

THE

THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

ST. ANDREW'S HERALD

St. Andrew's Church Chippenham with St. Nicholas' Tytherton Lucas



Photo: Gavin Macrae

Where is God?

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and Stride

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No. 58
October 2023

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OF ENGLAND

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Photo: Gavin Macrae

Where is God? WHY?

I popped into the church to do one of my little jobs, and there on a table was a list asking for contributions to the "Herald". Well, as it happened, I was already part-way through an article. I thought, "ah that's good", I have one almost finished, I will submit that for the October edition – and I put down my name. What I didn't realise, until I received an email from Rod, is it should have a religious content. That sent me into a spin - "panic"!! what can I say? I play the organ; I don't do sermons – that's for the vicar! Well, I thought, I have never been one to shy away from a challenge, and, with due sensitivity, I've always been a bit controversial, so in I go in at the deep end. I will ask the question that has been bothering me (and others) for generations - "Where is God?". What is he doing? Is He asleep? And the big question - "WHY"

If we sneak into a church when He is not expecting us, will we find him there? Elijah looked for God in the wind, earthquake and fire. But, He was not to be found in any of these. (1 Kings) – just a still small voice. This is dramatically portrayed in Mendelssohn's oratorio "Elijah". Why, I ask, was Elijah looking for God? It was a time of adversity and desperation. I think he wanted to have a chat with God – ask a few difficult questions, straighten out some problems, get some answers – particularly WHY?

But I am procrastinating, simply because I don't want to face the real question that bothers me – not just “where is God,” but WHY? “Where was God and why did He let *that* happen”? The psalmist cried out “*why have you forsaken me?*” (psalm 22) – later to be uttered on the cross by Jesus.

I have often been asked – why does God let this happen, or that happen? The dreadful carnage in Ukraine, the terrible Holocaust as examples. And I am to be found wanting, not knowing what to answer. How many of us have been caught out on this? Be honest – hands up. I know the stock answer – *because God has given mankind free choice* and we exercise it for good or evil. But that is no comfort to those who happen to be on the receiving end of suffering. Try telling that to a distraught grieving father carrying a little white coffin at his baby's funeral. So many times, as an organist, I have witnessed that and shed a tear. So, of no comfort to those in such distress - the stock answer is inadequate, it falls short for those of no faith and indeed, those of us who do have faith. If I am inadequate to help others with an answer, then how do I (we) square this with ourselves– do we not sometimes feel forsaken? (Psalm 22) Does that not sometimes call even our faith into question?

A favourite reading at weddings is 1 Corinthians 13. Here, Paul speaks of faith, hope and love. He rates love as the “greatest”. But, is not “faith” of equal standing? I quote: “*Faith involves reliance and trust, and it endures in the face of doubt*”. So, I have come the full circle. There we have it, just take comfort in accepting with childlike trust and confidence, that which we have been taught over the years, that God has given mankind freedom of choice, to do good or evil as we see fit – the stock answer to WHY.

But, I am not content with that, simply because I still do not know what to answer to others. So, I find myself thinking back to Elijah and the “*still small voice*” – the final verse of the hymn Dear Lord and Father of mankind. And I think of the hymn “Be still, for the presence of the Lord”. Be still, listen to the still small voice, have faith, take courage, have trust and confidence.

God bless.

Geoff Oldnall

Hymnathon 2023: Come one, come all

On **Saturday 28th October**, St Andrew's is holding a Hymnathon as our big Christian Aid Fundraiser. Simply put, everyone comes by 10 am and for the next three hours with breaks for refreshment and gargling(!), we sing as many hymns as we can manage. There will be a £5 entry fee to include light refreshments, £5 donation to ask for a favourite hymn and there will be sponsorship forms.

These will let you to record your amazing achievements and allow other people to support the incredible cause that is Christian Aid. Reports from other churches suggest this is a perfect balance of fun and fundraising and we so hope you will be able to join us.

Carols Around the Piano

This year's "Carols Around the Piano" will be on a Thursday evening, **7th December at 7.30pm**

This popular event has been running for at least 25 years. When, nineteen years ago, we came to St. Andrew's, it was run by Penny Banks and then Wendy Larkin. I have had the pleasure of organising it for the past fourteen years. Each year I try to introduce a new Christmas solo and one or two new carols. Words for these will be on the screen.

Come along and bring your voices!

Geoff Oldnall



Nigel Linacre & Vladimir Miller's



Grief Opera Love Goes On

The most moving show you will see this year
"A brilliant musical of the six stages of grief"

Saturday 7 October St Andrew's

7.30pm, Market Place, Chippenham, Wilts

Tickets £10 Town Hall, Eventbrite & on the Door

About the Grief Opera

Thanks to all of you who have supported me in my grief journey since my son George Linacre died by his own hand in November 2021. Grief almost destroyed me: the shock was off the scale, the pain was existential, a continued existence seemed impossible. The world I knew, in which we - my family anyway - would certainly come through, was no more. Actually, it was a world I imagined. I found myself in another world where it felt that death was somehow present in every moment. How did I fail to see his suffering? Our last conversations echoed in my mind, and then differently, to try to get a different result. I demanded to be taken instead of George. All of the stages of grief compressed in weeks. George came to mind, even after his death, and we talked, in reality or in my imagination. Rod Key gave awesome support throughout.

At the same time, I wrote. What else could I do? First, a poem for my son's funeral. Attempts to capture our last conversations, to describe my psychological state, even the difficulty of talking about death. the impossibility of answering a simple question like "How are you?" without falling into a chasm. A grief memoir started to take shape - some readers may be familiar with C S Lewis's *A Grief Observed* - but the words "The Grief Opera" flashed into my mind. I mentioned the idea to Jazz musician Vladimir Miller with whom I had performed a couple of Poetry and Piano evenings at St Andrew's. He said grief is universal, music is universal, and if you think of an ancient, wailing funeral cortege, music is the long-standing traditional way of working through grief.

Vladimir is a master of musical forms, and The Grief Opera contains, actually is held together by, modern and traditional, jazz and orchestral styles, which flow with and against the narrative.

St Andrew's choir member and Village Singers member Gavin Macrae joined the Grief Opera. He knows what it is like to lose a son to suicide. Rebecca Dorsey (nee Snell) brought her soaring soprano voice. George Linacre's aunt, rock singer Keri Farish, and international opera star Neil Latchman have joined us too. It's an honour to sing alongside him. Musicians Cressida Nash, David Shepard, Nigel Shires and Sara Stagg, have all performed in St Andrew's. Members of the audience has described The Grief Opera as "Harrowing but ultimately uplifting", "The most thought-provoking evening of my life" and "Everything you would want from a work of art". We have performed in Bristol and London and return to St Andrew's on Saturday 7th October.

My grief journey continues. I don't know what comes next. Grief can be extremely hard, but unresolved grief remains. I hope the Grief Opera enables those of us who know grief to move forwards in their grief journey, and those who do not yet know it to be better prepared. Tickets are available at the Town Hall, online at Eventbrite and on the door.

Nigel Linacre

Wiltshire Churches 'Ride and Stride ' Event 2023

The Wiltshire Churches 'Ride & Stride' is an annual fundraising event organised by the Wiltshire Historic Churches Trust to raise funds for much-needed repairs to churches in Wiltshire. Funds are raised by participants in the Ride and Stride through sponsorship to take part in the event which involves visiting churches in the area either on foot or by cycling. Most churches would be open to greet the visitors, record them, and provide some refreshments on the way.

Four of us from St Andrew's (Margaret, Gavin, Jenny and myself) took part in the event on Saturday 9th September (the hottest day of the year!) and unsurprisingly elected to walk rather than cycle!

We began at St Andrew's and our first stop was at the great Central Methodist Hall on Station Hill. From there we walked to St Paul's Church. After that Gavin set out on a more ambitious route taking in churches in Langley Burrell, Kington Langley, Kington St Michael and Yatton Kennell before completing the remaining Chippenham Churches.

The other three of us reached St Nicholas, Hardenhuish, St Peters, and Sheldon Road Methodist Church before returning to St Andrews. As someone who had not been to the Hardenhuish church before, I found it a delightful small church, while St Peter's, provides a reminder of why funds for church repairs are so vital. Although it is a 1960's building and has a superb design, it is suffering from concrete problems which will cost a huge amount to deal with.

As my first experience of the Ride and Stride I would certainly do it again and encourage others to take part.

Half of the money raised from our efforts will come back to St Andrew's and half will go to the Trust to distribute to Churches for repairs.

Chris Norris

Photos clockwise from top left: St. Peters, St. Andrews, Sheldon Rd Methodist Church, St. Nicholas' Hardenhuish interior and St. Nicholas' Hardenhuish exterior.



When God calls, He also leads

Before I was born 30th Sept. 1936, my parents had been missionaries in Nigeria. They married not long before they returned home. I was their second of four sons. My mother once said to me; "Laurence, you were very nearly a Michaelmas goose." I was born 12.30 am and only half an hour from being born on Michaelmas Day, 29th Sept. In 1938 we moved to St. Albans. Neither of them forced faith on us, just encouraged us.

Only aged 8 I felt sure God was calling me to be two things; ordained and be a missionary. Since then, He has led me on. Aged 10 I went to St. George's School, Harpenden, a Christian School. I used the chapel for my quiet times when I was older, and staff encouraged me greatly, e. g. singing, organ playing, learning Greek in my last year. In 1955 I started my National Service in the Army, RASC. After basic training and training in office management and touch typing, I was posted to Singapore. I was greatly helped by chaplains, helped run a Sunday school, and visited CMS & CIM missionaries in Malaya. I took my degree in Cambridge at Queens' and on to Wycliffe Hall, Oxford, still working hard at Theology, plus Greek and Hebrew.

Ordinations were then at Michaelmas. I was ordained in this Diocese, 23rd Sept. 1962, in Radstock parish church, becoming Curate to Jack Armes at Widcombe. He said he didn't want me to marry while I was his Curate, which I felt was very severe. After my Priest's Ordination in Bath Abbey 22nd Sept, 1963, 60 years ago, Jack suddenly was taken ill with a cerebral aneurism early Advent that year and died 6 days later.

Bishop Henderson and Prebendary Geoffrey Lester put me i/c Widcombe parish, a huge early responsibility. I was then free to marry. Wendy & I married in August 1964 when also a new Vicar was appointed. Early 1965 we offered to CMS who, after training in Missiology, sent by boat via the Suez Canal to Kenya for 7 years. I had the parish area in which was Treetops, a view-point in the Aberdare forest, and on coming down Princess Elizabeth and the Duke were told of her father King George's death. We moved to Nanyuki, where I was Vicar of a huge area/parish called Mount Kenya parish (the size of two English counties), with a Polytechnic for African Teenagers. We flew home 1963, I was Vicar of two parishes here, Birmingham and Norwich as well as being Industrial Chaplain.

We offered a 2nd time when our third son had finished his degree in 1993, and after training in Islamics were sent to Syria where I was Chaplain to English speaking people; then down to Jordan as Chaplain to Seafarers in Aqaba. However, I caught typhoid fever from a Chinese ship and passed it on to Wendy, so we had to come home promptly, 2000. This helped Wendy as she was missing the family. All along God has led us in the most marvellous of ways. There are many matters, some exciting, I have not mentioned, but all prove God's wonderful leadership. When God calls He also leads.

Laurence Hubbard

CHIPPENHAM FLOWER CLUB



We are looking for new members to join, and we also welcome casual visitors or friends. We meet on the first Monday of every month at Sheldon School Hall. Doors open at 6.45pm and we finish around 9.30pm. Come and see some of the regions best demonstrators construct amazing floral displays, which are available to win via a raffle every month. Enjoy the peace and wellness that flowers can bring.

We also have a Practice Class, which meets on the 4th Tuesday of every month at Pewsham Community Centre. Doors open at 7.00pm and we finish at 9.30pm. This is a great evening, learning or developing skills in flower arranging, with a NAFAS judge to give help and assistance.



Full details of our programme can be found on our website www.ChippenhamFlowerClub.co.uk and/or you can follow us on Facebook as Chippenham Flower Club, where you can like and share our page!

Come along and join us – we are waiting to welcome you.





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North Wiltshire Symphony Orchestra

The North Wiltshire Symphony Orchestra will give its next concert in St. Andrew's church on **Saturday November 18th at 7.30 p.m.**

Tickets are £15 adult, £2 accompanied children.

*Available from: www.wegotickets.com/northwiltsorchestra
Neeld Community Hall & Arts Centre 01249 446699 or their website; at the door and from orchestra members.*

We were very pleased to see so many supporters for our summer concert. For this concert we do hope that you will be attracted by the rare chance to hear this wonderful symphony.

Do please book ahead because some people had to be turned away from the previous Mahler performance.

Refreshments available at the interval in support of **WellBoring**

Following concert: March 9th 2024 at St Andrew's Church



Programme:

Mahler: *Symphony number 5*

Mahler composed this work between 1901 and 1902. He had been seriously ill the year before and was recovering in a summer cottage enjoying fame and marriage to Alma, who was expecting their first child. The symphony makes a break from his earlier works that were much indebted to folk music. This has a much more formal style based on that of J S Bach, whom Mahler greatly admired: "In Bach all the seeds of music are combined". Although there are five movements the form is unusual.

Movement 1 is a slow march, opening with a trumpet solo that refers to Beethoven's famous motif in his 5th symphony. There are two trios, then a big climax, which fades away at the end.

Movement 2 is very stormy. Although it may seem chaotic it shares themes with the previous movement. In the middle there is a big, joyful, chorale. But that is interrupted by the return of the storm themes.

Movement 3 This is fast and joyful, based on conventional country dance rhythms. There is a prominent horn solo throughout.

Movement 4 This movement for strings and harp alone is perhaps Mahler's most famous piece. It is said to be a love song to Alma and Mahler left a poem that can be sung to this music. It has been widely used from funerals to films.

Movement 5 Rondo, meaning themes recur all through, often referring back to previous movements. It is a powerful, and complex, finale.

Brahms: *Hungarian Dances 5 & 6*

The concert will open with two of these, ever favourite, works. Brahms wrote them in 1879 and based them on traditional Hungarian themes. Number 5 is a traditional "czardas" or folk dance. Both are marked "Vivace" – lively.

The NWSO acknowledges with thanks the permission of the Rector to perform at St. Andrew's church and the continuing help of the Church Wardens and other staff in staging our concerts.

Parish Noticeboard

Services at St. Nicholas' Church, Tytherton Lucas

8th October *Evensong with Communion* 3.30pm

22nd October *Holy Communion* 3.30pm

Please note the times of the services as they are during our winter period.

Sheila Laurence

01249 740687

100 Club Draw for last month

£100: 55 £40: 81 £25: 34

Margaret Harrison

Mothers' Union Update

Our meeting on Monday, 11th September opened with Prayers followed by an informal get-together with a general knowledge quiz organised by Jenny Norris. Our thanks to her.

Our next meeting is on Monday, 9th October when Rev. Judith Lee will come to speak to us about her pilgrimage to Iona. Everyone is welcome to attend.'

Sue Haslop

EVENTS AT ST ANDREW'S

Saturday 7 October **7.30pm**
Grief Opera

Saturday 14 October **10.00am**
Autumn Fayre

Saturday 28 October **Time TBC**
Hymnathon in Aid of Christian Aid

Saturday 18 November **7.30pm**
North Wilts Symphony Orchestra

Thursday 7 December **7.00pm**
Carols Around the Piano

St Andrew's Men's Book Club

The St Andrew's Men's Book Club meets **the first Monday of every month at 7:30pm** at Michael Samme's house. It is a relaxed and informal group. We each try and read a new book of our own choice before each meeting then take it in turns to talk about what we have read.

More information will be published in future issues, but please contact Michael in Church or via email on the address [michael @sammes.co.uk](mailto:michael@sammes.co.uk), or speak to Dick Spencer if you are interested to join.



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Organ Rebuild Committee

Mary Pannel

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Eryl Spencer 651565

Social Responsibility

Dick Spencer 651565

Communications Committee

Paris Hall Committee

Friends of St. Andrew's

Jenny Norris 812945

When You Pray

You may not understand how to practise mental prayer. I will instruct you shortly and simply. Place yourself in the presence of God by these four means. **First**, keenly and attentively, realise that God is everywhere; there is no place or thing in the world where he is not. Let us go where we will, be where we will, we shall always be where God is. **Secondly**, God is specially in your heart and spirit. He is heart of your heart, spirit of your spirit. **Thirdly**, reflect that our Lord in his humanity looks always down upon you from heaven. **Fourthly**, in imagination, behold Jesus in his humanity as actually present with you. Make use of some of these methods to place yourself in God's presence. Let what you do be short and simple.



St Francis de Sales
(1567-1622)

A Final Word

During the Sunday service – for example during intercessional prayers – what do you actually pray about, and how do you pray? This is something I have considered many times, as there is no way of knowing whether what is going on in my own mind is happening in other people's! Recently, I have found myself making a point of systematically going through people I know and praying for them. I start with people whom I have recently learnt are in need, for example those who are sick or have had a hard week, and then recall other family members, friends and people I have encountered during the week. I don't always know exactly what to pray for them about, but I trust that God does know! It feels comforting to have had these people come to mind and know that even if nobody else has that day, at least one person has prayed for them. I would love to hear from readers how you approach prayer. Next time, I think I will try the above suggestion from St Francis de Sales that Michael Sammes kindly shared!

Remy Osman – Editor

While editing the magazine I listened to: *Elijah, Felix Mendelssohn – the first ever complete recording from 1930, by the BBC National Chorus and Orchestra!*

Church Services

St. Andrew's Parish Church, Chippenham with St. Nicolas' Tytherton Lucas

St Andrew's Church Chippenham

9am Eucharist

Alternating between traditional and contemporary language, this is a said service.

10.30am Eucharist

The main Parish Eucharist with singing and congregational hymns. Led by our robed choir on the 1st, 3rd and some 5th Sundays and the singing group on 2nd and 4th Sundays.

Evensong

6:30pm Second Sunday of the Month

St Nicholas' Tytherton Lucas

Please see inside on page 16 for more latest details during vacancy.