

CECHO



MAY 2023 EDITION



THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE
ECUMENICAL CHURCH OF OCCITANIE
www.ourchurch.fr

ECO Celebrates 100,000 Hits on its website in 2 Years

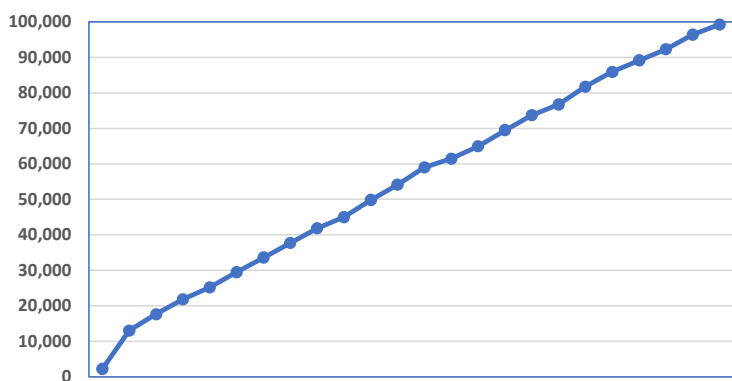


As the end of April 2023 approached, ECO passed a landmark statistic for its website, as we celebrated our 100,000th web hit in just under 2 years of online worship.

Visitor numbers have been rising steadily since the website launched at the end of May 2021. Our online services have now been viewed almost 9,000 times, representing (based on YouTube estimates) almost 20,000 actual viewers.

At the same time, in addition to the copies sent each month to subscribers by e-mail, on average another 100 copies are downloaded directly from the ECO website by visitors.

ECO Website Hits Since May 2021



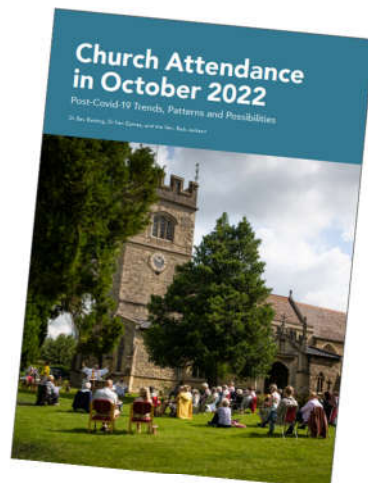
A total of 375 services were broadcast during this period with recent Sunday services regularly exceeding 200 viewings on YouTube.

A report recently published for the Church of England by a small team of statisticians noted that, after Covid-19, there remains a considerable demand for online worship amongst congregation members, with increasing numbers of worshippers preferring to participate in what they term “Church At Home”.

They report warns that where Churches ignore this demand, congregations simply go elsewhere in order to find online worship.

ECO are very pleased to see that we are able to meet this need, not only in France, where the largest single group of our viewers are based, but also for other viewers around the world.

We look forward to welcoming our next 100,000 website visitors.



IT RAPIDLY BECAME CLEAR THAT THE ROW BETWEEN MOSES AND NOAH WAS NOT GOING TO BE EASY TO RESOLVE.....



THY KINGDOM COME 2023

Join in with ECO

TKC is a global ecumenical prayer movement originally created in 2016 by the Church of England Archbishops of Canterbury and York which has now expanded to embrace 85 different denominations encompassing 90% of countries worldwide and will involve more than 1 million Christians.

Spanning the period between Ascension Day - Thursday 18th May - and Pentecost - Sunday 28th May - those who join in are invited to pray during the 11 days as they wish to.

A suggestion for 2023 is to prayerfully choose 5 people and to pray for them each day. Using a Prayer Journal, which is downloadable from [here](#), a number of different theologians suggest themes for prayer which change each day.

TKC also publish a *Novena* to use during this period.

The word “novena” is derived from the Latin word for nine, or “novem.” Typically, a novena refers to nine days of prayer, asking God for a specific intention, often through a Saint’s intercession. Novenas are a beautiful way to grow purposeful, consistent, and persistent in daily prayer.

The 2023 TKC Novena has been prepared by the Very Reverend Bob Key, former Dean of Jersey, and is focused on verses from the First Letter of John The Evangelist (who is probably not the same John as the author of John’s Gospel).

You can download a copy of the booklet which accompanies the Novena from [here](#).

However, each day during the days of TKC, a short video will be available to accompany that day’s Novena, and ECO will publish these on the front page of our website each day.

We hope you may take a few minutes each day to join us in our prayer journey during this 10-day period.

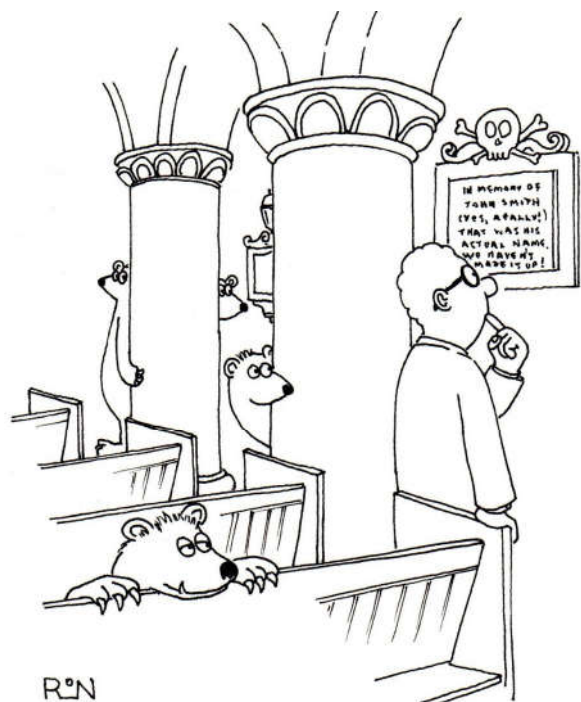
WHAT 5 PEOPLE WOULD YOU PRAY FOR ?

Pray for:

God to bless them

An opportunity to share faith with them

For them to come to know Jesus more closely



R.N

Dennis spent a long time in church looking for his forbears



THE ANOINTING OF A KING

At his coronation on May 6th, King Charles will be anointed with holy oil by Archbishop Justin Welby.

Sitting on the Coronation Chair dating back to the reign of King Edward I with the Scottish Stone of Destiny positioned underneath it, at the most holy moment of his coronation, King Charles will be anointed with oil specially prepared and consecrated in Jerusalem in March by the Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem—Theophilus III and Anglican Archbishop Hosam Naoum (*photo above*).

Pressed from olives gathered from two groves on the Mount of Olives at the monasteries of the Ascension and of Mary Magdalene (where the King's grandmother, Princess Alice of Greece is buried), the oil has been perfumed with sesame, rose, jasmine, cinnamon, neroli, benzoin, and orange blossom.

The oil will be poured onto Charles and Camilla using the Coronation Spoon, a silver-gilt spoon dating back to 1349. The King will be anointed on the head, chest and hands. The Queen Consort only on the Head.

It signifies that God's blessing is being conferred upon them both.

Anointing of monarchs with Holy Oil dates back as far as the Old Testament, where in 1 Samuel 10:1, Samuel anointed King Saul in this way.

The words of 1 Kings 1:38-40 will be sung to music composed by Handel for the coronation of George II:

*Zadok the Priest and Nathan the prophet
anointed Solomon King.
And all the people rejoiced, and said:
God save the King! Long live the King!
May the King live for ever, Amen, Hallelujah.*

While the coronation ceremony is being televised, viewers will not be able to witness this moment as the King will be hidden from view by a canopy held by 4 Knights Of The Garter.



14th May is Rogation Sunday

In the Anglican Church, Rogation is celebrated on the fifth Sunday after Easter. Rogation means an asking of God - for blessing on the seed and land for the year ahead. It is appropriate in any emergency, war, plague, drought or foul weather.

The practice began with the Romans, who invoked the help of the gods Terminus and Ambarvalia. In those days a crowd moved in procession around the cornfields, singing and dancing, sacrificing animals, and driving away Winter with sticks. They wanted to rid the cornfields of evil.

In about 465 the Western world was suffering from earthquake, storm and epidemic. So Mamertius, Bishop of Vienne, aware of the popular pagan custom, ordered that prayers should be said in the ruined or neglected fields on the days leading up to Ascension. With his decision, 'beating the bounds' became a Christian ceremonial.

Rogation-tide arrived in England early in the eighth century and became a fixed and perennial asking for help of the Christian God. On Rogation-tide, a little party would set out to trace the boundaries of the parish. At the head marched the bishop or the priest, with a minor official bearing a Cross, and after them the people of the parish, with schoolboys and their master trailing along. Most of them held slender wands of willow. A more extreme version of this ceremony was often practised termed as "Bumping The Bounds" where at the locations of boundary stones, one or more young boys would be beaten or tipped upside down and their heads 'bumped' against the stone - to make sure they never forgot where the boundaries were!

At certain points along the route - at well-known landmarks like a bridge or stile or ancient tree, the Cross halted, the party gathered about the priest, and a litany or rogation is said, imploring God to send seasonable wealth, keep the corn and roots and boughs in good health, and bring them to an ample harvest. At some point beer and cheese would be waiting.

These locations still bear names like "Amen Corner" or "Gospel Oak"



Beating (and Bumping) The Bounds in the City of London

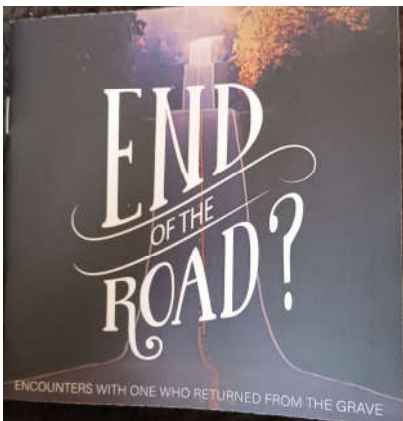


LOT House Group

Janet Varty

Anna, our musician, set the alarm for 5.30am, travelled from Swindon to Puy l' Eveque via Bristol and Bergerac and then stepped out of the hire car and at once sat at the piano to play for us!

Taking full advantage of having live music, our Service was interspersed with 5 songs. Such luxury. We welcomed old friends and new, along with Margaret Cross' sister, Viv, who travelled from Warwick to be with us. Absent friends were remembered and wished well.



Our thoughts for the meeting were around three curiosities from the Bible Society's End of the Road - 'Encounters With One Who Returned From The Grave.' A marble tablet that was discovered at the Parisian home of German scholar Wilhelm Frohner when he died in 1925.

Private notes revealed that it had been sent to him in 1878 from the Palestinian Town of Nazareth. It was a Roman Imperial Edict, possibly Claudius (10 BC to 54 AD) that makes veiled reference to the empty tomb.

A stone with Pontius Pilate's name on it and an ossuary bearing the name of Caiaphas, both unearthed by archaeologists. Intriguing at the very least.

Our next meeting will be held on Thursday 25th May at the new summer time of 3pm. For more information, please contact lot.group@ourchurch.fr

In Search of Hadrian - Janet Varty

In Search of Hadrian was a lecture given by the Rev'd Harriet Johnson, Research Fellow and Chaplain at St Augustine's College of Theology Maidstone UK.

30 or so of us joined those physically present by Zoom.

Saint Hadrian is not the man who built the wall, nor the Pope of the same name but the Abbot of St Peter's and



St Paul's Canterbury. Fascinating that he was probably a refugee, certainly a monk, someone who rose up in the church in Italy to become a diplomat. He was offered the post of Archbishop of Canterbury but declined. He was suspected of spying, settled in Canterbury and became a notable educator and biblical scholar.

Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People describes him as 'African by birth' and it is fascinating that he was fairly systematically air brushed out by later church historians and theologians.

In 667, Pope Vitalian offered Hadrian the chance to become Archbishop of Canterbury. Hadrian, however, declined, suggesting as an alternative his friend Theodore, who was a monk in Rome.

A condition of Theodore's appointment, however, was that Hadrian should accompany him to Canterbury.

On their arrival in Kent, Theodore immediately appointed Hadrian as abbot of the monastery of St Peter and St Paul. Hadrian obtained special papal privileges for his monastery and assisted Theodore in the administration of the Canterbury diocese.

In addition to the knowledge he passed on through literature and teaching, Hadrian also had a considerable impact on the Anglo-Saxon liturgy. With Theodore, he spread the use of music in church services. It is also due to Hadrian that the feasts of several central Italian saints were introduced to the calendar of the Anglo-Saxon Church.

Hadrian died in 710 and was buried at his Canterbury monastery. Numerous miracles were attributed to Hadrian. His feast day is celebrated on 9 January, keeping alive the memory of the man who played such an important role in turning the Anglo-Saxon Church into an intellectual powerhouse of the early medieval world.

Harriet suggests he is coming in from the cold now and can speak to us across the centuries. He was cited in the recent Black History Month as an African that helped transform Anglo Saxon England. He was made a Saint but images don't always reflect his ethnicity. Saint Augustine's is hoping to fund an icon of him that respects that.

BAME Anglicans was set up in 2017 as an independent forum for black and minority ethnic Anglicans.

Church of England safeguarding concerns continue over its “Independent” Safeguarding Board

The controversies over the role of the Church of England’s Independent Safeguarding Board have deepened over the past few weeks following the resignation of its Chair after she was criticised by the UK Information Commissioner over personal data breaches she was found to have committed.

The Archbishops’ Council of the Church of England responded by appointing as Interim Chair, Meg Munn, a former MP who has also been the Chair of the Church’s National Safeguarding Panel since 2018.

However, the UK’s Sunday Telegraph printed a report on 23rd April stating that the only two remaining Board members had reported working with the Church of England to be “an uphill battle and unnecessarily challenging.” They claimed that “there has been clear interference” with their work, a “lack of transparency” and a “reluctance to provide information” meaning that at times they have been “met with hostility”.

The latest evidence of ‘interference’ was, they stated, a failure to consult either them or the victims of Church abuse over the appointment of Ms Munn, which contravened the Terms of Reference of the Board, which require that Board members be appointed using a public advertisement process using expert recruiters.

The Board Members stated that they had been told not to engage with victims of abuse on matters of their independence or the appointment of Ms Munn.

Abuse Victims also criticised this appointment, demanding that Ms Munn decline to take up the post. 50 survivors have notified the Board that they will not consent to their personal data being shared with Ms Munn.

One leading Church Law barrister has suggested that the conflict of interest that Ms Munn will have over holding two separate appointments relating to Safeguarding can only be resolved by her copying the BBC Chairman’s recent resignation and declining the ISB appointment.

At the same time, the two current members of the ISB announced on 28th April that they had reached an agreement with Professor Martyn Percy, who has been pursuing legal action against the ISB over its refusal to investigate allegations of abuse he has made against the Church of England and Christ Church College Oxford which has been the subject of legal proceedings and was due to return to court for a further hearing over whether the Board was truly independent.

They have also supported a call for the Church of England to hold an enquiry into Dr Percy’s complaint to be chaired by a judge or King’s Counsel.

We will report further on this matter as it develops.

An UBER fit for a King

As London hangs out miles of bunting in preparation for the Coronation of King Charles on 6th May, the Uber online taxi company have come up with a novel way for everyone to get into the coronation mood.

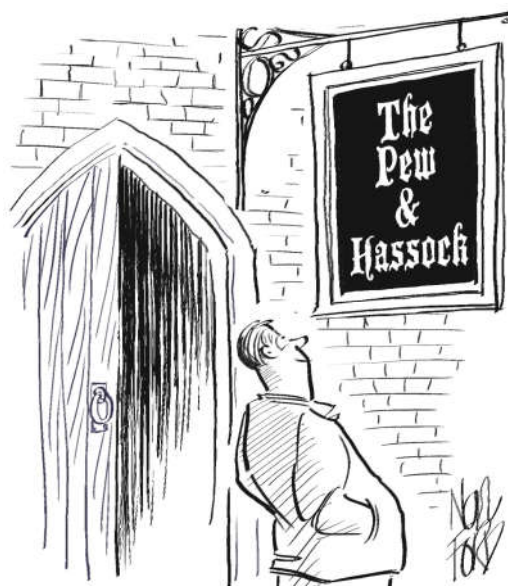


You can now book a ride in the Uber Coronation Coach around Dulwich Park in South London between the 3rd and 5th of May from 1pm to 4pm.



Seated on plush seats with embroidered cushions, hirers will be able to wave regally to onlookers as they are drawn along by 4 white horses.

Part of the fare from every ride will be donated by Uber to Spana, a UK animal welfare charity.



Rev Jones' decision to change the church's name from "St Mark's Parish Church" proved very successful in attracting in more people - especially to evening services....

Roman Catholic Baptisms rose “significantly” at Easter 2023.

The Catholic Herald newspaper has reported that the number of baptisms in the Roman Catholic Church which took place during the Easter Vigil - a traditional time for baptism - in 2023 rose by 21% over 2022 to 5,463. In 16 dioceses, the number of baptisms doubled. Sadly, this trend was not repeated in Paris, where the rise was only half that witnessed elsewhere.

Significantly, about half of those who came to receive the sacrament of baptism came from families who were not Christian.



At the same time, the UK Times newspaper has reported that a fast-growing charity - SOS Calvaires - which restores and re-erects crucifixes across France

has now swelled to have more than 50 branches across France, and helped to restore over 200 crucifixion scenes around the country.



Crucifixes abound in rural France, although it is illegal under laïcité laws to erect any new ones on public land. (Existing ones can be restored)

Some crosses are very much part of the landscape. For example the 9m tall cross atop Pic Saint-Loup here in Occitanie was vandalised in 2020, but was restored within 3 months after €24,000 was raised in public donations.

SPRING IS SPRUNG - BUT BEWARE LES SAINTS DE GLACE !



The warmer days of Spring are here, and surely we can now get busy in our gardens ?

Always beware the French Saints’ Days which are associated with late frosts - the Saints of Ice:

11 May - St Mamert

12 May - St Pancrace and

13 May - St Servais

If you preparing to plant outside, it may be better to wait until after these Saints Days are passed, and in fact you may wish to wait until after 25th May, the day of St Urbain about whom it is said

“Quand la saint Urbain est passée, le vigneron est rassuré”

Once St Urbain’s day is past, the vineyard owner can feel safe.

We wish all our readers frost-free gardens this Spring.

Church Mice

Karl Zorowski



28th May is Pentecost



"You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you and you will be witnesses to me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth" *Acts 1:8*

We all get tired, and battle weary sometimes. The disciples of Jesus had just been through a three-year long roller coaster adventure with Jesus that had culminated in His death, resurrection and ascension into heaven.

The range of emotions would have been hugely taxing in the days leading up to Pentecost, as they remembered Jesus weeping in the garden of Gethsemane, betrayed by Judas, brutally beaten and crucified, and then dead and buried. Then there had been the shock and awe of finding out that He was alive again! But then He had left them again, to return to His Father. By the time the day of Pentecost arrived, the disciples would indeed have welcomed some fresh spiritual fire!

Today, many of us have been emotionally drained by the uncertainties of Covid 19, the worry of prices rising at an alarming rate, and now the uncertainty of what will happen in Russia's war in Ukraine.

So, what better day to pray for fresh spiritual fire for each of us? As we celebrate the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and birth of the Church, let us thank God that He will never leave us or forsake us.

Pentecost took place on the well-established Jewish festival of First Fruits, which was observed at the beginning of the wheat harvest. It was seven weeks after Easter, or 50 days including Easter.

A feast day to celebrate the country's wheat harvest does not sound exactly world-changing, but that year, it became one of the most important days in world history. For Pentecost was the day that Jesus sent the Holy Spirit - the day the Church was born.

Jesus had told His disciples that something big was going to happen, and that they were to wait for it in Jerusalem, instead of returning to Galilee. Jesus had plans for His disciples, but He knew they could not do the work themselves. They would need His help.

And so, they waited in Jerusalem, praying together with

His other followers, for many days. And then on that fateful morning there was suddenly the sound as of a mighty rushing wind. Tongues of flame flickered on their heads, and they began to praise God in many tongues, to the astonishment of those who heard them.

The curse of Babel (Genesis 11: 1- 9) was dramatically reversed that morning.

That morning the Holy Spirit came to indwell the disciples and followers of Jesus. The Church was born.

The Christians were suddenly full of life and power, utterly different from their former fearful selves. The change in them was permanent.

Peter gave the first ever sermon of the Christian Church that morning, proclaiming Jesus was the Messiah. His boldness in the face of possible death was in marked contrast to the man who had denied Jesus 50 days before. And 3,000 people responded, were converted, and were baptised. How's that for fast church growth!

Of course, Pentecost was not the first time the Holy Spirit had acted in this world. All through the Old Testament there are accounts of how God's Spirit guided people and strengthened them. But now, because of Christ's death and resurrection, He could INDWELL them. From now on, every Christian could have the confidence that Jesus was with them constantly, through the indwelling of His Holy Spirit.

Pentecost in Jerusalem

On that long ago first morning of Pentecost, Jerusalem was crowded with thousands of visitors, coming to celebrate the Feast of First Fruits.

In one small room of that great city, a small group of people who had followed Jesus were praying. There was nothing else for them to do: Jesus had died, He had risen, and He had ascended, promising to send them 'a Comforter'. They were left alone, to wait at Jerusalem. And so they waited – on Him, and for Him.

They were not disappointed, for that morning the Holy Spirit fell upon that small room, and transformed those believers into the Church, Christ's body here on earth. Pentecost was not the first time that the Holy Spirit came to the world – throughout the Old Testament there are stories telling of how God had guided people and given them strength. But now His Spirit would use a new instrument: not just isolated prophets, but the Church, His body on earth.

Acts opens with the preaching of the gospel in Jerusalem, the centre of the Jewish nation.

Within 30 years the Gospel had spread throughout the northern Mediterranean: Syria, Turkey, Greece, Malta... to the very heart of the Roman Empire: Rome. The Church was on the move – God was on the move! He was calling people from every nation to repent, turn to Jesus for forgiveness of their sins, and to follow Him.

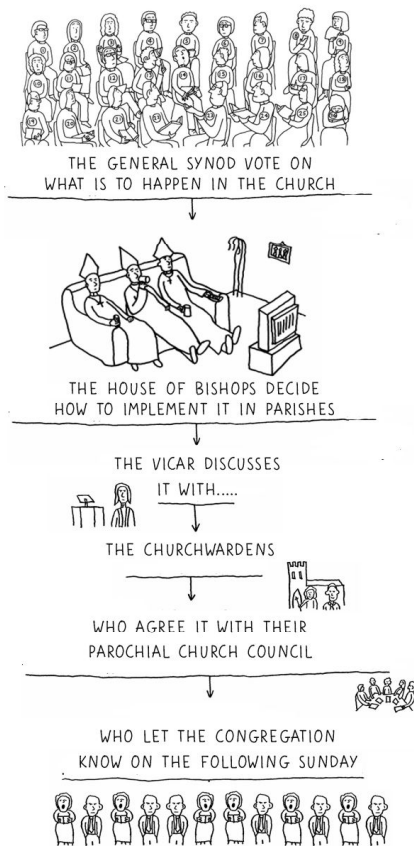
ECO WORSHIP CALENDAR MAY 2023

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2 19:00 Online Service of Compline	3	4 19:00 Online Service of Prayer for Healing	5	6
7 10:30 Online Communion for Easter 5	8	9 19:00 Online Service of Compline	10	11 19:00 Online Service of Prayer for Healing	12	13
14 10:30 Online Morning Prayer for Easter 6	15	16 19:00 Online Service of Compline	17	18 19:00 Online Service of Prayer for Healing	19	20
21 10:30 Online Communion for Ascension Day	22	23 19:00 Online Service of Compline	24	25 15:00 Lot House Group 19:00 Online Service of Prayer for Healing	26	27
28 10:30 Online Morning Prayer for Pentecost	29	31 19:00 Online Service of Compline				

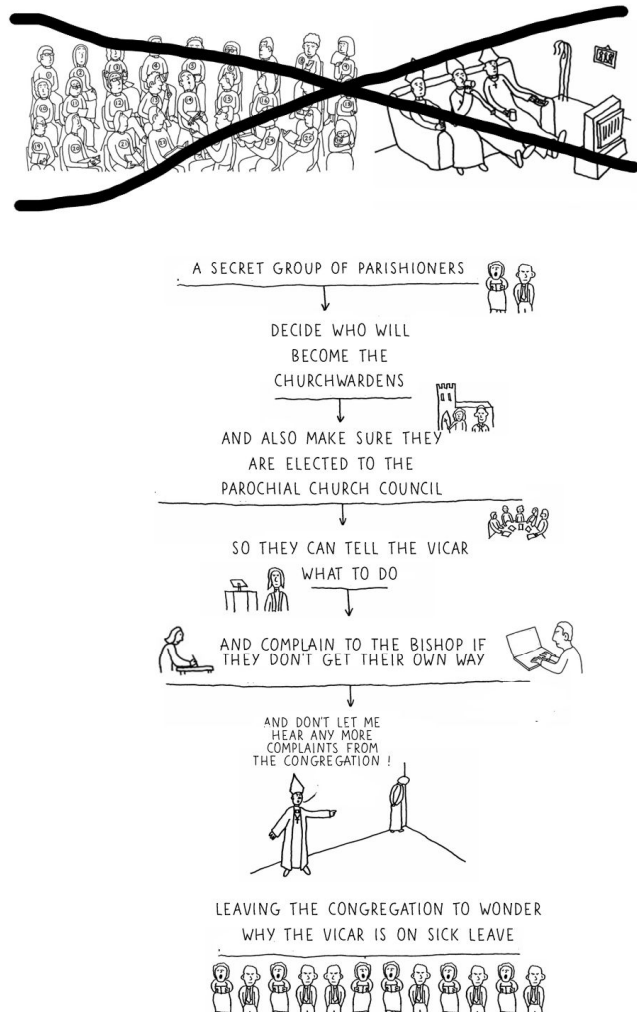
With thanks to Dave Walker...
Not all churches are run the way that their congregations think that they are....

THE CHAIN OF COMMAND WITHIN A CHURCH

WHAT SHOULD HAPPEN.....



WHAT SOMETIMES HAPPENS.....



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