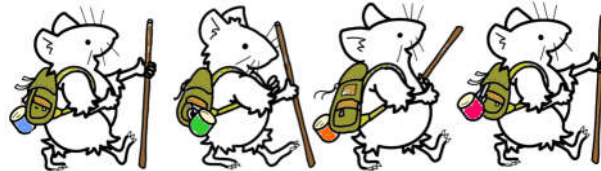




ECHO

AUGUST 2024 EDITION



THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE ECUMENICAL CHURCH OF OCCITANIE

www.ourchurch.fr

X @occitaniechurch 



SUMMER WEDDING BLESSINGS WITH ECO

So far this summer, ECO ministers have been asked to conduct two blessings of marriages here in the Occitanie.

In May, Linda Billenness conducted a blessing of the marriage of Rebecca and Kenneth, two Americans who had come with their families to be blessed in a beautiful medieval church near Foix.

Then, in July, Linda Trew conducted an open-air blessing in glorious summer sunshine for Pablo and Laura near Cahors. *More inside this edition.*

A NEW JOINT INITIATIVE FOR ENGLISH-SPEAKING CHRISTIANS IN THE OCCITANIE.

A new Facebook page has just been launched which is dedicated to English-speaking Christian groups here in our Occitanie Region.

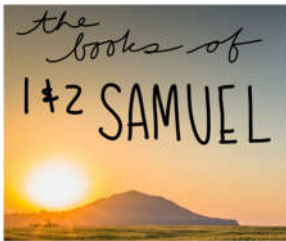
The Facebook page "English-Speaking Churches In The Occitanie" (ESCITO) has been established to provide a space for the many English-speaking worship groups which exist in this area to minister to the estimated 50,000 English-speakers who reside in the Occitanie Region.

ESCITO will enable representatives from these organisations to announce their services, share advertisements about events and also stream worship (Facebook now requires pages to have a minimum number of 'followers' before they can livestream worship and this page provides a space from which they can do this.)

This does **not** mean that the ECO Facebook Page will be disappearing - we will continue to publish items on our own page, but we will also share on the new page as well.

Because of how Facebook works, it will require a few days for this page to come fully live but watch out for announcements on our Facebook and web pages.





What's The Big Idea ? - 1 & 2 Samuel

Over 2 years, Canon Paul Hardingham, Vicar of St Peter's, Bolton and a regular contributor to ECHO, is writing a series of monthly articles about the books of the Bible, this month looking at the 2 Books of Samuel

1 & 2 Samuel was originally a single work, which focuses on Samuel, Saul and David, around 1,000 BC, mid-way between Abraham and Jesus. It was Samuel who established the monarchy in Israel after the period of the judges.

He was commanded by God to give the people a king, although their request is seen as a rejection of God's rule over Israel (8:7). The people simply wanted to be like other nations, however their king was still subject to God's law and the word of the prophet.

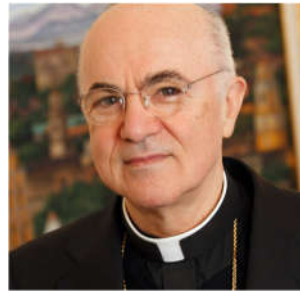
Although Samuel anointed Saul, he soon showed an unwillingness to submit to these requirements, leading to his rejection as king (15:23). God chose David as Saul's successor, and 1 Samuel depicts David's years of waiting until the right time arrived to claim the throne.

2 Samuel depicts David's rule, in which the nation prospers and its enemies are defeated. The promise of the perfect king is fulfilled in Jesus Himself, as David's descendant. The second half of the book depicts the darker side of David's reign, describing his weaknesses and failures, including his adultery with Bathsheba and the rebellion of his son Absalom.

Nevertheless, David remained a man after God's own heart: 'The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.' (1 Samuel 16:7).

The characters in this book are not always great examples of faith, however, 'They do not show us how we should live but how in fact we do live, authenticating the reality of our daily experience as the stuff that God uses to work his purposes of salvation in us and in the world.' (Eugene Peterson).

UPDATE - VATICAN HAS EXCOMMUNICATED ARCHBISHOP VIGANÒ



In our last issue, we reported that Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò, the former apostolic nuncio (the Pope's Ambassador) to the United States, had been summoned to Rome to face disciplinary charges.

The Catholic Herald reported on 5 July that the Archbishop has been excommunicated by the Vatican following charges of 'schism'.

The Vatican's Dicastery for the Doctrine of Faith (DDF) made the announcement after the Archbishop failed to answer the summons.

The Archbishop had achieved global notoriety in the church after the 2018 World Meeting of Families in Dublin, where on the final day of Pope Francis' visit, he published an 11-page "testimony" in which he accused Pope Francis of covering up for former cardinal and priest, Theodore McCarrick, who was charged with sexually abusing minors and the sexual harassment of adult seminarians.

He also attempted to expose alleged overspending and mismanagement in the Vatican itself.

Since that time, he has regularly published open letters accusing the Pope of heresies and abuse of his authority. He has rejected many of the reforms of the Second Vatican Council and has also criticised the Pope's decision to restrict the use of the Latin Mass.

In the meantime, petitions to the Pope not to impose fresh restrictions on the use of the Latin Mass continue to be published. These support the Mexican Archbishop of Guadalajara, Cardinal Juan Sandoval Iniguez, who has written an open letter to Pope Francis asking him to confirm that rumours that the Latin Mass will be banned completely are not true.

The Vatican has been increasingly restricting the use of the traditional Latin Mass, originally promulgated in 1570 by Pope Pius V and often referred to as the Tridentine Mass and this issue is becoming an increasing cause of tension between different sections of the Catholic Church.

Lot House Group

lot.group@ourchurch.fr

Janet Varty



We met twice this month.

Firstly, we gathered with many local friends, on the 9th July in the Eglise de Puy-l'Eveque to hear

a choir, of which our friends Margaret and Howard are members, perform works by Vivaldi and Fauré. This was a splendid concert and congratulations to all those involved.

We then met again on 25th July.

We opened with the Collect for the Feast of St James (the Greater) and shared the leading of a service of Prayer for Healing. At the exact same time an in-person ECO Communion

service was taking place in Alet Les-Bains. A double achieved for the first time!

Sitting in the cool of the cave we shared the Reading of The Three Hermits by Leo Tolstoy. Its theme echoes Matthew 6 v 7 and 8:

"And when you pray, do not keep babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him."

Food for thought in all our minds as we consider the "wordiness" of all the prayers we know and use.

Later, after refreshments, we continued with a literary theme as Nils presented his short story *The Message*.

A competition set to include all matters pertaining to Puy-l'Eveque had been won by Nils. (Adults category.)



Written by him in French of course, he translated for us. It drew us into the subterranean world of the town and a message to be delivered to a King. He challenged us to note the 3 biblical themes he embedded.

Nils's story is published overleaf.

Our next gathering is on Thursday 29th August.

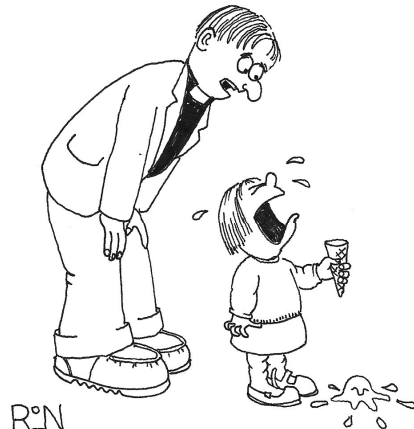
WEDDING BLESSINGS (contd from front page)

Linda Trew writes about the Blessing near Cahors:

This was a small, private, intimate event – I guess in France we would say 'bijou', which made it so very special. The couple had married a year ago but due to unforeseen circumstances not all family members could attend. So, a year on, the couple decided to recreate the day to enable loved ones to be part of this special event.

Working with the couple in advance we planned together the service. What was important to them? How could we involve others? They chose music that had meaning to them and a beautiful version of the hymn 'Oh the deep, deep love of Jesus' by Audry Assed which I had not heard before (I highly recommend you listening to it - you can find it on YouTube). As vows had been exchanged the year before, they used this time to share personal words of love, thoughts, reflections and promises, which they wrote themselves.

It was a blessing of their marriage, but it was a blessing to all that were there. There were tears of joy, laughter, an abundance of love and a rich presence of God. How blessed was I to be able to be part of something so very special!



Gary realised that he would have to call on everything he had learned on his counselling course in this situation



The Messenger

a story by
Nils Ankarkrona

BOOM! Gabrielle was torn from her little nap.

"Another cannonade!" she exclaimed in front of her small entourage of two young ladies and two pages, who all slumbered sitting and dressed, warming themselves in front of the embers in the fireplace.

"I hope my dear king is not hurt!" she thought.

"He must join us well before dawn to escape this hell of war!"

She addressed her good friend, Aurore Guiscard: "You helped us so much by welcoming us here at your parents' house, and I hope you can find me a solution soon, please!"

Gabrielle and her small retinue had arrived the day before in Puy-l'Evêque by the towpaths along the Lot. Sheltered from the night, they managed to go up the Cledelles stream with a boat to reach the Guiscard house through the garden.

"Dear Aurore," she said in a low voice: "I have a crucial message for my dearest Majesty. It was his faithful friend Charles Gontaut who entrusted it to me before leaving Nérac. The message is crucial for France and Navarre! Gontaut whispered it in my ear, and I must do the same to the King!" There is no question of a written message, even if it is encrypted, sent, neither by pigeon nor by arrow! This can be intercepted by the enemy! Maybe I'll go myself? But how do you reach him? And he must be reminded that it is his dear Mademoiselle D'Estrées who is looking for him! "

Aurore, still in her dressing-gown, replied: "My dearest Gabrielle, I admire your courage, although you are only nineteen like me, but you must not venture into the city at this moment, it is too dangerous! The king had barricaded himself in the keep, which is bombarded by the enemy on the side of the Church of Saint Sauveur. But I'm going to ask our sommelier Lucian for advice, who knows all the corners of the city and especially the underground! "

A few minutes later Lucian arrives, rubbing his eyes, sleepy and whispers: "Ah, I understand! Well, I suggest a solution to free the king, but it's risky. I need a small person! Follow me!"

"Dear Aurore, I think you are the only one who can persuade the king to follow you here, can you go?" begged Gabrielle.

"Dear Gabrielle," replied Aurore, "yes, for you and our king!"

They all went down to the lowest cellar, equipped with torches.

"Behold," Lucian said, "I will open this camouflaged door for you, which leads to the tunnels below the city. Enter and continue upwards. But be careful, halfway the tunnel splits into two, one part on the left, which is rocky and narrow, the other is paved and wide. You must take the one on the left and continue to the bottom of the dungeon, and you will open a door like this to free the king! Do not take the tunnel on the right, otherwise that will take you to the cemetery! Mademoiselle Aurore, go quickly, time is running out! Here is a lantern."

Aurore, still in her long dressing-gown, hesitated; a harsh and cold air entered through the opening. "For France and Navarre!" she shouted and disappeared into the tunnel.

She climbed upwards with small steps; her lantern illuminated the damp rockeries. "This is the sharing of the tunnel". But suddenly she stumbled on the stone, which was rejected by the builders, but which had become the head of the corner and her long dress clung to it; she tried to regain her equilibrium; suddenly the lantern fell and went out! Black!

Black! However, in the tunnel on the right there was a faint bluish light.

"I can't go back and the tunnel on the left is all black, I'll try to continue towards the light," she decided for herself. The pavement was smooth, and the tunnel wide. The light came from a kind of cloud at the end.

"Don't be afraid! " She heard a chilling voice! "What are you doing here? I'm a mist and we're dancing tonight, we mists with the misties! He disappeared into the rock on one side, and reappeared on the other, crossing the rocks up and down, too. In the background she saw dancing luminous seraphims, who came out of the bottom of the cemetery and disappeared in the rocks.

"I can help you, but don't get too close to the cemetery, from where we came out for the annual Palm Sunday dance."

Aurora asked in a trembling voice, "Dear mist, I'm going to the dungeon to free our king, but I've gotten lost!"

"Ah," replied the mist, "this road here ends at the tombs from which we emerged last night, there is no way out! But I'm going to turn you into a misty for tonight, so you can cross the rocks to the dungeon! But

be careful, as soon as the slightest light of dawn appears, you will become human again, and if you wait too long, you will remain frozen in the rock forever! Since you want to go to the dungeon, then I'll walk through you, and you become a misty! "

"Okay," agreed Aurore, anxious! And suddenly he walked through her, and she had become a misty, floating from right to left, up and down looking for her direction.

Now she saw the city from below; the Grande Rue, its cellars, the foundations of the Lycherie and other houses, the city wall and finally the large rocks of the lower keep.

She crossed the wall, all the way into the jail where the king was, who noticed nothing.

She exposed herself to the light of a torch, and suddenly she had become a human maiden again.

The king, frightened, but relieved after listening to her, agreed to follow her to the camouflaged door!

In the meantime, at the Guiscard house, Gabrielle, trembling with anxiety, went to the fireplace room with her young ladies and now they were joined by the lords of the house, who were looking at this little troop through the door, curious.

The minutes passed, as long as hours, and after an interminable wait, she heard the gentlemen shout:

"Mademoiselle, His Majesty has arrived!"

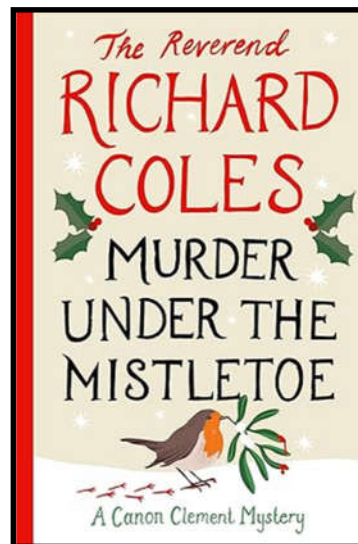
The King, in battle dress with his red belt, entered. Gabrielle, stunned, remained seated. The king knelt and kissed her tenderly. Gabrielle held him tightly for a long time and whispered the crucial message in his ear.

The king quickly stood up and exclaimed:

"Thank you, my dear mistress, so let's get out of here quickly before dawn!

Towards Nérac where we must gain in safety! There, my dear faithful friends, are waiting for me impatiently, and we are going to prepare the future of France and Navarre. This we will celebrate with a chicken in each pot for all with a good Cahors wine, take a full barrel with us!

Pages, get the barge ready, we're leaving at once!"



ADVANCE NOTICE - A NEW CANON CLEMENT MURDER MYSTERY FOR CHRISTMAS

We don't have to wait until next Summer for the next book from Revd Richard Coles

Over the past 3 years, each summer has welcomed a new mystery from retired vicar Richard Coles featuring Canon Daniel Clement , rector of Champton (which turns out to be a very dangerous place to be a member of the congregation.)

Richard's books have become Best Sellers on the Sunday Times List, and he has now increased his productivity to produce an extra book which will be released on 24 October 2024 - just in time to get into a lot of people's Christmas stockings.

It is Christmas Day in Champton Rectory and a group are assembling for Christmas Lunch. At the feast, peace and goodwill prevail, until two meet under the mistletoe and one them falls down dead...

Has murder returned to Champton ? Find out in October.



"How thoughtful, wearing something all the wedding guests could shelter under in case of rain."

LIAB

UPROAR AFTER CHRISTIAN JOURNALIST ACCUSES ARCHBISHOP OF 'LYING' TO MEMBERS OF CHURCH OF ENGLAND'S GENERAL SYNOD

A controversy has arisen after the Former Director of Communications for the Anglican Communion and ex-Member of the Church of England's General Synod, Gavin Drake, accused the Archbishop of York of 'lying' to the General Synod over the circumstances surrounding the abolition of the Church's Independent Safeguarding Board at the meeting of Synod in July 2023.

During what was a very heated and emotional discussion in July 2023, Archbishop Stephen Cottrell had assured members of Synod that the decision to terminate the members of the ISB had been made 'unanimously' by the Archbishops' Council. The subsequent independent report prepared by leading barrister Dr Sarah Wilkinson revealed that this decision was actually taken by a vote of 11 to 4 with 4 other members abstaining.

At the meeting of the Synod in July 2024, Archbishop Stephen began his opening address to Members by stating that he wanted to make "a small correction to the record" because he had "mistakenly" said that the vote had been unanimous.

Mr Drake has pointed out that by reviewing the footage of the July 2023 meeting, it can be seen that the Archbishop was reading from a prepared script when he declared that the decision had been 'unanimous' and was not speaking off the cuff. He also noted that a briefing to journalists by the Church's Press Team in York 2023 had contained the same incorrect information. When invited to comment on this, neither the Archbishop nor the Press Office wished to do so.

Neither would they comment on whether a formal disciplinary complaint has been made against Archbishop Cottrell over this matter.

In a further development, in his 2024 Birthday Honours, King Charles awarded knighthoods to both Alan Bates, whose campaign to expose the various problems at the Post Office with their



Newly-honoured - Sir Alan Bates and Dame Jasvinder Sanghera

Horizon computer system has led to the exoneration of postmasters convicted of fraud and large payouts of compensation, and also to Jasvinder Sanghera, one of the members of the now-abolished ISB.

Sir Alan and Dame Jasvinder will be honoured at the same investiture ceremony and intend to discuss how they can work together to demand greater transparency and accountability from large institutions such as the Post Office and the Church of England.

Also, it is understood that a television program will be screened shortly on satellite TV detailing the story of the ISB.

The investigative magazine *Private Eye*, in its 19 July edition, has alleged in an article entitled 'Holy Ghosting' that the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, had continued to provide money to John Smyth - who exploited his senior position in the Church to sadistically abuse young men - even after his abusive behaviour was exposed.



Smyth was allowed to flee the UK and resumed his previous conduct in Zimbabwe where 90 children were abused and 1 sadly died. Smyth died in 2018 and never faced any criminal charges.

A report from a Church of England Enquiry into this matter by independent Safeguarding expert Keith Makin is now overdue by three years, owing to the need to allow people criticised in his report the opportunity to respond to his comments but this may be published by the end of 2024.



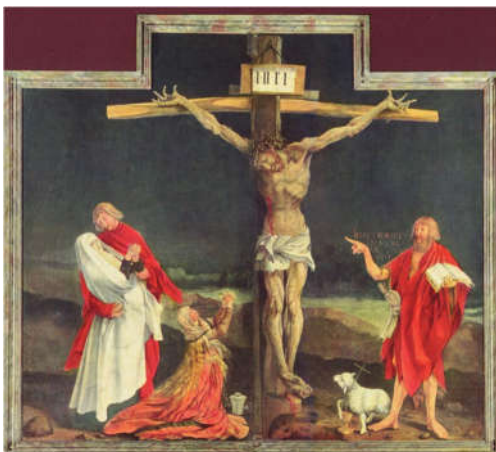


THE ISENHEIM ALTAR PIECE
Matthias Grunewald (painter),
Nikolaus Hagenau (sculptor)
Painted between 1512 - 1516

The altarpiece has been one of those things to see on my 'to do' list ever since I heard about it, years ago.

Unlike most altarpieces, which were made from a single panel, (some very special ones are diptychs and triptychs eg The Wilton Diptych and the Donne Triptych, both in the National Gallery in London)

The Isenheim altarpiece has 9 panels or folding wings, which are open or closed, according to the church calendar, and is on display at the Unterlinden Museum in Colmar in the Alsace.



The best known of the panels is of the Crucifixion of Christ, painted by Grunewald as a dark and harrowing image with, to one side, Mary the Mother of Christ being supported by St John and Mary Magdalene.

To the right is John the Baptist pointing to the Crucifixion, his inclusion is symbolic since he is considered to be the last of the prophets to announce the coming of the Messiah.

(John also appears in the Wilton Diptych, a portable panel made for the private use of King Richard II some 120 years earlier)

The work was commissioned by the Antonite order's monastic complex at Isenheim, south of Colmar.

The monks ministered to victims of the horrible illness known as St Anthony's Fire, caused by ergot poisoning, common in the Middle Ages. Ergot is a fungus which grows on rye grass and so contaminated the rye flour used to make bread. Ergot poisoning could make victims go mad as well as suffering gangrene in their hands and feet. The monks gave the sufferers good clean food and made up herbal salves which had anti-inflammatory properties. They also created *saint vinage*, a concoction of holy fortified wine containing a special blend of herbs.

Patients admitted to the infirmary at Isenheim would be cared for for the rest of their lives. The Order of St Anthony thrived and became hugely prosperous until the source of the ergot poisoning was discovered in the 18th Century at which point it faded away and was absorbed in 1776 into the Order of Malta.



On closer inspection one can see that Christ's body on the cross is covered in sores and is a gangrenous colour. This was to show viewers that Christ suffers with us.

The pointing finger of John the Baptist is seen again in the vision of the angel Gabriel in the Annunciation panel addressing Mary. All the panels are filled with highly detailed symbols of biblical stories and characters, the devil himself is seen lurking in several!

One of the best aspects of viewing this amazing artwork is its accessibility. The viewer can walk right around, and back and forth, sit and study – almost touching the panels. This gives a very real feeling for the people who lived at that period, in fact the dreadful scenes that they were viewing are not so unlike the scenes we see on our 'screens' today.

Mairi Venables

IT'S BACK - THE CHURCH MOUSE BLOG HAS ROARED (OR SQUEAKED ?) BACK INTO LIFE.

THE CHURCH MOUSE



BLOG

During period around 2000 - 2011, one of the most prolific bloggers on the Internet about Church matters was "The Church Mouse", an anonymous blogger who did not hesitate to seek out and then call out hypocrisy and un-Christian attitudes within churches.

Issues which were contentious at that time (like the appointment of women bishops in the Church of England) fell under the Mouse's steely gaze. And then, in June 2011, the Mouse decided to take a break in order to spend more time on his family.

The break lasted 13 years, but now, the Church Mouse blog has resumed at

<https://www.churchmousepublishing.co.uk/>

with a variety of articles concerning a new bill to legalise assisted suicide being introduced by Lord Falconer in the House of Lords, an examination of the struggling finances of the Church of England and a story about Pope Francis telling a group of 100 comedians that it is acceptable to laugh at God and religion and this is not blasphemy.

Readers of ECHO are recommended to subscribe to this blog for not always very reverend views of all matters religious.

SUNSHINE, TEA AND CAKE FOR OUR IN-PERSON COMMUNION SERVICE IN ALET LES BAINS

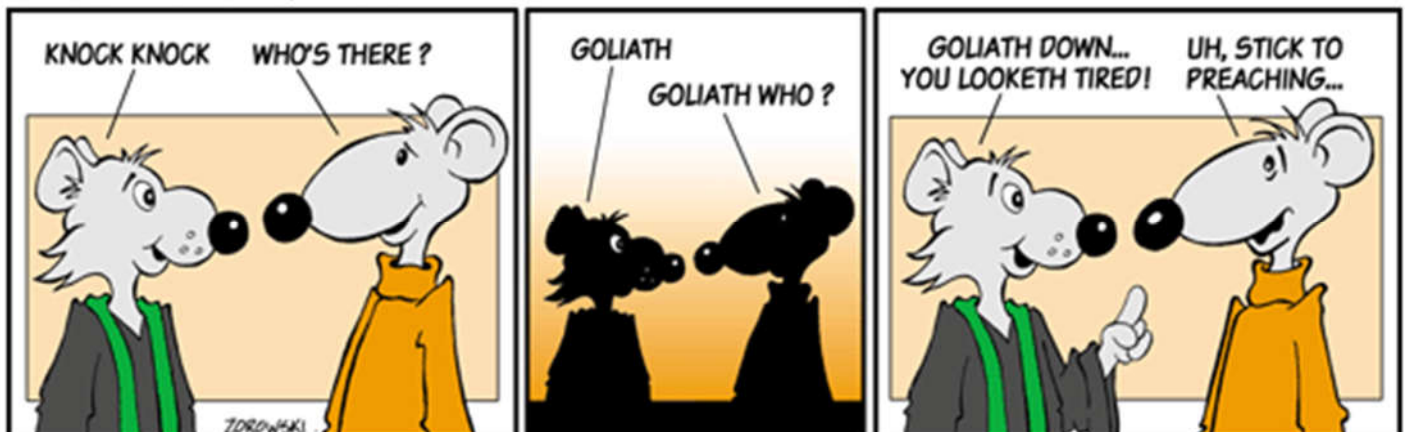


We gathered in the gardens of Les Marguerites on 25th July to share communion, followed by fellowship as well as to enjoy Antoinette's delicious tea and home-made cake as we thought about the words of the Lord's Prayer in the context of the six-petal rose painted on the floor of the meditation area. You can watch a recording on Sunday August 4th at 10:30.



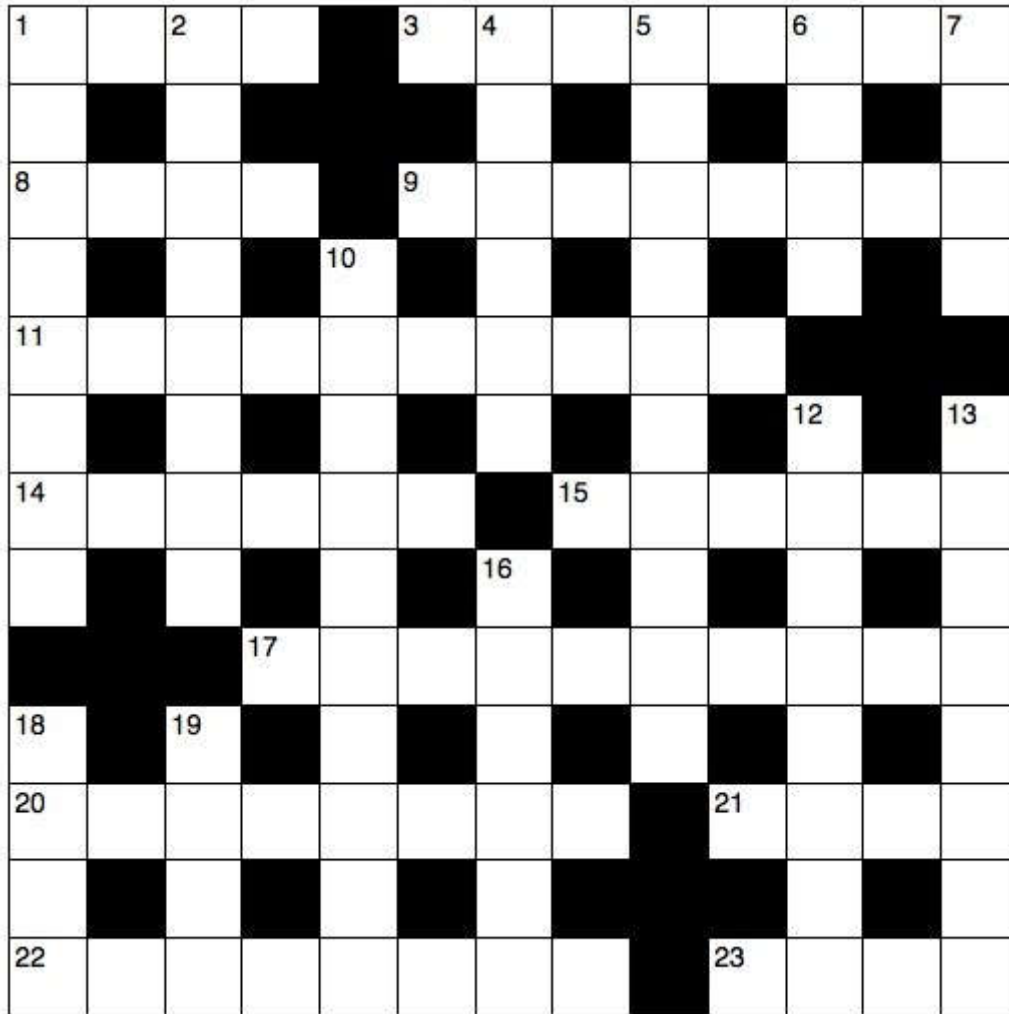
Church Mice

Karl Zorowski



The ECHO Church and Bible Crossword

Can you solve this crossword ? Answers are at the bottom if you get stuck
with thanks, as usual, to our crossword compiler John Capon



Across

- 1 and 3 Two of the disciples who witnessed the transfiguration of Jesus (Luke 9:28) (4,3,5)
 3 See 1 Across
 8 'Let us draw — to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith' (Hebrews 10:22) (4)
 9 O Simon is (anag.) (8)
 11 Form of government under the direct rule of God or his agents (10)
 14 How Jesus found his disciples when he returned to them after praying in Gethsemane (Luke 22:45) (6)
 15 In The Pilgrim's Progress, the name of the meadow into which Christian strayed, which led to Doubling Castle (2-4)
 17 Glad sin rat (anag.) (10)
 20 Spinal column (Leviticus 3:9) (8)
 21 Valley of the Balsam Tree with a reputation of being a waterless place (Psalm 84:6) (4)
 22 'The oracle of Balaam son of Beor, the oracle of one — — sees clearly' (Numbers 24:3) (5,3)
 23 Adam and Eve's third son (Genesis 4:25) (4)

Down

- 1 David's great friend (1 Samuel 20:17) (8)
 2 'The Lord... will bring me safely to his — kingdom' (2 Timothy 4:18) (8)
 4 'I, Daniel, mourned for three weeks. I ate no choice food; — — or wine touched my lips' (Daniel 10:3) (2,4)
 5 Seeking to vindicate (Job 32:2) (10)
 6 Female servant (Isaiah 24:2) (4)
 7 'For Christ died for — once for all' (1 Peter 3:18) (4)
 10 'Offering spiritual sacrifices — to God through Jesus Christ' (1 Peter 2:5) (10)
 12 Jesus said that some people had renounced this 'because of the kingdom of heaven' (Matthew 19:12) (8)
 13 One of the three men thrown into the furnace for refusing to worship Nebuchadnezzar's golden image (Daniel 3:20) (8)
 16 'You have — of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry' (Luke 12:19) (6)
 18 'There before me was a white horse! Its rider held — — , and he was given a crown' (Revelation 6:2) (1,3)
 19 Equipment to Charity Hospitals Overseas (1,1,1,1)

ACROSS: 1, John. 3, And James. 8, Near. 9, Omission. 11, Theocratic. 14, Asleep. 15, By-path. 17, Stalingrad. 20, Backbone. 21, Baca. 22, Whose eye. 23, Seth.
 DOWN: 1, Jonathan. 2, Heavenly. 4, No meat. 5, Justifying. 6, Maid. 7, Sins. 10, Acceptable. 12, Marriage. 13, Shadrach. 16, Plenty. 18, A bow. 19, ECHO.

ECO WORSHIP CALENDAR AUGUST 2024

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1	2	3
4 10:30 Online Communion for Trinity 10 / Proper 13	5					10
11 10:30 Online Morning Prayer for Trinity 11 / Proper 14	12					17
18 10:30 Online Communion for Trinity 12 / Proper 15	19					24
25 10:30 Online Morning Prayer for Trinity 13 / Proper 16	26					31

**DURING
AUGUST 2024
WE WILL NOT BE
BROADCASTING ANY
MIDWEEK WORSHIP
WE WILL RESUME IN
SEPTEMBER 2024**

**DAVE WALKER OFFERS THIS RESOURCE FOR
CHURCHES WHO ARE CONTEMPLATING**

FUNDRAISING

EVENT IDEA GENERATOR



THE VICAR / YOUTH GROUP / CONGREGATION / CHOIR / FLOWER ARRANGERS



IS/ARE RUNNING / ABSEILING / LIVING IN A TENT / SELLING CAKES / CRAWLING



FOR 100 MILES / 24 HOURS / A MONTH / AS LONG AS IT TAKES / EVER



WHILST WEARING FANCY DRESS / SINGING ALL OF THE HYMNS / TELLING JOKES / JUGGLING / RATTLING A TIN



PLEASE DONATE / SPONSOR / PURCHASE A RAFFLE TICKET / BUY TEA AND A CAKE / STAY AWAY

CartoonChurch.com

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