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Crossway

THE MAGAZINE OF CHURCH SOCIETY

Take courage
Lee Gatiss

Bodies and souls to the glory of God
Martin Davie

Godliness in the online world
Ros Clarke

Seriously? It's a joy!
Chris Moore

Church Society

EQUIPPING GOD'S PEOPLE TO LIVE GOD'S WORD

Take courage

Lee Gatiss urges us to collective, costly, and continuing courage – because courage is compulsory for the Christian.

You may know that old joke about the university student who sat down in an exam to find the first question was this: 'What is courage?' And apparently they wrote just two words: 'This is.' Then they got up and left.

Well, I think the Bible has more to say than that about this virtue of courage. In Philippians 1, for example, we learn that courage is unashamedly proclaiming the gospel together, whatever the cost.

Collective courage

First, in Philippians 1:14, Paul says 'And because of my chains, most of the brothers and sisters have become *confident* in the Lord and *dare* all the more to proclaim the gospel without fear.'

Paul is in prison because of his open proclamation of the good news of Jesus. But rather than making the Christians around him somewhat wary of speaking out themselves, it has only made them more confident. That word *confident* speaks of assurance in a situation which might normally cause fear or dismay. Their hearts are not cowardly, but convinced and courageous.

Indeed, they are *daring*. They dare to double down on the gospel, and preach it all the more, despite what has happened to Paul. This is the same daring courage that Joseph of Arimathea had when he took a deep breath and went in to ask Pilate for the body of Jesus (Mark 15:43). It may be 'fearless', in one way, but that's not because there was nothing to fear. Rather, true courage is facing up to fear. As Cicero says, 'fortitude is deliberate facing of dangers and bearing of toils.' Or I think it was President Franklin Roosevelt who once wrote, 'Courage is not the absence of fear, but rather the assessment that something else is more important than fear.'

For the Christians Paul is talking about in Philippians, that something else was the courageous proclamation of the truth in the face of opposition. And that was part of their partnership with Paul. In Philippians 1:27 he urges them to 'Strive *together as one* for the faith of the gospel, without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you.'

The courage of one can be inspiring and strengthening – whether that's Paul in prison, a steadfast Christian in a secular workplace, or a bishop who has the courage to stick their neck out for the gospel on a controversial issue. But courage is often something we can do together.

It damages all of us if some step away and distance themselves from the battles we all face. It saps our collective courage.

Lord of the Rings fans may remember Aragorn's speech at the Black Gate, as his fearful army prepared to fight against insurmountable odds to give poor Frodo a chance: 'A day may come when the courage of men fails. When we forsake our friends and break all bonds of fellowship, but it is not this day.' We need each other, those 'bonds of fellowship'. It damages all of us if some step away and distance themselves from the battles we all face. It saps our collective courage. Standing together, as evangelicals have done recently in General Synod elections, for example, should mean more to us than whether or not we personally are in line for the next big church or diocesan post – or whatever it is that might hold us back or make us feel ashamed to stand together.

Costly courage

Second, Philippians 1:20 has something to say about the cost of courage. Paul is grateful for the church's prayers for him while he is suffering. And he writes, 'I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be *ashamed*, but will have sufficient *courage* so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.'

This is another different word for courage. Here it's more about boldness, freedom to speak, in what might be intimidating circumstances. Paul says he hopes for unashamed, confident courage to say what needs to be said. Whether he lives or dies because of it.

Prayer Diary: January

Please pray every day that God's blessing will be on Church Society to sustain it and guide its ministry.

1 Pray for God's provision for the ministry of Church Society over the coming year. For the Directors, other staff and many volunteers to be refreshed and filled with enthusiasm for the year ahead.

2 Airmyn* (Sheffield) – Incumbent, Philip Ball.

3 Pray for the resources produced by Church Society to be useful in encouraging churches and ministers to hold fast to biblical teaching on sexuality in the ongoing LLF discussions.

4 Pray that Anglican churches would call the nation to repent and believe the gospel, and for the Holy Spirit to bring many to a saving faith.

5 Akeley* (Oxford) – Rector, Hans Taling. Pray for the final stages of the project planning for the new building, and the receiving of grants and other financial contributions to enable this.

6 Pray for more evangelical archdeacons and bishops. Particularly pray that complementarian evangelicals will be appointed to these senior positions.

7 Anchorsholme, All Saints (Blackburn) – Vicar, Anthony Barnshaw.

8 Pray for Regional Directors, George Crowder, Tony Cannon, Chris Moore, and Theological Consultant, Kirsten Birkett to be effective in supporting gospel ministry across the country, and to work well with local and regional networks.

9 Pray for Church Society members to increasingly feel part of our fellowship, through the prayer meetings, webinars, and other events and resources. Pray that no one will feel as though they are contending alone for the gospel in the Church of England.

10 Pray for the work of the Church of England Evangelical Council (CEEC) as it seeks to contend for the gospel in the CofE.

We press on, resisting the temptation to fight ecclesiastical battles with the weapons of this world; and take up instead the word of God and prayer, with the persuasive power of a godly life.

Again, this is something shared with the Philippians. Verse 29 says 'For it has been granted to *you* on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him.' They have the same struggle, and the same need for courage as Paul.

So, Philippians 1 gives us a picture of courage which is very different from that of the world around us. In our culture, courage is often simply *self*-confidence. *Self*-assurance. The courage to be me.

But Philippians 1 tells us that courage is unashamedly proclaiming the gospel together, whatever the cost. And courage begets courage. Seeing Paul in prison for his faith, facing frightening opposition and proclaiming the gospel anyway – this put steel in the backbones of the Christians around him. God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, and love, and self-control (2 Timothy 1:7).

Because, make no mistake: love and self-control require courage. Gregory the Great said: 'The fortitude of the righteous person is to overcome the flesh, to withstand self-indulgence, to quench the lusts of the present life.' (*Moralia* vii) Do we have that courage, to fight valiantly those personal, intimate battles against the disordered desires of our own hearts, when the world and much of the church tells us we really needn't bother, and no-one would know or mind if we didn't?

In the rest of the Bible, being 'strong and courageous' is often about doing what God has told you to do, trusting in his promise of help. Often this comes with the reassurance of his comforting, strengthening presence, whether that's in conquering the land, building the temple, ending the exile, or standing firm in the faith.

We have no promises from the Lord of certain victory, in the battles approaching on General Synod and in the church as a whole. We may lose. We may end up one day like the Episcopal Church in the US – no third province for those with traditional views on marriage, no alternative oversight, the 39 Articles thrown on the bonfire. Yet as Augustine says, 'fortitude is love bearing all things readily for the sake of the object beloved' (*De Moribus Ecclesiae* xv). And we love the Church of England and God's people within it. So we press on, resisting the temptation to fight ecclesiastical battles with the weapons of this world; and take up instead the word of God and prayer, with the persuasive power of a godly life. 'Whatever happens,' says Paul, 'conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ' (Philippians 1:27).

Continuing courage

Being out of control and out of our comfort zones brings fear. There's been a lot of that in the last year or two. It's taken immense courage to do new types of ministry, that often involve tiring and steep learning curves. For ministers, it's taken resolute determination to keep calm and carry on, taking difficult decisions, almost on a daily basis, which they know will upset or annoy at least some people in their congregation. Courage is unashamedly proclaiming the gospel together, whatever the cost.

I know many of our people are fearful of even mentioning the orthodox biblical view of marriage and sexuality in their churches. Of course we naturally want to shy away from

bringing that up, when we already feel fragile and weak, or even traumatised, by the last two years. Who needs more angst and argument right now? I don't.

In the last few months, I've personally been threatened by numerous individuals online with CDMs, being reported to the police, and threatened with violence, verbal and physical abuse, and death, simply for having stood by the view of marriage and sexuality in *The Beautiful Story* – which is the Church of England's official view. I know many of you have also faced flak. We know the temptation to self-censorship can be immense.

So courage in our current situation is not about giving simple answers and then walking away, like a cocky student in an exam being asked what courage is. No, courage is about endurance. As Aquinas puts it, 'the principal act of fortitude is endurance, that is to stand immovable in the midst of dangers' (*Summa* 2/2.123.6).

But courage is *not* the same as foolhardiness, brawling and brashness. It is not, *necessarily*, dramatic. But whatever it is, courage is not passive either, or incomplete – all talking and tweeting but never acting.

Compulsory courage

Finally, courage is not optional either. It's rather startling that in Revelation 21:8, the first people listed as being thrown into hell (even before murderers, the sexually immoral, idolators, and liars), are 'the cowardly'. The timid. The ones who run away.

Brothers and sisters, let that not be us. But rather, let us unashamedly proclaim the gospel together, whatever the cost in this life. Because we know there is a day of judgment and reward approaching.

That may mean speaking the truth that is hated by the world. It may also mean courageously confronting our own anxieties and inadequacies, our failures and our disunities. It's hard. But let's do it anyway, for the glory of God and the good of England.

Almighty God,
who gives victory to his faithful people
not by might, nor by power, but by your Holy Spirit:
Grant in your mercy that we may not be ashamed
to confess the faith of Christ crucified,
and to fight valiantly against sin, the world, and the devil
contending for the gospel as his faithful soldiers and servants
until the end of our lives;
for we ask in the name of Jesus,
who conquered the powers of darkness
and gave himself up
to rescue us from this present evil age.
Amen.

Lee Gatiss is the Director of Church Society.

Bodies and souls to the glory of God

Nathan Jennings on Unsplash.com

This is an extract from Martin Davie's seminar on 'Godliness in the Body', given at this year's Fellowship of Word and Spirit Conference.

Who are we as human beings?

A key text for thinking about the issue of godliness in the body is Paul's injunction to the Christians in Corinth in 1 Corinthians 6:20: 'glorify God in your body.' This verse outlines who we are and what we are made for as human beings.

In 1 Corinthians 6:20, Paul tells us implicitly that as human beings we are creatures with bodies. There would be no point in the Corinthians being told to glorify God in their bodies if in fact they had no bodies in which they could do so. It would make about as much sense as telling someone with no legs that they should walk.

What this verse also implicitly tells us, however, is that as human beings we are not *just* bodies. Paul does not write to the Corinthians: 'bodies glorify God.' What he writes is 'glorify God *in* your bodies, a command that only makes sense if there is a self, a 'you', that possesses a body, but is not identical with it. This self is clearly not a material entity, because then it would itself be a body, whereas Paul distinguishes it from the body. It must therefore be a spiritual entity, and in order for Paul's injunction to make sense it must also be an entity that is capable of hearing, understanding, and then acting on the basis of that understanding. It follows that what we are talking about is a conscious, rational, spiritual entity that is capable of directing the body: that is, a soul.

To be human is to exist as a being who consists of both body and soul, and who has been called into existence by God.

In summary, what we learn from thinking about what Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 6:20 is what has been taught down the centuries by the Christian tradition, namely, that human beings are what is known as a 'psychosomatic unity' of a material body and an immaterial soul.

'Who am I?' I am a single self, a psychosomatic unity consisting of a body and a soul. I am a material body, including a material brain, but that is not all I am. I am also an immaterial, conscious, rational, soul that is aware of God, other people, and the world in general; a mind that acts in and through my body in the light of this awareness. I am not simply my body, nevertheless, I am my body and my body is me.

One day my material body will die (unless Jesus returns first), but my soul will survive that death, and God will reunite my soul with a resurrected body in the general resurrection of the dead at the end of time.

The fact that human beings have souls

as well as material bodies is what enables us to act in a moral fashion. To act morally is to freely choose to do something in response to a sense of moral obligation. In the case of purely material entities there is no element of choice. Thus, a stone hurled at someone's head has no choice in whether or not it will hit them!

If a human being was a purely material entity the same point would apply. We would have to take a determinist view of human activity and say that all our thoughts and intentions, as well as the acts that flow from them, are controlled by physical forces in a way not chosen by us. Therefore we would have no freedom of the will, and consequently no more freedom over our actions than a flung stone has. If determinism were true it would be difficult to make sense of moral obligation and responsibility. Since human morality, presupposing freedom to choose and act on what we choose, does exist, the only reasonable explanation is that, as the Christian tradition has affirmed, human beings have souls as well as material bodies.

In summary, reflection on Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 6:20 shows us that to be human is to exist as a being who consists of both body and soul, and who has been called into existence by God.

What are we here for as human beings?

If we turn to the question of the purpose of our existence as human beings, Paul's injunction in 1 Corinthians 6:20, 'Glorify God in your body,' points us to the truth that our purpose

Prayer Diary: January

11 Audley, St James the Great (Lichfield) – Vicar, Simon Tomkins. Pray for outreach talks in March, by Ste Casey from BCUK, on anxiety, depression, regrets, bereavement and conflict. Please pray for the church family to catch the vision and for people to meet the living God in the midst of their struggles.

12 Pray for evangelicals involved in revitalisation ministry. Pray for today's revitalisation webinar to encourage and strengthen all those who attend and to help them see the gospel opportunities God has given them.

13 Pray for Parliament and Government, especially for the witness of Christians.

14 Babcary*, Holy Cross (Bath & Wells) – Vacancy.

15 Bacup* (Manchester) – Vacancy.

16 Pray for clergy who face opposition and difficulty in their parish, and from the wider church, to remain faithful to Christ.

17 Barton Seagrave, St Botolph (Peterborough) – Rector, Mark Lucas.

18 Pray for the ministry of Church Society Trust, our patronage board meeting today, and for wise appointments to be made in all our Trust parishes.

19 Pray for Lee Gatiss and other Church Society Council members attending the meeting of CEEC today and tomorrow.

20 Continue to pray for CEEC to make wise decisions and plans for the year ahead at their residential meeting today. Particularly pray for their work in encouraging churches and ministers to hold fast to biblical teaching on sexuality.

21 Pray for ministers who are approaching retirement. Pray that they may be open to new opportunities for service, and pray that their practical needs will continue to be met.

22 Pray for Associate Director, Ros Clarke, speaking on 'Women of the Word' for a women's day at St Margaret's, Angmering.

23 Beeby, All Saints* (Leicester) – Vacancy.

24 Beeston next Mileham* (Norwich) – Vacancy.

The function of light is to make it possible for things to be seen, and the calling of God's people, under the New Covenant as under the Old, is to enable the nations of the world to know and to glorify God.

as conscious rational souls is to use our bodies as the means or instruments through which the God who created us is glorified. In the well-known words of the Westminster Shorter Catechism, 'The chief end of Man is to glorify God' and this end is achieved by human souls working through human bodies.

The Hebrew word *kabod*, translated as *doxa* in Greek and 'glory' in English has the root meaning of heaviness. By extension it came to be used to describe the 'weight' or 'worthiness' of something, or someone. When it is used with reference to God, the term means the intrinsic worthiness of the one true creator God, because of both his being and his activity. God is glorious because both his being and activity are of supreme worth; they are better than anything else is or ever could be. To glorify God is to declare this fact by bearing witness to who God is and what he has done through our words and deeds, and to do this involves our souls and bodies acting together.

When Genesis 1 says that human beings are made in God's image, that means that God has created human beings to make known what he is like. In fact, as Henri Blocher has pointed out,[1] the Hebrew preposition used in Genesis 1:26 and 27 would be better translated by the word 'as' rather than the word 'in'. God has created human beings as his image and as his likeness in order to reveal his being and hence his glory in the world that he has made.

If we ask how human beings are to perform this function, the answer that Genesis gives us is that they are to do it by ruling over the world on his behalf. 'Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth' (Genesis 1:26). God is the world's true king and human beings are called to reflect his kingship by ruling the world on his behalf.

Furthermore, doing this involves human souls and bodies acting together. We can see this in Genesis 2, for example, where Adam is placed in the Garden of Eden with the charge 'to till it and keep it'. As anyone who has ever done gardening will know, tilling and keeping a garden is an activity of the body, but it is also an activity of the soul. It is the conscious rational self, working through the body.

For a second example, we could look at the Sermon on the Mount, where Christ tells his disciples in Matthew 5:14–16:

> You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. Nor do men light a lamp and put it under a bushel, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

Here again we see that human beings are called to make God known. The function of light is to make it possible for things to be seen, and the calling of God's people, under the New Covenant as under the Old, is to enable the nations of the world to know and to glorify God. How are they to do this? Through the performance of 'good works', actions performed in obedience to God that reveal the

truth about God and how he wants his human creatures to live. Because of the way human beings are made, such works are necessarily bodily works, actions performed by conscious rational human souls through the bodies with which they are united. For example, turning the other cheek and giving someone your cloak (Matthew 5:39–40) are actions of the soul through the body and so with everything that Christ asks us to do.

Paul's injunction to the Corinthians to 'glorify God in your body' is not an idiosyncratic demand. Rather, it is a summary of the vocation given by God to his human creatures throughout the whole of Scripture. Godliness in the body is what we are all called to undertake.

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1 Henri Blocher, *In the Beginning* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1984), p. 85.

The full text of this article, including Martin's analysis of sin and sanctification, as well as a look at the particular challenges in this area facing the Church of England today, is available as a downloadable booklet from churchsociety.org.

Prayer Diary: January–February

25 Bebington, St Andrew (Chester) – Rector, David Vestergaard. Pray for recovery from the pandemic: discipleship and fellowship; drawing in people in the community and those who have joined us online.

26 Bispham, All Hallows (Blackburn) – Rector, Jonny Lee. Praise God for our new Rector Jonny settling in and for new service patterns working well. Pray for us to grow in being outward looking and for local families to be soundly converted.

27 Pray for Christian parents to be well-equipped to build Christian home and family life. Pray that churches will teach and model this well to the next generation.

28 Blackpool, St John (Blackburn) – Vicar, Andy Dykes.

29 Pray for Lee Gatiss speaking today at an event at Oak Hill College, 'Is Church of England ministry for me?' Pray for many faithful, godly people from a new generation to be called into Church of England ministry.

30 Bournemouth (Throop), St Paul (Winchester) – P-in-C, James Findlay.

31 Pray for the FWS Conference over the next three days on the theme of 'Leadership Reset – from Scripture to theology to ministry'. For clear, bold talks by Lee Gatiss and James Hughes and an edifying time for all.

February

1 Continue to pray for the FWS Conference today and tomorrow, as they consider 'Leadership and authority in Christian doctrine, the church, and the world'. For speakers Lee Gatiss, Rob Munro, George Crowder, Ros Clarke and Clare Hendry.

2 Bovingdon, St Lawrence (St Albans) – Vicar, Charles Burch.

3 Bradfield & Stanford Dingley (Oxford) – P-in-C, Julian Gadsby.

4 Pray for those who are considering full-time ministry in the Church of England, and for wisdom and faithfulness for those whose job it is to discern vocations nationally and within each diocese.

Godliness in the online world

jeshoots.com on Unsplash

Ros Clarke challenges us to consider how we behave online, both as consumers and as contributors.

Sometimes it's hard to believe that Paul had never been online. His descriptions of the world in Colossians 3 are perfectly on point for the online world we've come to know: sexual immorality, impurity, greed, rage, malice, slander, lies and filthy language – the internet is full of such things. By contrast, Paul instructs the Colossians to put on:

> …compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so also you must forgive. And above all these, put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.
>
> Colossians 3:12–14

Godliness in the online world is fundamentally the same as godliness in the offline world. That ought to be obvious, but from the way that many Christians behave online, it seems that it is not.

Imagine an internet characterised by these things, where people freely forgive, where they are gentle and patient with each other, where humility exceeds arrogance. Imagine an online community bound together in love. How wonderful that would be!

Occasionally, of course, the internet does allow for some truly wonderful flashes of such virtue, as well as the everyday expressions of them that never go viral. But we shouldn't be surprised to find both the worst of humanity and the best of humanity online. Because all humanity, more or less, is online. Of course the online world is like the real world, because the online world *is* the real world.

Which means that godliness in the online world is fundamentally the same as godliness in the offline world. That ought to be obvious, but from the way that many Christians behave online, it seems that it is not. I think there are a number of reasons for that which we would do well to be aware of.

Lack of controls

Online, we are always at the mercy of the algorithms, those tools which ensure that we are shown more and more of the content that the tech firms want to show us. That repeated exposure can change our political preferences, our purchasing decisions, our patterns of thinking. We need to be conscious of this and where possible take steps to avoid it – check your settings to make sure that you see chronological posts on your social media, rather than promoted posts; don't automatically allow

Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming. In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another…

Colossians 3:5–9

cookies; clear your cache from time to time.

It's easy to inadvertently stumble across unwanted content online, especially unwanted sexual content. You can set 'parental controls' on your browsers or sign up to services such as Covenant Eyes, to ensure that the accidental click doesn't lead to a repeated problem.

We are all constantly being subjected to advertising, and no more so than online. Remember that every service you use for free is paid for by advertisers. Consider paying for some services to get an advert-free version, or using an ad-blocker for some websites.

The best way to minimise these influences, of course, is to use the internet less. But it's not always that easy. Many of us need to be online for work, as well as for social and other reasons. And the internet is, by design, addictive. Take breaks from the internet. Have social media sabbaths. Deliberately go offline on holiday. Detox as often as you can, to make sure that the online world isn't defining 'normal' for you.

Lack of accountability

The second major problem to be aware of online is the lack of accountability. In many ways, the internet can be an anonymous space. And where no one knows who you are, it's easy to feel you can get away with anything. The Lord sees, of course. And remember Achan's sin, where the hidden wickedness of one person infected the whole camp. It will have consequences, even if not in the immediate moment.

Many online communities have an expectation of pseudonymous names. These

Prayer Diary: February

5 Pray today that the leaders in the Church of England would clearly proclaim the gospel when they have opportunities to speak to the nation.

6 Brixton St Matthew & St Jude (Southwark) – Vicar, Stephen Sichel. Pray for the church team's efforts to get local service agencies to work together in addressing drug dealing and prostitution in the church grounds.

7 Pray for evangelicals to be engaged in the synods and committees of the Church of England, for the sake of the gospel. Pray especially for those serving on General Synod as it meets this week.

8 Thank God for so many Church Society members being elected to the current General Synod. Pray for them to contend for the gospel wisely and boldly.

9 Brixton, St Paul w St Saviour (Southwark) – Vicar, Sam Whittington.

10 Brunswick, Christ Church (Manchester) – Rector, Simon Gatenby. Celebrate God's goodness: over £620k given & raised to pay for our renovated community hall & heating system. Pray as we share the good news of Jesus with our multicultural community.

11 Pray for Diocesan Evangelical Fellowships, that evangelical Anglicans might be united in the gospel and work together to respond to the LLF materials.

12 Burlingham (North)* (Norwich) – Rector, Kevin Billson.

13 Pray for the Queen and the Royal Family.

14 Pray for the Archbishops of Canterbury and York.

15 Pray for the ministry of Church Society Trust, our patronage board meeting today, for wise appointments in all our Trust parishes.

16 Burton-on-Trent, All Saints w Christ Church (Lichfield) – P-in-C, David Collier.

17 Pray for all incumbents to have appropriate administrative support, and for churches to have suitable people who can take on the increasingly complex and important tasks of safeguarding, finance and maintenance.

So how do we guard our godliness in the online world? We need to consider our roles as consumers and as contributors.

are often silly usernames, clearly not intended to deceive, but nonetheless they are used to hide your identity. Do you need to use a name like that? I'm on the knitting website Ravelry, where most users are called things like KnitWit and Knit1Pearl2, but my username is rosclarke and I have a link in my profile to my website and social media where I also go by my real name. It helps me to know that whatever I do on Ravelry is openly linked to my offline identity. I am not tempted to act as if I am hidden.

But even where you use a real name, there can be a complete detachment from your Christian community. Even in a very innocent niche interest group – whether it's knitting, fly fishing, or model trains – if you are the only Christian present, there can be little accountability. Your pastor will never know what you say or do in that group; your Christian friends won't be interested, and so once again, you may be tempted to act as if it doesn't matter how you behave in that group.

This can all be true in the offline world as well, of course, but geographical limitations and the interconnectedness of social groups may make it more likely that there are some links back to your Christian circles. The internet is an easy place to find groups that are entirely separate from your offline life.

It's also easy to be caught up in very large groups online. Amongst so many hundreds of thousands of people, your individual actions can easily go unnoticed or unquestioned. And crowd psychology suggests that we are all more likely to get carried along with groupthink than we realise. Taking a step back to consider, talking to a person offline, and taking a moment to pray can all help us to realise how skewed our thinking has become through the influence of the online community.

Even when your considered opinion hasn't changed, you may still inadvertently be doing more harm than good, simply because of the size of the group involved. When one person is rightly critical of someone or something, that may be valuable feedback. When a thousand people have all pointed out the error, it feels like bullying. When a hundred thousand people have done so, that is virtue-signalling on their part, and abusive towards the one who is being criticised. Often, the right thing to say is nothing.

So how do we guard our godliness in the online world? We need to consider our roles as consumers and as contributors.

Consumers

I think it's wise to do a regular audit of your online consumption. In the past 15 years, the average time spent online each week by adults in the UK has gone up from 10 hours to 25 hours. What are you spending that time doing and what effect is it having on your godliness?

What are you consuming?

- What are you consuming that is good, true, noble, right, pure, lovely and admirable?
- What are you consuming that is directing your heart and mind towards the Lord?
- How much of what you are consuming is turning your heart to worldly things?
- How much of what you are consuming is tempting you towards rage, malice, slander, lying, greed or lust?
- When you assess your regular online consumption, are there things that you need to cut out altogether? Can you block them on your browser? Are there things you need to cut down on? Are there things you want to be doing more of?

How much are you consuming?

- Is your time online affecting your duties as a disciple of Christ? Do you have as much time to pray as you want? Do you have as much time to read God's word as you feel you ought? Do you struggle to concentrate for more than a couple of minutes? Do you find that you're easily bored when there aren't graphics, and music, and clickbaity headlines to keep you reading?
- Is your time online getting in the way of your family life? Are you still present with your children when they need you? Do you have good quality time with your spouse? Are one or both of you always on a screen?
- Is your time online stopping you from doing your job wholeheartedly? Are you up too late gaming to be prompt and alert for work in the morning? Are you always checking your socials when you should be focusing in a meeting?
- Is your time online preventing you from developing deeper friendships? Are you neglecting your Christian friends? Are you getting to know non-Christian friends, sharing your life with them as you share the gospel with them?

Turning to the internet when you can't do much else, such as in a waiting room, or waiting for your child at school may be a good way of making use of that time. Using the internet to speed up chores such as booking medical appointments or shopping may free up time for other important things. But 25 hours a week is a long time in our busy lives. Do you really want to spend that long online? Can you set limits on your home wi-fi? Can you monitor your screen time on your device? Do you need to prioritise other things?

Why are you consuming?

- Are you procrastinating? The vastness of the internet allows endless possibilities to avoid the work you should be doing. Notice this and find techniques to avoid it, e.g. website blockers, Pomodoro Technique, putting your phone away.
- Are you escaping? When the offline world is hard, lonely, boring and frustrating, do you turn to the internet in order to avoid dealing with those things? Are you avoiding talking to God about them? Are you running away from responsibilities? If you notice this in yourself, tell a trusted (offline!) friend, take time away from your screen to pray, identify the concrete steps you need to take and set deadlines for them.
- Are you addicted? Can you turn off? Do you forget to check your favourite sites? Are you irritated when you're in a situation where you can't be online? Does your endless scrolling keep you up to the early hours of the morning? Do you feel sucked in as soon as you log on? Step away from the screen. Put your phone on airplane mode. Go out into the fresh air. Put dates to meet up with offline people in a paper diary. Give your spouse permission to confiscate your phone or turn the wi-fi off. And if necessary, seek help.

Contributors

In the past ten years or so, the internet has moved from being something most of us consume to a space where most of us contribute. Whether you have a blog or a YouTube channel, an Instagram account or a Facebook profile, it's never been easier to have your say, to create your own content, and to participate actively in the online world.

As the online world increasingly forms part of everyone's social lives, we need to be there, engaging in that community. But we need to make sure that our engagement is wise, godly and winsome.

It's great that Christians are participating. As the online world increasingly forms part of everyone's social lives, we need to be there, engaging in that community. But we need to make sure that our engagement is wise, godly and winsome.

What are you contributing?

- Are you sharing your life honestly and openly? You don't have to share everything, of course. Some things are rightly private. But are you giving a false picture of your life? Are you making it appear better than the reality or making people envious of you?
- Are you engaging in discussions appropriately? Are your contributions true, helpful, important, necessary, and kind? Does it seem likely that the person you're speaking to will be in a position to listen and take on board what you are saying? Has your point already been made by others? Very, very often, the most helpful thing to say is nothing.

Where are you contributing?

Whatever site you are using, or group (formal or informal) you are in, depends on the contributions of its members for survival and growth. Consider whether your online places are the ones you want to see survive and grow? And if not, could you just leave?

Consider the influence of others in the group on you. Is the tone and nature of their posts something you want to emulate in yours? And if not, why are you there?

Why are you contributing?

- Are you correcting error? That's fine, but remember that there will always be someone wrong on the internet and policing it is not your job! Are you answering a fool according to their folly when you ought not to be?
- Is your contribution intended to build relationships or destroy them? Is it building people up or knocking them down? Is it pointing to the glory of the gospel or reflecting the wickedness of the world?

Godliness online is just like godliness offline. We constantly need to be considering our words, our thoughts and our actions, weighing them against God's standards, as found in Scripture and modelled by Christ. We constantly need to be repenting of our failures, asking forgiveness, seeking to do better. We need to clothe ourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. We must forgive as the Lord forgave us. And over all these virtues, we must put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. And we must do these things online as well as offline.

Ros Clarke is Associate Director of Church Society.

Seriously? It's a joy!

Chris Moore considers the place of seriousness in the Christian life.

A couple of months ago Mary, my wife, and I were staying in the Highlands, just to the west of Inverness. Sunday came, and we made our way to a church in the city. When in Scotland we worship in the Free Church of Scotland. It's solid.

So it was that we entered the modern building and took our seats. There were around a hundred chairs slowly filling, and I leant over to whisper something to Mary. 'I don't think we're supposed to talk' she whispered back. She was right. Silence reigned before the service, and when we sang it was unaccompanied. Only Psalms were sung, and there were no jokes in the sermon, which was long and biblical. As the service continued we were left with a deep sense of seriousness, and I can still remember what was preached: the kindness of God.

In short: it was wonderful! The church was full, with families lined up in their chairs. The children stayed in throughout, and in the evening they were all there again. Serious it may have been, but it was not off-putting.

Times of revival

All this put me in mind of the diaries and journals of ministers of a previous generation. In times of great revival, when the gospel light breaks over the dawn horizon, I have been struck by how often a solemnity settled on a congregation. There would be a stillness, sometimes broken by weeping over sin, and a weight would settle on a crowd. Take this as an example, from the pen of the great missionary to the Native Americans, David Brainerd, writing in 1743:

> Saturday, September 10. Rode six miles to Stanwich, and preached to a considerable assembly of people. Had some assistance and freedom, especially towards the close. Endeavored much afterwards, in private conversation, to establish holiness, humility, meekness, etc. as the essence of true religion; and to moderate some noisy sort of persons that appeared to me to be acted [actuated] by unseen spiritual pride. Alas, what extremes men incline to run into! Returned to Horseneck, and felt some seriousness and sweet solemnity in the evening.

'Seriousness and sweet solemnity.' The next year, on the other side of the Atlantic, George Whitefield was reflecting on his experience of preaching in the docks of Plymouth:

Let me commend seriousness to you. It is as you realise how serious is your sin, that you can truly appreciate how great is God's grace.

> I desire you all to bless him [Jesus] for what he is doing in these parts; for preaching at the Dock is now like preaching at the tabernacle. It would delight your dear soul, my brother, to be a spectator of the people's seriousness.

Seriousness in the entertainment age

In an age where we prioritise entertainment, and the endless scrolling of phone screens numbs thought, all this talk of seriousness sounds rather worthy and dull. Surely, people argue, the church should be *more* entertaining, not less? We should focus on the joy and fulfilment Christ brings, not the seriousness of sin. We should invest in better coffee machines at the back of church rather than better sermons.

Well, I have no complaint with the motive of drawing people to Christ, but it is telling that Jesus himself began his ministry with a call to repentance (Mark 1:15). The path to redemption inevitably winds through those deep valleys where we become aware of our sinfulness. As our vision of the majesty of the all-sovereign God expands we shrink in comparison. As the awe of the great, grace-filled love which produced the cross deepens within us we are humbled. Might we not echo the words of Ecclesiastes 12:13 'The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.'

That fear of God is the beginning of wisdom. 'I will warn you whom to fear: fear him who, after he has killed, has authority to cast into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him!' (Luke 12:5). So says Jesus, and as the earliest church heeded his words, so it grew: 'So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was being built up. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it multiplied' (Acts 9:31).

The Hebrew word we translate as 'glory' carries the meaning of weight (as Martin Davie explains in his article). To glorify God is to give him his due weight, to treat the faith as a weighty matter. As the author of the Letter to the Hebrews reminds us: 'It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God' (Hebrews 10:31). The fear of the Lord – that deep sense of reverence and humility before the one who created you and holds your future in his hands – is at the core of Christianity.

There was a story told by Matthew Henry about one of Queen Elizabeth I's courtiers. He had retired, and was spending his time in serious thought about his faith. His friends were concerned that he was growing depressed, but far from it:

> I am serious; for all are serious round about me. God is serious in observing us, Christ is serious in interceding for us, the Spirit is serious in striving with us, the truths of God are serious, our spiritual enemies are serious in their endeavours to ruin us, poor lost sinners are serious in hell; and why then should not you and I be serious too?'

Friends, let me commend seriousness to you. It is as you realise how serious is your sin, that you can truly appreciate how great is God's grace. It is as you understand God to be judge of all that you can rejoice in the justification wrought for you by Christ. It is as the terrible, infinite majesty of God begins to make its impression on your thinking, that his love for you leaves deep impressions of joy. Oh, and remember that the one to be feared is also the one who sent his Son to save you.

The more we understand the fear of God, the more we wonder at his kindness to us. Surely that is the beginning of wisdom.

Be serious. It will bring you joy.

Chris Moore is Rector of the Fownhope Benefice and Regional Director for Church Society in the Southwest and West of England.

Fellowship of Word and Spirit Conference

Leadership

– from Scripture to theology to ministry

Speakers

Ros Clarke
George Crowder
Lee Gatiss
Clare Hendry
James Hughes
Rob Munro

Monday 31st January – Wednesday 2nd February 2022
Cloverley Hall, Shropshire

More details and booking form at churchsociety.org

Prayer Diary: February

18 Camborne (Truro) – P-in-C, Rosheen Browning. We give thanks for the Transforming Mission team. We pray that each church in our cluster becomes more rooted in Christ and seeks to join in with God's mission to the 'forgotten corners of the world'.

19 Pray for Associate Director, Ros Clarke, as the keynote speaker at today's Reformation Fellowship Women's Theological Conference.

20 Chadderton, Christ Church (Manchester) – Vicar, Ben Wilkinson. Pray we would grow in Christlike, gospel-centred culture; for love and unity in and between our two churches in Oldham, and our new partnership with St Mary's Balderstone (Rochdale). Pray for wisdom and courage in evangelism.

21 Chadwell St Mary (Chelmsford) – P-in-C, Darren Barlow.

22 Burlingham (South)* with Lingwood (Norwich) – Rector, David Wakefield. Give thanks for the joy of worshipping together at Christmas. Pray for how we raise our Parish Share, and for the future of our pre-school group whose venue closes in the Spring.

23 Pray for AMiE and ANiE that the kingdom may grow through their work.

24 Chatham, St Philip & St James (Rochester) – Vicar, Martyn Saunders. Pray for new Associate Vicar, Andrew Vaughan and for good relationships within the clergy team as Martyn Saunders takes on responsibility for reopening St John's Chatham.

25 Cheadle, St Mary (Chester) – Rector, Rob Munro. Praise God for growing connections with the community, and pray for fruit from evangelistic initiatives planned around Easter, Platinum Jubilee and Festival Manchester. Pray for our work among children and youth.

26 Pray that evangelical leaders in the Church of England will work well across networks for the sake of a common witness and common goals.

27 Pray for the continuing witness of the 39 Articles. For the CofE to uphold them and ensure that they are taught and valued.

28 Chilton* (St Eds & Ips) – P-in-C, Cheryl Collins.

Revitalisation ministry as mission

In the first of an ongoing series on revitalisation ministry, George Crowder explains how he came to a non-evangelical parish and began the work of shaping the church into a vehicle for mission.

All things to all people

A post at St John Over in Winsford, Cheshire, was offered to me with much encouragement from my area bishop, who was always a friend and an ally. To be given a non-evangelical church with a clear mandate to revitalise it as an evangelical was an undeniable opportunity. In my college days I had become convinced that this kind of ministry was much needed, and I thought I might indeed pursue it. It was as much of a calling as I was ever going to get.

I inherited a nineteenth-century catholic revival building sited on a thirteenth-century street which borders two large 1960s council estates and a couple of more modern private housing developments. Winsford's industrial heritage lies in the now-automated salt industry, yet the arrival of the UK's first industrial park drew huge numbers of people from Liverpool and Manchester to relocate to factory work and affordable housing. They were housed alongside each other, which continues to be an intriguing social experiment.

St John's Church comprised 45 people, with an average age of 65. Services were held on Sunday morning, Sunday evening and Wednesday morning. The only other church activities were the ladies' group, the Christmas fair and the Summer fair, which together with the harvest festival were administered by a strangely powerful social committee. The PCC was populated by anyone who wanted to show willing and dominated by one powerful individual.

Sunday services began with the procession of the cross, and the minister presided in full vestments, giving a brief 'thought for the day' homily which had a tenuous connection to the lectionary readings. Music was provided by means of a CD set of organ recordings; a microphone directed at a portable stereo system giving the sound input. Hymns were selected using a lectionary guide, and if the number of verses written didn't equate to the number of verses played, then the congregation accordingly sang *a capella* or listened to the organ recording in silence.

Each of these details betrayed significant challenges that lay ahead of me. St John's held a place in the community as a church, but it

Christ's mission agency is the local church, the visible covenant community. The local church needs to be a roadworthy mission vehicle to carry people Christ has died for on the road to glory.

was not functioning as a church. It would be a couple of years before I could, on the one hand, lay hold on a coherent vision for the church and, on the other, have any hope of bringing at least a few people with me. Until then I had to find a way to exercise a ministry of sorts that could fit into this place

Like so many I have talked to about this ministry, I had to establish what was going to change from the moment I arrived, and to find a balance between gracious accommodation and doctrinal faithfulness.

When I preached for the first time, many of the congregation were shocked at the length and complexity of my sermon. I preached for twelve minutes and caused consternation by constantly referring to the Bible reading. Obviously, my one 'non-negotiable' was biblical preaching, and I could see that this was such a revolution that I needed to give as much ground as possible with everything else.

No-one was troubled at the transition from vestments to cassock, surplice and scarf, though it would have been a bridge too far to ditch the robes completely. Using 'Order 2', the most reformed of the Holy Communion service options, didn't seem to be a problem either, which was an encouragement. I left everything else as it was to start with, processing with the cross, being attended by the server, consuming the elements (the remaining bread and wine) and playing host to a large candle rack at the front of the building.

One evening I sneaked into the building, unscrewed the light from above the aumbry

Prayer Diary: March

1 Great Chishill* (Chelmsford) – Rector, Anand Sodadasi. Pray that the parish ministry of Icknield Way Villages would be gospel-centred and Bible-believing, and all the churches may be witnessing among these seven villages in the midst of many challenges. Pray that we may have Bible studies in each village and that the Parish financial deficit would be covered by the end of this year.

2 Pray for Rod Thomas in his responsibilities as Bishop of Maidstone.

3 Compton Chamberlayne* (Salisbury) – Team Rector, Graham Southgate.

4 Pray for the Anglican Primates, that they would be faithful to the Scriptures under the pressures they face.

5 Corley (Coventry) – Vacancy.

6 Pray for Luckley House School for which Church Society appoints Trustees, for wisdom and boldness for the senior team and governors to uphold a biblical Christian ethos through all aspects of school life.

7 Cowden w. Hammerwood and Holtye (Rochester) – Vacancy.

8 Pray for wise administration and use of the funds and properties entrusted to Church Society for gospel work.

9 Cudham, St Peter & St Paul (Rochester) – Vicar, John Musson. Pray for our outreach into the community, especially as the new pastoral team is up and running. Also that people engage with the Bible Course from the Bible Society as we launch that. Finally, that our links with Cudham C of E school continue to grow and for Head of School Dan Finch.

10 Pray for aged and infirm Christians with limited opportunities for Christian fellowship, and those who care for them.

11 Duffield, St Alkmund (Derby) – Vicar, James Hughes. Give thanks for folk gradually returning to both churches after Covid. Pray for fundraising and appointment of a new youth and children's worker.

With the proclamation of redemption and restoration Christ calls people of all nations to become part of his people, the new covenant community, the church.

safe and threw away the key. 'Consecrated bread' used to be stored or 'reserved' there, and the light used to indicate that 'Jesus was present'. I also hid the crucifix that was on the table in the side chapel. No-one noticed. A few months later I moved the candle rack to the back. A few people noticed that, but they let me get away with it. Many, many small incremental changes followed.

I couldn't simply go on changing things ad hoc, though, however slowly and carefully. I had a lot to learn about the people who came each week. Many of the things that they considered a normal part of a church, even the little things, were strange and alarming to me. That cut both ways of course; I had to accept that even the tiniest changes I made would seem strange and alarming to them. I couldn't simply preach at them. I needed to connect with them and help them connect to God through his word.

Imagine that you set up an outreach group and 45 people came along to it regularly. You would go out of your way to make sure they felt welcome, removing all the barriers that might appear strange to them. It's no little opportunity to share the gospel with a settled group of people over a sustained period of time.

Our natural instinct, nevertheless, is to remove all the 'churchiness' from such an enterprise. In my case, the sort of 'churchiness' I had long shunned was the very thing that I had to live with for the sake of the people who came. I carried a huge burden of worry about newcomers being repelled by it, and a strong conviction that the church's mission was to the whole parish not just to the people in the church, so I was constantly conflicted.

I know other revitalisation ministers share this sense of conflict. I have heard other Christian leaders register concerns, sometimes about compromise, but more often about evangelistic ineffectiveness. To get some perspective, we need to refresh ourselves with a big picture view of mission.

A roadworthy mission vehicle

God's mission begins in the sublime interaction between the members of the Holy Trinity. Jesus acknowledges a glorious pact as the Son of God in prayer with his Father in John 17:2, 'you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him.' As Jesus faces his most painful part in this plan, he speaks only of glory. His death brings glory by opening the way to sharing it. Redemption through his blood brings those who believe in him into a perfect union with God: 'The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one' (v.22).

Human beings are created in God's image to bear God's image; created for worship. Worship is simply the mode of our relationship with our creator. He made us for a relationship with him that reflects his glory. He ordered our relationships with each other and with the rest of creation to be purposefully, responsibly and enjoyably reflective of his communicable attributes in order to glorify him.

While worship is the mode of our relationship with God as our creator, covenant is the form or pattern of our relationship with him as our Lord. Through the grand narrative of Scripture, God reveals the person he is and the way he operates relationally. The Bible is the story of the relationship between God and people, and that relationship is based on his word, it is a covenant relationship.

When Adam and Eve listened to another

voice in the garden, they rejected the speaker of the word that formed them and gave them life; they broke the covenant of creation. Our relationship with God, based on his word, is the fabric of our existence and our fallenness has it in tatters. In the Old Testament, as God revealed his word through promise, law and prophecy, his fallen people helplessly and yet wilfully rejected it. However, each new revelation was a revelation of hope for restoration in the covenant for a greatly extended people of God through the person and work of a perfect mediator, a covenant redeemer.

From the beginning, God gathered a people to whom he gave his word and whom he called his own. He revealed the basis of his relationship with them in the covenants he made with Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses and David. Each pointed to a greater overarching covenant of grace, a future hope expressed most fully in the new covenant. This hope took shape in a people, and this was a people who gathered in an assembly, a people who said yes and amen to his word, a covenant community, a people of his word.

Christ fulfils our hope because he fulfilled all the covenants in his blood. With the proclamation of redemption and restoration he calls people of all nations to become part of his people, the new covenant community, the church. It's a people formed by his word that gathers in an assembly to glorify his name and to embody the hope he gives them in his eternal kingdom. It's a people who devote themselves 'to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers' (Acts 2:42). It's a people whom Jesus calls together to proclaim his message together,

Prayer Diary: March

12 Dagenham, St Peter & St Paul (Chelmsford) – Vicar, Joel Edwards. Pray for spiritual growth in the church, diminished in number after the pandemic. For people who joined last term to be served and to serve in church life. For fruit from Passion for Life projects including The Mark Drama and a Cornhill Team visiting our regular ministries.

13 Danehill, All Saints (Chichester) – Vicar, Paddy MacBain. Pray for all in the churches, especially the leaders, to grow in godliness, love and faithfulness to the Scriptures. Pray that the home groups and Sunday services will inspire a whole-hearted commitment to the Lord Jesus.

14 Pray for Lee Gatiss attending the Affinity Council meeting today and tomorrow. Pray for their work in connecting evangelicals across denominations in the UK. For Anglican evangelicals to have good relationships with non-Anglicans.

15 Pray for Church Society Trust, our patronage board meeting today, for wise appointments in all our Trust parishes. Pray also for the Bishop of Maidstone's advisory group meeting today, and for Lee Gatiss attending.

16 Dolton* (Exeter) – P-in-C, Susan Oldham.

17 Pray that the Bishops and clergy in the Church of England would uphold biblical teaching on human sexuality.

18 Pray for our publishing ministry to be clear and faithful in equipping the church.

19 Great Dunham* (Norwich) – Vacancy.

20 Pray for Synods and Committees, that godly wisdom would be brought to bear at every level of the Church of England.

21 Düsseldorf, Christ Church – Chaplain, Stephen Walton. Give thanks for new people joining. Pray that the Covid rules won't divide the church and that we will have new zeal and energy in gospel work.

22 Pray for Associate Director, Ros Clarke, speaking to ordinands at Oak Hill College about complementarianism in the Church of England today.

to be a community of disciple-making disciples, 'baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you' (Matthew 28:19–20). The church is at once the goal and vehicle of Christ's global mission.

Because human beings have broken God's covenant, redemption is the road to glory. His people's mission task in this age is evangelism, the proclamation of the good news about Jesus to all who will believe it. Because redemption is restoration in God's covenant, church is the mission vehicle. Christ's mission agency is the local church, the visible covenant community. The local church needs to be a roadworthy mission vehicle to carry people Christ has died for on the road to glory.

There are many more disciples we want to make than those in the established congregation, but the vehicle for mission is the local church. More fundamentally, the mission is God's not ours, and it is founded on his word. Church revitalisation is the business of shaping an existing congregation into a covenant community of disciples, a roadworthy mission vehicle.

George Crowder is vicar of St John's Church, Over and Regional Director for Church Society in the north of England.

Gospel Opportunism

Wednesday 12th January
1–2.30pm

This bimonthly series of webinars is open to anyone involved or interested in working in parishes without a tradition of evangelical ministry.

Each session includes a presentation, an interview, and time for discussion and prayer.

More information at churchsociety.org

Church Society
REVITALISATION
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Vacancies & appointments

Church Society Trust holds the rights of patronage for a number of benefices in the Church of England. To find out more about the current vacancies, or to apply, please see churchsociety.org/vacancies.

Vacancies

Babcary, Diocese of Bath & Wells, House for Duty
Slaidburn, Diocese of Leeds, House for Duty
Chilton, Diocese of St Eds & Ips, P-in-C
Corley, Diocese of Coventry, Vicar
Knodishall, Diocese of St Eds & Ips, P-in-C

Appointments

Andy Dykes, Vicar, St John, Blackpool, Diocese of Blackburn
Darren Barlow, P-in-C, Chadwell St Mary, Diocese of Chelmsford
Nick Alexander, Vicar, St Peter & St Paul, Moulton, Diocese of Peterborough (pictured)
Adam Childs & Jo Purle, Team Vicars, St Mary, Sevington, Diocese of Canterbury
Joanna Farnworth, All Saints, Stirchley, Diocese of Lichfield

Richard Croft / St. Peter & St. Paul's church
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Prayer Diary: March

23 Pray for the Latimer Trust and its publications ministry.

24 Eastbourne, All Souls (Chichester) – Vicar, Mark Redhouse. Thank God for completion of our building project; for a remarkable response to our recent gift day towards the post of assistant minister. Pray that this may be recognised as a licensed lay minister post by the diocese, and for God's will as we apply to trusts to make up the 30% shortfall for the post.

25 Pray that evangelical Anglican theological colleges would not be discriminated against when candidates are advised on training.

26 Eastbourne, Holy Trinity (Chichester) – Vicar, Philip Coekin.

27 Pray for clergy looking for posts.

28 Egham, St John the Baptist (Guildford) – Vicar, Esther Prior. Pray that we would devote ourselves to Scripture, to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. That we would enjoy the favour of all the people in our town, as the Lord adds to our number those being saved.

29 Pray for clergy preparing Easter sermons and services, that they will present clearly the truth of Christ's death and resurrection.

30 Low Elswick (Newcastle) – Vicar, George Curry.

31 Pray for churches in the Anglican Communion facing persecution in countries openly hostile to Christianity.

Thank you for praying with us.

* Indicates that the Trust's parish is part of a larger benefice.
These prayer diary items are also accessible via the PrayerMate app: http://praynow4.org/churchsociety.
We also produce a prayer list sheet of all the parishes we are patron of; if you would like to be sent this please contact the office.

Crossway

Winter 2022/162
Editor: Ros Clarke

Crossway is the quarterly magazine of Church Society and is available free to members of the Society. For details of how to become a member, please check our website or contact us using the details listed below.

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UK: £10
Overseas: £17

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THE Global Anglican

Established in 1879 as *The Churchman*

The Global Anglican

The Winter 2021 issue of *The Global Anglican*, an international theological journal produced quarterly by Church Society, is now out:

- Editorial – 'Where is the True Church?': *Peter Jensen*
- 'Expounding the Bible in Latin America': *Luke Foster*
- 'Fathers and Reformers in the Church': *Henri Blocher*
- 'The Perseverance of the Saints in Reformation Anglicanism': *Matthew N. Payne*
- 'Preaching the Whole Bible? Do Conservative Evangelicals Really Mean It?': *Philip Keen*

Making a bequest to Church Society

Here is a convenient form of words which can be used to make a bequest to Church Society in your Will:
'I GIVE the residue of my estate / the sum of _____ pounds (£) to CHURCH SOCIETY of Ground Floor, Centre Block, Hille Business Park, 132 St Albans Road, Watford WD24 4AE and I DIRECT that the receipt of the Administrator or other proper officer of Church Society shall be good and sufficient discharge to my Executor.'

Church Society

EQUIPPING GOD'S PEOPLE TO LIVE GOD'S WORD