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# St Mary's Northchurch Newsletter

## July/August 2018



**Church enquiries to:**  
**Revd Jonathan Gordon**  
**01442 871547**  
[revjagordon@googlemail.com](mailto:revjagordon@googlemail.com)

# The Parable of the Mustard Seed

A few weeks ago I watched a really interesting documentary about the murder of Stephen Lawrence. The main people who were interviewed were primarily Stephen's parents and in particular Doreen Lawrence or who is now Baroness Lawrence of Clarendon. The story and its developments are well known but one thing in particular struck me very strongly in the programme. At the time of Stephen's death the family are seen with their pastor and then one of the final shots is of the two of them together in the present saying a prayer at the memorial by the place where Stephen died. The minister is not interviewed but he seemed over the last twenty five years as if he was an important support and presence in the life of the family.

It has made me think about the role of the church and how we are involved with society. In the national church there are new initiatives for church growth and reaching new people and these are important as you cannot assume that future generations will simply come as in years past. A number of these ideas are shaped by business strategies. It is interesting but my problem with such language is twofold: business strategy is based on profit and economics, whilst the ethos of the church and its mission is concerned with loving and caring for everyone irrespective of their economic value. The second issue is that in business thinking we are encouraged to think about what we must do as an organisation to make a difference and how we can change things or find the "tipping point." The expression used is "building the kingdom," but in some of the parables told by Jesus, God's kingdom is not dependent on what we do. It is God's initiative and we recognise it and receive it. We don't build it as it is a gift.

Jesus told a parable about a mustard seed. It describes

how something that is quite unpromising in its beginnings develops into something extraordinary and beautiful. A mustard seed, something unremarkable and the smallest of seeds has the potential to grow into something that the birds of the air can find shade. One thing that strikes me about the mustard seed parable is that Jesus is inviting us to think small. This is not easy as the world tends to like big and successful, but what we might think is unimportant and inconsequential is in the eyes of Jesus something of huge revolutionary potential. The mustard seed will grow into a shrub, not much to look at, and it won't draw a lot of attention, but that shrub, for all its limitations, is a miraculous sign of the work of God.

I think that is why the pastor in the Stephen Lawrence film was so interesting. He did not say anything but he was with the family, as a representative of the church, offering prayer and support. These are challenging times for the church. We are fairly marginalised and it is easy to become a bit disheartened. So Jesus tells the story of a tiny seed that grows into a shrub. This might just be the way that God does things.

Rev Jonathan Gordon

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**Lance Corporal 4/6982 George CURL****2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, Bedfordshire Regiment. Killed 1<sup>st</sup> July 1918**

George Curl, the younger brother of Alfred Curl who was killed in December 1917, was born in Bell Lane, Northchurch in 1896. Within three days of war breaking out in 1914, George walked into Berkhamsted and became one of some 250,000 teenage boys from across the country who lied about their age in order to sign up. Unlike many other teenagers however, George only knocked three months off his age.

George was sent to France in September 1915 to join 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, Bedfordshire Regiment. The following year, George survived the Somme Offensive and in 1917 he took part in the bloody battles at Arras and Ypres and was one of the few members of 2<sup>nd</sup> Bedfords to survive the German Spring Offensive in March 1918. Held in Reserve through most of June, George wrote to his sister, Lizzie, that the battalion had been given shorts to wear and suggested 'strolling up Berko' in them with people thinking he was a football player!

On 29<sup>th</sup> June, George's battalion returned to the front line near Albert. That night the Battalion took part in a successful attack against German trenches on the Bouzincourt Spur. Early in the morning on 1<sup>st</sup> July however, the Germans launched a powerful counterattack, hitting the Battalion's advanced posts. According to one of George's officers, George was killed having courageously jumped out of his trench, because some of the soldiers in front of him 'refused to face the Hun bombs'. His officer continued 'it may be some consolation to know that [George] had accounted for several Huns before he lost his life'.



Photo: Peter Addiscott

Lance Corporal George Curl's body now lies in the Bouzincourt Ridge Cemetery, close to where he died. George was a seasoned veteran, having fought on the Western Front for three years and taken part in all the major battles during that time. He was described as one of the battalion's best NCOs, and yet when he died, he was still only 21 years old.

**Private T/271032 Thomas FANTHAM****10<sup>th</sup> (East Kent and West Kent Yeomanry) Battalion  
The Buffs (East Kent Regiment). Killed 10<sup>th</sup> August 1918**

Thomas Fantham was born in Northchurch in 1886. After leaving school, Thomas started work as a bricklayer's labourer and later became a gardener. He seems to have been a quietly religious man, regularly attending the local Baptist chapel. He was known in the village for his cheerfulness and took part in various local entertainments as well as playing for the local football team.

In January 1914, Thomas married Dorothy Batts, a housemaid working in one of the local large houses. They made their home in Alma Road. Later that year, their son, Frederick, was born. Thomas decided to volunteer in December 1915, just prior to the introduction of conscription. Six months later, with Dorothy expecting their second child, Thomas was instructed to report to the Recruiting Officer at Watford.

In February 1917, Thomas was posted to the Egyptian Expeditionary Force (EEF). By then the Turks no longer were a threat to the Suez Canal and had been driven north into Palestine. Thomas missed the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battle of Gaza due to illness, a frequent problem experienced by the troops in Palestine. Later, he was involved in an accident when a large piece of wood hit his leg, with the wound becoming infected and necessitating another stay in hospital.

The following year, Thomas and his battalion were sent to France as replacements for the troops lost during the German Spring Offensive. On 8<sup>th</sup> August 1918, the allies launched their massive offensive against the weary Germans at Amiens. As the Germans began to retreat north-eastwards, the allies, including Thomas and his battalion, gave chase. During an attack on 10<sup>th</sup> August, Thomas was mortally wounded. His body now lies in the St Venant-Robecq Road British Cemetery, nine miles northwest of Béthune.

**Private 601505 James DELDERFIELD****2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, Bedfordshire Regiment, transferred to 142<sup>nd</sup>  
Company, Labour Corps, Bedfordshire Regiment.  
Died 26<sup>th</sup> August 1918**

James Delderfield was born in 1885 in Wigginton, the fourth child of Mary Delderfield and her husband James, a Tring-born gamekeeper and general labourer. In 1911, James' family were living in Northchurch High Street. The following summer, James married Elizabeth Fantham in St Mary's Church and early in 1914 Elizabeth gave birth to a daughter they named Enid. The family later moved to 13 Middle Road in Berkhamsted.

Despite having family responsibilities, James enlisted with 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, Bedfordshire Regiment in the Spring of 1915 and landed in France the following August. James' service record no longer exists, so it is unclear when he was transferred to the Labour Corps, his transfer probably resulting from a wound or injury making him unfit for front line service. The circumstances of his death on 26<sup>th</sup> August are also unclear. It is likely that he was severely injured during an accident at an ammunition dump close to where he was buried eight days before he died. This accident resulted in the deaths of 13 men and the wounding of a further 58. Many of those who died as a result of the accident are buried alongside James in the Puchevillers British Cemetery, twelve miles north of Amiens.



Photo: Linda Pottinger

## News from Phakamisa in South Africa

*Note from the Editor: Phakamisa is one of the main charities that St Mary's Church supports. It exists to support children and adults in impoverished communities in South Africa who are living with HIV/AIDS. If you want to find out more information about Phakamisa, they have a website at [www.phakamisa.org](http://www.phakamisa.org).*

### PROGRAMMES:

- Early Childhood Development (ECD)
  - \* Under ECD the registration is as follows:
  - \* Child Minder – 125 teachers have registered this year
  - \* Edu Care - 80 registered this year
- Orphans AND Vulnerable Children (OVC)
- Wandering Schools

### SKILLS DEVELOPMENT:

Care givers are learning the following skills: Beadwork, sewing, cooking and gardening.

### ACTIVITIES

THURSDAY IN BLACK - Awareness in Domestic Violence and Child Abuse

### PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR 2018

The following planned activities will be done depending that we get some funding for them

- Child Protection Week
- Gogo Fun Day
- Celebrating Women's month – addressing domestic violence issues

### LOCAL FUNDRAISING PLANNED

The following fund raising have been identified for 2018

- Department of Social Development (DSD) – Care and Support Services to Families
- Afri –Sun – they do fund NGO
- Community Chest – they also support the NGO's as well

God bless you,  
Thokozani

### The Monday Club

July 9th            A display of dancing by the children of St. Mary's School.  
2 pm in the Parish Room.

July 16th          Tea in Barbara's garden

For more information please contact: Joan Downhill on 865821 or Barbara Lloyd on 865059.



## Solemnity, celebration – and sometimes just fun!

You expect to hear the bells ringing on Sunday before the usual services – but ringing at noon is out of the ordinary. So it was on the first Sunday in June when a band of Northchurch ringers gathered to remember Robert Allen with affection and respect. As a young lad, Robert had learnt to ring at St Mary's in the '50s but his working life took him away from the area, and from ringing. Retirement brought him back less than 10 years ago and Robert discovered that ringing is indeed like riding a bike: once you've learned, you never forget how to do it. Robert was the most regular of Sunday ringers – and the most conscientious clock-winder! Those bells ringing at noon heralded the scattering of Robert's ashes in the churchyard, a simple ceremony attended by a score of friends from near and far.

Bells on Saturdays at this time of year often celebrate a wedding, half an hour before the service and for 20 minutes afterwards. Different timings will tell you the bride was late! Ringing for a wedding is definitely for celebration.

If you hear the bells ringing for nearly 50 minutes non-stop, that will be a quarter peal. At the end of May, some ringers from elsewhere in the county came as part of their ambition to ring a quarter peal at every tower in Hertfordshire. 2 QPs a week will do it! This may not sound much like fun to you, but bellringers enjoy a challenge ....

What about Monday practice nights? People who enjoy their hobbies, sports, or leisure activities generally regard them as fun. But there is also a serious side to our regular practice. The ringers are learning and practising to ring something new or something tricky. Amongst supportive friends, everyone takes delight in mastery of some new skill. The overall result is that the standard of our Sunday ringing also improves.

*Valerie Clark, Tower Captain*

St Mary's Church, Northchurch

# Hallelujah!

Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> July

## Handel's Messiah

Workshop: 1–6 pm    Concert: 6.30–7.45 pm

Musical director: Richard King

Organist: Richard Carr

Singers: £12 includes refreshments and afternoon tea

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More details on: [www.stmarysnorthchurch.org.uk/events](http://www.stmarysnorthchurch.org.uk/events)

Enquiries & bookings to: [music@stmarysnorthchurch.org.uk](mailto:music@stmarysnorthchurch.org.uk)

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## A SatNav to life?

How did we ever get to difficult places before SatNav? It is my go-to method. Of course, we all tell stories about how SatNav landed us in a field. It has certainly happened to me, although more often than not because I put the address in wrongly, or had not updated the app. SatNav has been corrected by accumulated experience, making it pretty useful.

Christians often say that the Bible is like a SatNav to life. Not because you can key in an issue and out comes the answer, but because it has been built up out of people's experience of coping with different situations, their moments of joy and of sadness, of confidence and of despair. Indeed, the stories and poems and words only got into the Bible when people found, by experience, that they were helpful.

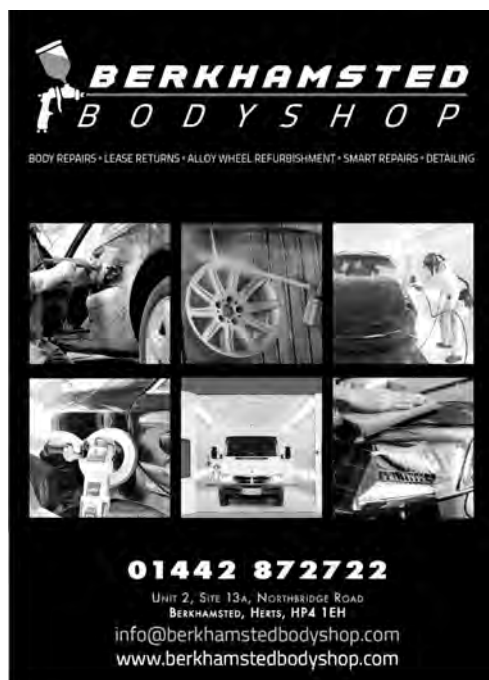
Jesus told a very short story about the kingdom of God, by which he means the way we get to let God rule in our lives. He said that it grows from little beginnings. It is like a mustard seed: if you plant the tiny seed, it will eventually grow into a great shrub, big enough even to provide a safe place for birds to nest. (Mark 4:30-32)

Starting to read the Bible is like planting the seed. It can grow into something big and helpful.

You may have heard about the man who thought he could learn from the Bible by letting it fall open at random and being guided by what it said. The first words he read did not seem very useful: "Judas went out and hanged himself. So he tried again and it said "Go and do likewise".

Silly questions get silly answers - just like when you put the address wrongly into the SatNav and end up in a field.

David White



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## Sunday Services at St Mary's



### 1st July

Trinity 5

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)  
10.00am Parish Eucharist  
6.00pm Evening Prayer at St Bart's

### 8th July

Trinity 6

8.00am Holy Communion  
10.00am Confirmation Service  
6.00pm Evening Prayer

### 15th July

Trinity 7

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)  
10.00am Parish Eucharist  
6.00pm Evening Prayer

### 22nd July

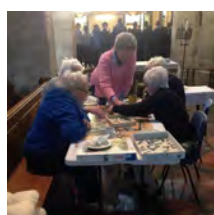
Trinity 8

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)  
10.00am Parish Eucharist  
6.00pm Evening Prayer

### 29th July

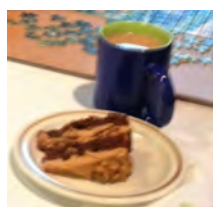
Trinity 9

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)  
10.00am Parish Eucharist  
No Evening Prayer



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Next Newsletter: September



All church enquiries to:  
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St Mary's Church

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Please visit our website [www.stmarysnorthchurch.org.uk](http://www.stmarysnorthchurch.org.uk)

## Music at St Mary's Handel's Messiah July 21<sup>st</sup>

# Hallelujah!

## A choral workshop!

St Mary's church has developed a reputation for hosting inspiring and memorable singing events. In recent years, singers have joined together from near and far in exploring great music in many styles including Vivaldi's *Gloria* and Faure's *Requiem* with Richard Grylls, the exciting 'Gospel' repertoire with Geraldine Latty and our own 15 hour hymn singing marathon, or "Hymnathon". This year, the chosen work is the incomparable *Messiah* by Handel.

We are delighted to welcome Richard King, an experienced and charismatic musician who will guide the massed chorus of participants through our favourite choruses and also some of the 'solos'. The Hallelujah chorus will be included!

The workshop will start at **1pm** and will culminate in an informal performance of our best efforts at **6.30pm**, to which family and friends will be warmly invited. Refreshments will be provided during the afternoon and a reception will follow the performance.

### Participant Fee: £12

Informal performance: **FREE** (retiring collection)

Editions to be used: Prout or Clifford Bartlett only.  
Copies can be hired. Please order when booking (£3/copy)

Bookings and Further Information on the church website  
e-mail [music@stmarysnorthchurch.org.uk](mailto:music@stmarysnorthchurch.org.uk)  
tel: 01442 822915

## DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

Don't forget!!

July 21<sup>st</sup> 2018

Workshop: 1pm

Performance: 6.30pm

Parish Room Bookings:  
Emily Millar 07929 934367