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**Online Edition**

***ST PETER'S CHURCH  
BRACKLEY***

***"Loving God, loving each other, loving Brackley"***



## Revd. Rich Duncan writes



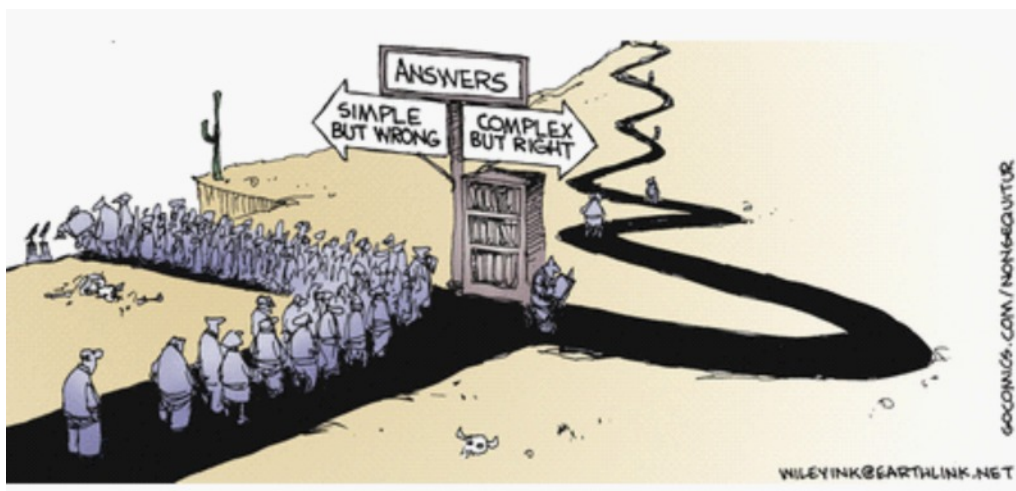
‘Will I be fat in heaven? And other curious questions.’ That is the title of a new book by J. John that I requested for Christmas. We all have questions – some more *weighty* than others. (See what I did there?)

This January, after marking Epiphany on the first Sunday, we’ll use the four remaining Sundays to address some of the weightiest questions with which many people wrestle, believers and non-believers alike:

1. Does science disprove God? (9<sup>th</sup> Jan)
2. How can God allow suffering? (16<sup>th</sup> Jan)
3. What about other religions? (23<sup>rd</sup> Jan)
4. How can we trust the Bible? (30<sup>th</sup> Jan)

This plan to tackle **Big Questions** will be a sermon series with a difference: perfect for inviting along that sceptical friend or family member who wouldn’t normally darken the doors of a church.

There will be no easy answers. But perhaps we should be wary of easy answers, as this cartoon illustrates:



In an era that prizes the pithy soundbite and tweet-length argument, nuance can be in short supply. So come prepared to think carefully about complex ideas.

Perhaps you attended a Christmas event at St Peter's and resolved to dig deeper into issues of faith. Maybe you have been having doubts lately – serious doubts, not just the everyday run-of-the-mill ones. Or possibly, you'd like to feel better equipped "to give the reason for the hope that you have" (1 Peter 3:15). Whichever applies to you, I hope our Big Questions series proves a thought-provoking way to begin 2022.

For those wanting to explore further, our next **Alpha Course** will then (covid permitting) take place on the four Tuesday nights in February (1<sup>st</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>) at The Venue, Brackley Football Club. These informal evenings will provide an opportunity to hear a talk, share food and discuss important questions, like those mentioned above. The course is free and there's no need to commit to coming back. More details will follow on our website and in next month's magazine.

Let me wish you a very happy new year, and hopefully I've given you some dates to scribble into those brand new diaries (or plug into online calendars). You're welcome!



## Remembering Sir Ernest Shackleton

One hundred years ago, on 5<sup>th</sup> January 1922, Sir Ernest Shackleton, the Irish-born British Antarctic explorer, died of a heart attack in his bunk in South Georgia. He had led three British expeditions to the Antarctic. He was 47.

It is now believed he may have had a hole in his heart. His feats of bravery and endurance were mixed with sudden illness, but he was never willing to have his heart properly examined.

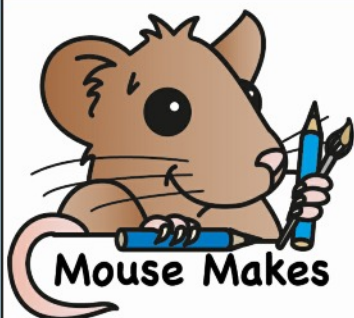
He set a Furthest South record when he commanded the Nimrod expedition in 1907-09. On that occasion he showed acclaimed leadership by refusing to try for the Pole because of the likelihood that he and his men would die on the return journey.



But his greatest achievement was to enable the rescue of his crew after the Endurance became trapped and then crushed by ice in the Weddell Sea in 1915. A long trek, hauling lifeboats over ice, was followed by Shackleton and two companions reaching South Georgia in a small boat – followed by a trek over mountains and glaciers to a whaling station, from where a rescue ship was launched to bring home the remainder.

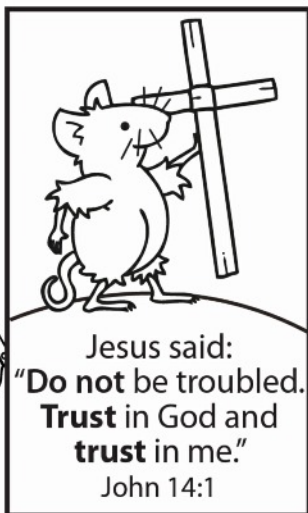
This has been described as “an utterly unbelievable story of bravery, heroism and endurance”. Shackleton was not known to be a Christian, but he and his men said they felt Providence was guiding them, especially during the 36-hour march across South Georgia, when all three said they felt sure there were four of them, and not three, making the journey.





But I **trust**  
in you,  
O Lord;  
I say,  
"You are  
my God."

Psalms 31:14



Jesus said:  
"Do not be troubled.  
**Trust** in God and  
**trust** in me."  
John 14:1

Cut out and colour these cards to  
help you to **thank** and **praise** God.

When I am afraid  
I will **trust** you,  
I praise God for  
His word,  
I **trust** God, so  
I am not afraid.

Psalms 56:3-4



The Lord is good,  
a refuge in times  
of trouble.  
He cares for those  
who **trust** in Him.

Nahum 1:7

"May the God of hope fill you  
with joy and peace as you  
**trust** in Him." Romans 3:13



**Trust** in the Lord with  
all your heart and  
lean not on your own  
understanding.  
In all your ways **submit**  
to Him and He will make  
your paths straight.

Proverbs 3:5-6



## **St Peter's Church - a place of worship**

I have always maintained that the worshipping community in any place is more important than the building. However, when we come together it is seemingly that we worship in a place that reflects the importance of our worship of God. It is difficult to reconcile belief in our all-powerful God who created the world when we do not do our utmost to maintain the church where we worship in good condition for this and future generations.

What about our, St Peter's building? There was a Quinquennial (5 year) architect's inspection conducted this year. Extract - "The church fabric continues basically sound and in good order. There are works of maintenance required but overall, it is apparent that the church is well cared for."

In the last five years we have needed to spend over £200,000 on the building. Re-tiling the Church Hall - £87,000, re-tiling the north nave roof - £48,550, general roof repairs - £11,720, repairs to the churchyard wall where it was in danger of collapse - £19,230, repointing the church - £12,575. We also spent £23,700 on a new Audio-Visual system.

It is wonderful that we have been able to fund these by a combination of grants, fund raising and Rosemary Miles' legacy. Many thanks to all who were involved.

There are still works to do!

These works of maintenance include re-tiling the remainder of the Church Hall roof, with the roof over the kitchen in danger of imminent failure. The boiler failed its inspection this year and although running again is now at the end of its life. The first stage would be to replace with a condensing boiler. The rainwater goods need repair and re-painting and if left much longer we would face a much larger bill for their renewal. The churchyard boundary wall continues to require attention as further sections collapse or are a danger to people nearby. The PCC has applied for approval to improve the lighting. There are works to the tower including re-gild the clock face and weathervane. In total these come to over £350,000, less than twice as much again as we have raised and spent in the last five years!

Although we have substantial funds in our account these are insufficient to cover both these costs and to pay for our wonderful children and young families worker. Unless we proactively fundraise, these significant building works will have to be funded almost entirely

by the congregation. A fund-raising appeal would offer a perfect opportunity to include the wider community with the potential to help our financial outlook for the next 5-10 years.

The PCC is giving urgent consideration to launching an appeal in spring 2022 to fund these items and to prepare our church to celebrate eight hundred years of worship in 2023.

If you would like to be involved in this campaign, please contact Rich or one of our churchwardens.

JM

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

If you are online and would like to receive the weekly Vicar's Update, just send an email to [brackleyvicar@gmail.com](mailto:brackleyvicar@gmail.com) and ask to receive the church's email bulletin

### **Franklin Graham tour coming to the UK**

Franklin Graham, the son of the late US evangelist Billy Graham, is to come to the UK this year for his *God Loves You* mission. It was due to be held last year, but got postponed by the pandemic. The *God Loves You Tour UK* will visit Liverpool Exhibition Centre on 14<sup>th</sup> May, the ICC Wales on 21<sup>st</sup> May, the Sheffield Arena on 25<sup>th</sup> May, and end at the London ExCel Centre on 16<sup>th</sup> July.

### **Update for the sing along date**

As we are all now used to the phrases

" Due to Covid numbers "

We have decided that it would be sensible to now try to plan our sing along in March . It would be very hard to try to sing along with soup and a face mask

**So watch out for a new date**

## **MAGAZINE SUBSCRIPTION**

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