

Chaplain's Blog - Star date June 2016

This month:

- **Annual Reader's Day**
- **Jasper, Tolstoy, Molly and other works of creation,**
- **Book of the Month & Book of the Week.**
- **Selection Conference for New Readers**
- **The Diocesan Website and the Quest for Safeguarding Courses**
- **Job Descriptions**

The Annual Reader's Day

It was great to see so many Readers in Bodmin and to catch up on News as well as getting some excellent input from the main speakers. Simon Cade gave us much to think about and some helpful ideas for Sermon Content. Bishop Chris was as thought provoking as ever but Richard Hopper said a small thing at the end of his environment talk.

"Jasper was just a cat" '(but a wonderful example of God's creation),' was one of the lines that struck me in Richard Hopper's fascinating input for the Reader's Day in Bodmin. More of the day at the end but for now my thoughts are on Jasper and other works of God's creation, who we steward, love and grieve for terribly when we lose them. Reader, Martin Smith posted in Facebook about the death of one of their horses and the loss they felt. For my part I will introduce you to Tolstoy the tortoise whose picture is below. Tolstoy was owned by my wife's mother and has always been part of our house living through five decades with us and goodness knows how long before then. He was a cantankerous individual who would stubbornly bash doors until someone opened them, creep up on the sleeping dog to bite his paw or nip the end of your toe when gardening. Each spring he would live in the conservatory, frustrated at not being allowed in the garden and then he would be granted the freedom of the lawns. He was a way of life and marked the passage of time. Sadly Tolstoy could not swim and drowned after a mountaineering exercise to get to the garden pond while we were out. The family grief was greater than it was for my mother's departure some six months previously and my wife found it hard to enjoy her gardening for the rest of the year. God's creation is a wonderful thing – if only we felt the same attachment to all of it – perhaps we would care for our planet better. Jasper was not just a cat in the same way that Tolstoy was not just a tortoise or Molly was not just a horse... For us pet lovers they hold a hint to creation and God's love for us.



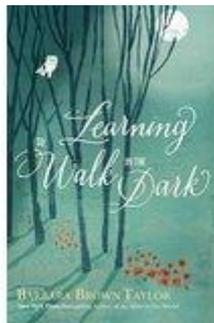
Tolstoy emerging in Spring : the garden is not the same without him!

Thanks to Carrie for all her hard work in doing the admin for the day! I think the feedback sheets will make interesting reading in helping to formulate next year's programme.

Feel Free to suggest a tome.... or lend me one!

One of the biggest effects of being involved in Reader Training is the motivation to read to keep up- so amongst this month's library additions were these:

The book of last month: 'Learning to Walk in the Dark' Barbara Brown Taylor. (2014)



Available 2nd Hand on Amazon for around £7

I borrowed this one from Dr Becca Greenough one of our readers in training after a conversation we had about spirituality. I always think I have no right to complain about my own 'walking in the darkness' or 'heavy twilight' when I am not battling with family breakup, terminal illness or pending homelessness. All things, incidentally that our ministers, both lay and ordained are facing or might face here in Cornwall. I was hoping to write a few pithy quotes to grab your attention it in the end choosing a quote seemed to be doing Brown-Taylor's writing a disservice. Having read the book, some of it twice, I am learning far more from my sojourns in dark places. Worth reading if you suffer trying to make sense of the dark times in the glow of what BBT calls 'Full-Solar Christianity.'

Book of Last Week: My Amazon treat was Marcus J. Borg's only (I think) novel among all his theology books. "Putting Away Childish Things: A Novel of Modern Faith." For £1.15 plus post and packing, it was a wonderful buy! So much to think about written in a style which had me carting it around looking for moments when I could sit and read a bit more! It would certainly be an excellent book to give to someone exploring faith which I guess as Readers / LLMs is most of us!



Safeguarding & the Diocesan Website

“But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold”. Job 23:10 (KJV)

Most of you have probably now done the LLO Lay Leadership & Ordained course but I still get asked about when the courses are being run occasionally. I always head for the diocesan website because I know it is up there somewhere.

For safeguarding information- don't try searching for “Safeguarding Courses” – it will bring up a blank, BUT..... if you just type “Safeguarding” and then “Read More” under one of the articles that appears it mystically opens up another index page with courses and all sorts of useful documents on it. I just tried again this morning browsing the website I discovered that if you go to “Readers” under the “All Users” bit at the bottom of the home page there is a link to “View This Resource.” There I found the Reader's Handbook and my May blog!

Does anyone else find the new Diocesan website layout as tricky as I do.... or am I just getting old? I just want to be able to type what I want in the search bar and for it to pop up!

The screenshot shows the Diocese of Truro website. At the top, there is a search bar and a navigation menu with links: ABOUT US, LIFE EVENTS, WHAT'S ON, SCHOOLS, FAITH, DOCUMENTS, CONTACT. Below the menu is the 'INFORMATION AREA' header. On the left, there is a sidebar with 'AUDIENCE...' and links for All users, Church House, Education, Ministry, and Parish Officers. The main content area is titled 'READERS' and includes a 'Back to listing' link. The 'READERS' section contains a list of resources with descriptions and buttons for 'DOWNLOAD' or 'VISIT':

- Readers' Handbook** (PDF icon) - DOWNLOAD
- CRC Readers' Forum** - VISIT
- Central Readers' Council** - VISIT
- The Reader** - VISIT
Read the latest edition of the The Reader magazine
- Who or What is a Reader?** (PDF icon) - DOWNLOAD
- Reader Ministry Team** (PDF icon) - DOWNLOAD
Readers are lay people in the Church of England, from all walks of life, who are called by God, and theologically trained and licensed by the Church to preach, teach, lead worship and assist in pastoral, evangelistic and liturgical work. To contact the Reader Ministry Team please use this resource.
- Reader Chaplain Blog** (PDF icon) - DOWNLOAD
Reader Chaplain Jim Seth produces an occasional news sheet for Readers.



Chris Kingshott sent me the "CHAPLAIN TO THE READERS Job Description"

It reads as follows:

- To pray daily for the Readers of Diocese
- To encourage a deepening of each Reader`s prayer life and personal relationship with God
- To offer confidential support to the Readers and to respond, as appropriate, to Readers` needs for pastoral care
- To communicate with deanery representatives on a regular basis
- To be involved in supporting the Ministry of Readers in other ways as deemed appropriate

It does not say anything about sending out a blog or sharing a cup of coffee but I am sure it is in the sub-text! Is there anything else missing?

I could add:

- Support Readers in Training including representing Readers on the Selection Panel.

The Selection Conference for this year was last week at Lis Escop and was my third. The day was both intense and wonderful and we welcomed seven new readers into the training programme to start in the Autumn. It was a huge privilege to be able to listen to their stories and ask some pertinent questions. Having met us, it was also reassuring that they all still wanted to pursue their Reader / LLM vocations! Now they have to get the correct DBS check and book a place on the Lay Leadership and Ordained Safeguarding course.

The main issues for the Readers I have been talking to this month have been around work-load both actual and threatened. Some Readers when pressed move parishes to pastures fresh but this is not always possible or indeed desirable. My advice to any Reader worried about work load, whether it is imposed by their incumbent or whether it has been dumped into their laps in interregnum by the PCC is to draw up a job description with what you feel prepared and able to do. Then get it agreed by the PCC/DCC and stick to it; say, 'no' once in a while and be firm about it. A burned out Reader is no use at all!

Last week we had the **St Andrews Redruth Annual Arts Festival**- Pride of place was taken by Willow apparently a lost corgi from the palace made by Pennoweth School.

Footfall through the building was well over 600. Let's hope a few of them felt the touch of God whilst there!



Lord Jesus,
help us to seek you in all things
to discover your grace in the ordinariness of our lives.
Grant us the openness and generosity to strengthen your church on earth.
May we be your faithful companions and rejoice in your presence among us.
We ask this in your name Our Lord and Saviour.
Amen