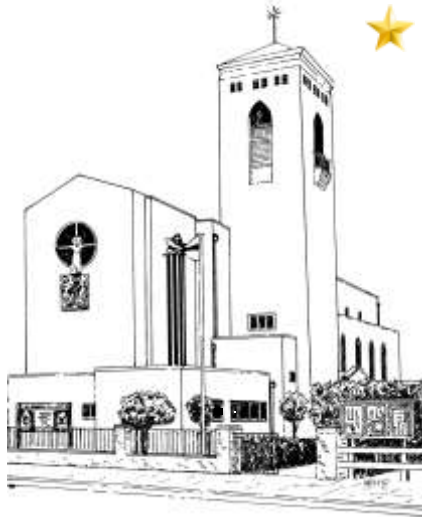


50 pence



Advent & Christmas 2021

The Trident




The Parish Magazine of


ST THOMAS THE APOSTLE
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CHURCH OPEN TO ALL FOR
Sunday Parish Mass 10am
Children's Church 4pm
Sunday 6.30pm
Said Mass Tuesday at Noon
All Live Stream Services can be viewed by anyone on www.facebook.com/StThomasHanwell

www.thomashanwell.org.uk

All the information here is correct at the time of going to press, but as you know, the situation we find ourselves can change, so if you need any further help **or you're not sure whether the church is open, you can email us at st.thomas.office@btinternet.com**



A Prayer for December

Dear Lord. Thank you that You came into the darkness of this broken world on that first Christmas night, pouring in your light, in the person of your Son, Jesus.

Lord, so much of our world seems dark, still. So many dreadful things we can't make sense of and so many difficulties. It's easy to feel overwhelmed.

Lord, help us to focus on you this Christmas. Open our eyes to see your bigger picture. Help us to hear afresh the good news that nothing and no-one can ever extinguish your Light.

Jesus overcame the troubles of the world by His death and resurrection.

Father may we re-connect with you, through Jesus, this Christmas and know the love, the joy and the peace, which are your Christmas gifts to us

Amen

Opinions expressed in this magazine are those of the individual contributors and not necessarily those of the Church, the Vicar, the editors or the PCC.

Adverts in this magazine are not necessarily endorsed by the Church, the Vicar, the editors of the PCC.



From Father Robert

Dear Friends

Ho, ho, ho. Merry Christmas everyone!

For most of us that joyous sentiment reflects perfectly the feel of the Christmas season. The gathering, the celebrating, the festivities with family and friends are what we most look forward to. That is certainly true of the vicarage, where any whiff of Oliver Cromwell is exorcised. Christmas is very much the highlight of the year for us.

However, it looks like this year may be very different. As I write this in November it is looking distinctly possible that I shall be spending some of the Christmas season in hospital having, what is threateningly called, **'salvage chemotherapy'**. **This year it feels like there is very little to eat, drink and be merry about.**

Inevitably as the world celebrates (rightly!) noisily around us it does rather reinforce the sense of loss. Psychologists call this cognitive dissonance; I call it a pain in the...

As we come to terms with this reality, I am reminded of the reality of the season. I do so recalling words from the 21st chapter of the Book of Revelation[s]:

Behold, the dwelling of God is among mortals!

As I heard those words read out during the All Saints Mass, I instantly thought of Christmas, and what is confronting us and many others for whom the season seems to offer little in the way of joy.

Those words from Revelation remind us that the place of God, where **God dwells, is with us (the word Emmanuel means 'God with us')**. By extension that means God is with us whatever and wherever we may be. Thus, no matter where you are, in a chemotherapy ward or pulling a cracker round the family dinner table, there God is!

This teaching, the very heart of the Christmas message is what we should hang onto.

So whether you are booing at the villain in our panto, singing Christmas carols in church or weeping with loved ones remember the dwelling of God is among mortals.

This Christmas remember God's rightful place is by your side and, no matter how you feel, raise a glass of cheer to that.

Do have a holy, happy and blessed Christmas from us all at St Thomas'.

Your friend and priest

Fr. Robert



From Father Adam

My Dear Friends!

For the Church, Advent is a time of waiting, both for the coming of Christ as a baby at Christmas and also for his promised coming again.

Waiting can often be seen as dreary and tries our patience.

It is one of the things that humans seem to find challenging, especially in this day and age where so many things are instant.

Waiting often sits alongside hopes for the future. Advent is firmly rooted in hope, looking to a time when there will be no more violence or war, selfishness or greed, injustice or poverty, sickness or death. Hope can give waiting meaning.

There are many ways we can bring hope to others during this season of Advent. As preparation for all that we are to receive at Christmas, most especially the gift of God himself, generosity prepares our hearts to recognise the true value of all that we have.

For God, Christmas is about love, nothing more and nothing less. And it should be the same for us. God comes into the world to show us what it means to love without boundaries, to love unconditionally. In the first **chapter of Matthew's Gospel, he is referred to (using words found in the book of the prophet Isaiah) as "Emmanuel". The meaning of this title is "God with us." And the heart of the Christian story of Christmas is just that – God is with us.**

God is with us whatever may befall. God is with us through good times and bad times, through times of security and times of uncertainty, through times **of joy and of sadness. It may not always feel like it to us, but that doesn't mean it's not the case. We know the sun exists even when clouds hide it.**

Mary and Joseph knew what it was to have an unknown future and live in a time of uncertainty. The political situation in first-century Palestine was one of tension. People were divided. Power was held in the hands of a few. Resources were tight for many. Even religion seemed to have become exclusive rather than for everyone. Sounds familiar?

Emmanuel – God with us – **didn't come just for the powerful and certain, the rich and the religious, but for everyone. How different God's way was from that of human beings! And God doesn't run out on us when things get tough but carries us in loving arms and stays with us in every circumstance.** We have to grab that outstretched hand.

God offers hope but also comfort for the tough times. I hope and pray that we will all experience some joy while never forgetting that Emmanuel is

with us for all the ups and downs of life.
May you have a hope-filled Advent and a happy Christmas.
With love and blessings,
Fr Adam



St Thomas' Panto 2022 By Ben Crocker

Beauty and the Beast

Thursday 6th & Friday 7th January at 7:30pm
Saturday 8th January at 1pm and 6pm

Tickets £10 adult £5 children
All tickets on Thursday £5

Tickets 07850 889948
stickets@me.com



From the Editors.

You'll notice for the second year running that we haven't done a parish-wide circulation of our magazine. This is largely because we really don't have enough people to distribute them and also it uses a lot of paper! What we'd really like to do is to get far more people on our email list so we can send you our magazine by email every month. You can of course read it online via our website. Either way, we hope that you enjoy reading it and perhaps have a go at our quiz. Please do come along to the panto - tickets on sale now. Please see the poster above - a huge thank you to it's designer.

We wish you all a very Happy Christmas and a more normal-looking 2022.

Jul & Sue

Copy Dates!

Copy date for January is on Sunday December 12th
(The magazine will be collated on December 12th &
printed on the 13th December)

Special Services for **Christmas at St Thomas'** Christingle

4.30pm on Sunday 12th December



Our Christingle service is a candle-lit family celebration **that raises money for the work of The Children's Society**, a voluntary organisation of the Church of England.

The 'Christingle' itself, which symbolises the light of Christ's love, is a lighted candle mounted in an orange, which has a red ribbon or tape around it. Also mounted in the orange are four cocktail sticks, each bearing dried fruit or sweets.

The orange represents the world. The candle stands for Jesus, the Light of the World. The red ribbon or tape

symbolises the blood of Christ, who shares in the suffering of the whole **world. The fruits and sweets are symbolic of God's Creation and His love** for us.

Refreshments will be served in the Church Hall after the service.

Carols by Candlelight

6.30pm on Sunday 19th December

Nine Lessons and Carols is a chance to renew your acquaintance with the best of the traditional Christmas carols, to hear some old favourites sung by the choir and, we hope, to discover some new ones. Come along and sing, then enjoy a glass of mulled wine and some mince pies



Christmas Eve Children's Service

4pm

This is an informal service with no choir or organ. The Sunday School perform a short play based on the nativity with carols and prayers. Some of the figures are placed in the crib at the back of the church.

Midnight Mass

11.30pm on Christmas Eve

Midnight Mass has its roots in the very earliest of times and we join at St

Thomas' to celebrate the first Eucharist of Christmas.

Christmas Day Family Communion

10am on Christmas day

A service for all the family, so bring your children, friends and relatives.



And there were shepherds

Luke's story of the birth of Jesus is brilliantly told – the angel's visit to Mary to tell her she would be mother of the long-promised Messiah, the old priest in the Temple told by another angel that his wife would have a son **to be called 'John', who would prepare the people of Israel for that event**, and then Mary and Joseph making the 60 mile journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem, as required by the Roman census. When they got there, no room at the inn, and they settled instead for a convenient stable, where Mary gave birth to a boy child.

Suddenly, Luke changes the tone. 'And there were shepherds ...' – that's what he actually wrote, just like that. 'And there were shepherds', doing exactly what shepherds do, looking after their flocks by night. But this night was different: yet another angelic message – a call to abandon their sheep and go into Bethlehem to see the baby Messiah. They were given directions **and a 'sign' to identify Him. He would be lying in a feeding trough. Well, at least they would recognise that.**

And why the shepherds, in this glorious story of our salvation? Because the event needed witnesses, and the chosen witnesses would be this bunch of scruffy, smelly shepherds straight from the sheep-pen. Nothing could speak **more eloquently of God's purpose than that. This was not a Saviour for the strong, rich and powerful, but for everybody.** The carpenter and his wife guarded the Saviour of the world, and the very first witnesses were not kings or priests but a handful of shepherds.

Your Gift of Life – at Christmas

Creaking on the staircase -
Noise outside my door -
A rustle in the chimney –

It's 'Santa-time' once more.

St Nicholas is on his way
With all his Christ-life gifts
To fire every child-light with
The loving Christ-mass kiss.

In some he'll place the gift of gold -
In others frankincense -
While others will be given myrrh -
All signs of God's presence.

For in each earthly crib or bed
In squalor, comfort, splendour -
The Christ child has been placed again
To call the world to wonder.

So come you kings, come one, come all,
Come shepherds to the cradle stall
And hear the angels sing a-new
The heavenly song they sing for you.

Your God is in your gift of life -
The life He gives with love –
So take the gift and use it,
Use it wisely, don't abuse it,
Let the Christ-life fire your spirit
That God in you may LIVE.



Contemporary theology

Dietrich Bonhoeffer -

"When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die."

Over the centuries, theologians have drifted further and further away from life as it was relentlessly taking a new course. Probably the most acute version of it was expressed in the early Middle Ages, when the theologian was a monk, sitting in the fortress of his monastery enclosure, living with the rhythm of prayer and intellectual work of his community, contemplating the Word of God. In the thirteenth century, the theologian became a university professor and has remained so to this day. However, he drifted further and further away from life.

Today it remains an open question, who should a contemporary theologian be - a university specialist in a strictly defined field of research, or a person who is immersed in the life and shares it with others, trying to find an adequate intellectual expression for his experience of faith? Dietrich Bonhoeffer was undoubtedly such a theologian of the second type, closely related to the lives and problems of ordinary people.

Today his name has become the slogan of a great collection of disputes and problems in the 20th century. His theology to this day remains highly courageous in asking questions and looking for answers to them. It is not without reason that his name is placed in the same row with the most outstanding Evangelical theologians of the twentieth century: K. Barth, R. Bultmann, P. Tillich, J. Moltmann. However, compared with the bulky volumes of the works of these theologians, Bonhoeffer's output is relatively modest. His most famous work remains "Nachfolge" (Discipleship), first published in 1937, and it soon became a classic exposition of what it means to follow Christ in a modern world beset by a dangerous and criminal government.

Bonhoeffer's life is not an appendix to his writing, but its very core, his intellectual work growing out of his life. For Bonhoeffer, life is not for writing, but writing is a commentary on life. The greatness of Bonhoeffer is not that of a classic but that of a witness. He wanted to be, and was, a witness aware of his calling, trying to live his Christianity honestly in "times of contempt".

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was born on February 4, 1906, in Breslau, then Germany (now Poland), into a large family. His father, Karl Bonhoeffer,

was a professor of psychiatry, and his mother, Paula, née von Hase, came from a family in Prussia. His mother's father was, for a time, the emperor's court chaplain, a Lutheran pastor, and a professor of theology.

His family home was very intellectual, open to high-ranking intellectuals, such as the famous Evangelical theologian Adolf von Harnack. It was a liberal, anti-Nazi, but religiously indifferent environment. Hence, Dietrich's decision to study theology surprises the family. The decision to become a pastor amazes his community even more. Bonhoeffer ceases to treat the profession of the theologian as only a fascinating intellectual adventure. He experiences a kind of conversion, becomes very pious, begins intensive pastoral work. Admittedly, he combines it with scientific work. Bonhoeffer becomes the chaplain of students and workers. He travels abroad, establishes contacts with the already existing ecumenical movement. He even travels to India to learn the method of passive resistance.

Bonhoeffer was a Lutheran. It was determined by his family tradition, theological studies and the most profound personal conviction. In his drama, dichotomous presentation of issues, and zeal for ultimate problems, he was an impeccable disciple of the prophet of Wittenberg. On the other hand, however, he gradually became aware that the situation in which Christianity found itself in the Third Reich was not only a matter for his Church. Hence his deep ecumenical commitment.

Bonhoeffer was critical of the so-called German Christians (Deutsche Christen), a group of Hitler's supporters growing in influence. Its representatives transferred the principle of leadership known in the NSDAP to the Lutheran Church. They accepted the so-called Aryan paragraph and wanted to "de-Judaize" Christianity by removing the Old Testament books from the biblical canon.

Resistance against Nazism is the main thread of his life. In 1933, Bonhoeffer quit his academic job, remaining a pastor in the German Lutheran congregation in London. At the same time, he was involved in ecumenical activities. In 1934, he joined the Confessing Church, founded by opposition theologians and Protestant pastors, which, as one of the few German Christian denominations, condemned the Nuremberg Laws and protested against the existence of concentration camps.

Bonhoeffer protested against making Christianity similar to an ideology that could be reduced only to recognise a few articles summarising the theory. He claimed that Christianity enters the very matter of life to transform it through the liberation of man in Grace. The awareness of the responsibility that had to be taken brought Bonhoeffer from the ecclesiastical sphere to the very centre of secular political involvement.

In Christ, the world and man were called into being, and in him, they were reconciled with God. Only in Him does nature regain its naturalness, beauty and spontaneity. It is faith that makes us engage with all our power in the secular sphere, in the world, and not on its margins, in the intimacy of the pietistic heart, but in full splendour, that makes us enter the very whirl of life.

In 1938, Bonhoeffer joined the anti-fascist conspiracy planning to attack Hitler. Bonhoeffer was convinced that his service to God could not be separated from his socio-political views and remaining hidden when others needed him and his homeland would become why he would not face these people after the war. Due to formal employment in the Abwehr (as an intelligence agent), he avoided military service and travelled quite often to maintain ecumenical contacts - to Switzerland, Norway, and Sweden. In 1941, Bonhoeffer - as an agent of the Abwehr - helped a group of Jews to get to Switzerland.

Two years later, on April 5, 1943, Bonhoeffer was arrested with other conspirators and imprisoned in the Tegel prison in Berlin. In the absence of specific allegations, prison conditions were relatively good. Only after the unsuccessful attempt on Hitler's life, on July 20, 1944, when Abwehr officers were arrested, Bonhoeffer was transferred to the Gestapo prison on Prinz-Albrecht-Strasse, then to the Buchenwald concentration camp, and in early April 1945 to the Flossenburg camp. A few days before the end of the war, he was sentenced to death and hanged. At the time of his death, he was 39 years old.

Bonhoeffer was not the creator of a coherent theological system. The thoughts expressed in the writings and notes he left behind attract attention primarily with their metaphorically, paradoxicality and conciseness. According to Bonhoeffer, the profession of theologian must not only be a fascinating intellectual adventure, but above all, it must be pastoral work and service to other people.

Bonhoeffer's work was closely related to his life and activity. All his theological writings reflect current questions and struggles arising from the confrontation with the dramatic reality surrounding him. There are few theologians in whom the situational context and theological reflection form such an unbreakable whole as in his case. His theological thought and reflections on "non-religious Christianity," which his martyrdom gave even more profound meaning, had a significant impact on post-war theology in Great Britain and America.

Bonhoeffer begins with the question: who is the God of Jesus Christ, and what has changed Christian revelation in the overall vision of God in

different religions? His thesis is that Christianity is not a religion but a faith to live in, assuming that we live in a world of "etsi Deus non-daretur" (if there is no God). Faith is not a view but a way of being. Faith does not mean believing anything. Faith is man's way of making his being. For Bonhoeffer, the Christian vision of faith consists in being for others, which is a participation in the being of Christ, where the most critical elements are: becoming a man, the cross, and the resurrection.

Bonhoeffer sets man a task: to imitate God who came into the world and suffered in it. Following Jesus' example, Christians should enter the world, live in it in a "secular" way and suffer, thus participating in God's suffering. For Bonhoeffer, Christianity is not "defined religiosity." A Christian is someone who dares to "share God's suffering in secular life ..." because "Jesus does not call for a new religion, but for life."

Apart from Christ, who is the supreme and only mediator between God and men, there is no direct relationship with God. In Christ, man's union with God is realised and every direct relationship between two people. The path to neighbour leads only through Christ. He is always in between. "The disciple does not, therefore, take a position that enables him to attack another, but approaches him in the truthful love of Christ, unconditionally offering him fellowship."

Our conviction that Christ died for the sins of each of us should lead to conversion and acceptance of God's Grace, which should manifest itself in changing our lifestyle and following God's commandments. Only then will Christians be able to change the world without conforming to the world indiscriminately. A Christian's life consists of imitating Christ, especially fulfilling his requirements in the Sermon on the Mount. Hence, the most important thing for a disciple of Jesus is the compliance of his life with the humanistic ideal of the Gospel. The Church's task is to protect the weak and to serve others. Christian faith should be revealed in an uncompromising commitment to life.

Bonhoeffer was such a man. An implacable defender of human rights, socially and politically engaged; and at the same time a man of prayer, contemplation and meditation on the Word of God.

Always remember you're unique. Just like everyone else.

St Thomas' Christmas Quiz 2021

This year we're returning to the sort of quiz we had some years ago. Each set of initials spells out a book title and it's author. We have a mixture of fiction (including books for young people) and non-fiction. So for example, TLGGTC by HI would be The Land God Gave to Cain by Hammond Innes. Have fun with it over the next few weeks or so and we'll put the answers in our February magazine.

1. TRG by JW
2. TOMATS by EH
3. OMIH by GG
4. TM by JF
5. TPP by JB
6. TAM by ZS
7. TMC by JW
8. CW by EBW
9. TFON by SWS
10. TROE by AB
11. FGIT by EB
12. VB by EW
13. PP by JMB
14. TTMR by PH
15. ATWIED by JV
16. JE by CB
17. AF by JO
18. ASB by VS
19. WD by RA
20. OFOTCN by KK
21. EOICF by GH
22. TKAM by HL
23. NL by PP
24. TSP by RW
25. TCW by WS
26. LOTF by WG
27. MFAOA by GD
28. WTCS by DO
29. CCM by LDB
30. TGWTDT by SL
31. HTC by GO
32. AIW by LC
33. TGG by FSF
34. TCITH by DS
35. SB by DS
36. CAP by FMD
37. SM by GE
38. TS by LS
39. BNW by AH
40. **H by MO'F**
41. TTMC by RO
42. TMAAS by AC
43. JSS by RK
44. BB by J and AA
45. TBE by TM
46. LCL by DHL
47. THOTB by ACD
48. TIGTH by AK
49. EIM by EH
50. BH by CD
51. TSOTG by PB
52. CER by NL
53. TWIW by WC
54. BT by AT
55. TSD by ER
56. NP by SR
57. P by JA
58. JW by RC
59. TCT by GC
60. TPODG by OW
61. SOTLM by LS
62. JTTCOTE by JV
63. TB by MN
64. Nwas by AAM
65. TDOAYG by AF
66. TVH by BB
67. SPW by TA
68. AOGG by LMM
69. KSM by HRH
70. MC by SR
71. SP by JLC
72. TCITR by JDS
73. TTM by HGW
74. LTC by MB
75. ABCP by MB
76. CCF by SG
77. ICTC by DS
78. V by SG
79. JU by CR
80. GWAPE by TC
81. VF by HM
82. TWITW by KG
83. OANTOF by JW
84. MD by HM
85. LOP by YM
86. LIACC by NM
87. SAA by AR
88. **TOD'U by TH**
89. MD by MT
90. BR by GG

Come and join
**St Thomas'
Sunday School**

Every Sunday in term time
(during the 10am service)

All children welcome!



St Thomas' Christmas Fair

Saturday 27th November 2-4pm

- * Sweet & Savoury food
- * Teas & coffees
- * Bric a brac
- * Toys & games
- * Christmas family photos with photographer Keith Spillett
- * Local artist Vivienne Keable @viviennekeableprints
- * Arts & crafts
- * Raffle
- * Tombola
- * Books/DVDs/CDs



At Christmas

Always
 in the dark centre
 of this season
 the birth occurs
 noiseless and marvellous;
 the seers
 move on their journey,
 there are gestures
 of wonder, and at midnight
 a resting star.
 Always

it is amazing
 that the mountains
 do not relinquish
 their momentary grandeur,
 bend to the stable,
 let the ermine tremble
 there
 where the oxen
 and the angels are.

Jean Kenward

Reverse
ADVENT CALENDAR



1 find a box for the food	2 tinned sweetcorn	3 pick up some litter	4 1 kg long grain rice	5 give someone gloves	6 mixed nuts	7 take a walk
8 long life juice	9 donate to a charity	10 dried fruits	11 say hello to a neighbour	12 washing up liquid	13 pick up some litter	14 size 5 or 6 nappies
15 give someone a hot drink	16 shower gel	17 say something encouraging	18 savoury biscuits	19 send a nice note	20 fruit squash	21 watch a film together
22 colouring book	23 pick up some litter	24 savoury biscuits	25 1 month until Christmas!	26 long life milk	27 give someone socks	28 peanut butter
29 read a Christmas story	30 box of chocolates	Bring your donations to the Ealing foodbank warehouse on Wednesday 1 December between 10-4 or drop off at any of our donation points.				

RED DAYS: add an item for the foodbank (no alcohol please)

GREEN DAYS: do something for your community or for yourself

Daily Hope phone line receives more than 550,000 calls

Daily Hope, a free phone line which offers prayers and support for callers, receives nearly 20,000 calls every month. The service, which was launched during the Covid-19 lockdown, has spent more than 7.15 million minutes on more than 550,000 calls.

The phone line originally launched in April 2020, only to continue in response to ongoing demand once restrictions were eased.

Daily Hope set up by the Church of England nationally, has also been supported by Connections, a Missional Programme to older people based at Holy Trinity Claygate in Surrey and the Christian charity Faith in Later Life.

Over the year and a half of service, Daily Hope has continued to encourage people across the country and beyond including Australia, Japan, and the United States.

Since the phone line launched, users have been able to listen to a range **of audio, including the Church of England's national weekly service,** hymns and daily prayer.

Many have messaged Lambeth Palace to express their thanks for the introduction of the phone line, particularly for elderly people.



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We're still collecting

- Ella's Kitchen baby food pouches & lids
- Crisp packets

Unfortunately...

Tassimo collection is closing 5th
December. Please get your pods
to us by then.



www.terracycle.co.uk

More details: paulinesbritton@hotmail.com





From the Ealing Foodbank

Thank you for continuing to support the foodbank.
There are a variety of ways in which you can help.

- If you go to your local supermarket leave your donations there. Most have a Foodbank box on their premises
- If you order online it is possible to click the right button to make a donation for the Foodbank
- If neither option is available to you then you can continue to leave your donations in the boxes left in the church porches. But there will be some delay in transferring it to the Foodbank warehouse.
- Another alternative is to give cash or cheque (payable to Foodbank Trussell Trust) to Nicole who will pass it on regularly.

Ealing Foodbank has partnered with a food charity called Bankuet, which offers you another way to get donated food to them. More details can be found on the foodbank website, where you can also find the most up to date shopping list.

<https://ealing.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-food/>

** please remember that our magazine is produced a month in advance, and we publish the shopping list available to us at the time of going to **press**, **So it's a good idea to check the most recent list on the website** (see above) or Twitter: @EalingFoodbank or Instagram: ealingfoodbank

THE NOVEMBER SHOPPING LIST **

Vegetarian meals - anything long life, instant coffee, Long life fruit juice & squash, UHT milk - whole or semi skimmed, not skimmed please, dried/powdered milk, savoury biscuits & crackers, tinned vegetables - anything green, eg peas, beans, peanut butter/marmite/sandwich paste, ketchup & mayo, cooking oil, laundry products (smaller sizes if possible)

Thank you, but the foodbank has plenty of pasta, meat & meat main meals, tinned fruit, baked beans & soup at the moment.

An exasperated mother, whose son was always getting into mischief, finally asked him

“How do you expect to get into Heaven?”

The boy thought it over and said,

“Well, I’ll run in and out and in and out and keep slamming the door until St Peter says “For Heaven’s sake, Dylan, come in or stay out!””

PARISH DIRECTORY



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