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Online Edition

ST PETER'S CHURCH BRACKLEY

ST PETER'S

"LOVING GOD,
LOVING EACH OTHER,
LOVING BRACKLEY"

Remembrance



Revd.Rob writes…..



Covenants of Love

"And the Lord God commanded the man, 'You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.'" (Genesis 2:16–17)

The God of infinite love chose to structure his relationship with humanity through covenants. I wonder whether that sounds rather strange to you, or even coldly legal?

Think about it on a human level. Just imagine a couple enjoying a candlelit dinner. It's date night. The husband wants to express his love for his wife, so he reaches into his bag, pulls out a legal document, and slides it across the table. Hardly the most romantic gesture, is it? Apparently, there are five love languages. But legal paperwork isn't one of them!

So why does the God who is love choose to relate to us through covenants? To answer that question, we need to go right back to the beginning.

In Genesis 1, we are given a wide-angle view of creation. God is the Creator who speaks the universe into existence by his Word. Genesis 2 then zooms in to give us a more intimate picture. It is similar to the opening of *The Sound of Music*. The camera sweeps across the Austrian hills before zeroing in on Julie Andrews. And as Genesis brings us closer, we see God forming humanity from the dust of the ground (Gen 2:7), like a potter shaping clay, before breathing life into Adam.

It's a beautiful picture of our complete dependence upon God. The imagery of dust should stir feelings of humility. I only live because God gives me life. And in the Garden of Eden, Adam was given an opportunity to put that dependence into practice. That's why God established the covenant of works with humanity (Gen 2:16-17). There are two parties: God and humanity. There are terms: Adam is free to eat from any tree except one. And there are consequences: life or death.

But why structure the relationship in this way?

First, it shows God's love. Adam was created by God and already owed him obedience. Yet despite the enormous gulf between the

Creator and creature, the LORD graciously stooped down to establish a relationship with humanity. He held out the promise of life and invited Adam to enjoy fellowship with him.

Second, it solidifies our faith. We can trust God because of his loving character. But in a covenant, God also binds himself by his Word. Through the covenant, God graciously gives us further assurance that his promises can be trusted.

Charles Spurgeon captures this thought beautifully:

"Settle this in your heart: Whether I am up or down, the Lord Jesus Christ is the same. Whether I sing, or whether I sigh, the promise is true, and the Promiser is faithful. Whether I stand on Tabor's summit, or am hidden in the vale of Baca, the covenant standeth fast, and everlasting love abideth."

Of course, we know what happened next in Genesis. Adam and Eve disobeyed God, breaking that first covenant of works. They sought independence from their Creator, wanting to decide for themselves what was good and evil rather than living in humble dependence upon him.

Immediately afterwards, a covenant of grace was initiated. We see various administrations of it throughout Scripture, all pointing to Jesus, the one who crushes the serpent's head (Genesis 3:15). This promise of life that Jesus gives does not depend on our actions but on God's grace.

With that in mind, at the end of the month, we will be in the season of Advent. It's a time when we look forward to Christ's return and the fulfilment of his promises, when he will heal what sin has devastated. We can trust that will happen because the eternal Son of God assumed human nature, clothing himself in the frail dust of humanity. Where Adam disobeyed, Christ obeyed. Where Adam brought death, Christ brings life.

And amazingly, Christ died upon a cursed tree so that we might enjoy the fruit of the tree of life.

We can begin to see why God structures his relationship with humanity through covenants. My hope is that reflecting on this will prepare your heart for the season of Advent and help you to know God's love and be assured of his promises.

Harvest at St. Peter's 2026



















Thank You to the Flower Team for making the church look so beautiful and those that donated food items for Brackley Food Bank

Would you like to hear more from St Peter's?

If you would like to receive an update by email from Rich every few weeks, including news and information of up-coming events at St Peter's, you can subscribe to the email list by sending an email to brackleyvicar@gmail.com and ask to receive the bulletin

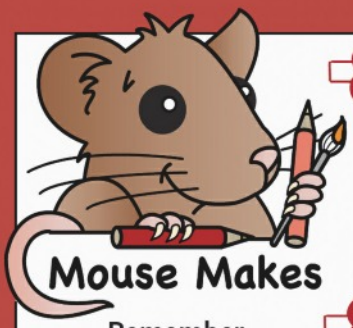
Ride & Stride - Totals

Many thanks again to those who organised, led, donated and took part in this year's Ride & Stride in September. I'm delighted to advise that, including the gift aid on most of the donations, we raised a magnificent total of **£1,017.50**.

Congratulations and thank you again.

John Carter





Mouse Makes

Remembrance Sunday is the day we remember the sacrifice of those who gave their lives so that we could live in peace, it mirrors what Christ did for us when he gave his life so that we could live in peace with God.

Remember
the words Jesus said:
"It is more blessed to give than to receive."
Colossians 3:25

Jesus said:
"No one can have greater love than to give his life for his friends."
John 15:13

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Kirk school matron who died in the Holocaust recognised at Auschwitz

The name of a Scottish woman who died in the Holocaust after refusing to abandon Jewish children in her care has been added to a special memorial wall at Auschwitz.



Jane Haining, the matron of a Church boarding school, is recognised in a renewed section of the Auschwitz Birkenau Memorial and Museum's main exhibition, which is devoted to hundreds of prisoners for whom no registration photographs were taken.

Originally from Dunscore in Dumfries and Galloway, Miss Haining was the matron at the Scottish Mission School in Budapest, Hungary from 1932-1944.

It had around 400 day and boarder pupils aged from six to 16 years old, a mixture of Jewish and Christian girls.

Miss Haining helped keep the children safe for more than four years after the war broke out in 1939 until she was betrayed by the cook's son-in-law, whom she scolded for taking scarce food meant for the girls, some of whom were orphans or abandoned by their parents.

She was determined to stick to her post and had repeatedly ignored Church of Scotland requests to return home, saying: 'If these children need me in days of sunshine, how much more do they need me in days of darkness?'

Miss Haining was arrested by German officers in April 1944, and former pupil Agnes Rostas said her haunting last words to sobbing children were: "Don't worry, I'll be back by lunch."

But the kind-hearted Scot never returned to the school. She was transported along with Hungarian Jews to Auschwitz on 14 May 1944.

Miss Haining was 47 and it is widely accepted that she died in a gas chamber and her remains remain on the Auschwitz site.

St Peter's Church

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What is 'O Come, O Come, Emmanuel' about?



Quite unusually for a Christmas carol still commonly performed, there are all sorts of arcane words and expressions littered throughout. This is perhaps because the strong roots of the Latin text come from the 'O Antiphons' (so-called because each one begins with an 'O'), traditionally used during the last seven days of advent during the Roman Catholic Vespers service.

The distinctly biblical feel of the lyrics differ from the more overtly celebratory tone of most carols (there's no herald angels harking nor flocks being watched by night, for example), and the actual nativity narrative doesn't feature in any meaningful way.

The Emmanuel of the title refers to the Hebrew 'Immanuel' which appears in the Book of Isaiah in the Old Testament more as a sign of God's protection than an actual person, whereas in the Gospel of Matthew in the New Testament the name Emmanuel refers specifically to Jesus Christ.

Who wrote the music?

The haunting melody of 'O Come, O Come, Emmanuel' has its roots as far back as 15th Century France, with a sketchy-at-best history. It wasn't until the 1960s musicologist Mary Berry (not **that Mary Berry**) sourced the 15th century manuscript that bore the tune's building blocks, among many others used for processional chants for burials.

So the actual composer of the music for one of the world's most popular carols is enigmatically anonymous. It was, however, the combination of the tune with John Mason Neale's translation of the Latin text that began its life as a perennial festive favourite.

O come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to you, O Israel.

St Peter's Church



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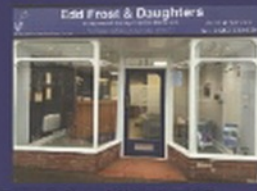
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