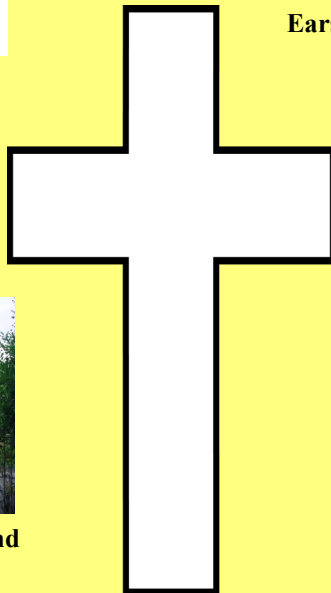




St. Alban's Earsdon



Earsdon Methodist



CHURCH VIEWS

**March
2021**

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Our Lady & St. Edmund



St. John's Backworth



Immaculate Heart of Mary

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

March 2021

Dear All,

I'm writing this five days after Boris Johnson announced his 'roadmap out of lockdown'. It explained that the legal requirement to stay at home will be lifted on Monday March 29th. This is a significant date for Christians. The 29th of March is 'the Monday of Holy Week'. The day before, we will have remembered the events of Palm Sunday – Jesus riding in triumph into Jerusalem. Then we will trace the events which led to the agony of Jesus on the cross, and the triumph of His rising again on Easter Sunday.

Several churches I have spoken to have decided to reopen for public worship after March 29th. As I write, we're taking soundings from the members of St Alban's and St John's Church Council. Responses so far have been positive to this suggestion. This would have the wonderful knock-on that our first Sunday back worshipping together in person would be Easter Day – how special would that be? Our very best to sisters and brothers in other churches as you make important decisions about when you might be able to reopen for public worship.

If our first Sunday back in church were to be Easter Day, it would be good to make the most of this. One idea would be to leaflet Backworth village, inviting people to Easter Sunday worship. St John's in Backworth usually only has a said 8.30am communion service every Sunday. Perhaps it's not surprising then, that the St John's congregation has been quite static in the nearly two years I have been with you. An Easter Sunday reopening – despite the early start time – would be a good opportunity to invite people we haven't yet met into the life of St John's. Do please let me know if you would be willing to help with this leaflet drop.

Jesus: Love in Action

As March unfolds, so will our Deanery-wide Lent Course. 'Jesus: Love in Action' is 'five readings in Mark for a time of pandemic'.

We want to see how these episodes in the life of Jesus speak to us at this particular point. We want to look for clues as to how we might play our part in an eventual national recovery from Covid. As I write, we've only had one session of the course. But it seems to have struck a chord with people. 138 people took part in session 1, spread over several different editions of the course, and involving people from at least nine parishes. The gospel episode in session 1 was 'Jesus touching a healing a man with leprosy'. This ancient text touched off a lot of very modern resonances, with the leper suffering from a very acute form of social isolation. We reflected that when Jesus reaches out his hand and touches this man, it might be the first real human contact the leper has had for a very long time.

The first session of the Lent Course also invited us to identify the people who will need support once the Covid-19 pandemic is over. This turned into quite a list: 'people with mental health issues... the digitally poor... homeless people and rough sleepers... those who use Food Banks... those who have slid into debt through no fault of their own, but as a result of the pandemic... those with visible and invisible disabilities... asylum seekers... and those with special needs.' Christian writer Robert Warren helpfully suggested that 'healthy churches do a few things, and do them well.' With such a mountain of Covid-related human need, God's church will need to be particularly discerning about where God is calling us to put our energies.

I wish everyone reading this a rich journey through the remainder of Lent, and then the astonishing joy of Easter – this year maybe reinforced by the joy of people able to be together again [albeit socially distanced] in our churches.

Yours with love,

Tim Mayfield.

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The Revd Dr Gary Bowness continues his tongue-in-cheek letters from 'Uncle Eustace'... this was written before the pandemic.

St James the Least of All **On how to deflect those staff appraisals**

The Rectory
St James the Least of All

My dear Nephew Darren,

I see that your vicar has introduced staff appraisal for all the officers who work for your church, including yourself. It seems a very dangerous innovation; as far as I am concerned, ministry is only successful when parishioners have no idea what the clergy get up to.



I imagine that he will look at the number of services you take in a year. Funerals can only be increased if you resort to murder, which is likely to be frowned on – although I have been sorely tempted during endless church council meetings. Perhaps if you take a flask of water wherever you go and if you find a baby unattended, you could resort to a spontaneous baptism. That would get your numbers up, even if returning mothers may marvel at the highly localised and brief shower that seemed to have taken place over the pram.

Home visiting targets are easily increased. Compile a list of when parishioners will be out and call on those days; a card through their letterbox will prove to your vicar that you were there. Should they happen to be in, mention that you are collecting for the organ fund and they will immediately excuse themselves for an important appointment. You are then free to move on to clock-up another visit.

Your vicar is also bound to want to see the congregation increasing. This is not sustainable, and you should put a stop to such ambitions at once. It is easily done. All you have to do is to approach your friends at the local football club and bribe them with your homemade beer to come along to church several Sunday mornings in a row.

If you give them enough beer BEFORE the service, they will be likely to make just enough muted disruption as to leave your vicar a bit rattled, and thinking that perhaps after all, 'less' is 'more' when it comes to the congregation.

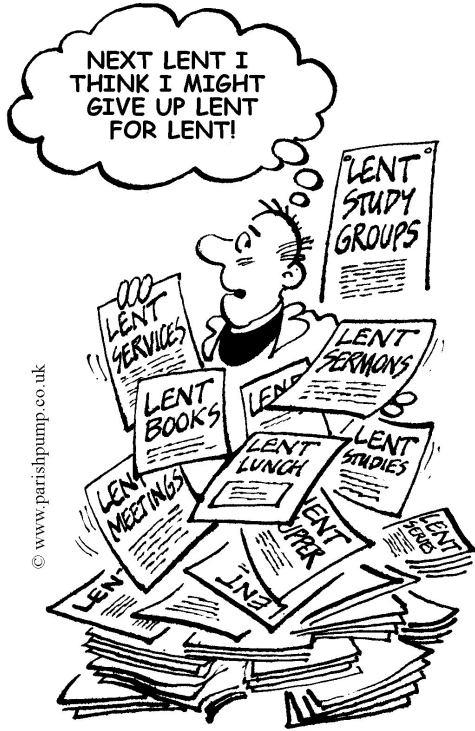
But whatever you do, make sure that you never preach a better sermon than he does. You don't want anyone thanking you at the door for your 'so interesting sermon' in front of him, when they have been sleeping through his sermons for years. If you offend the vicar this way, he will take swift revenge, and ask you to organise the parish summer fete.

Your loving uncle,
Eustace

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or call Jean on 0191 2377273





Words of wisdom from genuine chalkboards:

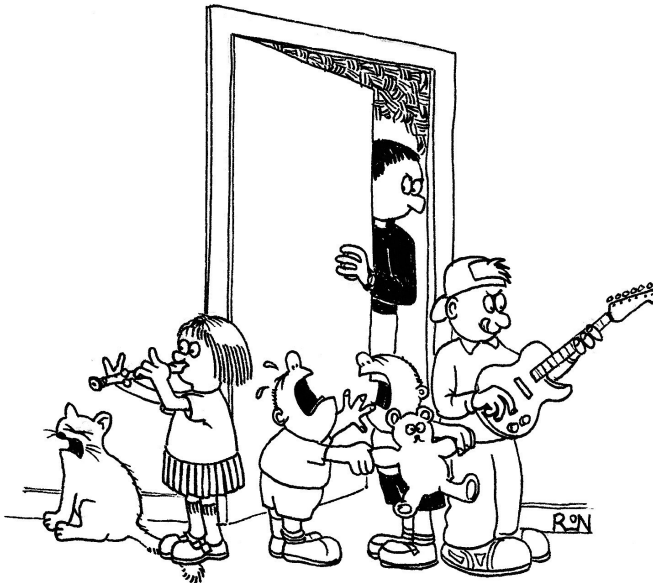


Beware the cost of supermarket convenience stores

If you do your weekly food shopping at a supermarket convenience store, you will be paying up to £320 more a year than if you had used one of the bigger branches.

According to a recent study by *Which?* Tesco Express costs £5.37 more a week, or £279 a year, while Sainsbury's Local stores cost £6.18 more a week, or £322 a year.

Tesco points to higher rents, rates and operating costs in Tesco Express stores, while Sainsbury's points to 'a range of factors' including varying promotions.



*Kevin took himself off to his
study to pray for peace*

BITS 'N' PIECES

It was...

150 years ago, on 27th March 1871, that the first international rugby union football match was held in Edinburgh. Scotland beat England 1 – 0.

Also 150 years ago, on 29th March 1871, that the Royal Albert Hall in London was officially opened by Queen Victoria.

60 years ago, on 8th March 1961, that Sir Thomas Beecham, British conductor and impresario died. He founded several major orchestras and transformed the operatic and orchestral scene in Britain.

40 years ago, on 1st March 1981, that IRA member Bobby Sands began a hunger strike at Maze Prison, Northern Ireland. He was elected as an MP to the British parliament on 10th April, and died on 5th May.

Also 40 years ago, on 29th March 1981, that the first London Marathon was held.

30 years ago, on 3rd March 1991, that American construction worker Rodney King was beaten by officers from the Los Angeles Police Department following a car chase. The beating was captured on amateur video. When the four officers were later acquitted in April 1992, it triggered the Los Angeles riots in which 53 people died and around \$1billion worth of damage was caused.

Also 30 years ago, on 14th March 1991, that the convictions of the Birmingham Six were quashed by Britain's Court of Appeal and they were released from prison after 16 years. They had been convicted of carrying out pub bombings in Birmingham in 1974.

Also 30 years ago, on 21st March 1991, the British Government announced the controversial poll tax (officially called the community charge), which had sparked riots, was to be replaced by a new property tax (council tax) from April 1993.

25 years ago, on 13th March 1996, that the Dunblane Massacre took place in Scotland. A gunman killed 16 children and a teacher at a primary school and wounded several others before taking his own life.

Also 25 years ago, on 20th March 1996, that the British Government reported Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (CJD) in humans was linked to BSE (mad cow disease) and could be transmitted to humans who ate infected beef. On 25th March the European Union banned the export of British beef (until 2006).





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Welcome to “**The Secret Life of St Alban’s and St John’s Folk**”.
This month we have been talking with Janet Dobson, from
St. Alban’s church.

1) Where were you born?

I was born at the Mona Taylor Homes, Stannington, on 14 August 1944, weighing in at 7lb 4oz. As it was wartime, Margaret Cavanagh’s aunt accompanied my Mother - my father being in Germany. Margaret and her family were the first to hear of my birth.

2) Surprise us with something we may not know about you

My working life started in retail, Binns as it was then called. We were sent to college, and in the final year’s exams I came second top in the U.K. I was therefore invited with others to be interviewed for a single award that would take one of us to Germany to study for three weeks, monitoring the running of their retail stores. I couldn’t believe that I won, I even got a half page write-up/ photograph in the Evening Chronicle - big news! Later that was a stepping stone to being a buyer for 2 of their stores in fashion.

3) What are your favourite book and your favourite film?

I love reading. Probably my favourite books are by Wilbur Smith, I just cannot put them down, in fact I sometimes skim read them, it is so exciting to see what happens in the end. I also read thrillers, cannot get away with Mills and Boon, I like a meatier story. My favourite film, without question, is ‘The Quiet Man’, with John Wayne and Maureen O’ Hara. If you haven’t seen this ‘old’ film, it’s a must, great for lifting the spirits.

4) What’s your least favourite food?

That’s easy, one word: offal, yak!

5) Tell us something you’ve learnt recently

I am trying to learn, spell, and retain a new word/words every day. Latest words: mnemonic, and oedema. I’ll let you find out the meaning, if you don’t already know!

6) Tell us about somewhere interesting you've visited

I'm lucky to say I have many. Walking part of the rim of the Grand Canyon, so inspiring, the vastness is awesome; Yosemite Park, a sight to be seen; holidays in Palm Springs, all in California; and finally, seeing an iceberg in full sunshine, cloudless blue/orange sky in the Arctic Circle, at 2 am. to name a few. What a wonderful world we live in.

7) Do you have any prayer requests we can ask the magazine readers to pray for?

My prayers are for a revival of Christianity throughout the world, and a slow down of consumerism.

8) What's your favourite hymn and why?

Favourite hymn is 'Just as I am', especially the second verse - it's so apt for me. I am singing it in my head now!

9) Tell us about someone who has had a big influence on your life

The biggest influence in my life was my immediate boss. She took me under her wing, and was my mentor the first years of my buyership, as it was such a responsibility. We visited all the London fashion shows twice a year, also fashion in Germany and Dublin, with lots of laughs and adventures along the way. A very, very exciting part of my life. She has long been deceased, but I still think of the happy times. She treated me almost like the daughter she never had.

10) Do you have a favourite phrase, quotation or saying?

My favourite saying is: Always travel the straight and narrow path; however hard it may seem, it will reward you in the end.

11) If you could spend 10 minutes stuck in a lift with Jesus, what would you talk about?

I don't think I would be able to speak, just look in awe. When I pulled myself together, I would thank him for my safe birth into a very loving family, and for the precious gift of our son Richard. I would then get out of the lift and grab everyone I saw and tell them whom I had been with for that short but treasured time.

CHURCH VIEWS FOR MARCH 2021 FROM THE PARISH OF OUR LADY, STAR OF THE SEA

Stations of the Cross



Ash Wednesday 2021 marked the strangest opening to Lent that any of us can remember. As our parish churches remain closed there was little sense of the beginning of our journeys to Easter. Stranger still will be the lack of opportunity to follow the Stations of the Cross. In previous years parishioners gathered on a weekday evening to make this symbolic *via dolorosa* from Jerusalem to Calvary.

Each journey was different, led by couples and individuals who selected or composed their own texts while

retaining the traditional format. Many of these shared experiences were truly inspiring and encouraged thought and prayer. In Immaculate Heart of Mary church they were enhanced by the beautiful wood-carvings of the late John Carr. This year our journeys will have to be ‘together apart’, so every Tuesday in Lent the Journey of Faith meetings will start with two or three of the Stations of the Cross. Parishioners are welcome to join these. They will start at 7pm and last approximately 10 minutes. To join the meeting, use the Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86874306623?pwd=dDRBWml6QzJJcWNvZIR2ZnFpV2dwdz09>.



Should you need them, the log-in details are : Meeting ID: 868 7430 6623
Passcode: 642187

Bay Food Bank

In the past twelve months the Bay Food Bank has helped to feed 7177 adults, 3421 children and 194 babies. Our parish contributions have really helped towards that support, and our recent additional donation of £250 was very welcome indeed. Many thanks to everyone who continues to support the work of this very practical local charity.



Donations may be brought to Immaculate Heart of Mary church between 10.00am and midday every Monday morning. Thanks particularly go to those who braved the recent snow and ice to ensure delivery.

Children's Liturgy

The Children's Liturgy groups in the parish churches were a popular addition for our very young parishioners during Masses. Continuing them during lockdown was impossible, but thanks to the work of enthusiastic volunteers it has been possible to set them up again online on Sunday mornings at 11.00am. The first session was in February and they will continue up until Palm Sunday, the last Sunday in March.

North Tyneside Technology Assist

As staying in touch with friends and family has become more dependent than ever upon our IT skills and Zoom contacts, it's easy to feel that we are out of our depth at times. We may feel more confident after accessing the six hours of free training being offered by North Tyneside Council's Digital Outreach Project. They offer help with skills including: Handheld Devices & Laptops, Connecting with Friends & Family, Navigating the Internet, Connectivity & Online Safety, Email Setup & Use, Creating Documents. For more information, call (0191) 643 2288.

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14th March: Mothering Sunday, 4th Sunday in Lent

There is an old Jewish saying: God could not be everywhere, and therefore He made mothers.

Mother Church, Mother Earth, Mother of the Gods - our human mothers - all of them have been part of the celebration of 'Mothering Sunday', as the fourth Sunday in Lent is affectionately known. It has been celebrated in the UK since at least the 16th century.

In Roman times, great festivals were held every Spring to honour Cybele, Mother of all the Gods. Other pagan festivals in honour of Mother Earth were also celebrated. With the arrival of Christianity, the festival became one honouring Mother Church.

During the Middle Ages, young people apprenticed to craftsmen or working as 'live-in' servants were allowed only one holiday a year on which to visit their families, which is how 'Mothering Sunday' got its name. This special day became a day of family rejoicing, and the Lenten fast was broken. In some places the day was called Simnel Day, because of the sweet cakes called simnel cakes traditionally eaten on that day.

In recent years the holiday has changed, and in many ways now resembles the American Mother's Day, with families going out to Sunday lunch and generally making a fuss of their mother on the day.

Mothering Sunday

14th March 2021



Smile-lines

Wife texts husband "Windows frozen, cannot open. What can I do to open?"

Husband texts "Pour lukewarm water around edges then tap lightly with hammer"

Wife texts " You've wrecked my laptop"

(With apologies to Gerry for pinching his joke.)

Children's prayer requests reveal a lot about their parents.

A little girl told her mother, "We went to a confirmation service at the cathedral and I saw the bishop. Now I know what a crook looks like!"

HYMN: A song of praise usually sung in a key two octaves higher than that of the congregation's range.

An advert appeared in a student newspaper of a university: "Sweet little old lady wishes to correspond with good-looking university student – especially a six-footer with brown eyes, answering to initials J.A.D." It was signed: "his mother."

A bus station is where a bus stops. A train station is where a train stops. On my desk I have a workstation.



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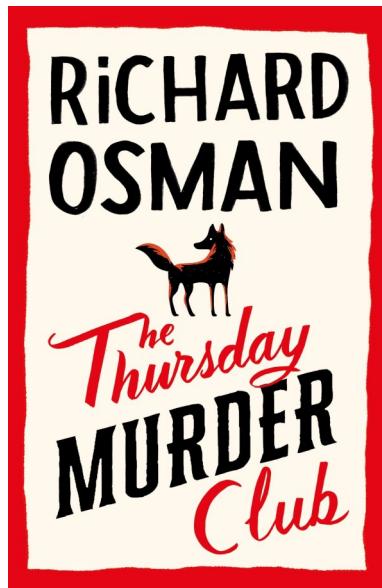


St Alban's book club

This month we have been reading *The Thursday Murder Club* by Richard Osman.

“In a peaceful retirement village, four unlikely friends meet up once a week to investigate unsolved murders. But when a brutal killing takes place on their very doorstep, the Thursday Murder Club find themselves in the middle of their first live case.”

It was an entertaining easy read about a group of people living in a retirement village. It was an interesting read as different characters are written in the first person and the rest in the third person which made it a good mix of storytelling style. We all thought it was easy to put down and pick up again so could be read at any time. Richard Osman has created some diverse characters in a clever and often comical way. We rated it 8/10 and decided we would all like to live in that retirement village!



Earsdon Methodist Church

March 2021

We held our Zoom Church Council on 18th February, and 11 members of us managed to master the technical wonders of the internet.

We noted our concern for our Minister Rev John Mason, who is to undergo major surgery on 4th March. Our prayers and continuing thoughts are with him and his wife and family as his treatment and recovery period proceeds.

In addition to some routine business we tackled the matter of the re-opening of our building for worship. We recognised the particular difficulties of being a small building with the secondary access having to negotiate two exceedingly steep sets of steps – one inside and one outside of the building. After discussion it was agreed to set a provisional date of 23rd May, which would be our Church Anniversary. However, there would be a serious conversation two weeks before to see if this was possible taking into consideration the restrictions at the time and the work needed to make the building suitable.

CHEWING GUM.

Out of the blue I was sent a free sample of chewing gum with the maker's compliments. A packet worth 49 pence – just for me.

Mind you, it is a big difference to the time when gum was sold from a penny slot machine – and every fourth penny got an extra packet free ~ and I am talking old pennies!

I remember once waiting half an hour beside the machine outside our local shops and waiting to be the fourth customer – only to find that the third person put in two pennies, so my wait had been in vain.

But my real problem with chewing gum has always been what to do with it once the flavour has gone. There is no foolproof, mess-free solution. As a lad at school, under the desk lid or behind the ear were favourite places, but both made a sticky mess, especially when you came to re-use the stuff. These days I try to be more refined with my samples and merely put the used pieces in the bin. But even there, if not wrapped in paper, they can make a mess.

Perhaps I should just give this gum away to those who want to stop biting their fingernails; or who want to stop smoking; or those who don't mind aching jaws after 20 minutes. But even they would have the problem of disposing of it without creating a sticky mess.

Of course, in some circumstances, the ability to be sticky is an advantage.

The Apostle Paul wrote to a peculiar church going through a bad patch and said "Remember above all else that love sticks – even when life's flavour has gone, love looks for the best. Trust steadily in God and love extravagantly."

What a man – and to my knowledge he never had a free sample of gum in his life!

Wes Blakey

St. Alban's and St. John's



Diary Page for March 2021

Wednesday 3rd

Sunday 7th

Third Sunday of Lent

10.10 am for 10.30 am Zoom Service

Thursday 11th

Sunday 14th

Fourth Sunday of Lent

10.10 am for 10.30 am Zoom Service

Wednesday 17th

Sunday 21st

Fifth Sunday of Lent

10.10 am for 10.30 am Zoom Service

Thursday 25th

Sunday 28th

Palm Sunday

10.10 am for 10.30 am Zoom Service

Wednesday 31st The legal restrictions may be lifted St Alban's
9.30am on Monday March 29th. Please
check on our website, or Facebook
page, or contact the vicar nearer this
time for an update.

Website: [St Albans \(stalbansearsdon.co.uk\)](http://stalbansearsdon.co.uk)

(look under the "Calendar" option)

Facebook : St Alban's Earsdon

Rev Tim Mayfield: Tel: 07414 601 351

St. Alban's and St. John's

Gospel Readings for March 2021 :

7th

Mark 5. 21-43

14th

Mark 10. 46-52

21st

Mark 9. 2-27

28th

Mark 11. 1-11

Here is the hyperlink to our newspaper "THE LINK"

[linkmarch2021final.pdf \(d3hgrrlq6yacptf.cloudfront.net\)](https://d3hgrrlq6yacptf.cloudfront.net/linkmarch2021final.pdf)





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Earsdon

plants centre



It's time to plant!

Our Garden shop is OPEN as usual and starting to fill up with beautiful Spring colour .

At present, sadly our coffee shop is still temporarily closed due to Covid guidelines but will reopen as soon as it is safe.

As Mother's Day is quickly approaching don't forget your Gift vouchers. You can purchase vouchers at the shop till and they are valid for 12 months .



SUDOKU

Complete the 9x9 grid with digits so that each column, each row, and each of the nine 3x3 blocks contains all of the digits from 1 to 9.

	5		8			4	6	
		1				3	7	
			2					
		8	6	7				
7								9
				5	9	2		
					6			
	2	3				5		
	7	4			2		9	

Please note - all material for next month's magazine (April) will need to be in before Wednesday 24th March 2021. Thank you, *Jean*.

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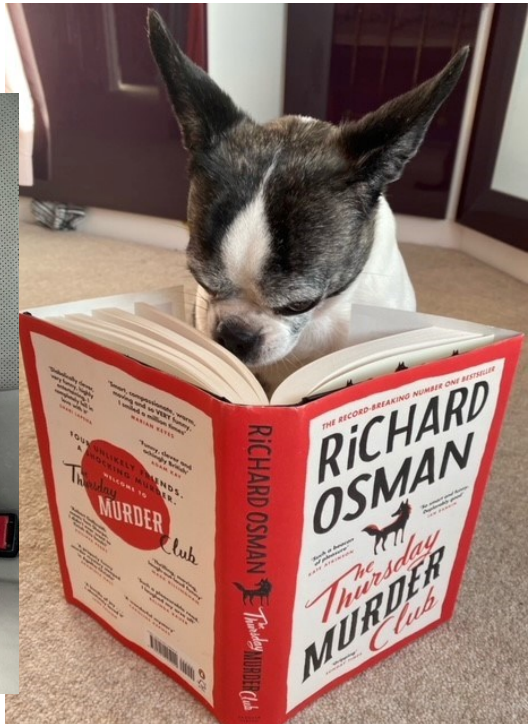


Marti's Musings 84

The end is nigh! Of lockdown that is. It will be so good to see everyone again; I've missed the church social events and catching up with all my church friends. It is very appropriate that we should be heading back to church in time for Easter, the time of re birth. I'm glad the vaccination program is going so well and lots of you have had it already. Mum and grandma have both had it now so I can worry less about them.

The book club have been reading Richard Osman's book this month. I like watching his House of Games so thought I would give it a go although my reading is not too good so I think I will listen to the audiobook. The weather is rather changeable at the moment, one minute it's raining, next it's snowing and then it's sunny. We went for a lovely walk round Holywell Dene the other day, but it was so muddy my white paws turned black! I didn't mind, but mum for some reason wasn't happy about me getting back into the car, so cocooned me in a blanket. I wasn't very happy about it. Guess I'm off in the shower again.

Lots of washings
Marti xx



WORDSEARCH

Life is full of ups and downs: after blessings, hard times often follow. They are not meant to destroy us but to help us grow spiritually by deepening our faith and dependence on God. The Holy Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil – to give Him the opportunity to stand fast against the enemy. The devil’s temptations were based on half-truths, which Jesus rejected by standing firm on the whole truth of Scripture. The truth sets us free!

- Holy
- Spirit
- Jordan
- Wilderness
- Tempted
- Devil
- Fasted
- Hungry
- If
- Bread
- Alone
- Kingdom
- World
- Authority
- Glory
- Worship
- Me
- Serve
- Jerusalem
- Pinnacle
- Temple
- Stone
- Foot
- Angels
- Bear
- Strike
- Test
- temptation



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 * regarding the magazine, or for anyone thinking of
 * sending in their contribution for publication, please
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