran>

Gareth Gregory

### **Sunday Club**

**Sophie and Claire will be running Sunday Club during July and August, either in the Centre or outside. They will be following the regulations set out for places of worship and the Centre windows will be opened for free flow of air.**

**It is good to see the children back in church again. As before, they will come into church for their blessings and communion and return to the Centre.**

### **St Mary's Centre**

We are hoping to hire St Mary's Centre out from September, 2021 following the social distancing rules set out by the government and the diocese.

For further details please contact:

[1945judypage@gmail.com](mailto:1945judypage@gmail.com)



# Children's Page



## A RULE FOR LIFE St. Benedict - 11<sup>th</sup> July

From the earliest Christian times there have always been those who felt a special call to give their whole lives to God. Gradually these people came together with others who wanted to live in the same way. 500 years after Christ died, St Benedict set down a series of rules for these communities of monks and nuns.

St Benedict called his Rule one for beginners, a 'school of the Lord's service' where the student is 'to set nothing before the love of Christ'. The Rule sets out a life of prayer, study and work, living together as a community.

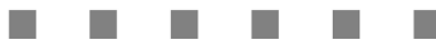
Many still live by the Rule of St Benedict today - in the Church of England and in the Roman Catholic Church. They keep the same Rule and Office (seven times for prayer each day) that St Benedict set down some 15 centuries ago.



## B- QUIZ

All the answers to this Bible quiz begin with the letter B - can you find them all?

1. He was released instead of Jesus (Matthew, chapter 27)
2. When Jesus fed the 5,000, the loaves were made of this (John 6)
3. The youngest son of Jacob (Genesis 35)
4. A city where they built a tall tower (Genesis 11)
5. How Saul escaped from Damascus (Acts 9)
6. A village near Jerusalem where Simon lived (Matthew 14)
7. David ordered his men to stay away until these has grown again (2 Samuel 10)
8. Joseph and Mary travelled there because of a census (Luke 2)
9. God created them on the fifth day (Genesis 1)
10. Ruth's 2<sup>nd</sup> husband (Ruth 4)



### Why do bees have sticky hair?

Because they have honey combs.

### Why do bees hum?

Because they don't know the words.



ANSWERS: 1.Barabbas 2.barley 3.Benjamin 4.Babel (or Babylon) 5.in a basket 6.Bethany 7.beards 8.Bethlehem 9.birds 10.Boaz

# National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF)



## Heritage Fund Activity Plan Coordinator

Dr Philippa Mesiano has now been appointed to this job and started on Monday, June 28th. This appointment is in line with the NLHF and will be funded under our lottery grant.

Philippa has been Programme Administrator at Canterbury Christ Church University and has had experience with NLHF projects at Canterbury Cathedral including Heritage Open Days and Graffiti tours at the cathedral. We are very excited about working with Philippa over the next 24 months and welcome her.



## The Tower Coffee Shop

**Open Monday to Friday from 8.30am to 3.00pm.**

**Also serving ice creams and cold drinks in the summer**

*The Coffee Shop is one of the first community activities set up with help from our lottery fund*



## Extracts from the Inclusive Church Newsletter June 2021

### IC Stories—Mark Bishop

I guess I became aware of Inclusive Church when our Parochial Church Council agreed to apply for membership, quite a few years ago. We had always tried to be inclusive and welcoming, and Inclusive Church's principles seemed to line up with what we sought to do. I didn't realise just how much this might mean to others, especially those motivated to join us because of that attitude, until individuals began to tell me about it. I chaired a group informally called 'Mind the Gap', which looked for gaps between our church community and those who felt outside it, and tried to find ways of bridging them. That was when I came across the IC series of books, with the individual stories they told about real people who wanted to join in but were prevented from doing so by discrimination and bias, whether intended or merely tolerated by a failure to do anything about it.

It was just over two years ago that Dianna Gwilliams (IC's Chair, whom I knew in several other contexts) asked me if I would be prepared to take on the role of Treasurer for IC, as the previous incumbent was standing down after a number of years. That was when I began to get a clearer view of the work that Inclusive Church does, in a variety of contexts, both to educate those who do not appreciate the extent and effect of existing discrimination and exclusion, and to support those who suffer from it. It has been quite a steep learning curve, and I still feel that the other trustees know much more than I do, often from first-hand experience.

We are enormously blessed, as an organisation, by the energy and dedication of those we work with, but also by the generous and regular giving of many individuals and a number of churches. We could not manage without this support. But I soon discovered that the actual cost of what we do (and we want to do so much more) substantially exceeds this regular income. We have relied on other income, from events for example, which has dried up in the last 18 months, but in truth, we have been living off reserves for several years.

My message to those who read this is: please pray for the work Inclusive Church is trying to do. Join in, and encourage others to do so, to the extent that you can. If you feel also moved to support the work financially, that too would be wonderful, but it is not perhaps the most important thing – however strange it may be for a treasurer to say so!

*Mike Bishop is an IC Trustee and Hon. Treasurer.*

# Update on General Synod Elections



The General Synod elections are just around the corner, with seats for clergy and laity up for election in every diocese. Nominations are due to open around **30th July**, close on **8th September** and voting opening from **17th September**. We are working in partnership with a range of other inclusive church groups to organise for these elections, making sure that a strong inclusive voice is present in the Church of England's national assembly.

So what's happening?

1) We are organising candidates, aiming to have inclusive clergy and laity standing in every diocese. We still need more candidates to come forward, so if this is something you might be interested in please contact [synod@inclusive-church.org](mailto:synod@inclusive-church.org). Without inclusive candidates on the ballot paper we can't get inclusive candidates elected, so we would be delighted to hear from you.

2) We are compiling a list of Supported Candidates who are happy to sign up to this statement:

"I am committed to equality for everyone, at all levels and roles within the church, regardless of gender, disability, ethnicity, socio-economic status, mental health or sexuality."

The Supported Candidates list will be distributed through our partner organisations and posted online at [www.inclusive-synod.org](http://www.inclusive-synod.org) shortly before voting opens. This will signpost voters who care about inclusion to candidates who share their values. If you are standing in the election and would like to be a Supported Candidate, please email [synod@inclusive-church.org](mailto:synod@inclusive-church.org) and say you support the statement. 3) We are supporting inclusive candidates. There is information on the website [www.inclusive-synod.org](http://www.inclusive-synod.org) and anyone opting to become a Supported Candidate can also receive a copy of the Candidates Guide to the elections by contacting Nic Tall at [synod@inclusive-church.org](mailto:synod@inclusive-church.org).

These elections will set the debate in the Church of England for the next five years, so please consider how you can support them. Whether it's standing for election, encouraging someone to stand, making sure you use your vote or praying for all involved, this outcome of these elections will make a significant difference in the life of the church.

*This update was written by Nic Tall, the General Synod Elections Co-ordinator for Inclusive Church and partners. You can contact him on [synod@inclusive-church.org](mailto:synod@inclusive-church.org)*

## Events

**Every Wednesday**, between 6 and 6.30pm, One Body One Faith are hosting an online space for prayer called 'Rhythm'. Find out more on their website.

MOSAIC are hosting a conference on the **26th June** between 10am and 12pm. Keynote speakers are the Bishop of Liverpool, Paul Bayes, and the Dean of Manchester, Rogers Govenden. Further details and booking information will be advised in the near future. Keep an eye on [MOSAIC's website](http://mosaic.org.uk).

On the **21st July**, Progressive Christianity Network (PCN) are hosting a question time with John Dominic Crossan. Questions need to be submitted before the 4th July.

From the **29th to the 31st October**, Holyrood House are offering a residential LGBTQI+ retreat led by Urs Mattmann, a psychotherapist and Christian author on spirituality. You can find out more on the Holyrood House website.





## St. Clare of Assisi

### Feast Day August 11

Born on July 16, 1194, to Favorino Sciffi, Count of Sasso-Rosso and his wife Ortolana. Traditional accounts say that Clare's father was a wealthy representative of an ancient Roman family, who owned a large palace in Assisi and a castle on the slope of Mount Subiaso. As a young girl, Clare dedicated herself to prayer. At 18 years of age, she heard St. Francis of Assisi preach during a Lenten service in the church of San Giorgio and asked him to help her live according to the Gospel. On Palm Sunday in 1212, Clare left her father's home and went to the chapel of the Porziuncula to meet with Francis. While there, Clare's hair was cut off and she was given a plain robe and veil in exchange for her rich gown.

Clare joined the convent of the Benedictine nuns of San Paulo, near Bastia, under Francis' orders. When her father found her and attempted to force her back into his home, she refused and professed that she would have no other husband than Jesus Christ. In order to give her the greater solitude she desired, Francis sent Clare to Sant' Angelo in Panzo, another Benedictine nuns monastery. Her younger sister Catarina (later took the name of Agnes) joined her. Other women joined them, and they became known as the "Poor Ladies of San Damiano". They lived a simple life of poverty, austerity and seclusion from the world, according to a Rule which Francis gave them as a Second Order.

San Damiano became the centre of Clare's new religious order. San Damiano was long thought to be the first house of this order, however, recent scholarship strongly suggests that San Damiano actually joined an existing network of women's religious houses organized by Hugolino (who later became Pope Gregory IX). Hugolino wanted San Damiano as part of the order he founded because of the prestige of Clare's monastery. San Damiano emerged as the most important house in the order, and Clare became its undisputed leader. By 1263, just ten years after Clare's death, the order had become known as the Order of St. Clare.

Clare fought attempts by prelates to impose the Rule of St. Benedict on her order. She preferred the stricter rule of St. Francis and sought to imitate Francis' virtues and way of life so much so that she was sometimes titled *alter Franciscus*, another Francis.

Unlike the Franciscan friars, whose members moved around the country to preach, Saint Clare's sisters lived in enclosure, since an itinerant life was hardly conceivable at the time for women. Their life consisted of manual labour and prayer. The nuns went barefoot, slept on the ground, ate no meat and observed almost complete silence.

Two days prior to her death, the Pope confirmed that Clare's rule would serve as the governing rule for her Order. Her remains were interred at the chapel of *San Giorgio* while a church to hold her remains was constructed. At her funeral, Pope Innocent IV insisted the friars perform the Office for the Virgin Saints as opposed to the Office for the Dead. This move by Pope Innocent ensured that the canonization process for Clare would begin shortly after her funeral. Pope Innocent was cautioned by multiple advisors against having the Office for the Virgin Saints performed at Clare's funeral. The most vocal of these advisors was Cardinal Raynaldus who would later become Pope Alexander IV, who in two years time would canonize Clare. At Pope Innocent's request the canonization process for Clare began immediately. While the whole process took two years, the examination of Clare's miracles took just six days. On 26 September 1255, Pope Alexander IV canonized Clare as Saint Clare of Assisi.

## The holiday maker's hymn

Many of us are thinking about, and booking, holidays again. But to where can we travel safely and not have to quarantine when we return; do we have official proof of a double-vaccination; must we wear a face covering on our journey; and keep to social distancing all the time? These are questions we all ask in 2021. But here's a poem written by Nigel Beeton many years ago when life and holidays seemed less complicated.

Let us with a gladsome mind	Though our money goes not far,
Pack our bags for a great time!	Neither does our old hire car,
Holidays once more are here!	Yet we can't be very sad,
So our minds are full of cheer!	It's a change, and that's not bad!
Goodbye work and hello sun!	Two weeks pass in blinding flash,
Goodbye drudge and hello fun!	On our homeward way we dash,
Tell workmates they're in our thoughts	And, with less than gladsome mind,
As we go about our sports!	Get back to the daily grind.

To the airport for our flights,  
Through a sea of red brake lights,  
At check-in we join a crowd  
Held up by volcanic cloud!

Nigel Beeton

But, at last we get away  
For our longed-for holiday.  
Flop down in our hotel room,  
(Hope the builders finish soon).



## Strawberries and Cream

### **You will need:**

175 grams of unsalted butter  
175 grams caster sugar  
2 large eggs  
175 grams of self raising flour  
100 grams of ground almonds  
1 teaspoon of vanilla essence  
300 grams of chopped strawberries (3 to decorate top)  
1 small jar of clotted cream  
Icing sugar



Preheat oven to 180 C/ 160 C fan and grease and line a 20 cm round cake tin.

Cream together the butter and sugar until light and fluffy.

Add the eggs, one at a time, beating well. Add the vanilla.

Sift in the flour, and add the ground almonds. Stir till the mixture is thick

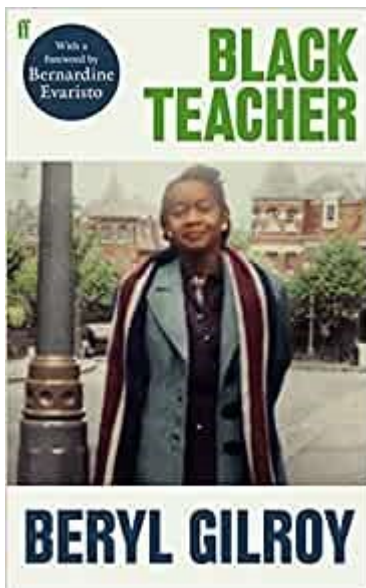
Fold in the fruit and spoon into the prepared tin, levelling the top

Bake for 60 minutes, or until a skewer, inserted in the middle, comes out clean and the top of the cake is golden.

Leave to cool in the tin for 10 minutes before transferring to a wire rack to cool completely.

Slice in half and add clotted cream before sandwiching together.

Dust with icing sugar and place the three whole strawberries on top



## Book Review

Black Teacher by Beryl Gilroy

Black Teacher, her memoir, is a rediscovered classic. It is not only a rare first-hand insight into the Windrush generation but shows the focus and ambition that ensured success against the odds.

In 1952 Beryl Gilroy moved from British Guyana to London. She found life was not what she had expected. She was unable to obtain a teaching post for many years and experienced a lot of bigotry in and out of the classroom. In 1968 she was appointed as a deputy head teacher and the following year she became the first Black woman head teacher in the London Borough of Camden.

Beryl Agatha Gilroy was a teacher, novelist, ethno psychotherapist and poet. She was one of Britain's most significant post-war Caribbean migrants.

This book will be available from July 1<sup>st</sup>. It is a significant 'must read' and tells us first-hand of the prejudices encountered by immigrants to Britain since the 1950s.

Mine's on order.

## **SUBMISSION GUIDELINE**

We welcome works from all areas of the community. However, we will not accept any items which may be construed as having an indecent or abusive nature. The copyright of each individual item remains with the author. Reproduction of their work is strictly prohibited without the written consent of the authors themselves. We will only use chosen works for the magazine, either in paper or electronic form.

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**Monday's at St Mary's**

**Join us on Zoom every Monday (except Bank Holidays)**

**Meeting ID: 892 4450 0961**

**Passcode: 730931**

**For more info call Linda Wood on 07928545960**

**Submission date for the September/October issue of the magazine is August 18th**