



# St Mary's Northchurch Newsletter



Parish Room Bookings:  
Emily Millar  
Mobile: 07929934367

*July & August 2016*

Church enquiries to:  
Revd Jonathan Gordon  
01442 871547  
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## Compassion and reconciliation

The recent events in Orlando, Florida represent another story in a long catalogue of violent episodes that have shaped the character of recent times. The motivations of the perpetrator are likely to become clearer over the next few weeks. Whatever they were it represents a tragic loss of life and the Archbishops in the Church of England have issued a statement in which they state that we must "speak out in support of LGBTI people, who have become the latest group to be brutally targeted by the forces of evil." The words seem very timely as in parts of the world the LGBTI community is subjected to persecution and violence. Sadly, the church has not always challenged inequalities and in parts of the world some would argue actively supports treating the LGBTI community as second class citizens.

A couple of months ago I was invited to a Buddhist Centre to listen to a presentation explaining the annual letter presented to the United Nations by Daisaku Ikeda, a Buddhist philosopher and peace activist. His letter was a reflection on the theme of human dignity. He described the crisis of refugees fleeing war torn lands and the scale of the humanitarian crisis. At the heart of his argument was a passionate assertion of the value of every human life and the empathy and compassion that can grow from the recognition of a shared common humanity. It was a very moving evening and struck a chord with me as compassion and

reconciliation are themes that have shaped by own faith over the years.

Those who use violence usually want to separate and divide communities by fear. Maybe the only way to resist this intimidation is to actively reach out and listen to the voices of the marginalised and even persecuted. It is only by attentive listening and understanding that it is possible to comprehend the struggles that people have been through. It may be that there are some who feel in the parish that the church has let them down or not listened to them and if that is the case then as a Vicar I can only apologise and seek to find a way forward.

The Archbishop's statement ended with these words: "The obligation to object to these acts of persecution, and to support those LGBTI people who are wickedly and cruelly killed and wounded, bereaved and traumatised, whether in Orlando or elsewhere, is an absolute call on our Christian discipleship.

"It arises from the unshakeable certainty of the gracious love of God for every human being. Now, in this time of heartbreak and grief, is a time for solidarity. May God our Father give grace and comfort to all who mourn, and divine compassion to us all."

Rev Jonathan Gordon

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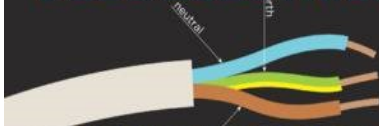
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# Reading the Old Testament

Edgar Wille

Christians tend to see the first part of the Bible, the Old Testament, as inferior to the New Testament, which introduces us to Jesus Christ.

Certainly from the Christian perspective the New Testament takes us further than the Old, but some understanding of the first part of the Bible is essential to understanding the second.

God promised that He would use the Israelite nation to reveal his intentions ultimately to teach all nations his ways. There was punishment for their lack of commitment to their part in the covenant God offered them. Many acts of rebellion against God are recorded. Yet He never reneged on his promises. He still promises to use the Jews, when converted to his perspective, to change human hearts from self determination and violence.

Thus God told Moses that in spite of Israelite rebellions, as recorded in the Bible, God will always offer grace (unmerited favour) to Israel. According to the Apostle Paul in the New Testament, the Jews have a big part to play in transforming the world. God proclaims his character in

Exodus 34 as '*compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in loving kindness and truth*' and this still holds good, even if it might be felt that Jewish nationalism in the face of Arab hostility is far distant from God's ways at present. Yet, repeatedly, God speaks of his love for Israel right back in the time of Abraham when he promised that Abraham would be the beginning of blessing for all mankind. We may find this difficult to believe, but it is a consistent theme of both parts of the Bible.

The earth is going to '*full of the glory of God as the waters cover the sea*' (Isaiah 26). The Bible is a book of hope - a hope that seems almost incredible, but it will come to pass. Several prophets in the Old Testament (poetically) predict a day '*when every man (and woman) shall sit under their own vine tree and fig tree and none shall make them afraid; neither shall they learn war any more*' (Micah 4, vs 4)

And at his second coming, Jesus will make things happen for all nations in a favourable direction as frequently predicted in the Old Testament in a hidden way and openly in the New Testament.

## The Monday Club

July 4<sup>th</sup> A display of dancing by the children of St Mary's School. 2pm Parish Rooms.

July 18<sup>th</sup> Tea in Barbara's garden. 2pm (Or Parish Room if wet).

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

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## NORTHCHURCH SOCIAL CENTRE AGM

Wednesday 13th July 2016 at 7.30pm

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ALL WELCOME





## THE GREAT WAR 1914 - 1918

# The Battle of the Somme

## 1st July 1916

The Battle of the Somme began on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1916; it was to become one of the defining battles of the First World War. At 07.30, following an 8-day artillery bombardment of the German lines, British troops went 'over the top' and advanced towards the enemy positions. Many got no

further than their own trenches as the bombardment had failed to destroy the German defences, once the barrage had stopped the Germans emerged from their deep underground shelters and opened fire on the advancing troops.

The British suffered 58,000 casualties on the first day of the battle alone, many in the first few minutes. Of these, about a third were killed. Among the dead were Arthur Frost, Walter Howlett and Charles Ross. Over the following weeks Philip Fiest, Edwin Morgan, Albert Rolfe, George Bignell and Thomas Henderson would also be killed.

Arthur Frost was born in 1882. When he was eight Arthur's parents moved to Gossoms End where his father became the licensee of the *Crooked Billet* pub. Arthur later started work as a draper and in August 1916 he joined 1/8<sup>th</sup> Territorial Battalion, Royal Warwickshire Regiment. He died during an attack on a German strongpoint.

Eighteen-year-old Walter Howlett from Orchard End enlisted with the 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Bedfordshire Regiment in 1915 and arrived in the Somme area during May 1916. Walter's Battalion achieved all its objectives on the first day of the battle, but at the cost of 24 dead, including Walter himself.

Rifleman Charles Ross was born in Suva in Fiji in 1889, the son of a colonial civil servant. Charles spent his early years in Fiji before being sent to England for formal education, staying for periods with his maiden aunts in *Whitelea*, a large house off Shootersway. He enlisted as a rifleman with the 1<sup>st</sup>/16<sup>th</sup> (County of London) Battalion, (Queens Westminster Rifles) in October 1915. Only a fifth of the men of the Queens Westminster Rifles were to survive the fighting of 1<sup>st</sup> July.

Philip Feist, the son of the licensee of *The Compasses* public house in New Road, was a gardener. Enlisting with the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Duke of Cambridge's Own (Middlesex Regiment) in the autumn of 1914 Philip saw action near Ypres in 1915 before being transferred to the Somme area. He was killed during an attack on the village of Fricourt on 2<sup>nd</sup> July.

Edwin Morgan was born in 1891 and later moved to Norcott Hill Farm where his father worked as a shepherd. As a Reservist Edwin was mobilized in August 1914, joining 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, Bedfordshire Regiment and was present

during the "Christmas Truce" of 1914. Edwin survived the fighting of 1<sup>st</sup> July but was wounded during an attack on 30<sup>th</sup> July and died at a Casualty Clearing Station the following day.

Albert Rolfe attended the Baptist Chapel in Northchurch before marrying in St Mary's in November 1913. Later moving to Luton he enlisted with 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Bedfordshire Regiment. Having taken part in the fighting around Arras in 1915 Albert's Battalion was sent to the Somme. He was wounded during the fighting around the village of Longueval on 30<sup>th</sup> July and died the following day.

Also born in 1891, George Bignell worked at Coopers chemical works in Berkhamsted. He later enlisted and served alongside Albert Rolfe in the Bedfordshire Regiment. George was also wounded during the fighting around Longueval and died on 4<sup>th</sup> August.

Thomas Henderson was born in 1876, the son of a wealthy businessman who later moved to *Fordell* in Darrs Lane. Thomas trained as dentist in London before enlisting in the Public Schools Battalion in 1914 and later gained a commission with the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, South Staffordshire Regiment. Some of the heaviest fighting at the end of July took place around Delville Wood. Thomas led his company in hand-to-hand fighting with the Germans during an attack on 31<sup>st</sup> August but was killed after being cut off from supporting troops during a counter-attack.

The bodies of Arthur Frost, Edwin Morgan, Albert Rolfe, George Bignell and Thomas Henderson now lie in identified graves in the Somme area. Those of Walter Howlett, Charles Ross and Philip Feist were never recovered from the battlefield. Their names are now engraved on the Thiepval Memorial which commemorates those who died during the Somme Offensive without a known resting place.

Richard North





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## RAISING THE ROOF

The model of the church is progressing well with over £7,000 already sponsored. Interest in sponsorship is rising as the model takes shape and we will shortly start putting in the stained glass windows, which will be photographs of the actual windows, printed onto transparent foil. The bell tower is also now going up, and a brass bell has been acquired to hang inside it.

To sponsor bricks at £3 each, or a stained glass window for £50 or £100, please complete a yellow envelope at the back of the church and put it into the money box church, or contact Andrew Dobbie, 1 Shootersway Lane, Berkhamsted HP43NP, [andrew@gameplaneurope.com](mailto:andrew@gameplaneurope.com) tel: 07775 560363



## A Note from Northchurch Parish Council

We are sorry to report that Northchurch Parish Council will be removing two large "friends of the parish" in the shape of trees in the very near future and, in fact, by the time you read this, they may have been taken down.

The first one is the London plane tree that the school and the Parish Council cooperated to plant to celebrate the millennium. Unfortunately, it has grown far in excess of what we all expected and, if left, would grow from 6-8 times its existing height with all of the problems that brings, i.e. branches over the A4251 and roots attacking the building.

The second tree which has to disappear is the 200-year-old oak tree which is currently situated in the Recreation Ground at the pedestrian entrance to Herons Elm. This has three splits in its main trunk and is therefore considered to be hazardous and will be removed. It will have to be felled as soon as we get quotations from various experts.

We are sorry to be the bearers of sad tidings.

Alan Fantham

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**3rd July**

*Thomas the Apostle*

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)  
10.00am All Age Worship  
6.00pm Evening Prayer at St Bartholomew's

**10th July**

*Trinity 7*

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)  
10.00am Confirmation Service with  
Rt. Rev Michael Beasley, Bishop of Hertford  
6.00pm Evening Prayer

**17th July**

*Trinity 8*

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)  
10.00am Parish Eucharist (CW)  
6.00pm Taize Worship



Taize Worship is a quiet meditation service with chants and silence to celebrate Pentecost. Tea, coffee and cake to be served afterwards. All welcome.

**24th July**

*Trinity 9*

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

**31st July**

*Trinity 10*

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)  
10.00am Parish Eucharist  
6.00pm Healing Service

### Contacts for the Newsletter

Distribution to Valerie Clark, 862613

Advertising & editorial by email to the Editor Mrs Jill Hipson  
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**No newsletter in August. Next issue: September 2016.**

All advertisements must be paid for before they can be published. Copy date is 15th of each month.

## Parish Registers: May and June 2016

### Baptisms

**June 12th** Freddie Christopher Dance  
Felicity Rose Miller  
Thomas James Gouldsmith  
Edward Samuel Gouldsmith  
George Oliver Gouldsmith

**June 26th** James Richard Haggerstone

### Burial of Ashes

May 15th Valerie Phillips  
May 22nd Gwyneth Else  
May 26th Kenneth Harvey  
June 11th Audrey Putman

### Funerals

May 13th Victor Hillsdon  
May 27th Margaret Prosser



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