



**SAINT
Barnabas
CLARKSFIELD**

June 2020

medlockhead.co.uk

Services at St Barnabas' Church

Sunday	9:30 am	Parish Worship
Monday	2:30 pm	Prayers in the vestry
Tuesday	10:00 am	Holy Communion (said)

First Tuesday of each month: Service of Holy Communion at Moor Haven Nursing Home on Ripponden Road, starting at 2:00 pm.

Baptisms and marriages by arrangement with the Vicar.

Please submit items for the July 2020 magazine by 15 June. Please e-mail files to paulmonk111@gmail.com

People at St Barnabas' Church

Vicar

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St Barnabas' Vicarage, Arundel Street, Clarksfield, Oldham OL4 1NL
Tel: (0161) 624 7708

Assistant Curates

The Revd Denise Owen (and Vicar of St Thomas' Church Moorside)
Tel: (0161) 652 0292 and E: therevd.dowen@yahoo.co.uk
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Lay Reader and Warden

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Administrator Miss Sarah Gura (07708) 714 813
Treasurer Ms Gisele Onwumere
Parish Hall bookings The Vicar (0161) 624 7708

Letter from the Vicar

We're in lockdown. We can't go for a long walk or visit our friends. We can't hug, shake hands, talk face to face, laugh or cry together. We cannot even enter the Church to pray.

I display a wilful misuse of words as I write. 'The Church' is not a building but a group of people who share their lives. 'Church' is a collective noun of disciples, a communion of souls, a group of believers, a holiness club.

We don't meet in a Church. We *are* the Church. We are a Church of disciples whether alone in lockdown or together in a special building after a pandemic.

Later this month we celebrate the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul. That day's Gospel reading tells the story of Jesus telling St Peter that he would 'build his Church' on people like him. Peter was special because he recognised Jesus was more than a man—Jesus is the Christ.

That's what being a Church is about. Jesus builds his Church on people like us. And he builds on us in proportion as we live lives that proclaim Jesus to be the Christ. Each of us is like a brick, a stone in the Church because we belong to Jesus and seek to do his will.

Jesus wants us to live our lives as the Church: as his loving disciples. We may be alone or together. He doesn't mind. But he does want us to live our lives for him. That way we are indeed a Church.

Wishing you much love as you explore discipleship in Him:

PAUL

Church and Parish news

Condolences

Sincere condolences to Charlotte Derbyshire and her family following the death of her grandmother, Doreen Anderson in Early May. Doreen was 87 years of age.

Coronavirus—updates

With sadness, we have had to cancel this year's confirmation service. We anticipate that next year's service will be in June 2021.

Please consult the webpage medlockhead.co.uk/virus for advice, updates, and resources.

Each week, we will produce detailed services as downloadable pdf files with links to YouTube hymns, Bible readings, prayers, and a full sermon transcript. We will also be sending out a link to videoed services. Go to medlockhead.co.uk/resources. Please share widely. Thank you.

Trinity

**Beginning here we glimpse the Three-in-one;
The river runs, the clouds are torn apart,
The Father speaks, the Sprit and the Son
Reveal to us the single loving heart
That beats behind the being of all things
And calls and keeps and kindles us to light.
The dove descends, the spirit soars and sings
'You are belovèd, you are my delight!'**

**In that quick light and life, as water spills
And streams around the Man like quickening rain,
The voice that made the universe reveals
The God in Man who makes it new again.
He calls us too, to step into that river
To die and rise and live and love forever.**

Malcolm Guite

2020 dates for your diary

No services will occur in the Church until further notice owing to the Coronavirus. And no social events can occur in the Hall or in our sister Church of Holy Trinity, Waterhead.



Bible readings for June

Sunday 31 May

Pentecost

First: Acts 2:1-21

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 12:3b-13

Gospel: John 20:19-23

Sunday 7 June

Trinity Sunday

Old Testament: Isaiah 40:12-17

Epistle: 2 Corinthians 13:11-13

Gospel: Matthew 28:16-20

Sunday 14 June

First Sunday after Trinity

Old Testament: Genesis 18:1-15

Epistle: Romans 5:1-8

Gospel: Matthew 9:35-10:8

Sunday 21 June

Second Sunday after Trinity

Old Testament: Genesis 21:8-21

Epistle: Romans 6:1b-11

Gospel: Matthew 10:24-39

Sunday 28 June

Saints Peter and Paul

Old Testament: Zechariah 4:1-6a

Epistle: 2 Timothy 4:6-8

Gospel: Matthew 16:13-19

Sunday 5 July

Fourth Sunday after Trinity

Old Testament: Genesis 24:34-38

Epistle: Romans 7:15-25a

Gospel: Matthew 11:16-19

From the Parish Registers

Christian funeral

Tuesday 5 May

Thursday 7 May

Wednesday 13 May

Marjorie Heaps at Hollinwood Crematorium

Barrie Wild at Hollinwood Crematorium

Doreen Anderson at Hollinwood Crematorium



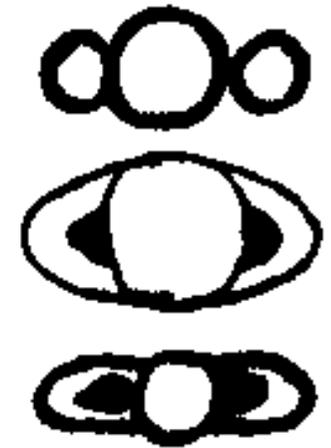
The first modern telescope was invented in the sixteenth century. One of the first good-quality instruments was made by the Italian astronomer, Galileo. One day he pointed his telescope at the planet Saturn.

Galileo didn't know that Saturn is encircled by enormous, beautiful rings. His telescope was not as good as anything we have today, so all he saw was a blob—the planet itself—with two smaller blobs either side that he called 'ears.' He was confused and could not work out what he was seeing.

Galileo looked through his telescope every night but never solved the riddle of why Saturn had 'ears'. In fact, it was more than a hundred years later, after astronomers had developed stronger telescopes, that someone solved the riddle of Saturn's 'ears': of course, Saturn has a central spherical body and rings that circle it.

A silly story, perhaps. But what do we as Christians see when we look through the telescope of faith at the heavens or, rather, at Heaven and at God: what does he look like? Do we see a man on a cloud or a being on a sapphire throne, like that seen by Isaiah? Or do we see a Palestinian peasant healing, teaching and dying on a Cross? Or do we see the Holy Spirit, for example descending like the story of Pentecost? Who and what is God? The answer to this vital question could very well determine our eternal destiny.

When Christians first come to faith, they often to adopt an oversimplified image of God. They may start by seeing just one person of



Galileo drew his first sketches of Saturn after looking through his new reflecting telescope.

the Trinity: people without a faith tend to concentrate on God the Father; those whose faith centres on the Bible often prefer to see God in Jesus the Son; many in the Charismatic Church tend to look first at the Holy Spirit. All these images are oversimplifications, of course. But each tends to see one person of the Trinity as central with two 'blobs' either side. How do we see all three as one?

As we grow in faith, we need to move from seeing one person of the Trinity accompanied by two smaller gods—a being with a blob of deity either side. We need to see each as a different manifestation of the one God but operating in different ways, meeting different people in different needs. But they all are the one. They are God the Almighty.

As we seek to grow in faith, we must ask God to show himself to us and help our souls to grow out of oversimplification, so that we gain a better, truer idea of who he is.

The Church celebrates Trinity Sunday on 7 June.

What is the Church?

The word 'church' has three main meanings:

- **A building in which Christian services and meetings occur.**
- **A Christian group or denomination like the 'Church of England', 'Baptist Church' or 'Roman Catholic Church.'**
- **All the people of God; the group of all baptised believers.**

The third definition is usually the best. To distinguish this model from the other two, it is common to talk about the Church *Universal* which means all believers of all denominations, wherever they worship God. We don't use a capital C when we talk about a church building, but we do when we talk about a denomination such as the Church of England or the Church Universal.

The word 'church' translates the Greek word *ekklesia* (from which we get English terms like 'ecclesiastical'). As far as we know, Jesus used this word rarely—the Gospels only cite him saying it twice,

- (1) In Matthew 16:18, when Jesus said that he would build his church on 'the rock' (which is actually a pun on St Peter's name — think of 'petrify', meaning 'to make like rock'). Jesus meant that Peter's faith was simple, strong and based on Jesus as Christ.
- (2) In Matthew 18:17 when Jesus spoke about discipline in groups of believers.

But Jesus usually only alluded to the church indirectly. It's easy to explain his hesitation: he expected to come back soon after his Ascension. Time as we know it would then stop meaning there would be no need for any institution or church.

There are consequences of Jesus saying so little about the Church. For example, we have few clues regarding what God wants the church to look like that we sometimes have to guess. And some people's guesses differ from others'. This first point means the church of today is, to some large extent, man-made.

Words of warning

Jesus did not come to create the Church. Rather, he came to build 'The Kingdom'. His concept is very simple: if God is King— a sort of divine ruler — then we live under him and must obey his rule and obey only him. When all humanity does obey God as King, life on earth will be transformed, leading to an earthly paradise. He called it 'The Kingdom'. Right at the beginning of the Lord's Prayer, when Jesus teaches us how to pray, he says the words,

Your Kingdom come, here on earth as it is in Heaven.

No mention of a church!

For more information, read:

<https://www.gotquestions.org/what-is-the-church.html>

<https://www.learnreligions.com/what-is-the-church-700486>



Charlotte Brontë was born on 21 April 1816. She was the third of six children. Her father Patrick Brontë was an Irish crofter's son who rose via a Cambridge education to become, in 1820, Vicar of Haworth in Yorkshire. Her mother Maria was Cornish and brought up as a Methodist.

Much of Charlotte's life was marked by tragedy. She was only five in 1821 when her mother died. Four years later her two older sisters died as a result of the harsh conditions prevailing in the *Clergy Daughters' School* at Cowan Bridge in Lancashire to which they and the eight-year-old Charlotte were sent in 1824. Charlotte's experiences at the school influenced her portrayal of Lowood School in *Jane Eyre*.

After the two oldest Brontë girls died, Patrick and Maria's sister Elizabeth gave the children a stimulating and wide-ranging education at home. Charlotte's father was an evangelical clergyman so Charlotte considered herself an Anglican. Much later, in a letter to her publisher she wrote, 'I love the Church of England.' Her father's theology may have been orthodox but his views on child-rearing were not. On the children's return from the severity of *Cowan Bridge School*, Revd Brontë allowed great freedom to his daughters. Their subsequent education was far from conventional and stimulated their prodigious imagination.

In January 1831 Charlotte left home aged 14 and soon enlisted at Roe Head School near Haworth. Roe Head was much less harsh than the *Clergy Daughters' School* but Charlotte returned home only 18 months later. Charlotte had been summoned home to teach her sisters Emily and Anne as a governess.

Charlotte and her sisters, who had written stories which can still be seen in tiny notebooks at the Howarth Parsonage, turned to writing novels. Charlotte's novel *Jane Eyre* was an immediate sensation. Although most famous for *Jane Eyre* (1847), Charlotte also published poems and three other novels. *Shirley* (1849), written during and after the tragic deaths of her three siblings within a single year, displayed Charlotte's engagement with both women's rights and radical workers' movements.

Charlotte Brontë grew up in a deeply religious atmosphere. Her father was extremely devout as was his wife, Maria Branwell, who also brought to the household her Methodist upbringing. The latter was intensified when

Elizabeth Branwell went to live at Haworth after her sister's death in 1821. All the men Charlotte encountered held strong religious views; most were clergymen. Such men appear regularly in her novels. Her prose clearly demonstrates the way she had absorbed the language of the *King James Bible* and the *Book of Common Prayer*. Those novels also display a great many biblical allusions and references. And we know that Haworth was a stronghold of Methodism and non-conformism.

Charlotte's Christianity was always deeply felt and she explored it in her novels. Most of the characters she penned for *Jane Eyre* are people of faith. She paints the pleasanter folk as following a faith of love and selfless giving. Their faith is quick to love and slow to judge, open-ended, seeking to obey God's loving laws and to encourage others to do likewise. The more unpleasant characters follow a harsh and wrathful God, often mixed with their own tyrannical egos. Charlotte herself followed a more spiritual form of Christianity that tried to reconcile early forms of feminism and contemporary religious ideals.

In June 1854, Charlotte married her father's curate Arthur Nicholls, who was her long-term suitor. Although the eldest, Charlotte was the last to die of all her siblings. She became pregnant soon after her marriage but died aged 38 on 31 March 1855, almost certainly from a complication of the pregnancy.

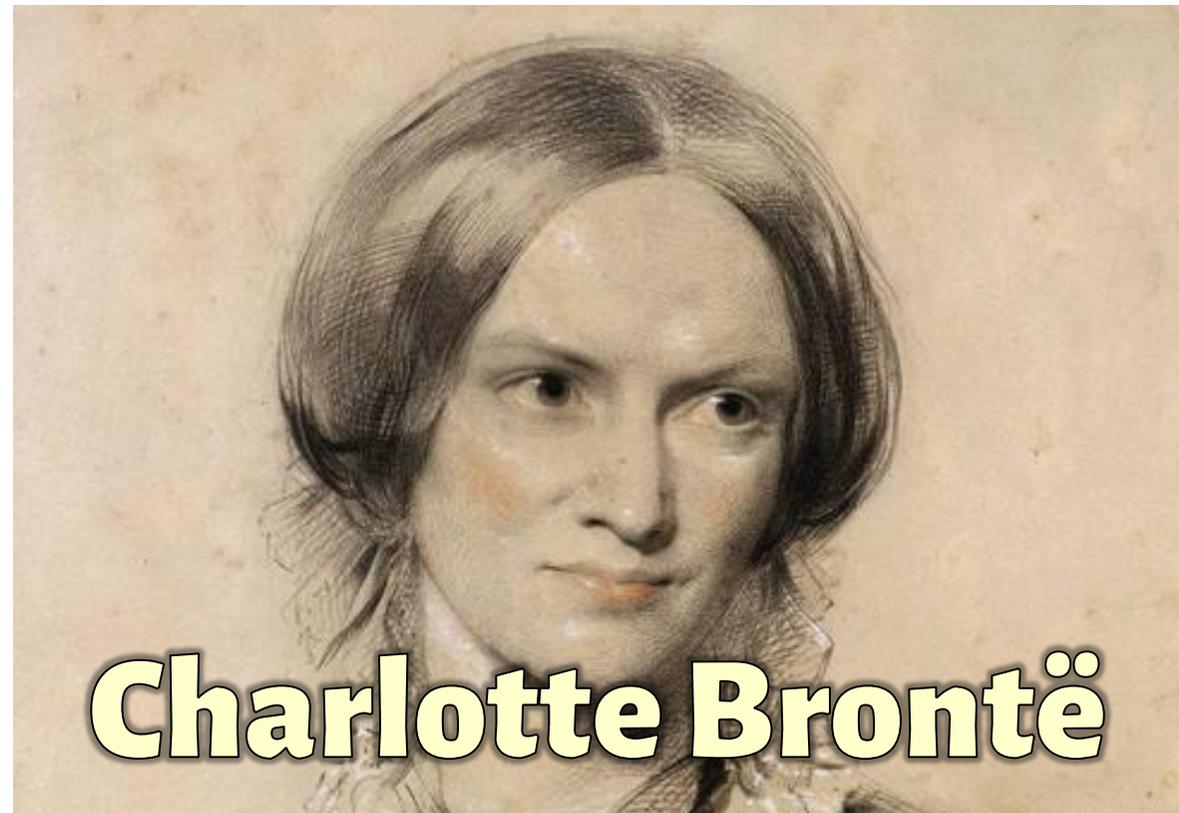
For more information, please visit the following sites:

<https://www.dawsonenglishjournal.ca/article/christianity-as-a-form-of-empowerment-in-charlotte-brontes-jane-eyre/>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charlotte_Bront%C3%AB

<https://www.mentalfloss.com/article/77787/10-facts-about-charlotte-bronte>

<https://crossref-it.info/textguide/jane-eyre/9/1008> (and its links)



However good a person's voice sounds, they can always be trained to sing better. However good someone's hand-eye coordination is, they can be trained to draw and paint better. Any athlete can be trained to run faster, jump higher and throw further. In each case, even a short training course will yield results.

In just the same way, Christians through the ages have taught that prayer is another aspect of our development that can be trained. To be sure, some people have a greater aptitude, a greater inclination, but the soul of anyone can be trained to pray.

When we say the word 'prayer,' we tend to think of intercessions in Church. They are often asking for help or comfort. This sort of prayer is often derided—people today even say, 'He hasn't got a prayer' meaning a complete loss of hope. Or we may be thinking of prayers embedded within the liturgy. These prayers have advantages and disadvantages: the timeless phrases sink so deeply into the soul that they surface at odd moments. But, conversely, if we're honest we know the words so well that we can find we haven't even heard them.

At root, prayer is an encounter with God. To pray, we must somehow tap into the spiritual Person that is God. That 'tapping in' is the goal of all prayer.

Prayer can be made to sound fiendishly complicated but in essence it's blissfully simple. It starts with three things. Firstly, we need to be comfortable (physically) so we are unaware of our bodies. We should be relaxed, with a straight neck and back, and the airways open.

Second, and more important, we need to relax mentally. We will never pray if we feel fretful and preoccupied. Meditation techniques can help here.

Thirdly, we need to centre our soul on God. In this context, some technical manuals on prayer talk of 'recollection,' by which they mean calling God to mind. To use the powerful phrase of Brother Lawrence, we must 'Practise the Presence of God.'

We all know that God is everywhere but the use of the imagination can prepare the heart before spiritual encounters. Some people when they start out in prayer find it helpful to picture God (or Jesus) in their mind's eye. When they feel 'in the mood,' they then speak to God or Jesus. That's OK for the absolute beginner, but we must reject such images, when we have moved on a

little, because such pictures become too small. They hold us back.

God knows everything. As the *Book of Common Prayer* reminds us, He is 'power infinite.' So there is no point in telling him details he knows already—'I have an appointment with Dr Smith at 9:10 tomorrow morning ...' But it does help to tell Him the things that matter to us. For example, honestly telling God our emotions and feelings can be both liberating and spiritually powerful. A conversation with God in prayer is more desirable and often more useful than using a series of set prayers.

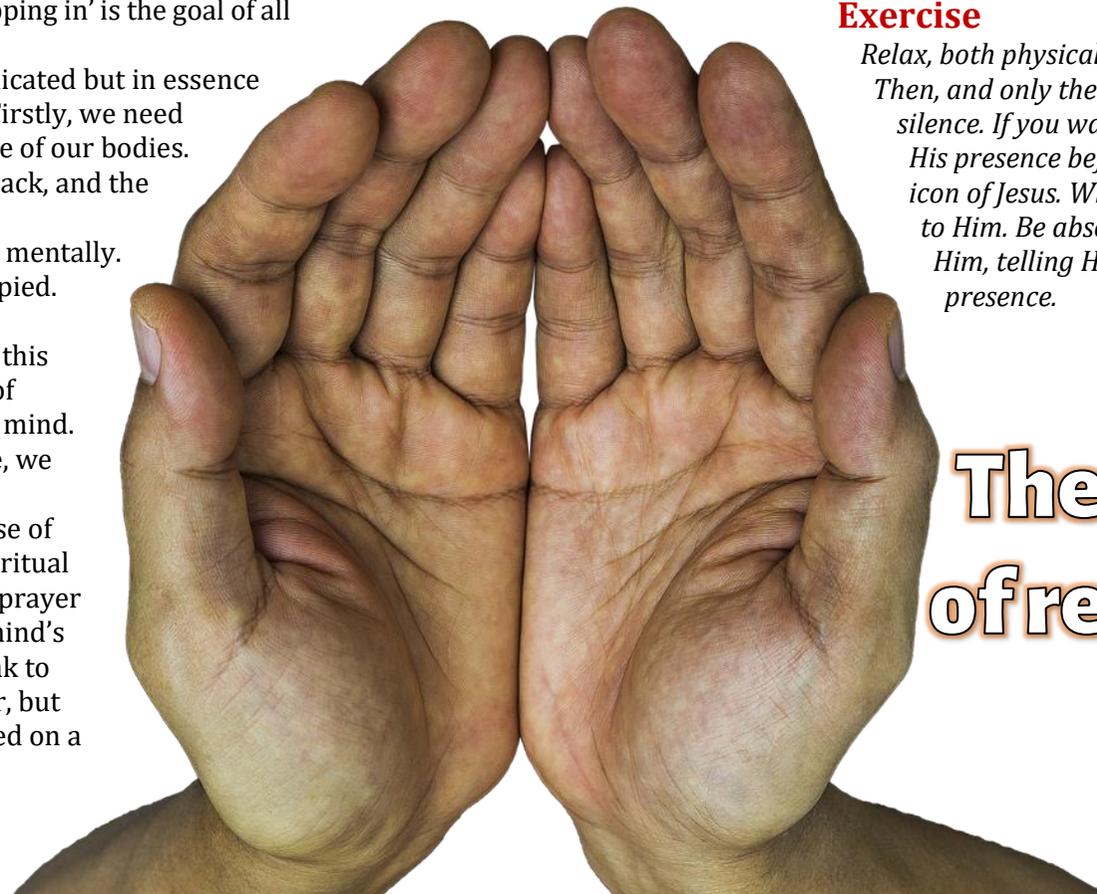
But collections of printed prayers can be essential if we feel down and depressed, or just tired, . They do away with the need to invent new words. There is also the comfort of knowing these words have nourished countless Christians, sometimes over millennia.

Many people find the liturgy also speaks powerfully at such times, but others find that liturgy 'sparks no response' whatsoever. But do not worry: the giants of prayer all teach that while God may not feel close at these times, he is nevertheless present.

Exercise

Relax, both physically and mentally.

Then, and only then, talk to God in the silence. If you want to, try to imagine His presence before you. Or look at an icon of Jesus. When you feel ready, talk to Him. Be absolutely honest with Him, telling Him how you feel in His presence.



The prayer of recollection

Curate's corner



'Thanks dad! This coat will go well
with my trousers of many colours!
(with apologies to Genesis 37:3-36)

The Hebrew language could be very basic and didn't readily allow for emphasis or superlatives. So, for example, the Bible describes the most holy place in the Temple as 'the Holy of holies,' and described Jesus as 'King of kings and Lord of lords.' It's a Jewish way of describing the biggest, best and most important.

According to 1 Kings 4:32, King Solomon wrote five thousand and five songs. It is therefore to be expected (within this way of describing things) that the best should be described as, 'The Song of songs.'

The Song of Songs tries to describe the way that humankind can best reach satisfaction through love. But we cannot obtain satisfaction through knowledge alone. So Ecclesiastes, which precedes the Song of Songs, discusses the 'vanity of vanities.'

Ecclesiastes is traditionally attributed to Solomon, although the book itself only mentions 'the teacher' (*Quoheleth*) and 'son of David, King of Jerusalem.' In fact, the style of the prose dates the

book to about 400 BC which is much later than Solomon (who died in about 900 BC.) Perhaps it was heavily edited in the centuries after Solomon first wrote some of it.

Actually, the Hebrew name of this book and of its author *Quoheleth* is a title and may mean 'assembler' (of students, listeners) or 'collector' (of wisdom sayings). The book's more common name, *Ecclesiastes*, is an approximate translation into Greek of this Hebrew word.

The book discusses the purpose and value of human life. It starts with a bang: 'Nothing makes sense!' cries the teacher. 'Everything is nonsense' (1:8). So life is pointless—boring even.

Quoheleth believes in God and in an ethical code like the Commandments. And he believes in judgement. But God hides his plans from those people who seek happiness alone. For them, everything is 'vanity under the sun.' It is only in giving thanks to God our Creator that we can make life worthwhile. *Ecclesiastes* is therefore intended as a reality check.

Ecclesiastes is one of the more surprising books in the Bible. It's difficult to judge whether the book contains the views of a man so used to pleasure that he has become cynical and bored, or whether it is intended as a philosophical treatise. A first reading certainly suggests a cynical, weary dismissal of life from a man who's seen it all—and then rejected it. It's a dark reflection on the apparent futility of existence: as the author says repeatedly, 'everything is meaningless.'

Some expressions from *Ecclesiastes* found their way into the English language: 'There is nothing new under the sun' (1:9), 'To everything there is a season' (3:1), and 'Eat, drink, and be merry' (8:15). The book concludes with the recommendation to 'Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.'

But the book also has moments of humour and lightness, as well as passages of startling and moving beauty.

Ecclesiastes

For more information, please visit the following sites:

<https://www.biblestudytools.com/ecclesiastes>

<https://biblescripture.net/Ecclesiastes.html>

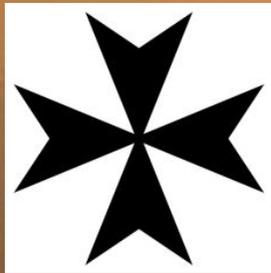
<http://www.usccb.org/bible/ecclesiastes/0>

<https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/ecclesiastes-1>

Symbols seen in a Church building



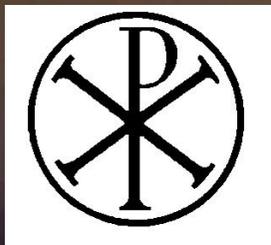
Alpha (A) and Omega (W) are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet.



Maltese Cross



Russian Cross



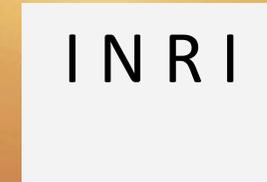
Chi (X) and Rho (r) are the first two letters of the word 'Christ' if written in Greek.



IHS are the first three consonant letters of Jesus's when written in Latin: 'IHSOUS'.



The Greek letters inside the shape spell 'ICHTHUS', which is the Greek word for fish. They represent an acrostic, the first letters of which spell out, 'Jesus Christ, son of God.'



The initial letters of the Latin inscription on the cross, 'Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews'.

Think of a new symbol that represents Christianity to you and draw it here.

What is the Church?

The word 'Church' has three different but related meanings.
Write three short prayers to demonstrate the differences.

A building in which Christian services are held



A group of Christians (a 'denomination') such as the 'Church of England'



All the people of God; the group of all baptised believers



THE WEDDING AT CANA

CAN YOU SPOT THE 20 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THESE TWO PICTURES?



Coronavirus (Covid-19)

Advice and resources



Many of us will be inside our homes during the Coronavirus crisis. We may feel alone and wanting more spiritual content than usual.

Our own website

Each week, we will produce two detailed services as downloadable pdf files. Each includes links to YouTube hymns, Bible readings, prayers, and a full sermon transcript. We also produce videos of services. For details, please go to www.medlockhead.co.uk/resources

Stay safe!

Our webpage www.medlockhead.co.uk/resources contains up-to-date advice and changes in legislation from the Government and Diocese.

O Christ, my God,
You stooped down to me,
a poor straying sheep,
to take me on Your shoulders
and have set me down in green pastures.

St John Damascene (675-749)



'Did I hear you say this was
your *first* Christening?'



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Church diary

Owing to the Coronavirus, we anticipate the ban on all services and events in the Church extending for some time further. Please consult the Church website for up-to-date details.



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