

Vicar and Curate's Musings

*and any other information we found interesting,
funny or a need to share!*

Vicar's Musings

Just to wish you a Happy Christmas and a few pictures of Christmas Eve.

Within this musings you'll find a lot of jokes that have been circulating about Christmas this year. The Bishop's of Worcester and Dudley Christmas message's to us and some more up to date information.

There are also pictures of the advent calendar—which have been amazing.



My old school posted a picture of the Bethlehem star that Moravians light on their doorsteps at the beginning of advent also the chapel windows had been decorated. It's been wonderful to celebrate on zoom and also on the Green singing carols—this year has been so hard for so many people and continues to be so.

I hope and pray you have a wonderful Christmas and a Peaceful New Year.

Stay safe
Shellie





St Michael's Church

Memory Christmas Tree

Our thanks to all who brought a bauble / decoration for the tree also to The Lygon Arms for donating the tree.





St John's
Church,
Wickhamford
Carol Service
in the
Churchyard
20th
December
and Memory
Christmas
Tree.



A Christmas message from the Bishop of Worcester



The Church of England's Christmas campaign this year has been about 'comfort and joy' reflecting on the words from the carol, God Rest Ye Merry Gentleman. At the end of a uniquely difficult year, we could all do with the tidings of comfort and joy that Christmas can bring.

Life remains very trying for so many because of the pandemic and for those who have lost loved ones, this Christmas will be a particularly difficult time. However, there is light at the end of the tunnel. My prayer is that we can all look forward to better times ahead, with the wider roll out of vaccines hopefully enabling the removal of restrictions during next year.

At Christmas we look back to the birth of the Christ Child 2000 years ago, a unique event in human history at which the angels sang. I pray that this Christmas you might experience the deep sense of joy and hope that the birth of Jesus brings. May your hearts sing with the angels: 'Glory to God in the Highest and peace to his people on earth.'

I pray that you are able to draw close to the Lord Jesus and be reassured by God's eternal love for you. May that everlasting hope for the future bring great joy to your heart.

God bless you and a very merry Christmas to you.

Bishop John

A Christmas message from the Bishop of Dudley



Christmas 2020, almost the end of a year like no other. Some have faced Covid induced illness death and bereavement. Others have faced loss of job, loss of income, loss of contact with family and friends. Added to that is an almost chronic sense of uncertainty, with rules and regulations, advice and guidelines changing time and time and time again. Most people like to be able to plan, to look forward, to make arrangements. This year that has been almost impossible.

2,000 years ago Joseph and Mary were looking forward and making arrangements. They were planning a wedding in their home town of Nazareth and excitement had been growing from the moment their engagement was announced. But then Mary fell pregnant, and Joseph wasn't the father. A nightmare in those days that would have meant disgrace for them both, and even death for Mary. Would Joseph still love and accept Mary? Could Mary trust God's promise that this child, the fruit of her womb, would be amazing? And then they had to travel, far from home. Plans thrown up in the air by a brutal government. Heavily pregnant Mary and Joseph travelled to Bethlehem, and the rest is history.

The baby born was Jesus Christ, and 2,000 years later I gave my life to follow him, and he is with me still. I'm just one of millions of Christians the world over. Why not join us at a Church Near You, or online. And worship Christ the new born king. Jesus, the Saviour of the World.

Bishop Martin

Church Information

Give a little



The diocese is trying to help churches, which due to Covid19 cannot fundraise or meet weekly as they did before March 23rd. This has had an impact on churches across the diocese and church including our own churches that still have weekly and monthly expenses that have to be paid but are struggling to fundraise and as yet aren't meeting for gathered worship.

To help support St Michael's and St Eadburgha's churches—give online to Broadway PCC please use this link from SUMUP: https://givealittle.co/campaigns/517bdd8b-33bf-4a59-92f4-7b8d88840249?fbclid=IwAR0RNYX2EJfHX_J5A2RjB6SpuCyYU0DrtPL4CynAYu7Shdy8NlxBEvg6vFI

You can also give to any of our churches by cash or cheque made out to either Broadway PCC or Wickhamford PCC and post to me or the relevant church treasurer



A free phone line of hymns,
reflections and prayers

St Michael's Church, Broadway

Sundays for Morning Worship at 10.30am-12pm

(please do let Shellie know if you're coming as we are limited to 30 people.)

St Mary's Church, Childswickham

Sundays open for private prayer 10.30am—12pm

St Eadburgha's Church, Broadway &

St John's Church, Wickhamford

Remains closed at this time due to their risk assessments.

Christmas Eve Zoom Carol Service

Can be accessed via this link:

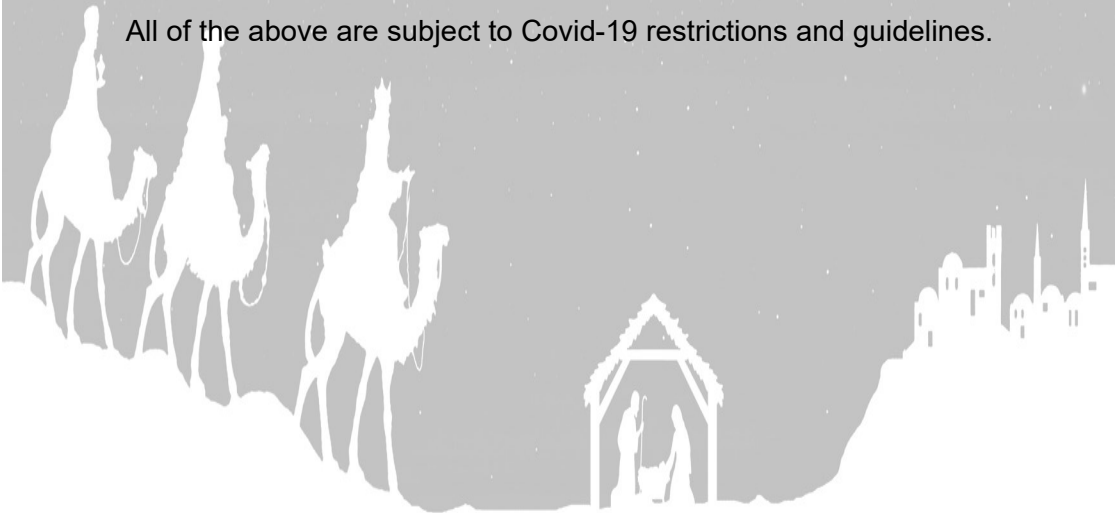
[Zoom Carol Service - YouTube](#)

Epiphany—6th January

An Epiphany Service in St Eadburgha's Church at 3pm

Please let Shellie know if you wish to attend as there are limited spaces available.

All of the above are subject to Covid-19 restrictions and guidelines.



Christmas Draw

Thank you to all who took part and for those that donated prizes—we raised £905

The winning numbers are listed below:

1st - 818 Hayes
Lunch for 2 at Russell's

2nd - 698 O'Brien
- Hamper

3rd - 326 - Bindoff
- Spring Hanging Basket

4th - 74 - Tripp
- Broadway Hotel cream tea

5th - 20 - Barker - lygon Arms

6th - Ward - stoneglow candle

7th - 225 - Donovan
- Crabtree and Evelyn

8th - 623 - Beadle
- wine hamper

9th - 538 - Jenkins
- Prosecco

10th - 427 - Grant
- box of wine
11th - 261 - simpkin
- Prosecco

12th - 876 - Ayshford-Sanford
- Port

13th - 175 - Rushmore-
- Baylis and Harding

14th - 504 - Jenkins
- chocolates

15th - 710 - O'Brien
- hamper

16th - 676 - England
- Gin

17th - 865 - Bates
- Yankee candles

18th - 843 - Pegg
- envy





*From 6th December there
will be a Memory Tree
outside
St John's Church,
Wickhamford.*

*In memory of your loved one
please create a decoration
and place it on the tree.*

*200 Club Winners
from 20th December*

- 1st: Deb Fitzer (£200)*
- 2nd: Eileen Cartmale (£50)*
- 3rd: Jane Heap (£25)*



BROADWAY LIVING ADVENT CALENDAR

<https://www.stmichaelsbroadway.org/broadway-advent-calendar>

Thank you to all those who have taken part whether displaying a window or following our path to Christmas Day. If you wish to view the windows there is still time and of course you can follow the link to our website.



1st December



2nd December



3rd December



4th December



5th December



6th December



7th December



8th December



9th December



10th December



11th December



12th December



13th December



14th December



15th December



16th December



17th December



18th December



19th December



20th December



21st December



22nd December



23rd December



24th December



25th December

Broadway Christmas Community Hamper

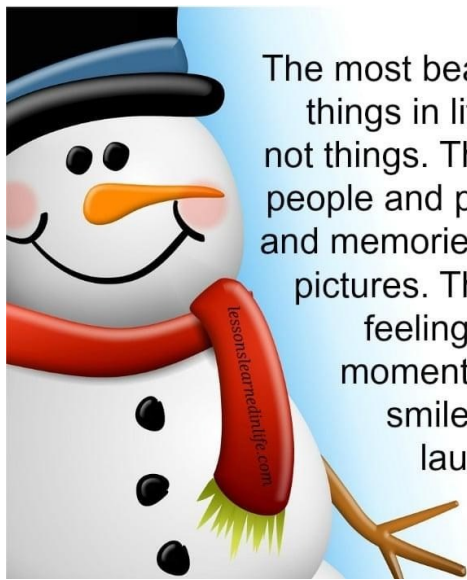
Thank you to all those who donated towards this cause and helped to compile and deliver the hampers. Also to Damien and the team at the COOP for their help (and the discount they also gave us towards the hampers). We raised over £3500 and distributed 26 Hampers. We've also given some food vouchers.

We also were able to give some chocolates / wine which were donated to those we knew either living alone or have been shielding since March!

Thanks to your help and generosity—money was and is still being donated after the Hampers had been distributed—we are able to keep in touch with people and offer food vouchers / and support to those who need a little help next year.

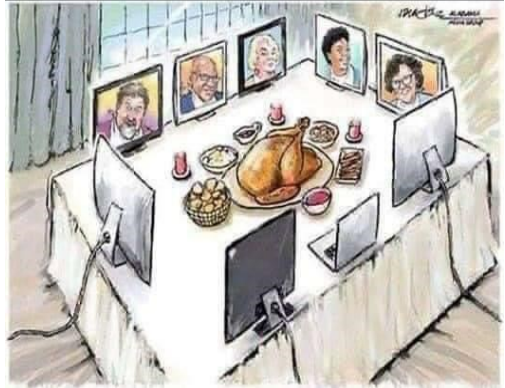
Thank you!



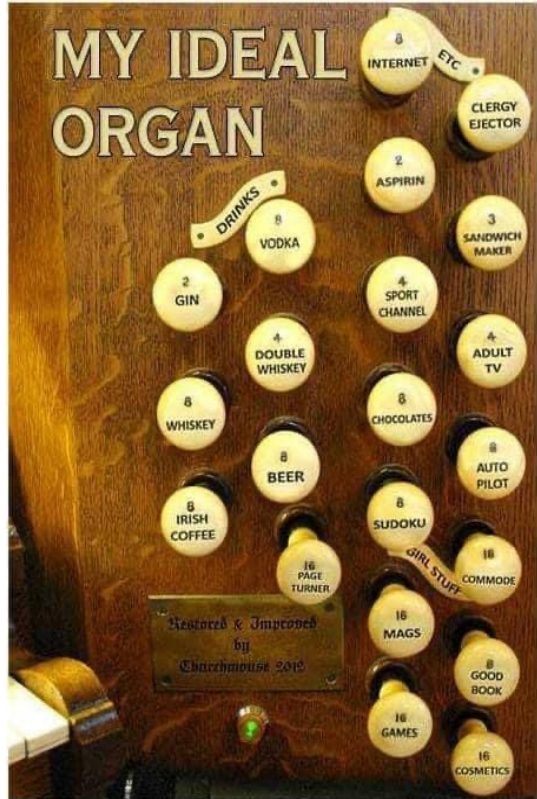


The most beautiful things in life are not things. They're people and places and memories and pictures. They're feelings and moments and smiles and laughter.

Christmas dinner 2020



"Hold on – we're trying to work this out. You're from three different royal households and the baby counts as three people already..."



The official DIY Christmas ornament for 2020 🤪



Don't you just love instant subtitling? 😊

<https://www.guildford-cathedral.org/support/donate>



<https://www.guildford-cathedral.org/support/donate>



6

1 Comment 2 shares

6

1 Comment 2 shares

Christmas Dinner 2020 with the family 🤪



**Grant me the serenity to accept
the people I cannot change.
The courage to change direction
when I see them coming.
And the wisdom to not try to
smack some sense into them
when I can't avoid them.**



**Once you understand
why the pizza is made
round,
Packed in a square
box,
And eaten as a
triangle..
Then you will
understand 2020.**



Wickhamford Cemetery

On 15th December Bishop Martin (The Bishop of Dudley) consecrated the cemetery at Wickhamford. Andrea (Wickhamford's Parish Clerk) and I attended the event which was fortunately a sunny day!



What else could possibly go
wrong this year ?



Christmas 🌲 2020



The Sound of Silence

by Rt Revd Rachel Treweek, Bishop of Gloucester

The Sound of Silence | ViaMedia.News



‘How silently, how silently the wondrous gift is given’

So goes the famous line in the carol ‘O Little Town of Bethlehem.’ And yet the wondrous gift is far from silent. Not only a baby crying in the night but a baby-grown-to-be-man who told stories, spoke words of challenge, affirmation, and rebuke, and who one day would cry out from the darkness of crucifixion. Yet there were also times when Jesus Christ chose to be silent. In recent weeks amid the clamour around Christmas and restrictions, and the noise of news across the world, I have also been aware of views about voices which are perceived as silent in response to different issues or opinions. And so it is that I have found myself this Advent reflecting on the ‘sound of silence’.

As we celebrate Christmas, albeit one with rules and restrictions, we will undoubtedly hear those spine-tingling words at the opening of John's Gospel: *'The Word became flesh and lived among us'* (John 1:14). God, three-in-one, comes to be with us, and although the baby Jesus Christ cannot yet form words, he is *'The Word'* – God's communication with the world.

As someone who began professional life as a Speech and Language Therapist, I am passionate about communication and enabling all people, each created in the image of God, to find a voice and have a voice regardless of whether or not that involves the vocal cords. And of course, communication is about relationship and connection, and that is at the heart of who God is.

Yet in our relating and being with God, each other and creation, there is also a place for choosing silence.

One of the most life-giving times in my life was a thirty-day Ignatian silent retreat. I escaped the demands of the world and the activity of usual daily life, but I could not escape God or myself and the noise within me.

It was the Gloucestershire composer, Ralph Vaughan Williams who arranged a translation of the ancient Greek chant *'Let all mortal flesh keep silent'* to make it into a popular hymn. The words invite us to be silent in the presence of God who comes to earth, choosing neither to be distant nor silent.

I remember when the Church of England bishops first discussed the Pastoral Principles being developed by the Pastoral Advisory Group. There was discussion around the principle of 'Silence' and how to present it because there was recognition that so often silence is destructive and yet at other times is deeply wise. Silence can enable us to listen more deeply, to notice and to be taken to the deep places within ourselves to explore and discover. It can also prevent or quench the metaphorical forest fire ignited by the spark of the tongue (James 3:5). Silence can also be life-destroying.

As a bishop I am aware that I have a platform of privilege to speak and communicate. It is also true that it is not an exclusive

platform as social media and digital communication allow anyone to say whatever they want, whether or not they are heard. And in the age of the sound bite, social media and quick reaction, each of us is faced each day with a choice of responding or staying silent. Either way people will make assumptions and draw conclusions.

Issues in national or church news around justice and equality such as gender violence, sexual abuse, racial justice, human sexuality, and matters of discrimination, all demand unequivocal messages regarding no one being diminished, and the need for change in institutional structures and culture. Words are required and so is action. So too is a silence which is humble, listens and refuses to add to the noise of darkness.

As we approach a very different Christmas yet celebrate the unchanging love of God revealed in the incarnation, it is not that God's action speaks louder than words, it is rather that in the action is The Word. Here is our God who comes to be with us through the mysterious act of the birth of a vulnerable child, pointing to the day when the silence of an empty tomb will speak of hope and light which will never be overcome by the darkness.

As I live this Christmas of 2020 which not only looks different from previous years but also sounds different, I will be reflecting more deeply on knowing how and when to use my voice in 2021 and when to be silent.





Association of English Cathedrals

5 h · 🌐



No words.

Repost from @roberto_a_manrique Words simply cannot describe the feeling you get standing under Ely's great Octagon Lantern Tower. Finished in 1342 after the catastrophic collapse of the previous Norman tower, its a marvel in medieval engineering and craftsmanship.



CHRISTMAS MUSIC

Name that Song

Can you identify these familiar
Christmas tunes by no more than their first few notes?



1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____
15. _____
16. _____
17. _____
18. _____

Silent Night



~Deryk

The first Christmas was
pretty simple.

It's okay if yours is too.



NATIVITY 2020

So children, the school Nativity play. We'll need three Shepherd?

Scuse me, Miss. Are they all in the same household?

Errrm not so much a household. They sit on the fields tending their sheep

Sanitized sheep?

Well, dipped I expect. The angels appear to them

Angels! How many Miss?

Well a 'Heavenly Host'

*Whoa whoa whoa Miss. They'll need manifestation in bubbles of six with
two metres between. Are they mixing?*

No, they're singing

Singing?!?! Projecting virus ridden breath? Near the shepherds?

At first, but the shepherds hurry away

I'm not surprised. They'll probably go and isolate

No. They go to find Mary and Joseph

So that's two households mixing?

No no. Mary and Joseph are in an Inn

Have they ordered a substantial meal?

No they are in the stable at the back with the baby Jesus

Ah! 'Track and Trace' app. Have the got a Smart Phone?

I don't know. Anyway, there's Mary, Joseph, baby Jesus and the Shepherds

OK. That's OK. I'm assuming this is tier 1 or 2. So nobody else!

Well then the three visitors from the East also come in?

What. Abroad? They'll need to isolate for two weeks. Who are these 'visitors'?

They are the three wise men

Wise? They sound utterly irresponsible to me!

No, they've come to worship baby on the day of his birth?

Worship?

Yes. It's Christmas. They're all celebrating the birth of Jesus.

*So this gathering is for a religious, charitable, benevolent and/or
philanthropic purposes by a charitably registered organisation and/or trust?*

Well... I suppose it is

Oh well, why didn't you say.

So, does that make it all ok?

Oh yes, yes, yes..... As long as they all wear face masks.

NSPCC
0808 800 5000
(24hrs)

National Domestic
Abuse Helpline
0808 2000 247
(24hrs free)

Mind
0300 123 3393
(Mon-Fri 9-6)

Victim Support
0808 168 9111
(24hrs)

Cruse Bereavement
0800 808 1677
(Mon-Fri 9-5)

ChildLine
0800 1111
(24hrs)

Action on Elder Abuse
0808 808 8141
(Mon-Fri 9-5)

Respect - Men's Advice Line
0808 801 0327
(Mon-Fri 9-5or8pm)

Samaritans
116 123
(24hrs free)

National Centre for Domestic
Violence
0207 186 8270

NEVER ALONE





Dear Santa,
That's not what I had in mind when
I asked you for a bottle of the most
popular alcohol of 2020



I am no cook. But I can follow the
directions. Which said to let the bird chill
in the sink for a few hours.



Please pray for the Bishop of Worcester. He had an accident while out cycling yesterday and has broken his leg. He is currently in hospital awaiting an operation and will obviously be out of action for a while.





Be still, my soul, and steadfast.
Earth and heaven both are still watching
though time is draining from the clock
and your walk, that was confident and quick,
has become slow.

So, be slow if you must, but let
the heart still play its true part.
Love still as once you loved, deeply
and without patience. Let God and the world
know you are grateful.
That the gift has been given.



'Support bubbles have been such an important part of this year.'

Gloria, in Excel sheets.

	A	B	C	D
1	gloria			
2	gloria	gloria	gloria	gloria
3	gloria	gloria	gloria	gloria
4	gloria	gloria	gloria	gloria
5	gloria	gloria	gloria	gloria
6	gloria	gloria	gloria	gloria
7	gloria	gloria	gloria	gloria
8	gloria	gloria	gloria	gloria
9	gloria	gloria	gloria	gloria
10	gloria	gloria	gloria	gloria
11	gloria	gloria	gloria	gloria
12	gloria	gloria	gloria	gloria
13	gloria	gloria	gloria	gloria
14	gloria	gloria	gloria	gloria
15	gloria	gloria	gloria	gloria
16	gloria	gloria	gloria	gloria
17	gloria	gloria	gloria	gloria
18	gloria	gloria	gloria	gloria

Gloria in Excel sheets

HOW TO COOK A TURKEY

- Step 1. Buy a turkey
- Step 2. Have a glass of wine
- Step 3. Stuff turkey
- Step 4. Have a glass of wine
- Step 5. Put turkey in oven
- Step 6. Relax and have a glass of wine
- Step 7. Turk the baste
- Step 8. Wine of glass another get
- Step 9. Hunt for meat thermometer
- Step 10. Glass yourself another pour of wine
- Step 11. Bake the wine for 4 hours
- Step 12. Take the oven out of the turkey
- Step 13. Tet the sable
- Step 14. Grab another wottle of bine
- Step 15. Turk the carvey!

Sir Cliff Richard: My faith has never been stronger

Sir Cliff Richard: My faith has never been stronger (premierchristianity.com)



As Sir Cliff turns 80 years young, he explains how God gave him the strength to forgive those who accused him of sexual assault Harry Rodger Webb, better known as Sir Cliff Richard, has sold more than 250 million records worldwide, making him one of the bestselling artists of all time. He has even equalled Elvis Presley's accomplishment of having a chart-topper in every decade from the 1950s to the 1990s. And his reputation as a man of faith also precedes him – he's arguably one of the most prominent Christians in the UK today.

I first met Cliff at a Christian event in the 1960s. He'd recently become a Christian and was there to share his testimony. I'd only just revived my own commitment to Christ and, as a member of the pop band The Settlers, I was finding it difficult to find a church where I wouldn't be recognised. I wanted to fade into the background, and Cliff's suggestion that I try St Paul's in north London was a welcome one. I went on to make lifelong friends there.

Later, when Cliff came to watch us perform a solo concert at the Royal Festival Hall, he asked us to get involved with a major venture he was planning – a gospel concert tour. We toured Sweden, Denmark and the former Yugoslavia – and then played three nights at

the Royal Albert Hall to raise money for a new charity, The Evangelical Alliance Relief Fund (later rebranded Tearfund). We also worked together on a six-part TV series where he played a guy who had three girlfriends – Una Stubbs, who wanted his money; me, who wanted to settle down and Lynda Marshall (who became Lynda La Plante) who just wanted the best for him. She got him in the end!

As the years went on, we collaborated more and more, and he became a close friend. Cliff was determined to use his fame to share his faith – and soon his fans became used to gospel songs featuring in his shows. The popular music magazine Melody Maker commented at the time: “Rock and roll and God work together well, in the hands of someone who loves them both.”

Right from when he first went public with his faith – sharing his testimony at a Billy Graham rally in 1964 – Cliff has had his detractors. People have accused him of being disingenuous – of using his faith to get publicity. As he would often point out, there are easier ways. He always presumed the press were expecting him to fall out of a club very drunk one evening. They’re still waiting.

Like anyone in the public eye, Sir Cliff has become accustomed to handling the media, but he was genuinely taken aback by the BBC’s decision to film a police raid on his home in 2014. Officers were responding to a claim of historical sexual assault, but the singer was never charged. Even now, he still struggles to comprehend the decision taken by the broadcaster’s executives, which led to helicopters circling above his home and journalists and photographers camping outside. He was appalled at the corporation’s response: an expression of regret for the hurt caused, but never an apology for broadcasting the raid). He told me: “The BBC only said the words: “Sorry [you] went through that, but we were doing our job’ What job? That’s not their job!”

Sir Cliff went on to win his privacy case at the high court and was awarded the highest level of general damages in any case of its kind. But these events have clearly scarred the singer, and we spoke at length about the hurt he experienced, as well as how God helped him to forgive. In spite of – or perhaps because of – the turmoil that has sometimes surrounded him, he tells me his faith has continued to grow stronger.

How does it feel to be 80?

It feels no different to being 79, to be honest with you. It's a huge number, but I don't feel it weighing me down. Sometimes, even the thought of ageing upsets people. I remember when Cilla [Black] was going to be 70, and she kept saying to me in Barbados: "I don't want to be 70, I can't do it."

And if you have an attitude about age, the danger is that it could damage your sights on life. You've just got to live and enjoy it. And even if you're not physically able to do too much, do what you can, and do it with people who are the same standard as you. I play tennis mostly with people at the same standard, so we have fun, but none of us are gonna win Wimbledon.



I remember when we first got together and toured and did all those gospel concerts to raise money for Tearfund, which was a brand-new charity back then. Would you ever think of doing anything like that again?

Yeah, I would, but I went through a period where I thought: You know, someone else has got to do this. At that stage, we were all a heck of a lot younger. I met you, because you were with The Settlers and were willing to do charity shows because you were a believer. But no one seems to be coming through at the moment.

When I started to do gospel concerts on my own, I made sure that the public knew that I wouldn't be singing 'Congratulations'. And I explained I wanted to spend the evening with them to sing to them about things that could change their life. I did play 'Devil woman', because I got a letter from a woman in Australia. She said: "My friend wanted to have a séance, and I was thinking the Bible says 'don't get involved, it's dangerous', so I gave my friend your 'Devil woman' record." The friend wrote back saying: "I've heeded the warning in the

lyrics and I'm not going."

So for me, it was encouraging to think that a pop record could actually help someone. Nobody converts anybody else. God does all that. But if you can put a seed in there, because of the way you speak, or the story you tell, it can touch someone.

Do you have a favourite gospel song?

Well, funnily enough I've done a gospel song on the new album [The Air That I Breathe] with Sheila Walsh. We used to do gospel concerts and some charity work together. Her producer got in touch and said Sheila would like you to sing a duet. They sent me the demo and it sounded like a brand-new gospel song. Turns out, it's an old hymn written in the 1700s. And it's just the most wonderful song: 'It is well with my soul'. I looked it up and discovered the guy who wrote it was a minister, and his four daughters and wife got on a boat and they sailed off and he never saw them again. They drowned. And for me, you know, I think faith can get you through almost everything. But for him to be able to later put pen to paper...I don't know how he wrote it – to write a song like 'It is well with my soul' having gone through that terrible loss. So now when I'm listening to it, I constantly think about what this man went through and how his faith got him through. And in a way, my faith got me through the worst years of my life, too.

Whether it was the false accusations of sexual assault, or the BBC broadcasting the police raid on your home live on TV, do you ever wonder: Where was God in all of that?

It's really strange how people say they don't believe in God, but then if something bad happens, they immediately ask: "How can God allow this to happen?" So they're actually arguing with somebody they don't believe exists! But for me, he has always been there. And when this thing [the accusations] happened, it was absolutely soul-destroying, because I couldn't imagine that somebody would make up a story that could have killed me.

I was in my house in Portugal with a group of friends two days after the news broke. That morning, my legs gave way and I fell on the floor, weeping. My friend John came in and asked what I was doing. I said: "I feel like I'm in a deep hole and I don't know that I'm going to get out." So he knelt beside me and said: "Did you do this?" I said: "No." He said: "Have you ever done anything like this?" I said:

“Absolutely not.” He said: “I believe you. You know you didn’t do it. And what’s more, God knows you didn’t do this. Stand up. You can get through this.” And that began to make me feel stronger, although it was still the most horrible four years. But I felt that God was alongside me.

I had loads of people come to visit me, and all my friends came and kept me calm during the day. But in the end, when you’re lying in your bed and nobody is there, I would talk to God. I talked to God so much, he must have got so bored! But to me, those prayers were vital for me surviving those years. I never felt devoid of God.

How did you manage to forgive your accuser?

I woke up in the middle of the night at 3:15am – about three days after I’d fallen down and got up again. I started praying for family, friends, people who are sick, everybody. And, in the end it was just a matter of me realising that I needed to do something. Because even in the first three days, there was this hate and I was getting frustrated – Who is this guy? And I began to hate him. And so I just said to God: “I would like to forgive him.” And then I said: “I forgive him.” And I felt OK.



In the end, forgiveness is more about you than the person who wronged you. I don’t even know this man’s name. He doesn’t know that I’ve forgiven him. I simply started making up reasons. And one of them was: maybe he has got a child that’s so sick he can’t afford to get them to America where there’s a surgeon that could cure her. And then I thought: If that’s the reason, I can forgive him, because he’s trying to do good for somebody else.

I still to this day can’t believe how people survive these bad things without having that other being – that we can’t even describe, really.

We say in the Lord’s Prayer, “forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us”, and we say that quite glibly sometimes, but you were put in that position and that must have been a big step.

Yes, and that's why I feel that my Christian faith grew because of those four years. I don't want to go through it again, but if I had to, I would deal with it in exactly the same way. It's impossible for me now, looking back, to have gone through that without the knowledge that God was there, and that he loved me. When I say God loves me, we should have another word for it really. I love the skin of custard. To use the same word to say "God loves me" – I just think there has to be another word! But we don't have enough language to accommodate God's love for us.

I came into the courtroom one day and sat with you. And I remember being led to give you the words to Psalm 40.

Yes, I remember. That verse was about being lifted out of the mire and the pit. And I felt I was in a pit I couldn't get out of. I understood 'mire' as being stuck. And then it said that God lifts you up out of the mire and places your foot on a rock. And you think: Oh, yeah, I can relate to that. Absolutely.

Were you aware of Christians praying for you during that time?

Oh yes, I was. I've had friends and family praying for me constantly and it's just fantastic for me. I think that's a real honour to have people that care for you that much.

There's nobody who doesn't need prayer. Sometimes people think praying is about: "I want a number one record." But praying is taking somebody you care for and placing them in God's care. The funny thing is you have to get used to the fact that God doesn't answer everything the way you'd want him to – otherwise I would be number one every day in the charts!



There's a line in your song 'Rise Up' that says: "The clouds were darkest / I could not see the end of it / But something inside of me never learned to quit." Would you say that sums you up?

Terry Britten has known me for 40 years and he wrote that lyric for me. It was wonderful to be able to sing it. "Rise up, they're never going to keep me down. They're never gonna break me down." In the end, I proved to them, the police and the BBC, that they couldn't break me down.

I'm not quite sure why both of them did what they did, because at the court case, towards the end, the superintendent of the South Yorkshire Police, who was in charge at the time when that accusation came, said words to the effect of: "I'm not sure what we're doing here. A very confused man came in. He said he was 13 when he was abused but didn't know which football pitch it happened at. Didn't know what year it happened."

And I thought: Yeah, what are we doing here? How could you follow an accusation from someone who doesn't even know when their 13th birthday was? The one thing that still confuses me is, having put me through four years of the most unbelievable emotional torture, not a single head rolled at the BBC. Two of them have been promoted. But the fact we put them in their place means that they'll have to think very hard if they ever do this again.

Have you been able to forgive the BBC?

Yes. I'm happy to forgive them and get on with my life. In fact, when the court case ended, I did not punch the air. Gloria Hunniford said my body language didn't change at all. All I could feel was relief. I'm past it, but I'm never going to get over it.

What's your favourite Bible passage?

I think it's Philippians 4:13. It's the one that says: "I can do all things in him who strengthens me" [RSV]. In other words, we are all capable of doing just about anything. But if we want to do something really well, it has to come from this other source of strength.

Your autobiography has just been released and it is called *The Dreamer*. Where did the title come from?

I used to dream about being Elvis and I started having a career that was like his. I didn't even know I was going to be 50 years old, let alone 80 and have a 62-year-long career, so it's masses of dreams all coming true.

To hear the full interview listen to Premier Christian Radio at 8pm on Saturday 9 January or download [The Profile podcast](#)

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...

We may not be able to be together as planned this [#Christmas](#) ☀️ or enjoy singing our favourite carols in church, but in this video we have brought together people from all over the diocese! vimeo.com/492202889
[@churchofengland](#) [#ComfortAndJoy](#)
[@bbchw](#) [@worcesternews](#)
[@WorcCathedral](#)

 Vimeo



NOT EVERYTHING IS CANCELLED...

sunshine is not cancelled
love is not cancelled
relationships are not cancelled
reading is not cancelled
naps are not cancelled
going for a walk is not cancelled
kindness is not cancelled
imagination is not cancelled
conversations are not cancelled
HOPE is not cancelled



A Brontësauros

Heathcliff!
Heathcliff!



"Everything is cancelled."

"Love isn't cancelled,"
said the horse. x

MARY, EXHAUSTED,
HAVING JUST
GOTTEN JESUS
TO SLEEP, IS
APPROACHED BY
A YOUNG MAN
WHO THINKS TO
HIMSELF; WHAT
THIS GIRL NEEDS
IS A DRUM SOLO

Be Festive



Wherever you are this Christmas, may it be the Holy Land for you...for us, it's Sheffield as told in Simon Armitage's poem (thanks Col)...

The Holy Land

Christ was born under Tinsley Viaduct –
why not? –
the Leopold being overbooked.

They dipped him in the silver waters
of the Don
until his little hands were forks.

Magi brought gifts from as far away
as Carnaby
and Goole: hair straighteners,

a replica Louis Vuitton man-bag, a two-piece
snooker cue.

Herod's henchmen sought him out,

hoodies from Bethlehem, PA, but hidden
in a battered
velvet-lined guitar case our Saviour slept.

In his teenage years he underachieved
but showed
promise in team sports, especially lacrosse.

Pointing to the seven hills he proclaimed:
'There shall I
picnic, there shall I BMX, preach,

sip Special Brew at dusk, find a cure
for cancer
of the lung, walk the dog, and there

on a goalpost shall they nail-gun my palms
and feet.'
He asked us, 'Who is your Lord? Who's

the big fella around here? Into whose arms
shall you turn?'
We answered, 'Thee. Thou. Thine.'

Heavenly Father,

May our Christmas season be
A time of reconciliation and
peace

May the love of Christ be with us
May His Peace surround us.

May our Christmas be a time
Of healing, giving and sharing
May Your spirit be with us
As we share and care in Jesus'
blessed birth,
Amen!

Read the full prayer @ christianstl.com