

Finding heaven

Dear Friends,

Jesus had not seen God for a long time. But one day, he bumped into God in the corridor. "Where have you been?" said Jesus. God replied "I have been travelling. I've been to Wales". Jesus was cross: "Don't you know that there is a pandemic on. You should not be making unnecessary journeys!". God gently answered: "Don't worry. I have been working from home".

Please forgive this. I have just been to Wales, where I heard the joke. I have no trouble in recognising Wales as God's home. It is the 'Land of my Fathers', and grandfathers, going back for many generations. Last week, we had wonderful sunny weather, clear skies, beautiful birds to watch, fresh Welsh lamb for supper and much more. However unusual that weather may have been, it is a heavenly country. And so is England, France, South Africa, India... Some churches have infamously banned the singing of the hymn Jerusalem because it sounds too patriotic. I disagree, although I recognise that it can be misused in a nationalistic way. But I can sing the closing line with integrity: 'till we have built Jerusalem in England's green and pleasant land'. The original poem says that, but the sentiment is equally applicable to Wales, Argentina and Ethiopia.

Indeed, I felt this very keenly while on a pilgrimage to Ethiopia in 2019. In Axum, in the north of the country, the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church believes that the original Ark of the Covenant is kept in the Church of Our Lady Mary of Zion. As a historian, with my sceptical rational faculties to the fore, I may doubt that. Looking at it with poetic eyes, I am sure that this is right – God's presence can be found, fully, local and active, in Axum and in the people who come on pilgrimage there. Deuteronomy 30.11 describes how close God is to each of us:

Surely, this commandment that I am commanding you today is not too hard for you, nor is it too far away. It is not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will go up to heaven for us, and get it for us so that we may hear it and observe it?' Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, 'Who will cross to the other side of the sea for us, and get it for us so that we may hear it and observe it?' No, the word is very near to you; it is in your mouth and in your heart for you to observe.

God is not the exclusive possession of any tradition, nation, language or culture. God must be sought, and can be found, wherever we go. More than that, heaven is not just to be found, it is to be built, to be fought for, to be painted, praised and sung about. Heaven begins as our hearts and actions turn outwards with love and care.

On the final Choral Evensong of the year, as many are preparing to journey on their summer holidays, we traditionally sing the great hymn 'How shall I sing that majesty'. Two lines from that hymn are:

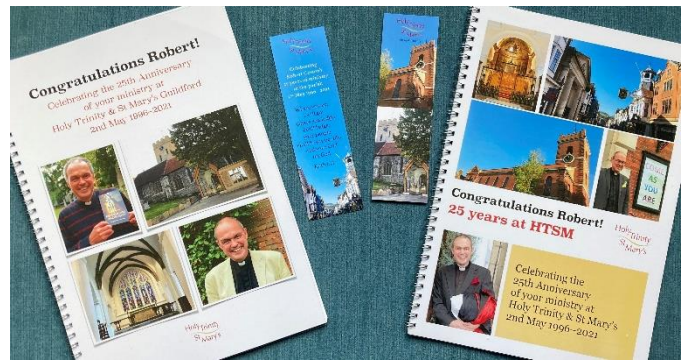
*Where heaven is but once begun, there alleluias be.
Thy time is now and evermore, thy place is everywhere.*

So although I may believe that God's first language is Welsh, God is fluent in every tongue

– Robert

Where you lodge, I will lodge **Celebrating Robert's 25 years of ministry in Guildford**

Robert writes: "Thank you for all manner of gifts and kindnesses last weekend. Your messages, smiles and greetings lifted my heart. I will treasure the gifts, especially the messages which will provide encouragement and delight for many months to come. The music at both churches was tremendous.
I feel so privileged to be part of this parish."
Please enjoy the [portfolio of photos of the day](#).



Walking with God – Chantries on our YouTube channel

From Easter to Pentecost:
[walking with the disciples on the Road to Emmaus](#)
(16 mins)

Choral Evensong

Choral Evensong resumes at 6pm in Holy Trinity this Sunday, providing 45 minutes of gentle, focussed time for reflection. Let the beautiful words and music help you let go of anxieties, knowing that you are secure in the presence of God.

You are welcome to come to church, or to join us on YouTube. We know that many people have preferred Zoom to YouTube, as the former provides more opportunity for interaction with others. Perhaps Evensong is best suited to livestreaming on YouTube, so you can be still and centred, allowing the service to carry you and prepare you for the following week.

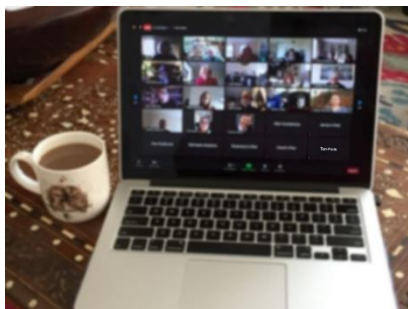


Christian Aid Week • 10-16 May 2021

Christian Aid provides a wide range of assistance and support to neighbourhoods and families in some of the poorest areas around the world. They offer experience and start-up resources for farmers; they advocate to remove legal burdens on those seeking to find work; they seek to ameliorate the negative effects of climate change on the most needy. Their motivation is the Christian faith; their reach is global and inclusive. Please [read more about their work](#) and consider supporting them.

Picture: Rose Katanu Jonathan sitting on the dry land caused by extreme drought in Dili Village, Kitui.





Trinity Club@Home Tuesday 11 May • **10am** – 12pm

To join us, please [email the parish office](#).

This week, we would like to welcome you for a chat over a coffee via Zoom in the virtual Trinity Centre. Please note that from 11th May, we will start at **10am** for those who wish to attend St Mary's weekly lunchtime communion at 12pm. prayed for by name (or in silence).

- Robert

Parish Walk • 22 May • 10am

The Parish Walking group intend on organising a walk of about 5 miles on May 22nd in the Chawton area. To register your interest please contact [Yvonne Cameron](#), [Nicky Matthews](#) or [David Uzzell](#) so that we can send you more detailed information nearer the time. – Yvonne



Sunday Services • 9 May 2021 • Easter 6

8am St Mary's BCP Holy Communion • Led by Robert Cotton

[At St Mary's & on Zoom](#)

10am Holy Trinity Eucharist • Sermon by Rod Pierce

Readings: 1 John 5:1-6; John 15:9-17

[At Holy Trinity & on YouTube](#) • [Breakout rooms on Zoom after the service](#)

10:30am St Mary's Morning Worship • Sermon by Philip Beastall

Readings: Acts 10:44-48; John 15:9-17

[At St Mary's & on Zoom](#)

6pm Holy Trinity Evensong • Sermon by Tom Pote

Readings: Song of Solomon 4.16-5.2; 8.6-7; Revelations 3.14-2

[At Holy Trinity & on YouTube](#)

Jonathan Hedgecock is leading worship on Sunday at St Nicolas Guildford.

Corinne Jones is preaching, Robert is presiding, at St Mark's Wyke.

To receive Zoom links and service sheets by email

contact office@holytrinityguildford.org.uk | 01483 567716

You can also watch our services (LS) Livestream on the HTSM YouTube channel

<https://www.youtube.com/c/HTSMGuildford>

If there is news that we should know, please pass it on:

Rev Robert Cotton rector@holytrinityguildford.org.uk | 01483 575489

Rev Tom Pote curate@holytrinityguildford.org.uk | 01483 511725

Parish Office office@holytrinityguildford.org.uk | 01483 567716

Please make sure we have up to date contact details for you.