

Number 44  
October 2026

# ALCUII NEWS

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM SAINT ALCUIN OF YORK  
THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND CHAPLAINCY IN TOURAINE



See Pages 4 and 5

**Confirm, O Lord, your servants  
with your Holy Spirit. Amen.**

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## WHO'S WHO

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## HEROES OF THE FAITH

### Richard Hooker

#### Anglican Apologist

**B**orn in Heavitree in Exeter in about 1554, Richard Hooker came under the influence of John Jewel, Bishop of Salisbury, in his formative years and through that influence went up to Corpus Christi College, Oxford, where he became a fellow. He was ordained and then married, becoming a parish priest and, in 1585, Master of the Temple in London. Richard became one of the strongest advocates of the position of the Church of England and defended its 'middle way' between puritanism and papalism. Perhaps his greatest work was *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* which he wrote as the result of engaging in controversial debates. He showed Anglicanism as rooted firmly in Scripture as well as tradition, affirming its continuity with the pre-Reformation Ecclesia Anglicana, but now both catholic and reformed. Richard became a parish priest again near Canterbury and died there on 3rd November 1600.

## FR JOHN WRITES



**T**HE CHURCH OF ENGLAND HAS A NUMBER OF LEVELS OF GOVERNANCE. These range from local Church Councils to the national body, the General Synod, taking in Deanery Synods (Archdeaconry Synods in the Diocese of Europe) and Diocesan Synods on the way.

Among the measures which General Synod members approved at its recent meeting in July was a new festival: the Festival of Creation in Christ. This is to be celebrated on the first Sunday in September each year. The date has been chosen to coincide with the start of the new ecumenical Season of Creation which runs from 1st September to 4th October, the festival of St Francis of Assisi.

This season affirms that we believe that God created the earth and has given human beings a particular responsibility to care for his creation. We believe, too, that the nature and climate crises show how people have failed to carry out this responsibility.

Christians are called to recognise that we have contributed to the harm caused to the world and to turn away from actions which damage God's creation. We are also called to remain hopeful and to take action to protect and care for the environment.

Responding to the environmental crises is a way to:

- **worship God**—we honour God when we care for creation
- **work for justice**—climate change hits the poorest countries and poorest people of the world hardest
- **show love for neighbours**—locally and globally.

'To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth' is one of the Five Marks of Mission of the Anglican Communion. May it also be a mark of our mission at St Alcuin's.

*Fr John*

## AT THE HEART OF OUR LIFE



### SUNG EUCHARIST with Junior Church

**11.00 am**  
**on the 4th Sunday of the Month**  
**in the Parish Church of St Michel**  
**Savigny-en-Véron**

## CROSSWORD ANSWERS

**ACROSS:** 1. Compose 5. Would  
9. Offender 10. That 11. Acted  
12. Among 15. Brutal 16. Openly  
18. Spies 20. Gives 23. King  
24. Disloyal 25. Lying 26. Adhered

**DOWN:** 2. Officers 3. Present 4. Side  
6. Often 7. Lead 8. Crimson  
13. Already 14. Alienate 17. Episode  
19. Pagan 21. City 22. Used

## THE ST ALCUIN CALENDAR

### *Our worship in the coming months*

|                |                                                    |                 |                       |
|----------------|----------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| August 23rd    | <i>Trinity 12</i>                                  | <b>11.00 am</b> | <b>Sung Eucharist</b> |
| September 27th | <i>Harvest Thanksgiving</i>                        | <b>11.00 am</b> | <b>Sung Eucharist</b> |
| October 25th   | <i>Bible Sunday</i><br><i>(Last after Trinity)</i> | <b>11.00 am</b> | <b>Sung Eucharist</b> |
| November 22nd  | <i>Christ the King</i>                             | <b>11.00 am</b> | <b>Sung Eucharist</b> |

# Sing of the Lord's Goodness



## HARVEST FESTIVAL

11.00 am  
Sunday 27th September

Church of Saint Michel  
Savigny-en-Véron

Thanking God for his gifts  
Sharing God's gifts with others  
Praying for God's planet  
Committing ourselves to caring  
for it

## The Earth is the Lord's and All that is in It

Psalm 24.1

**H**ARVEST FESTIVALS HAVE BEEN POPULAR EVER SINCE THEY WERE CONCEIVED IN THE MID-NINETEENTH CENTURY. They were first celebrated alongside the other festivals of the Agricultural Year: Plough Sunday, Rogation Sunday and Lammas.

The service itself followed the theme of thanksgiving, often expressed through gifts of home-grown produce being given to the poor of the parish. The evening before there might have been a Harvest Supper: a churchy version of the traditional Harvest Home. Sadly, the traditional commemorations went into decline.

The rationale of Harvest Festivals is that if farmers work hard, God will do the rest: the grain is 'fed and watered by God's almighty hand'.



We are now, thankfully, more aware of the fragility of God's beautiful planet. Responding to God's goodness with a packet of spaghetti and a tin of peas is

just not enough. Our response needs to be firmly grounded in the realisation that, as Christians, we have a duty to care for God's creation. That we are stewards of God's bounty and must do all we can to protect it.

Our response to God's goodness in giving us such a home to live in needs to be expressed in our lifestyle all year round and not just on one autumn Sunday.

May God give us such humble thankful hearts.

## Traditional Celebrations of the Agricultural Year

*(information taken from Common Worship)*

### PLOUGH SUNDAY

The observance of Plough Sunday on the First Sunday of Epiphany goes back to Victorian times, but behind it there is a much older observance, associated with the first working day after the twelve days of Christmas, hence 'Plough Monday' in some places. In mediaeval times some ploughs were kept in the parish church, and some churches kept a 'plough-light'. In days when work was scarce in winter, the observance looked forward to the time of sowing with the promise of a harvest to come.

### ROGATION SUNDAY

Rogation Days (from the Latin *rogare*, 'to ask') are the three weekdays before Ascension Day. However, in practice, many churches have observed Rogation on the preceding Sunday. The Prayer

Book Gospel includes the words of Jesus, 'Whatever ye shall ask for in my Name, he will give it you' – words associated with the heavenly intercession of the ascended Christ.

The Christian observance of Rogation was taken over from Graeco-Roman religion, where an annual procession invoked divine favour to protect crops against mildew. The tradition grew of using processional litanies, often around the parish boundaries, for the blessing of the land. These processions concluded with a mass. The poet George Herbert interpreted the procession as a means of asking for God's blessing on the land, of preserving boundaries, of encouraging fellowship between neighbours with the reconciling of differences, and of

charitable giving to the poor. In more recent times, the scope of Rogation has been widened to include petition for the world of work and for accountable stewardship, and prayer for local communities, whether rural or urban.

### LAMMAS

Lammas or 'Loaf-mass' (derived from the Anglo-Saxon *Hlafmaesse*) is an English feast in origin, held on 1st August as a thanksgiving for the first-fruits of the wheat harvest. Traditionally, a newly baked loaf from the wheat harvest was presented before God within the mass of that day. While the ceremony ceased at the Reformation, reference to Lammas Day continued in the Prayer Book calendar, and the practice has been revived in some places in recent years.

*Let your Holy Spirit rest upon them:  
the Spirit of wisdom and understanding;  
the Spirit of counsel and inward strength;  
the Spirit of knowledge and true godliness;  
and let their delight be in the fear of the Lord.*

## Sealed by the Spirit

**T**HE BIG DAY HAD ARRIVED AND WITH IT THE EARLY STAGES OF THE SWELTERING TEMPERATURES THAT WE HAVE GOT USED TO THIS SUMMER. It was mid-June and we were delighted to be welcoming Bishop Andrew Norman, the Suffragan Bishop of Europe, to St Alcuin's to confirm a number of our people. Our candidates, although most of them were young, ranged in age from James, nearly twelve years old, to Stanley, ninety-one years young.

The Confirmation took place at the end of the first day of a pastoral visit by the bishop and the Archdeacon of France, the Ven Peter Hooper, to the Deanery of North-West France, one of the four Church of England deaneries in this country.

It was a great pleasure for us to have them both at St Alcuin's: the archdeacon as an old friend, the bishop paying his first visit to us.

Bishop Andrew had clearly prepared himself carefully, finding out as much as possible about us and especially the candidates he was to confirm.

That care continued when he arrived, a full hour before the service was set to start. He spent the time getting to know them and then going through the service in detail so that they benefit as much as possible most from it.

Special care was shown to Stanley. As he cannot hear or see too well, he had a one-to-one mentor in Andrew Staley, who guided him through the service. This way he was able to respond confidently and clearly to the questions he would be asked.

In addition, although Stanley was certain that he had been baptised as a baby, he no longer had a record of this. So Bishop Andrew baptised him conditionally before he was confirmed.

The Rite of Confirmation is very rich in symbolism and, like all sacraments, not only includes the candidates making affirmations to God but also receiving a spiritual gift from God in return.

Now it was time for us to listen to the word of God: scripture readings specially chosen by the bishop for the occasion. These were followed by the bishop's homily, in which a cat called Dorcas featured prominently!



Renewing Baptismal Vows

It comes as no surprise that, at a Confirmation as at any other Eucharist, the homily is followed by the Creed. But there the similarity ends.

The Creed—the Affirmation of Faith—generally used at the Eucharist is the one which had its origins in the Council of Nicaea, held in 325AD. This is the great affirmation that Jesus is truly God and truly human. At celebrations of Baptism and Confirmation this is replaced by the Apostles' Creed, which has always been associated with Christian Initiation.

Confirmation is very closely linked to Baptism. We demonstrated this by the candidates and clergy moving to the baptistery.

Once squeezed into that very tight space, they could affirm their Christian belief, which we all shared with them.

The liturgy began with the formal introduction of the candidates to the gathered assembly, when they were invited to affirm publicly that they wanted to receive the sacrament. No problems there.

Very wisely, for this and for the later occasion when they were called to stand at the front, the bishop asked the candidates to stand in an arc so that both he and everybody else could see them at the same time.

Now the time had come for Stanley to receive his conditional baptism. The rest of the candidates then made the sign of the cross on their foreheads with baptismal water to acknowledge that they are among the company of the baptised.

Now the moment of Confirmation had arrived: the moment for which the candidates had prepared so carefully. So the group returned to the front of the church.

We had reached the heart of the matter and the actions—actions rather than words—which mark the core of the rite.

First the bishop prayed over all the confirmands together that they may **receive the gift of the Holy Spirit**. Then, one by one, he **laid his hands** on them, followed by **anointing** them with holy oil, to represent the fact that God had chosen them, each one of them, individually, by name.

It was no surprise that this was followed by thunderous applause for the newly-confirmed.

For those of us who were confirmed a long time ago, one thing seemed to be

lacking: that the service did not include the First Communion of the newly-confirmed.

That link was broken many, many years ago. Fr John has been practising Com-

share Holy Communion from the age of eight and all of the young people just confirmed had taken up the option. It was only Stanley who approached the altar to receive the Body of Christ for the first time.

**Defend, O Lord, your servants Emily, James, Louis, Madeleine, Olivia, Sam and Stanley, with your heavenly grace, that they may continue yours for ever, and daily increase in your Holy Spirit more and more until they come to your everlasting kingdom. Amen.**

This separation has resulted in the enhancement of true meaning of Confirmation, the gift of the Holy Spirit, rather than it being seen as a gateway to Holy Communion.

But, the service ended, after a successful photo call came disaster. It was time to bring out the gooey chocolate cake specially baked for the occasion. Unfortunately, even the subdued temperature inside the church was too much for the congratulatory plaque which went with it. Luckily, the cake itself still tasted good. And it did nothing to spoil what everyone agreed had been a most inspiring evening.

munion before Confirmation since 1981, when he became vicar of a parish which was taking part in a national experiment. He likes to think that no one in the Church of England still in active ministry has been doing it for so long.

At St Alcuin's young people are invited to



### A MESSAGE FROM BISHOP ANDREW



I much enjoyed my visit to St Alcuin's, in the midst of last month's heatwave. I was grateful for the chance to get to know you all better. And, as ever, coming alongside the confirmation candidates was greatly encouraging, all the more so with their contrasting ages!

Please be assured of my continued prayers.

Kind regards,

+ Andrew

# Actions Speaking Louder

**W**HEN WE THINK OF A CHURCH SERVICE, OUR MINDS INEVITABLY TURN TO WORDS: WORDS WE HEAR, WORDS WE SPEAK, WORDS WE SING. But that is only part of the worship experience and perhaps not always the more important part. Of course, the reading of scripture sets the tone – but the other words?

The most important gathering of Christians, following our Lord's command, is the Eucharist. Eating and drinking are at the core of this: physical, as well as spiritual, nourishment. The words which are said whilst we do so are incidental, just signifying what is being done. It is the same with the other great sacrament, baptism. We become part of the Church family by having water poured over us: all Churches do this, but the formula varies between Eastern and Western Churches, for example.

These are not the only actions which have biblical foundations. St Paul ends several of the letters he wrote to Christian communities (e.g. 1 Corinthians 16.20) with the words "Greet one another with a holy kiss." This would have been done during the service.

Scripture also attests to ordination and other commis-

sioning being accompanied by the laying on of hands. When the Act of the Apostles records the selection of seven deacons it says, "They had these men stand before the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them." (Acts 6.6)

Anointing, too, goes back to bible times. St James, in his epistle says, "Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray

over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord." (James 5.14)

The use of oil in commissioning goes right back to the start of the Hebrew monarchy, when God tells Samuel "you shall anoint him [Saul] to be ruler over my people." (1 Samuel 9.16)

And, supremely, the title we Christians give to Jesus, 'Christ', comes from the Greek for 'anointed one'.

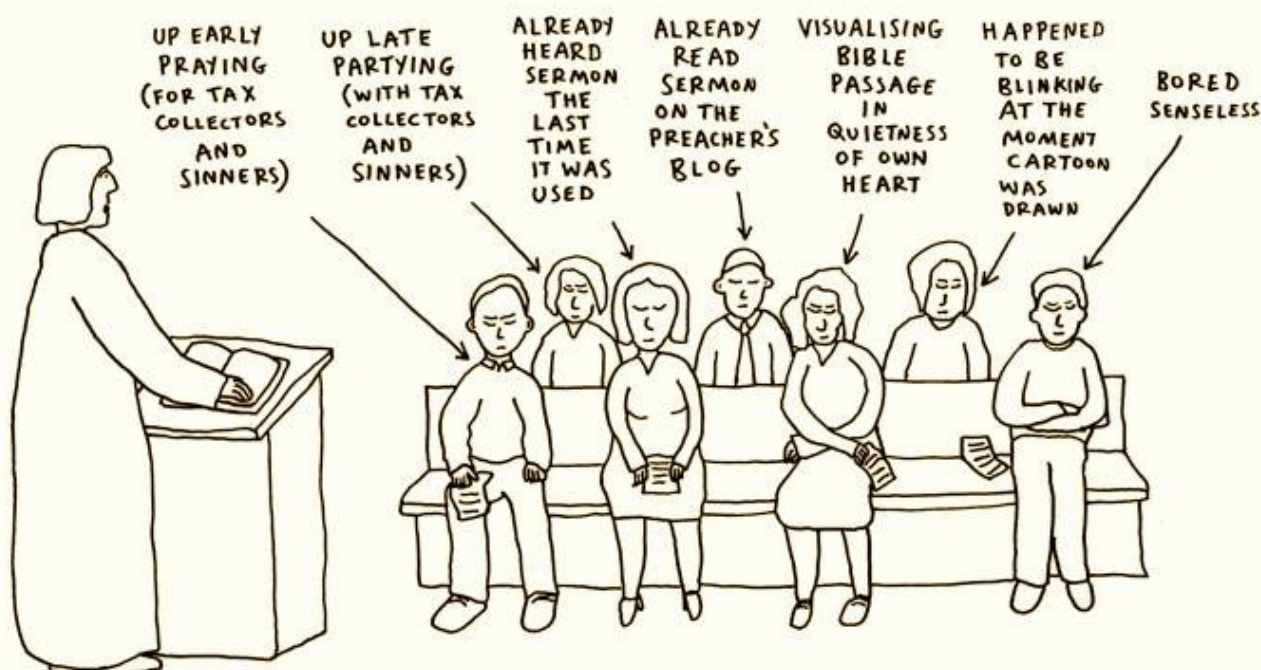
Much of the symbolism used by the early Church—such as water, bread, wine and the laying on of hands—has never been lost. But the re-discovery in the twentieth century of other actions, like the Kiss of Peace and the use of holy oils have brought new blessing to the Church.

They remind us that we offer God our bodies as well as our souls in his service: that our bodies, made in God's image, are holy, too,



## THE SERMON

PEOPLE MAY HAVE THEIR EYES CLOSED FOR A NUMBER OF REASONS



# A Spy Story for You to Solve

Read this spy story and try to find the missing words (replaced by a reference in brackets), then enter them in the grid. Finally, place the circled letters in the right order to give you the name of the character.



Many who knew who knew this young woman denounced her as an undesirable person. Men, especially, were (6D) in her home, where talk was mostly about the threatened invasion of their land by the Israelites. It was feared the old city of Jericho, in which she lived, (5A) shortly be attacked.

Joshua, a man appointed to (7D) the Hebrew people in battle, sent two (18A) to 'look over the land, especially Jericho'. On their arrival in the city, they lodged with the woman of ill-repute. And as she talked (16A) with them, she made known her faith in the one true God. She chose to (14D) herself from those in her own society; a (24A) act in their eyes.

When the (23A) heard (10A) the two visitors were spies, he sent officers to the woman's house, with an order to arrest the men. But she had (13D) decided that loyalty to her new-found God came first. Before the (2D) arrived, she hid the spies under stalks of flax on the roof of her house. And when questioned as to their whereabouts, she was able to (1A) herself, and found (25A) to the officers most convenient.

"Yes, the men came to me," she said, "but I did not know where they had come from. At dusk, when it was time to close the (21D) gate, the men left." The pursuers believed her story, for she (11A) her part well. She knew, beyond doubt, that such treachery, if discovered, would mean death to the (9A). Yet this (17D) in her life was to be (22D) by God.

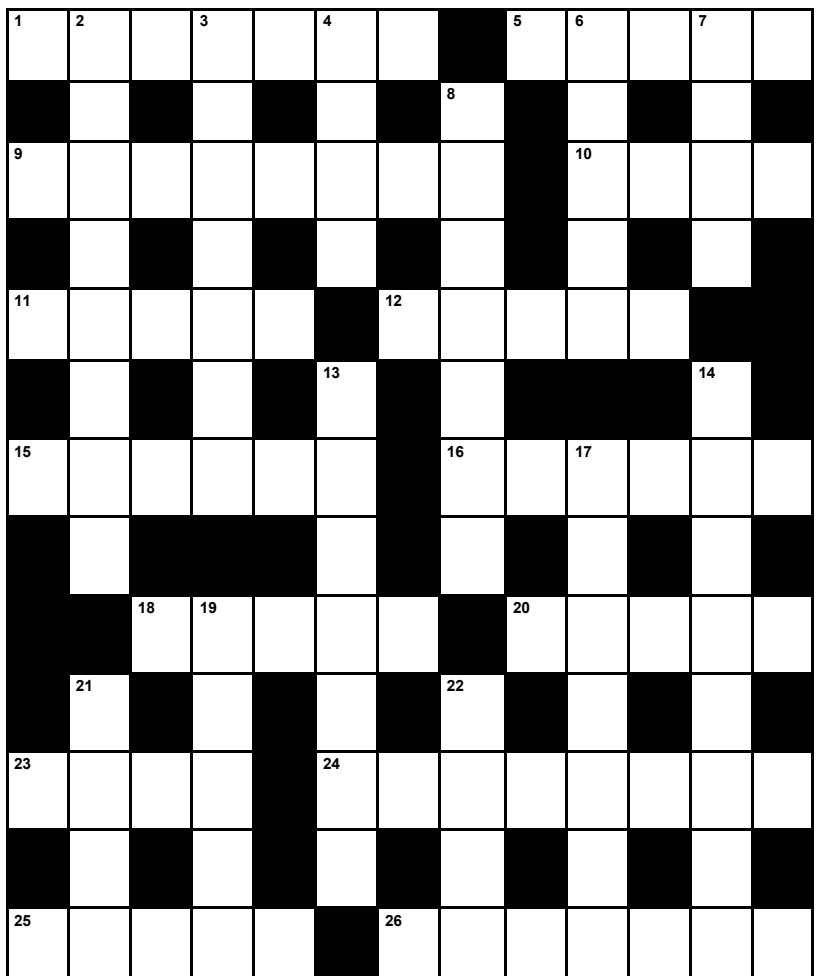
Before nightfall, she drew the spies to one (4D) and told of her fears during the coming attack on Jericho. But the men assured her she would be treated kindly 'when the Lord (20A) this land'.

She later lowered them by a rope through the window and they escaped over the city wall. But not before they had promised that if a (8D) cord was hung in her window, she and her family living in the house would be saved when Jericho fell.

After the Israelites had crossed the River Jordan, they were soon outside the city. And as they

marched around the wall, at first silently, then to the sound of trumpets and shouting, the wall collapsed and Jericho was invaded. The only survivors (12A) the city's inhabitants, following the (15A) attack, were the woman and her family. Having (26A) to the conditions set down by the two spies, they were rescued and taken to a place of safety.

**Solution on Page 2**



# Relaxing in the Summer Sunshine



**A**LTHOUGH PERHAPS NOT QUITE AS HOT AS SOME OTHER DAYS THIS SUMMER, it was certainly very warm for our annual picnic in the park at Savigny, held, as usual, after our Eucharist in June. As ever, the “oldies” enjoyed a time of good conversation around the table, whilst the younger ones found a shady corner to chill out. Perfect!

## And Finally . . .

Fr John writes

**I**T IS WITH GREAT SADNESS THAT WE HAVE TO ANNOUNCE THAT THIS IS LIKELY TO BE THE LAST ISSUE OF ALCUINEWS, AT LEAST FOR THE TIME BEING. This is not because of any local issue, but arises from the decision of Microsoft to withdraw the software, Microsoft Publisher. We use this, not only for this newsletter, but also for our service sheets, weekly Acts of Worship and other publications.

Ours is not an uncommon situation. Postings on social media show that many Churches will be put in difficulty by this decision. At the moment there seems little chance of finding a replacement, despite Microsoft suggesting that other products of theirs—such as Word—can achieve similar results. My one attempt so far at an Order of Service using Microsoft Word can only be described as an utter disaster.

It has always been a delight for us at St Alcuin's to share our news and we are thankful for how well received the newsletter has been. Thank you to those who have said so.

Much of the material has been “home grown”, some has been syndicated publicly available material and we have also been delighted to publish material written especially for us, including articles by two bishops.



Perhaps one of the most significant reports we carried was as long ago as 2016. It was an eye witness account of life in a refugee camp on the Greek island of Lesbos.

That edition was published at the time a Synod of the Archdeaconry of France was meeting in Brittany, so the oppor-

tunity was taken to distribute some copies there.

Much of the space, of course, has been devoted to news of ourselves, particularly of special events: our official inauguration by Bishop David in 2016, the great number of First Communions just three years ago and, of course, the wonderful Confirmation presided over by Bishop Andrew in June, which you will find in this issue (see pages 4 and 5).

We hope that this will be ‘au revoir’, rather than ‘adieu’, and that we will soon find a product which will fill the gaping hole left by the demise of Microsoft Publisher.

In the meantime, thank you for being such a loyal readership and taking such an interest in our small community.

Please remember us in your prayers as we shall hold you in ours.