

# Parish Magazine St Eustachius' Tavistock, Gulworthy and Brent Tor

## January 2021

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## From the Vicarage

January 2021

Every New Year provides us with the opportunity to look back and to take stock; it is a time to reflect and to prepare for the year ahead.

As we look back over 2020, it has been an extraordinary year dominated by an unprecedented pandemic across the world. Alongside this, in the UK, “Brexit” has continued to dominate politics and, no doubt, will continue to consume much time and energy moving forward. As I write this, parts of the country have just been placed in Tier 4, and no agreement has been achieved on Brexit. These are uncertain and worrying times. What is clear is that few areas of life will remain unaffected by either the pandemic or the Brexit negotiations. It seems that wherever we look, nothing is as we would wish it to be - internationally, nationally, or in politics, indeed, in so many different areas of life.

This is the world in which we are called to live as Christians. It is a world, still to be fully transformed, that has been changed by the birth of Christ. It is a world in which our faith offers us hope and that informs the way in which we live. Increasingly, it will be a world in which what matters is our personal witness and integrity, and our coming together for the common good in prayer, worship and study of the Bible, as disciples of Christ. As we reflect on 2020, this is a good opportunity to reflect upon the values by which we live; those things which inform what actions are right and what actions are wrong; what matters and what doesn't matter; where we place our trust; where we find hope and how we act; and how others come to know us and we come to know them - practically during times of crisis.

We all have values and those values shape our character. We show respect, act courteously, live honestly and with integrity, because these things are important to us, and to the society in which we live. By doing so we show others who we are. And, of course, for a Christian, this is not an arbitrary way of living for our values are not simply made up on the spot. Our faith gives us a particular perspective - a way of looking at, and seeing things, differently. We have seen many examples of “faith in action” during 2020 as we help and support one another.

An authentic, core value, which shapes our character, is something that is within us. We intuitively know that only by living by our authentic, lasting, core values, can we truly be ourselves. They inform the moral compass by which we navigate life - they show others the person we are and what we stand for. The Bible makes it very clear that showing respect, honouring the other person, and living with a proper sense of gratitude for blessings received, are among those core values which are not optional, but essential

for living a good life. What matters is living a life of holiness. Holiness, which is a gift from God, and which is not the same as goodness, kindness, gentleness or intelligence, although it may include those virtues as well as others. It is a quality that always lies beyond ourselves and which gives others a glimpse of that reality which is lived in us and through us, but which is not ours:

“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” (Galatians 2.20)

May 2021 be a time when we move beyond the pandemic and Brexit and grow in holiness so that the life that is in each of us finds its true expression in the life we are called to live.

With my love and prayers for 2021

*Chris Hardwick*

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## **A Prayer for January**

God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
whose years never fail  
and whose mercies are new each returning day; let the radiance of your Spirit renew our lives, warming our hearts and giving light to our minds; that we may pass the coming year  
in joyful obedience and firm faith;  
through him who is the beginning and the end, your Son, Christ our Lord. Amen

*Liz Watkins*

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## **Tales from the Tower**

Christmas may have been very different this year, but for Tavistock one thing was the same as always - or nearly so.

For many months, on and off as lockdowns and tier systems have come and gone, the bells of St Eustachius' church have been either silent or rung for shorter periods of only 15 minutes on Sunday mornings. Even then, because of social distancing, only five of the ten bells could usually be rung. And for the last few weeks, ringing has been forbidden entirely.

But for Christmas Day, with the general easing of restrictions, ringing was allowed again for the main services - Midnight Mass in Christmas Eve, and for morning service on Christmas Day itself. Better still, because there were two family groups, six of the ten could be rung, giving a more musical effect. And because two heavier bells needed to be raised into ringing position beforehand, those bells were able to join the 'doorstep' ringing at 6pm.

When the bells will be rung again is anyone's guess, but with the expectation of vaccination making it possible for some of the older ringers to take part, and hopefully ease restrictions in the coming months, it should not be too long before Tavistock will once more hear the bells sound as a regular occurrence over the town.

Donna Baker

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## Mission of the Month for January – The Melanesian Brotherhood



This month's Mission is the Melanesian Brotherhood, adopted following a year's stay in Tavistock by Brothers George and Leonard in 2001. George was a priest and acted as an assistant curate in the then Benefice of Tavistock and Gulworthy. Melanesia covers the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu situated in the mid-western pacific, some 100 miles east of Papua New Guinea. Brother Leonard later become an ordained priest, and was enthroned in 2018 as the Archbishop of the Anglican Province of Melanesia.

The Melanesian Brotherhood was founded in 1945 by Ini Kapuria, who is commemorated in the Church of England calendar on 6th June. The current head brother is Brother Honisea and there are at present 218 brothers and 175 novices - the largest religious order in the Anglican communion - serving in the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Papua New Guinea. In Tavistock we have a small group of MBH Companions, who lead evening prayers on Fridays and our former vicar the Venerable John Rawlings is the diocesan representative. If you would like to make a donation for this Mission of the Month, you can do so by two means:

- Visit the church website at [tavistockparishchurch.org.uk](http://tavistockparishchurch.org.uk), and click on the Mission of the Month block. Through here you can link to the VirginMoneyGiving site we have set up for this campaign. Funds donated here, including Gift Aid if you wish, will be collected into the PCC account and forwarded to the Brotherhood at the end of the month.
- Give or send a cheque, payable to **Tavistock PCC** to Churchwardens Graham or Mary Whalley, at **10, Monksmead, Tavistock, PL19 8ER**, and these will be added to the online donations and forwarded to the Brotherhood at the end of the month.

There is some more information about the Melanesian Brotherhood online at [www.orders.anglican.org/mbh/](http://www.orders.anglican.org/mbh/). If you would like to become a Companion of the Melanesian Brotherhood, please speak to Graham or Mary Whalley, our Churchwardens.

Here is a prayer of the Brotherhood denoting the means and dangers they face on their frequent travel to the islands:

**O Jesus Be the canoe that holds me up in the sea of life, be the rudder that keeps in the straight road, be the outrigger that supports me in times of temptation: Let your Spirit be my sail that carries me through each day, Keep my body strong so I can paddle steadfastly on the voyage of life AMEN**

Ian Silcox

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## Are You Dressed?

Revd. Mike Loader Assistant Priest

You may say, "what sort of question is that?", so I want in this article to look at what we as Christians should 'put on', how should we be dressed? This is a topic we took a short look at in one of our recent zoom bible studies, and please feel free to join us if you can at 2.30 on a Tuesday afternoon. Contact Mike for further details.

You may remember that in the Collect for the first week of Advent we pray, "Almighty God, give us the grace to cast away the works of darkness and to 'put on' the armour of light." So what do the scriptures mean by 'put on'?

There are some 57 uses of this small phrase throughout the scriptures, although not all are relevant to our lives as Christians. So let us start by looking at its use in some Old Testament verses, so it would be good to have an open Bible with you.

In the book of Leviticus (14v17-18) the Priests were instructed to 'put on' holy oil to the tip of the right ear, the thumb of the right hand, the great toe of the right foot, and upon the head, of someone who came to be cleansed-from their sin. Perhaps we can see that in this case the 'putting on' was to show how the hearing, what was listened to, the actions and path that was taken, and the thoughts that a person possesses, need to be holy, or we could say, that are acceptable in God's sight.

Later Job describes how he 'put on righteousness and it clothed him'. Here we begin to see the idea of 'putting on' having a meaning of 'getting dressed'. Exactly what Job meant by 'righteousness' in that context is not evident, but we may get a clue later.

We then read that the prophet Isaiah (51v9) says that it is necessary to 'put on strength', which he describes as 'a beautiful garment', again relating to our idea of getting dressed, perhaps showing that we need to consider the effect of the actions that we are about to undertake.

Later Isaiah (59v17) says that we are to 'put on righteousness as a breastplate and a helmet of Salvation'. Does that start to ring any bells? Have we not heard something similar from the Apostle Paul in the New Testament (Ephesians 6v14 & 1 Thessalonians 5v8). Perhaps like me you have found that many OT concepts are also echoed in the NT as well. What did St Augustine say? "Be prepared to find the Lord Jesus latent in the Old Testament as He is patent in the New Testament".

And lastly from the OT the prophet Ezekiel twice (Ez 42v14 & 44v19) describes how the Priests were to 'put on' 'special holy garments' when they went into the Temple court to minister at the altar. Interestingly they were instructed to remove these 'holy garments' and put on other garments before they went near the people in the outer courts because they-the garments-could communicate holiness to the people. This perhaps seems somewhat strange and contrasts with us who, as Paul tells us (2Cor2v15) as Christians are to communicate the 'sweet aroma of Christ'.

I hope you have worked out that the phrase from our Collect to, 'put on the armour of light' was taken from Paul's letter to the Romans (13v12), where he goes on to say, 'put on the Lord Jesus Christ' (13v14), a phrase Paul also uses in Ephesians (6v11).

Perhaps that phrase to 'put on Christ', helps us to understand why we are to 'put on the armour of light'. We know that Jesus described himself as 'the light of the world' (John 8v12), famously depicted in the painting by Holman Hunt, whose one time house in Jerusalem was near the Anglican School where I taught. But exactly how are we to 'put on Christ'?

Perhaps we get some idea of this from what Paul wrote to the Galatians (3v27), where he says, if we have been baptised into Christ then we have 'put on' Christ, so is Christ reflected in our lives?

Paul goes on to explain this in both Ephesians (4v24) and Colossians (3v10). We are to 'put on the new nature', a nature created after the likeness of God, His image, of true righteousness and holiness. So just how is that possible?

Previously in Ephesians (4v22-23) Paul reminds us that one of the purposes of our pilgrimage here below is so that we can learn to 'put off' our old self, and to let the Holy Spirit renew our minds. This transformation into the image of Jesus is so that we may, 'with unveiled faces reflect the glory of the Lord' (2Cor 3v18). For most of us this is by no means an instantaneous process, but we should demonstrate the 'intensifying glory' of Jesus in our lives.

This 'new nature' that we are to 'put on', a new nature to show the glory of Christ, is best understood as Paul describes to the Colossians (3v12 & 14). We are God's chosen ones- what a lovely phrase-we are to 'put on' compassion, kindness, meekness, patience, and learning to practice forgiveness towards one another. All of these Paul encompasses in the little phrase to 'put on love'.

But remember brothers and sisters, we are in a battle with the evil powers in the spiritual realm around us, a realm we overlook at our peril. So when we rise each morning it would do us good to remember that as we get dressed we need to 'put on the whole armour of God' (Ephesians 6v11-17) in order to 'stand against the whiles of the devil'.

Perhaps that would make a good new year's resolution for us all.

So just two final observations.

What did Job mean by 'putting on righteousness'? We do not know for certain when Job lived, some say at the very early time of the Patriarchs, and others at the time of the Babylonian exile. If this latter were the case then Job would have been familiar with the writings of the Prophet Isaiah and his lovely verse (Is61v10) "I will rejoice greatly in the Lord, my soul will exult in my God; for He has clothed me with garments of salvation and wrapped me in a robe of righteousness".

And what of our future? Paul asked the Corinthians (2Cor5v2) "do we groan and long to 'put on' our heavenly dwelling?" I take that to mean our new 'resurrection bodies'. That is what Paul seems to imply when he describes what will happen when we die, saying (1Cor15v22) "We shall 'put on' an imperishable nature", that is when our mortal bodies shall 'put on' immortality. I trust that hope helps us to calm our fears, and to trust in the one true God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Blessings, and a happy and hopefully more normal new year to you all. Rev Mike

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## Gulworthy Notes

Christmas was not exactly what anyone had planned in our community, let alone in the country. For many of us it meant that meetings with loved ones could not happen. Celebrations planned for, cooked for and longed for, had to be put in the freezer. Literally!  
But, there are good things to be remembered.

The children of Gulworthy School made "stained glass" hangings for the windows and decorated the church with tinsel and paper angels. We had an evening of recorded music, readings and prayers instead of our usual carol service and it was different but incredibly beautiful. Afterwards we stood outside well spread apart in a bit of drizzle and sang carols in the safety of the fresh air. We were a bit rusty, but it was joyous!

On Christmas Day, we had a morning service where Barry our organist played carols and we gave our thanks to God for his great Christmas gift. We managed to share the joy of Christmas day with our community even if some of us could not do so with our families. After church, one of my friends talked of how we all had people who we missed seeing this year, especially at Christmas and who missed seeing us; but, even more poignantly, how there were so many people around the world who would have been seeing no-one anyway; who were not missed by anyone at any time, let alone during a pandemic - people who had no-one with whom to celebrate. It really put my own sadness into perspective.

So, we look to 2021 and to hope: hope that we will manage to protect everyone; hope that we will soon be able to hug our loved ones; hope that there will be joy again for the lonely, made lonelier by enforced isolation. Above all, hope in the knowledge of the love of God even in the darkest times.  
Wishing you many blessings for a very Happy New Year, from all of us at Gulworthy.

## **The New Testament Gospel according to Luke**

The gospel according to Luke is the third and last of the synoptic gospels. It appears that Luke was a man of education and culture, an accurate and able historian and a companion of Paul 'the beloved physician' Colossians 4:14 –NRSV- and, it seems, a Gentile convert. Unlike Matthew, Luke uses only half of his major written source from the earlier gospel of Mark and his gospel is mainly written for non-Jewish readers. Considerable parts of the Book of Common Prayer come from Luke's infancy narratives of Jesus, namely the Benedictus, the song of Zechariah -1:68-79, the Magnificat, the Song of Mary -1:46-55 and the Nunc Dimittis, the Son of Simeon -2:29-32.

The gospel begins and ends in Jerusalem, with 1:26-39 describing the angel's message and the birth of Jesus, and concluding with the ascension 24:50-53.

Many of the major themes of this gospel are contained in Christ's words in the Nazareth synagogue, which is unique to Luke: 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to preach good news. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight to the blind, to release the oppressed and to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour ..... today this scripture (the Prophecy of Isaiah 61:1-2) is fulfilled in your hearing' 4:18-19 & 21 JB.

The gospel also contains, also unique to Luke, a considerable number of parables, many not recorded in other gospels, the most well-known being the good Samaritan, 10:25-37 and the prodigal son, 15:11-32, emphasising Luke's particular concern for the sick and marginalised.

The gospel of Luke, in a commentary I have, is said to have an overall theme that 'God's way triumphs' and at this time of concern over the two major worldwide problems of global warming and its consequences and the Covid-19 pandemic, we should, I feel, be encouraged by this assurance.

Wishing you a happy and virus free New Year

Ian Silcox

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