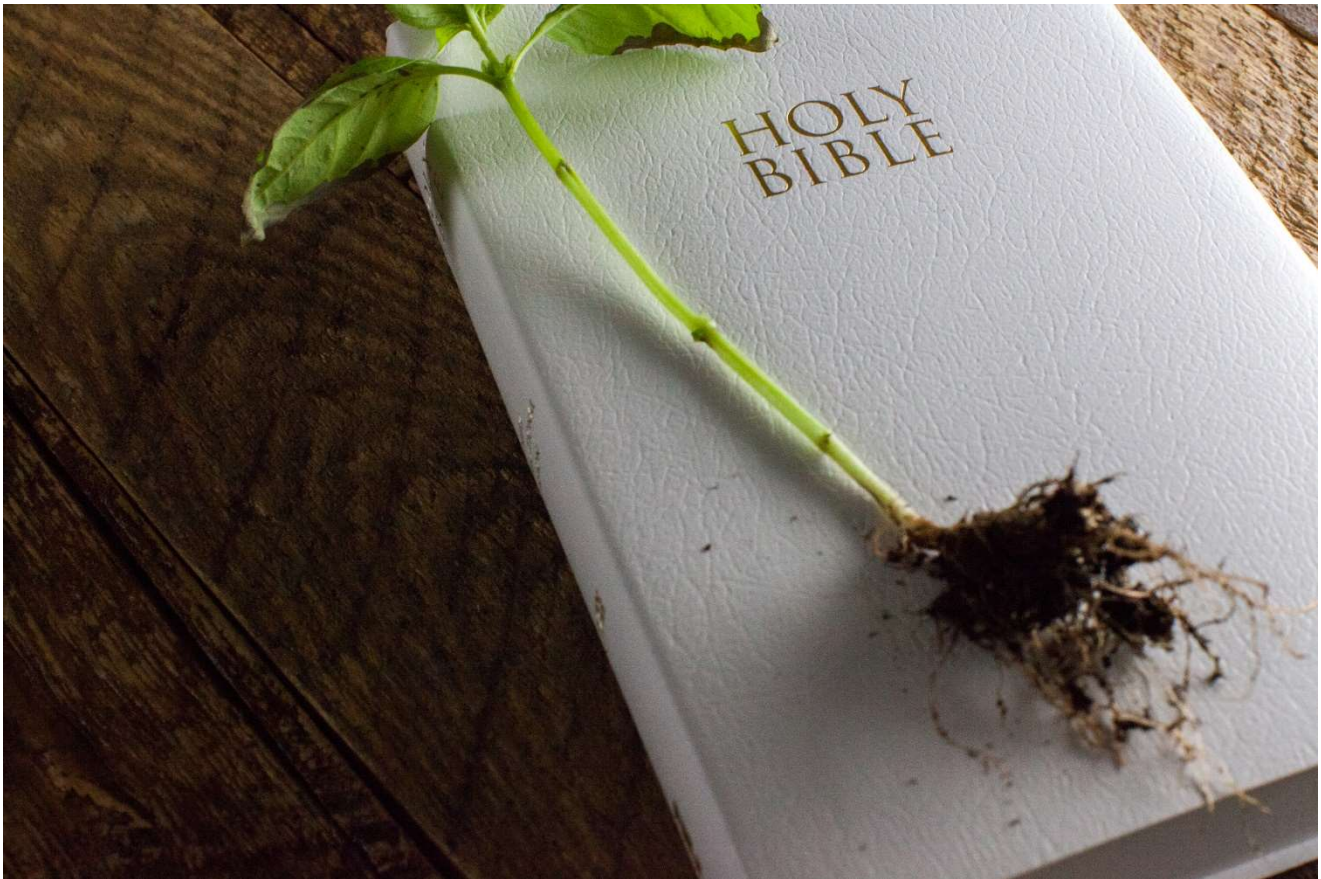


# The LINK

digital edition

May 2021



The Parish Church of  
St Michael Braintree  
[www.stmichaelsbtrees.co.uk](http://www.stmichaelsbtrees.co.uk)



## Peter ...

Dear Friends,

We are continuing our services **online** (YouTube), through “**St Michael’s by Phone**”, on **Zoom** and (since Easter) **in church**. We hope you will be able to worship God with us in at least one of these ways.

In May, we will be starting a sermon series on **the life of Peter**. Peter was clearly a “larger than life” personality and became one of the inner group of disciples (with James and John).

His name had been **Simon**, but Jesus renamed him Peter (literally “**The Rock**”), because, as Jesus later told him, “**You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church**” (Matthew 16:18). Indeed, Peter was the one who preach to the crowds on **Pentecost Sunday**, when the Holy Spirit came down in power, and went on to become the leader of the early church in Jerusalem.

Yet despite Peter’s prominence and influence, he had many **weaknesses** and made many **mistakes**. He often spoke without thinking and could be brash and impulsive. During Jesus’ trial, he died three times that he even knew Jesus. But Jesus restored Peter and called him again to “**Follow me**” (John 21:19).

The big lesson of Peter’s life for us this: **it is better to be a follower who fails, than one who fails to follow**. As we look at some of the events of Peter’s life, let’s keep in mind that Jesus can use us, even if we fail, as long as we are seeking to follow him.

Wishing you every blessing,  
Nigel

## MISSION OF THE MONTH

### A Rocha

A Rocha was founded in 1983 in Portugal by Peter and Miranda Harris. This Christian environment organisation is now operating worldwide in both conservation and education.

Every day we are hearing on media about climate change and the urgency of the problems facing us as humans. As Christians we have a vital role to play in taking care of planet earth: God created the universe and put man to take care of it. When he had done this, he looked at all he had created, and he was pleased with it.

A Rocha UK is based in London, and has a site called Wolf Fields. A second site, nearer to home for us, is at Foxearth Meadows near Sudbury. This site is managed primarily for dragonflies and damselflies. Church demonstration day at Foxearth this year is Saturday 10 July. If you would like to attend, please contact [uk@arocha.org](mailto:uk@arocha.org) and they will send you more details.

A Rocha international has a packed marine conservation programme. Here is a selection of their projects:

- The Kenyan team has finished the first survey of microplastics on the Kenyan coast; they have implemented a Marine Governance project in partnership with St Andrews University in Scotland and have continued to study important biodiversity and habitats in Watamu Marine National Park. Kenya Wildlife service has released their new management plan for the park which draws heavily on A Rocha Kenya data.
- The team in Aotearoa, New Zealand is conserving seabird nesting habitat and working to reduce plastic pollution on beaches.
- In Portugal, microplastic monitoring continues as does the long running European Storm Petrel (*Hydrobates pelagicus*) monitoring in collaboration with Cardiff University.

- The work in Canada has contributed significantly to restoring spawning habitats for salmon and protecting Semiahmoo Bay.
- In the USA, A Rocha has partnered local NGOs in Florida to monitor American Horseshoe Crab nesting, working towards habitat restoration of mangroves and oyster beds, hosting interns and visitors and developing reflective kayaking experiences. The USA team is conducting microplastic research on both Florida coasts working with state and national parks.
- The Marine Team has grown to 11 scientists both inside and outside A Rocha, working on projects across the world. The team has spoken at numerous conferences and local events. They have published various papers and reports, most notably co-authoring 'Research priorities for achieving healthy marine ecosystems and human communities in a changing climate'.

Root and Branch is published 2/3 times a year and is the magazine of A Rocha UK. If you would like to be on the mailing list, please let me know. ([paddyannmahood@gmail.com](mailto:paddyannmahood@gmail.com))

But for up-to-date information and prayer requests, please access the excellent websites: [arocha.org.uk](http://arocha.org.uk) and [arocha.org](http://arocha.org). A Rocha International are on Instagram – [arochaint](https://www.instagram.com/arochaint) – well worth a look! Or for videos and links to YouTube channel, <https://arocha.org.uk/resources/audiovideo/> .

*Ann Mahood*

# RACISM

Issues of racism have been very much in the news in recent weeks. There has been the murder of George Floyd by a police officer in the US, an admission that the British War Graves Commission dealt less favourably with non-white soldiers who died in the First World War and concerns about racism within the Church of England.

Yet Bible tells us that 'There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male or female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus' (Galatians 3:28)

## NO DISTINCTIONS

God recognises that there are ugly facts in his world. One of them is racism. But his purpose is to take these disfiguring traits in human beings by inviting us to repent of them and turn to Christ for his forgiveness of these hateful things and be remade in a new community ( yes, the church) in which there are no distinctions.

Colour of skin, class status, caste systems and human invented differences have no place with God. However, they do exist. God knows about them and he sent Our Lord Jesus Christ to meet them and cut through them. Have a look at John 4:1-26.

## CLASSIC CASE

Our Lord is reported as breaking the barriers of the sexism and racism of his day by asking a woman(!) and a hated Samaritan at that to give him a drink. The conversation with the woman ends by Jesus inviting her to join the new family that God is seeking to build with who will worship him 'in spirit and in truth' (John 4:23,24).

## THREE WEAPONS

Here are three weapons that can destroy racism.

First, we are all descended from one man and one woman. We may not think of Adam and Eve as two people in a pious legend. The Bible wants us to build our understanding of who we are as westerners, Asians or Africans by teaching us that we all come from one set of parents. The Bible goes to great pains to bring this point home to us.

## ONE STOCK

If a person starts to read the Bible with a good will they won't long into Genesis when they will be numbed by those long lists of A begat B who in turn begat C! Check out Genesis 5 & 10. Genesis is making the point that human beings come from the first man and the first woman. We modern people want to dismiss these stories. We may laugh at chapters like Genesis 5 and 10 which contain list of 'begats' and 'begottens'. Quaint though they sound they tell us that humankind is one family. We come from the same parents. We need to be clear: this can't necessarily be proved. But God has said it is so. It is in his scriptures. Perhaps there has never been a time like ours which needs to hear these God given writings once more. We are children of common parents. We all belong to one human family. As they say north of the border, 'we are all Jock Tamson's bairns'!

## CELEBRATORY MEAL

Second, the various cultures of humankind will be celebrated in God's new Jerusalem. The last book in the Bible speaks not so much of cultures being brought into God's city, but the *glories* of the nations being brought into God's heaven (Revelation 21:24).

How will we celebrate God's rich and diverse human creation? By having a meal together! Our Lord spoke of one special activity in heaven – eating and drinking with his friends in the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 26:29).

Part of the enjoyment of overseas travel is tasting food prepared in a different way than normally comes from our kitchens. Part of the glory of heaven that the Christian believer will enjoy is the rich cultures of God's world – food included!

**'FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD...'**

Thirdly, Jesus Christ died for all humankind 'For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life' (John 3:16). The sad fact is that all humankind has rebelled against their Creator and their Lord. Yet God has sent his Son to bear the penalty of all human antagonism to God. Pink, brown, yellow and black humans are invited to come home to God and his family by and through Jesus Christ. The Christian believer is lovingly saved and belongs to the richest and diverse family the world will ever know.

*Stephen Bailey*

## The Five Finger Prayer

(Translated by Peter Schaad from a Swiss calendar)

***“I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people.”*** (1 Timothy 2:1)

Today’s Bible word shows us how important prayer is for Christians. When in extreme need, we plead continuously to GOD and pray for HIM to help us.

Also, in everyday situations it is on our heart to pray to GOD regularly and present our requests to HIM. We not only think of our own needs but also of the needs of others. How much reason do we have to thank our Lord Jesus every day for the multiple proofs of His goodness.

Recently I came across **the Five Finger Prayer** which can support us in our requests.

- When you fold your hands, the **thumb** is nearest to you. Start your prayer with the ones who are closest to you – your spouse, your children and your parents.
- Next is the **index finger** which is the symbol of instruction. Pray for all who teach the Word of God to believers.
- The **middle finger** is the largest. It reminds us to pray for the ones who are above us – people in government, teachers or superiors at work.
- The **fourth finger** is mostly the weakest one. Pray for people who are ill and weak. Think in your petitions of believers, who are under pressure and have other problems.
- Then comes **the small finger**. It shows us how tiny and little we are before the all-powerful GOD. Pray to HIM to take good care of you, to help you and to keep you safe.



## MAY DIARY

[www.stmichaelsbtree.co.uk](http://www.stmichaelsbtree.co.uk)

Online services are launched on Sundays as follows:

9.45am – Children’s & Families service – now on Zoom

10.00am – Adult services & monthly Family Service

<http://stmichaelsbtree.co.uk/website/index.php/worship/adult-service>

Links for Zoom services are on Nigel Adams’ weekly email – these need to be accessed “live” (at the time).

The 10am YouTube services are available at these times, or to watch or listen to after those times, on catch-up.

### **2 Sunday**

10:00am Worship on the Web – Family Worship

10:00am Church Family Worship in Church – Book in advance

11:00am After Church “Zoom Coffee”

6.30pm Holy Communion on Zoom

### **4 Tuesday**

2:00pm Bible reading group on Conferoo

8:00pm Zoom Bible Study, led by Cyril Bamforth

### **5 Wednesday**

10:00am Meeting Point on Zoom

### **6 Thursday**

11:00am Coffee@Home “Monthly Zoom Coffee morning” with Nigel & Jo Adams

### **7 Friday**

7.30pm Identity Course on Zoom

## **9 Sunday**

- 9:45am Children's and Families Service – Live on Zoom
- 10:00am Worship on the Web – Adult Service
- 10:00am Morning worship in Church – Book in advance
- 11:00am After Church “Zoom Coffee”

## **11 Tuesday**

- 2:00pm Bible reading group on Conferoo
- 8 - 9pm First Priority Prayer Meeting on Zoom

## **12 Wednesday**

- 10:00am Meeting Point on Zoom

## **14 Friday**

- 7.30pm Identity Course on Zoom

## **16 Sunday**

- 9:45am Children's and Families Service – Live on Zoom
- 10:00am Worship on the Web – Adult service
- 10:00am Morning worship in Church – Book in advance
- 11:00am After Church “Zoom Coffee”
- 3:00pm Garden Socials
- 6:30pm All Age Tonight – Live on Zoom

## **18 Tuesday JUNE LINK SUBMISSION DUE**

- 2:00pm Bible reading group on Conferoo
- 8:00pm Zoom Bible Study, led by Cyril Bamforth

## **19 Wednesday**

- 10:00am Meeting Point on Zoom

## **21 Friday**

- 7.30pm Identity Course on Zoom

## **23 Sunday**

- 9:45am Children's and Families Service – Live on Zoom
- 10:00am Worship on the Web – Adult Service
- 10:00am Morning worship in Church – Book in advance
- 11:00am After Church “Zoom Coffee”

## **25 Tuesday**

- 2:00pm Bible reading group on Conferoo
- 7:30pm Church Annual Meetings on Zoom

## **26 Wednesday**

- 10:00am Meeting Point on Zoom

## **28 Friday**

- 7.30pm Identity Course on Zoom

## **29 Saturday**

- 9:00am Church and Church House work party – book in advance!

## **30 Sunday**

- 9:45am Children's and Families Service – Live on Zoom
- 10:00am Worship on the Web – Adult Service
- 10:00am Morning worship in Church – Book in advance
- 11:00am After Church “Zoom Coffee”

# Church and Church House Work Party

29 May 2021 from 9:00 AM.

Want to help? Speak to Dave Marriott or Lin Terris, so we can plan a safe and practical day.



This will be done to government guidelines on gatherings at the time.

There will be no catering and if possible bring your own tools.



# **BELFRY BULLETIN**

## **BELL RESTORATION UPDATE**

### **GOOD NEWS**

#### **WE HAVE A DATE FOR THE BELLS TO BE REHUNG**

Recently White's came and made some adjustments to the frame to accommodate the new improved head stokes, which should make ringing easier.

At present the bells are on the floor of the church and to get them to the bell chamber and in the frame, scaffolding has to be erected to allow a 2 stage lifting mechanism to be in place. This has now been arranged. At the end of the 10am service on Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> May there will be a thanksgiving for the bells.

We are looking forward to this with much anticipation as the completion should co-inside with easing of restrictions on ringing bells. After such a long time without any ringing let's hope we can still remember how. At the time of writing Covid restrictions do not allow us to invite you to come and see the work being carried out sorry.

OH the date !! MONDAY 17<sup>TH</sup> MAY is when work is due to commence.

Well done Bradley Hill for getting all this put in place.

*Peter Smith*