

Grapevine

October/November 2006

Parish Magazine

St. Luke with St. Bartholomew



Editors –
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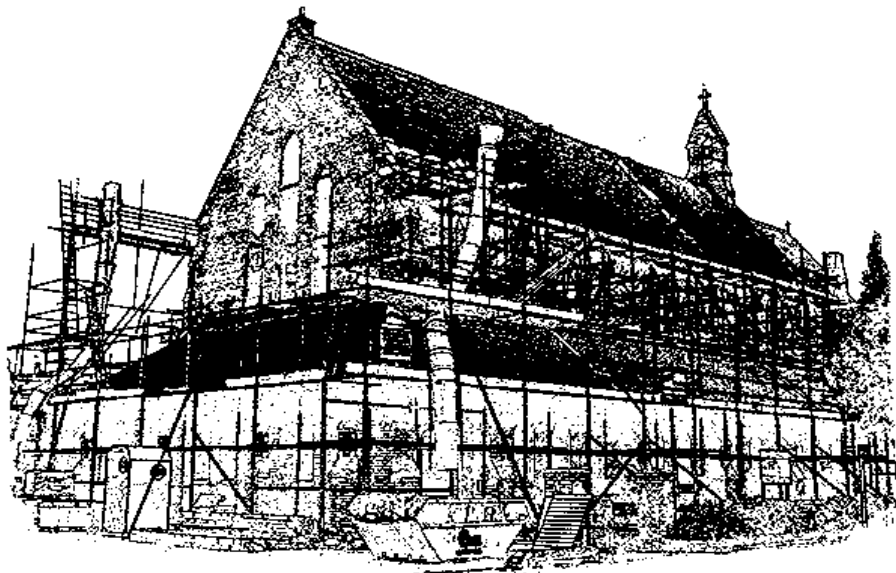
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St. Luke's Church Roof

 Leslie Green

For many years the tiles on our church roof have hung in position through the power of prayer. The iron pins supporting them had rusted away over past decades.

With grateful thanks to Mary Turner who generously remembered the church in her will, work has finally begun on the complete re-roofing of St Luke's.



Scaffolding was erected in August and the roofing contractor, N D Bowley has made an excellent start. The old tiles and battening are being removed in stages. The condition of the remaining superstructure appears remarkably good.

A conventional roofing felt is being laid and new battens are being screwed in position (using stainless screws). Tiles similar in size and colour to the original are being used.

Work is taking place on both the North and South elevations so that the weight is distributed evenly over the supporting structures at all times.

The area adjacent to the bellcote is being left untilled at present so further scaffolding can be erected to enable the masonry to be replaced on the tower.

Several stones on the South transept and West Gable will also be repaired or replaced. A F Jones stone masons have been contracted to carry out the work and will schedule in their work over the next few months, so as not to hinder the tiling.

As the tiling nears completion, we also plan to clean and paint the cast iron guttering and down pipes. Some of the guttering around the chancel may need to be replaced and quotations are currently being obtained.

Weather permitting, work should finish in December.



Did you know? The current building that is St. Luke's church was consecrated by the Bishop of Reading on 6 June 1883. The building was originally designed by Piers St. Aubyn, who was also the architect of St. Giles church.

Note: St Bart's will be open for prayer from 7am - 9am each weekday morning for the time being.

Parish Prayer Diary



Christine Blackman

Many years ago we used to have a monthly list that showed the special days during the month and suggested people to pray for.

This has been reintroduced in this magazine. I hope some people find it interesting and helpful.

The diary has been printed on the centre pages, to make it easy for you to pull it out and keep it handy.

Thank you



Gemma & Ali Bagshaw

Thank you very much to everyone who supported us in the build up to our wedding on the 29th July. Thank you for your lovely cards, kind words and support. We had a wonderful day and an incredible honeymoon.

The wedding day was made particularly special by the large number of people who attended the service and sang in the choir – it was wonderful to see so many familiar faces in church.

An especially big “Thank you!” to Christine, Brian, Nigel, Gordon and the choir. We look forward to sharing the photos with you soon!

Evolution, Creationists etc.



Nigel Hardcastle

The latest issue of the New Scientist has two stories about evolution. One is about how fruit flies on three continents have independently been evolving over the last 20 years to cope with global warming. The other was about Tiktaalik, the newly found “missing Link” between the fish and the amphibians.

Scientists compared the genetic markers of fruit flies in different areas 20 years ago with their distribution today. All sorts of markers that 20 years ago were only found in the very hottest places have now spread outward or upward to places that were once cooler. Presumably, these are genes that make living in hot places easier. Flies with these genes are more likely to survive and lay healthy eggs. There will be more of this sort of gene in the next generation. This is the way

that useful mutations are passed on to the next generation, whilst destructive mutations can only be passed on in small numbers.

“Creationists” find no problem with this. It has been shown to be true too often. The genetic colour of moths changed when the clean air act changed the colour of trees back from black to brown. The sooty coloured mutations now stood out and got eaten by birds. Think what human selection has done to farm animals or to the miniature poodle.

“Creationists” are not simply people who believe that God created the world and everything in it. All Christians, Muslims and Jews believe that.

“Creationists” believe in the most literal interpretation of Genesis chapter 1.; that the

7 days were no poetic reference to a period of time (as in John 8v 56.) They are each a period of 24 hours. In particular "Creationists" believe that it is not possible for one species to turn into another however many generations of selection take place. This last belief is not anywhere in the bible. They believe it because if it were true then only God could have made the different species, which would prove Genesis might be literally true.

Christians who are not "Creationists" believe that God created the world with physical laws that meant that life would evolve. In other words God creates the world like a cook creates a sponge cake. They don't carefully carve out each bubble. They mix the flour and baking powder etc. and put in the oven at the right temperature for the right time. They know that the process will make the bubbles. God knew the process of evolution would

make living creatures adapted to their environment.

So can one form of gazelle mutate over thousands of generations to become a different species of gazelle or antelope? Can a wild cat evolve into a mountain lion? Given millions of generations can a fish evolve into an amphibian like a newt or frog?

When Darwin came up with his theory it answered many questions but it still had problems. The theory predicted "missing links", animals half way between existing species. Why do we not find their bones? A good question. The search started and now literally thousands of "missing links" have been found.

One interesting question is how land animals developed from fish. Until recently scientists could point to Ponderichthys, the most amphibian-like of the fish, and Acanthostega, the most fish-like of the amphibians.

Then scientists used all they knew about evolution to work out when the change must have happened. They then looked on geological maps for rocks of the right age. As a result they set out for Ellesmere Island, north of Canada. There they found a creature almost exactly half way between fish and amphibians.

The most interesting "missing links" for us are those between humans and apes. "Creationists" say this proves nothing.

Some are simply unusual apes, but still apes. Some are unusual humans, but still humans. The problem is that as we discover more and more "missing links" the gap between unusual apes and unusual humans gets smaller and smaller. It becomes more and more difficult to claim that over 100,000 generations this change is not possible. It begins to look more and more as if this is the way God planned the world.

As St Augustine of Hippo said long ago, the wonder is not just that God made the world, but that he made a world that makes itself. God made you and me. The fact that our parents also caused us does not make this any less true. God created the process, and wills our existence.

The single greatest problem for "Creationists" is the literal interpretation of "7 days". All sorts of evidence suggests that the earth and the universe is much older. Did God really make the geological layers of the earth so that it looked as if the earth is billions of years old when it was really only 7,000 years old? If so, why? And can he blame us for believing evidence he forged to mislead us?

Dating matter by examining the proportion of different radioisotopes remaining confirms the other estimates. "Creationists" say that the flood affected all these readings, though the method still gives the

correct dates for the Marie Rose and Greek galleys even though they have been under water for more than 40 days. It also gives an age of 4.5 billion years for the moon. The flood did not cover that! On this point their argument is the weakest of all.

("Creationists" also believe that the flood wiped out all dinosaurs etc. Noah obviously did not get two of every creature on board after all!)

Ideally "Creationists" would like evolution banned from science lessons and "creationism" taught instead. They know this is impossible. Thus what they ask for is the teaching of "intelligent design". This leaves out claims about a literal 7 days.

Now all Christians believe in an intelligent designer. We call him God. Their claim is that you cannot explain the different sorts of animal in

the world without an "intelligent designer" who designed them each, one by one. Of course God may have done this. He is quite capable of doing this if he chose.

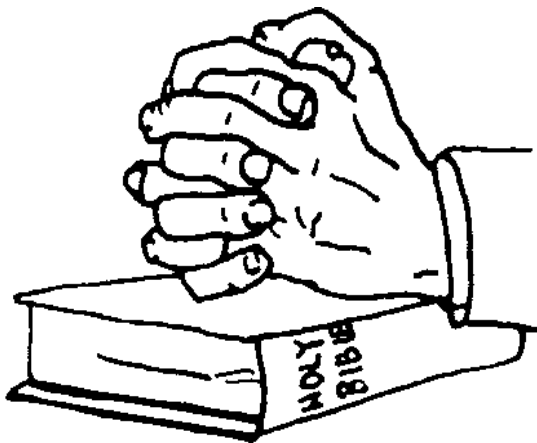
We may have been misled by the evidence we presently have. However, this belief in an intelligent designer is not a scientific belief to be taught in science lessons until we have evidence that convinces scientists. In the meantime I believe that a God who can design a universe where life evolves into millions of species, each adapted to its place is at least as intelligent as the God of the "Creationists".

If you are interested in this question there will be copies of the sermon of the 1st October on this subject and other material available. The family service on the 8th October will also deal with this theme.

It only takes a minute.....

 Christine Blackman

A group of us have decided to form a prayer group (did I hear someone say, "Another one"?).



This prayer group is different. So far all the members are busy at work during the day and sometimes don't feel like going out again in the evening. We have agreed that we will pray together even though we will all be in different places. As a modest start we will try to pray at one o'clock for 10 minutes.

Please join us.

You can tell Christine that you will be praying, or you can just do it. If you can only manage one minute, that is still worth doing.

To begin with we will be particularly praying for our Parish, that we will show God's love in action, but if there are other things that are important to you, then pray for them too.

Even if you are too busy to down tools and concentrate, remember that some of your friends are at prayer at one o'clock and say your own prayers when you can.

Thoughts about children in Church life



June Hardcastle

I was very interested in Richard's sermon on the 27th August. I was at St Bart's, as I am most Sundays.

Richard's message was about the importance of bringing children to an understanding of the faith, at home and within the church.

How could it impact on our church life, especially in places like St Bart's where the gathered congregation is mostly middle aged and older?

The first time I ever read a Bible passage in public was in 1965 when I was 17 years old. It was from Zechariah chapter 8 and the first 8 verses. It speaks of a New Jerusalem where young and old live in righteousness and truth and peace, and the streets are full of children playing together. **Children are at heart of God's will for his creation.**



How interesting that the passage isn't about the vital work of this or that important hierarchical person: it speaks of the work of God in rescuing people from the lands of strange gods, and the centrality of the most vulnerable in society- the old who need a stick and the young who play.

Yet, this is not a sentimental vision but is a cutting edge one.

We who are in the family of the Church are not just involved in teaching the faith but in working with God in

bringing about that New Creation of which the Bible speaks- rescuing from the strange lands of oppression and abuse; rescuing from bullying and racism; rescuing from atheism and agnosticism; bringing children to the New Jerusalem, that New Creation where together they play in safety.

Further, **children themselves** are not just passive receivers but **active agents** in that New Creation. As "Unfinished Business" (a URC publication) reminds us:

"Children have a ministry...reminding people of the incarnation and the embodying weakness which God chose. They can have a distinctive teaching ministry in which they ask...questions, voicing the doubts and questions which adults are too self conscious to raise and enabling answers to be found for all...calling us to share all that is holy and rich in meaning for everyone rather than just the preoccupations of the middle aged."

How fitting it was that Richard's sermon coincided with some children from St Bart's Sunday School writing the intercessions! Richard told us how important to him was the text from the morning OT reading:

"As for me and for my house, we will serve the Lord."

I also had pop into the forefront of my mind another text:

"And a little child shall lead them."

Perhaps in listening to children those of us who wonder what journey God has planned for our parish, might hear the very voice of God Himself.

From the Editors

We hope you enjoy this, the first issue of Grapevine that we have pulled together, since taking over from Hamish. Thank you to everyone who has contributed to it.

Hamish did a fantastic job of editing our parish magazine over the last nine and a half years, and we only hope we can develop and maintain the same momentum and quality that he did.

Of course, we continue to rely on the sterling efforts of those in the production team, without whom you'd not be reading this!

Looking to the future, we're really keen to hear what you think about the magazine and what you'd like to see in it.

Just as importantly, we really need you to come to us with ideas and articles **you'd** like to contribute.

We plan to issue Grapevine every two months, so that gives you plenty of time to think about it! We'd like to have contributions for the next issue by 12th November, but we'll accept them up to 19th.

You can email your contributions to the address below or drop them in the box at the back of St. Luke's church – we know not everyone uses a computer or the internet!

Julian and Anne-Marie

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