

Seek



April 2022

The Church and Parish of St Mark Cambridge

www.stmarksnewnham.org

A Letter from Tom Buchanan



O God, from whom all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works do proceed: Give unto thy servants that peace which the world cannot give; that both our hearts may be set to obey thy commandments, and

also that by thee we being defended from the fear of our enemies may pass our time in rest and quietness; through the merits of Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.

One of the many pleasures of living in Cambridge is the availability of spectacular choirs singing Evensong on our doorsteps. Sunday evening this week found me in Downing, trying to find peace in a world that feels like it's going mad. A very good choir and the rhythm of service that has been sung nightly since the Reformation provided an important anchor in a world that seems to have become more unsafe and harder to read than it has been for a long while – certainly in my lifetime.

What struck me, beyond the talent of yet another group of young choristers in Cambridge, was the second collect, for peace, which I have included at the top of this letter. You will notice that this collect isn't a prayer for an end to conflict, that swords be turned to ploughshares, and it isn't a prayer for physical safety either. It is a prayer for inner peace for us – that "we, being defended from the fear of our enemies, may pass our time in rest and quietness."

The events in Ukraine are heart-breaking and are affecting most if not all of us emotionally. And they come on the back of two years of a pandemic that in itself landed upon a country that had been through the emotional turbulence of the Brexit campaign. It seems a long, long time since we ever experienced normality, and for many of us this is extremely upsetting. Many of us have become accustomed to a latent sense of fear – fear of conflict, fear of our enemies, fear for our own health and that of our loved ones, fear for the future. And if we're not careful it is possible for us to be engulfed by it.

For me, the solution to this comes from the mundane. I think routines are important – both for our spiritual and our mental wellbeing. I have long been interested in Benedictine spirituality and have

even been known to spend a week or so in near silence with the brothers at Alton Abbey in Hampshire. St Benedict knew a thing or two about routines. The life of a Benedictine community is grounded on the daily offices. From the very start of the day to its end, each and every day is punctuated by a set pattern of services. Whatever is going on in the life of the monastery, or indeed in an individual monk's life, the services continue, and everyone continues to participate. The same pattern of services – the same rhythm has continued, unbroken through world wars, plagues, and catastrophic natural disasters.



Now you'll be relieved to hear that I'm not advocating that we all withdraw from the world, take vows of chastity and poverty become part of a Benedictine community! But I do think there's something about routine, a pattern of daily behaviour

that becomes normalised in our lives, whatever is going on in the outside world, that can become a powerful aid to finding "that peace which the world cannot give."

For me that routine is morning prayer, conducted via zoom with two friends in different parts of the country. Every morning we come together for twenty minutes to recite the psalms and read the scriptures, using a form of worship that is supremely comforting, partly because of the sheer beauty of the language and partly because it is a liturgy that has been recited, largely unchanged, for hundreds of years.

For us, Morning Prayer is not usually a time of great spiritual revelation or a time of extended intercessory prayer for the needs of the world, and if I'm honest I am sometimes conscious that I am just "going through the motions." But it's the sheer routine of it that reminds me of an important fact. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever (to quote the author of the letter to the Hebrews - and the text you read on the door into the Narthex every time you come to church). Our faith in him and his love for us gives us the solid base we need – the security and the confidence with which to view the events of the world and to know that whatever may lie around the corner, we are held firmly in his hands.

Tom Buchanan

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The Diocese of Gombe : Charity of the Month

This month we focus on the Diocese of Gombe as our Charity of the Month. Gombe has become familiar to many of us over the years through the regular reports, letters and photographs we have received and we have been able to see the difference our contributions have made to our fellow Christians there. Please give generously on the 10th April. In his article below Andrew draws attention to two gifts we in turn have received from Nigeria.



At the back of St Mark's church, where other church buildings might have a 'rose window', St Mark's, Newnham has an object that was a gift to the church from the diocese of Gombe in Northern Nigeria. The object is a circular design made of leather. Such objects can be found widely in Nigeria and they are used there as decorative floor coverings and for other furnishings in people's homes.

The trade in livestock has been in existence in Nigeria for years and it is genuinely a local enterprise which has economic significance. In 1857, Samuel Ajayi Crowther, the first black bishop in the Anglican communion, wrote about the existence of a trade in cattle from the Hausa speaking area of northern Nigeria to the Yoruba land in the south. Cattle were purchased from as far away as the Lake Chad region and the Sudan to the east, and these were then taken south to be sold.

The cattle are used as a source of milk and butter and for their meat. As well as cattle, sheep and goats were also traded and the availability of these has made the north of Nigeria a good producing centre of hides and skins. This simple and genuinely local industry included a tanning process and the manufacture of leather articles, such as low-cost shoes and leather garments.

In northern Nigeria the breeding of animals is central to the existence of such groups as the Fulani who can frequently be seen driving their livestock from

place to place according to the season. Herds leave the sub-Saharan areas in the north to look for pasture where there is a more pronounced wet season further south. The local breed of cattle has a noticeable hump similar to that seen on camels.

The circular object on the wall in St Mark's illustrates the technique of putting together a pattern by using pieces of leather of different shapes and colours. This is made possible by the dying of skins as part of their preparation. In St Mark's piece some of the decorations are made with snakeskin. The design includes concentric areas which surround a circular centre containing the words 'Gombe Diocese Partnership in Mission'. It was given to St Mark's in gratitude for the gifts sent twice yearly to the diocese. The money raised has been given to hospitals, schools and the work of local churches in their communities.

Recently this leather circle has been added to by a black and white piece, this time created in fabric. Again the design is a series of concentric circles. This was donated by Archbishop Henry Ndukuba who was our original contact in Gombe. He encouraged us to support the developmental work he was championing in his then diocese. However the new design notes that this was a gift from 'The Primate of the Church in Nigeria: Anglican Communion'. Henry has risen swiftly through the ranks in Nigeria and was recently voted to lead the church, for the next few years, as its senior archbishop.



St Mark's continues to support Gombe diocese in the northeast as that is one of the poorest states in Nigeria, which faces challenging social issues. The church there prays for us, as we pray for them.

Andrew Watts

What Difference Does it Make?

5 Wednesdays • 5 Life-Changing Perspectives

You are warmly invited to join us for our series of Lent talks. With five engaging speakers, we're taking a fresh look at some foundations of the Christian faith, and asking what kind of relevance they might have for us today.

9th March



WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES THE LIFE OF JESUS MAKE?

Michael Volland, Principal of Ridley Hall, Cambridge

16th March



WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES THE GRACE OF GOD MAKE?

Simeon Zahl, Associate Professor of Christian Theology, University of Cambridge

23rd March



WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES THE DEATH OF JESUS MAKE?

Mark Smith, Dean of Clare College, University of Cambridge

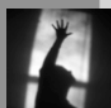
30th March



WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES THE CHURCH MAKE?

Anna Matthews, Vicar of St Bene't's Church, Cambridge

6th April



WHAT DOES GOD REALLY WANT FROM US?

Ally Barrett, Chaplain of St Catharine's College, University of Cambridge

Wednesdays • 7.30 – 9.00 pm • St Mark's in Newnham
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The Thread of Conflict. One Man's Experience

When I was six years old we had a refugee couple living in our front bedroom and a Canadian soldier visited us at weekends for a good meal. He wore a cap with a fine shining regimental badge which I much admired. He gave it to me when he embarked for the final invasion of France.

At 16 I saw the Russian flag for the first time. I was at an international scout camp in the British zone of occupied Austria. The red flag fluttered nearby in the Russian zone. On it the hammer and sickle, an ambiguous symbol, of work or war?

I was conscripted for National Service at 18 and served in Egypt, unsure of why I was there, just like a young Russian soldier in Ukraine today. My last task was to supervise a troop train for Germany. Soldiers still needed there, but now facing East.

At college I was asked to ensure a welcome for Nemeth, a young man fleeing from the invasion of Hungary in 1956.

Three years in Austria and Germany followed, helping refugees leave the camps they had lived in since 1945. The strand of conflict is a very long one! Eleanor and I worked there together. Tina and Tony Wilson did the same. I went to see the Iron Curtain,

that fearsome barrier of fence and mines. I walked to nearby hills with refugees from Czechoslovakia so that they could look back on their homeland.

We married shortly after the Berlin Wall went up and only returned to Europe in 1990 after it came down. We found the refugees well settled and their original homelands healing. Latvia made a particular impact - two cultures struggling to share land that had been occupied by both sides in World War Two. A presage of Ukraine, though we did not know it.

In Cambridge my role in Social Services also carried responsibilities for Civil Defence. We trained in secret, but thought that the thread of conflict had been broken.

It was there hidden. Now it has surfaced again in Ukraine. There are already refugees and I am reminded that the most able flee first, the poorest and weakest last.

Our vigil on the 5th March, 69 years to the day when I joined the army, was an emotional flashback of my whole life. It was for others too.

Will the thread of conflict always be with us? We must pray and hope that it will not.

Alan Jones

St Mark's Church Mission Statement

To be the people of God in this place and to work to make God more real for our community.

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The Cantus Singers of Cambridge (Conductor: Alan Howard) **are back!**

Their next concert is at St. Mark's Church on

Saturday 9th April at 8pm

when they will be performing

Fauré : Requiem
Palestrina: Stabat Mater
*and other short works by Lassus,
Lotti, Mendelssohn, Rheinberger
and Palestrina*

Tickets £10 in advance from Margaret Hay
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Under 18s free

Easter Flowers



Lilies

If you would like us to remember someone with lilies at Easter, please fill in the form in the narthex and give the money to Sue Payne - £3.00 per lily.

Decorating the Church

We shall be gathering at 9.30 am onwards on Saturday 16th April to decorate the church in our usual joyful fashion. Apart from the lilies, if you would like to contribute fresh garden greenery and some late spring flowers they would be very much appreciated and would add greatly to the joy and vivacity of the church at Easter.

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Eco Church Award



We are delighted to display a copy of the Bronze Eco Church Award certificate awarded to St Mark's by the Eco Church Team of A Rocha UK and, below, to include part of the letter that accompanied it.

Dear Gill and Debbie,

Thank you for your application for a Bronze Eco Church Award...

I have checked your survey scores and am delighted to confirm your award. Well done to everyone involved in reaching this milestone!

Our overall aim of the Eco Church award scheme is to celebrate the ways that church communities have been engaging with caring for the earth as a key part of our Christian faith... It was brilliant to see your creation care page on your website, and we encourage you to continue to share about all you are doing as an Eco Church in this great way.

Congratulations once again on receiving your Eco Church Award!

Warm regards,

Lissy

Eco Church Team, A Rocha UK



A Face, Another Face

For various reasons, the drama planned for Palm Sunday has had to be postponed. We hope to be able to put it on at a later date.

It will be replaced on Palm Sunday by *Waiting on the Edge*, a contemplative evening of poetry, prose and music that looks forward to the events of Holy Week. For further details, go to page 18.

St Mark's Arts Events

February's Charity of the Month



The total raised for St Michael's Workshop, including attributable Gift Aid, was just over £424.

Many thanks to all those who contributed so generously.

The May Issue of SEEK

Please send your contributions by Thursday 14th April to Jane Plows at janemp@virginmedia.com (350120) or contact any member of the committee.



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Feeling Sheepish Today?

The Newnham Monday Art group (still meeting up on Zoom as opposed to the 'small hall') were discussing the proposed 'art work' to be installed on the banks of the river Cam at Laundress Green. I have probably got the wrong end of the stick but it appears to be a gold-coloured metal and lace affair which to my mind would be totally out of place in such a lovely natural setting.

Later, I was having a cup of tea with my friend Teresa Green and told her about it. She was horrified. "What about the cattle that graze there?" she exclaimed. "What if they eat some of it and become ill? Like they did with the plastic bags that were littering Grantchester Meadows!"

This brought us on to the whole subject of grazing animals and natural habitat.

According to the National Trust, 'grazing is often the most effective and natural way to maintain habitats such as grassland and heathland. It helps to keep areas open and ensures a wider variety of plants and animals. Sheep graze using their front teeth to 'cut' the plants which creates a uniform height often just above ground level. Herdwick sheep also happily graze bramble and scrub making them ideal for overgrown sites.'



We discussed whether it would be a good idea to have a pet sheep. It would save using expensive electricity/petrol by eating the grass on lawns. We could even hire it out to other people too. Maybe

even the Colleges for their playing fields? Perhaps not. Imagine playing rugby and finding a sheep in the middle of a scrum instead of a ball. Softer to tackle though! Yes, and that fleece could be used for all sorts of things. We could even spin it to make wool and knit socks!

That said, imagine my surprise when I read the paper and found an article saying that the new must-have pet is a sheep! It seems Valais Blacknose lambs are now fetching up to £10,000 each because they make excellent pets and can be trained like a dog. The writer of the article went on to say that her family adopted an orphan lamb when she was a child. They fed it on milk from a bottle and called it '91' as that is what the farmer had sprayed on its back.

I asked my husband what he thought about adopting an orphan lamb as a pet. He laughed. (Did he think I was not serious?) "It won't just eat grass you know," he said. "I bet it would love to nibble on all those seedlings you have been growing on the windowsill. Still when it is full grown think of all the lamb chops and shepherds' pies we'll have!" Clever isn't he? He just knew how I would respond to that aspect of it!

Talking of seedlings, I had better go and check if they need watering. This year I am trying to grow seeds in peat free plugs. You can buy a pack of 50 of them. They come as little round discs in a small cardboard box (not a big plastic sack like normal compost). You just need to add water and they expand to four or five times their original size. Drop a seed into the dent at the top of each one, keep them warm and before you know it there is a little seedling popping up. Hopefully with the help of some of the contents of our compost bin they are destined to supply us with tomatoes, vegetables and flowers this summer. Teresa is growing her seeds in egg boxes filled with her own 'secret' recipe for compost. (With sheep poo?) No doubt the plants will grow to twice the size of mine!

Well, I hope we have some lovely weather this month and that you can get out and stroll along beside the Cam in the sunshine. Look out for any banks paved with gold and ladies walking their pet sheep though.

Best wishes,
Rosemary Ley

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Waiting on the Edge

Words and music for Holy Week

at

St Mark's Church

Palm Sunday, 10th April at 7.30 pm

Free Entry

The programme will finish by 8.30pm
All are warmly invited to stay for a glass of wine

Regular Groups

Monday Bible Study

10:00am, alternate weeks – contact: Sue Wagner, 01223 563435

Tuesday Home Groups

7:30 pm, weekly – contact: Andrew Watts, aa.watts@hotmail.co.uk or
Mike Thompson, michaelangelot99@gmail.com

Prayer group

11.00 am every Friday – contact: Anne Howie, 01223 356140

Choir

The choir normally sings on the first three Sundays of the month at our 9:30 am service. Rehearsals are 6:00 pm – 7:15 pm on the first and third Fridays of the month and from 9:00 am on Sundays. Contact: John Wyatt. mandyandjohnwyatt@gmail.com

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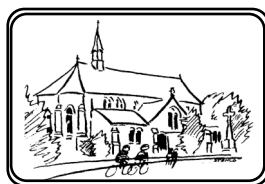
Prayers for April

A Prayer for Ukraine

God of peace and justice,
we pray for the people of Ukraine today.
We pray for peace and the laying down of weapons.
We pray for all those who fear for tomorrow,
that your Spirit of comfort would draw near to them.
We pray for those with power over war or peace,
for wisdom, discernment and compassion to guide their decisions.
Above all, we pray for all your precious children, at risk and in fear,
that you would hold and protect them.
We pray in the name of Jesus, the Prince of Peace.
Amen
Archbishops Justin Welby and Stephen Cottrell

A Prayer for peace

Almighty God, you know how little strength we have to stand up to the abuse of power, corruption and violence.
Strengthen us with your irresistible strength so that we do your will and make your light of truth shine here on earth. Free us from the hardships of war. May those who have lost their homes find new places to stay, give the hungry food, comfort those who weep, unite those who are separated.
Make us instruments of your peace and your righteousness, and equip us with all that is necessary to serve our fellow human beings. Do not allow your church to lose anyone out of anger towards their fellow humans and relatives; instead, like a generous God, give us reconciliation soon. Above all, strengthen our faith, revive our hope and teach us to love.
Preserve us from the arbitrariness of the powerful of this world and lead them to recognise their limits. Bless us with your peace so that we can work together, hand in hand, for a more free and just society, to your praise and glory. Amen
Communion of Protestant Churches in Europe



**Services at St Mark's Church, Newnham
for April
with Holy Week and Easter Details**

3rd April

8.00 am

Communion (BCP)

9.30 am

Communion with Junior Church

**HOLY WEEK & EASTER
AT ST MARK'S CHURCH, NEWNHAM**



Palm Sunday, 10th April

8.00am Communion (BCP)

9.30am Morning Worship

7.30pm Waiting on the Edge – words and music for Holy Week

Monday, 11th April

8.00pm Compline (Evening Prayer)

Tuesday, 12th April

11.00am Communion Service (BCP)

Maundy Thursday, 14th April

7.30pm 'Remembering the Last Supper' Communion Service

Good Friday, 15th April

10.00am Joint Service (Grantchester Meadows)

leave St Mark's at 9.15am, refreshments in Grantchester after the service

2.00pm 'Last Hour at the Cross' Service

Easter Sunday, 17th April

7.00am Sunrise Service & Fire (Grantchester Meadows)

refreshments in Grantchester after the service

8.00am Communion (BCP)

9.30am Communion

www.stmarksnewnham.org

24th April

8.00 am

Communion (BCP)

9.30 am

Communion

There is a Communion service every Tuesday at 11.00 am.