

THE WORD

MAGAZINE OF ST JOHN'S BIRKDALE

GOD CENTRED, RELATIONSHIP DRIVEN AND LIFE TRANSFORMING

NOVEMBER 2025 ISSUE 275

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John 1:1 & 14
*In the beginning was the Word,
and the Word was with God, and the Word was God
The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us*

St John's Church, St John's Road, Birkdale, PR8 4JP
Vicar: Rev. Jennie Hardy Charity number 1128171

Editor's column

In case you wondered what this was when it arrived on your doormat or in your email inbox it is a new incarnation of **THE WORD**. After several years of having the same format it is time for a change of livery and a new coat of paint. Nothing can stay the same for ever, not even in the Church of England.

I am very grateful to Ian Bennett who has created the new dramatic front cover which has real presence. I hope that our readers will find, as they turn the pages, that all the necessary information and their favourite items and articles are set out in an attractive and accessible format.

We are now using a very different font (typeface) which is clear and modern, and we hope that it will be regarded as reader-friendly.

Where has this year gone to? It seems hardly any time since we were taking down the Christmas trees from last



year's Festival, and soon we shall be putting new ones up!

We need volunteers to erect the boards over the pews in the side aisles to support the trees on **Sunday 30th November at 2.00pm. If you can help, please bring some sturdy gloves because the boards do not have smooth edges.**

We shall also need many hands when the trees are delivered at about **9.00am on Wednesday 3rd December**. There will be much to do in erecting the trees and hoovering up pine needles. Please put these dates in your diary and be willing to come and help.

November and December will be busy months, particularly in preparation for the Christmas Fair on 5th and 6th December, and then Christmas. There's a lot to look forward to in our church.

But before that we shall have our annual Service of Remembrance on 9th November. Do come and join together at that very poignant service.

WHO'S WHAT AT ST. JOHN'S

Vicar:	Rev. Jennie Hardy (07872 400718)	Transport Officer:	Mrs. Jean Morris (564206)
Priest (retired):	Rev. Roy Doran (572387)	Church of England	Mrs. Sylvia Kent (564071)
Reader:	Mrs. Christine Baker (560518)	Children's Society:	
Churchwarden:	Clive Morris (564206)	Mothers' Union:	Mrs. Linda Caton (564737)
PCC Treasurer:	Mrs. Amanda Potts (07530 950100)	Girl Guides:	Mrs. Janette Law (565951)
PCC Secretary:	Mrs. Christine Baker (560518)	St. John's Brownies:	Mrs. Helen Jones and
Gift Aid Secretary:	Mrs. Sylvia Kent (564071)	Brownie Guiders:	Mrs. Lesley Scott
Parish Hall Secretary:	Mrs. Jean Morris (564206)	St. John's Rainbows:	Mrs. Lesley Scott
Electoral Roll Officer:	Stuart Harris (563789)	Church Flowers:	Mrs. Cath Whiteside (07732 993025)
Deanery Synod Reps:	Clive Morris (564206) Stuart Baker (560518)	Magazine Editor:	Stuart Baker (560518)
Lead Safeguarding		Magazine Printer:	Mrs. Christine Baker (560518)
Officer & Recruiter	Stuart Baker (560518)	Buildings Inspector:	David Halsall (07790 822343)
		Eco Champions:	Mrs. Elizabeth Rothwell and Duncan Rothwell (564192)
		Editor's email:	stjohnbirkdaletheword@gmail.com

Change!

The Vicar writes:

You either love it or hate it, but like it or not, it happens. We are all in control of our daily lives and habits but in wider society, schools, clubs, government, church(!), everywhere, things are always changing.

We have been and are continuing to think about change through our series of talks on Sundays. We have thought about being 'Shaped by Grace' ending this series on the themes of transformation, being moulded. We have begun our current series on 'Transformed Lives' by thinking about the changes we need. Last week we were blessed to have Andy Roberts, the CEO of the Church Mission Society, speak to us about the changes and transformations in the lives of almost 200 young people in Brazil thanks to the work of Revive International whom we have been supporting for over a decade by contributing to this transformational work. Andy referred to God as the 'great disturber' whereby He disturbs our lives with the call He has on each of us to take up our place in the mission of God, to share the gospel. Our themes through October into November have been focussed on personal change in order to grow. At the end of November we turn our focus to what it means to be, 'Stronger Together' and how together, we can change the world. The emphasis will change from, 'me' to 'we'.

November is the month of Remembrance and I have been musing on how those



veterans who served in WW1 & WW2 would think about 'change and transformation' and on the theme of 'togetherness'. These topics are at the heart of the armed services mission. Peacemakers enter war zones and places of unrest to bring change and transformation and they do it together. The togetherness of the nations of the world is what brought an end to wars that otherwise, might have ended the world.

Ephesians 4:2 – 5 says:
"Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all."

We have one world and one race, the human race. We have one God and one church. God calls us, disturbs us, out of our complacency and selfishness to change the world, together. We have a huge church family around the entire world, we have a church family here in Southport and Birkdale. I was blessed last month to be invited to speak at the

Southport Prayer conference which is held by a group of people from churches across Southport spanning multiple denominations who have committed to pray together every week for years! The power of their unified prayers across all of those years has made huge impact, no doubt.

When we come together in 'battle' for the Lord, taking up the armour described in Ephesians 6 in unity with our brothers and sisters, we have the capacity to continue the work that Jesus began of changing the world for the better, to bring peace and unity, in Christ.

As the church, as His church, we must lead the way. We must cross barriers and be brave, inspired by the those who have fought and continue to fight for our freedoms to change the world for the better.

How might we, in Birkdale 'make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit' by 'bearing with one another' through our differences, through our challenges, through change?

As a deanery we have chosen not to walk the Fit for Mission path but this does not mean that we do not want to work together. The onus is now on all of us to work, to strive to come together and serve together, in the name of Christ.

This may be our great disturbance. It is a disturbance that may help our churches to endure, to grow and to thrive in drawing people into the Kingdom of God. So, let's do it, together.

Love, Jennie xx

WHAT'S ON AT ST. JOHN'S



Pray Together

Thursday @ 7.30pm
on Zoom
Meeting ID: 83550743780
Passcode:
7ehHEK

The prayer meetings are on the **1st and 3rd Thursdays each month** and last half an hour. This month they will be on **6th & 20th November**. If there is anything which readers would like to be included in the prayers please contact Jennie Hardy, Roy Doran, Christine Baker or Clive Morris. Do join us if you can. See page **30** for details about logging in on zoom by computer or by telephone.

GODSPEED
INDOOR CYCLING CLASSES
TUESDAY 7.30PM
THURSDAY 6PM
FRIDAY 9.30AM

St John's Birkdale

Scan to book!

St John's Birkdale

CHRISTMAS Tree Festival & Fair

5TH DECEMBER 6PM - LIGHT SWITCH ON
6TH DECEMBER 10AM - 3PM

Stalls
Cafe
Mulled Drinks
Crafts
Grotto & More

ST JOHN'S BIRKDALE
info@stjohnsbirkdale.co.uk

St John's Birkdale

Jolly Tots

Every Friday in term time
1pm - 2.30pm

For tots, babies & bums
St John's Hall, St John's Road, PR8 4JP

Connect with other parents and bring your little one for nursery rhymes, dancing, play, stories and more.

CONTACT
info@stjohnsbirkdale.co.uk
stjohnsbirkdale.co.uk
07905875944

WHAT ELSE IS ON AT ST. JOHN'S

Got Questions?

Is there more to life than this?

Does God exist?

What happens next?

Join the
adventure

St John's Church
Hall, St John's
Road, PR8 4JP

From
Wednesday
24th
September
7.30pm

Alpha.org
#TryAlpha

Alpha



Join us for a COLOUR PARTY

Dress in your favourite colour
Bring drinks & snacks that match your outfit
Prepare to have fun

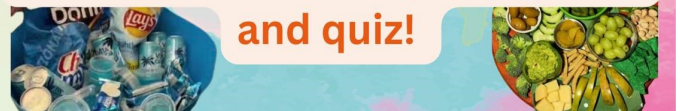
Sat 15th November

7pm @ St John's Hall

Tickets £5 from info@stjohnsbirkdale.co.uk



We will have a range of fun
activities on the night including
colour coordinated party games
and quiz!



FILM NIGHTS

September 12th

October 10th

November 21st ★

December 12th

Contact Christine: 01704 560518
Start: 6.30pm with hot drinks & Cake
For which we charge £5

St John's Hall, PR8 4JP

For details of our films contact Christine



SOUTHPORT ORCHESTRA

Saturday 29th November, 7.30pm
St John's Church, St John's Road
Birkdale, PR8 4JP

Jeff Rimmer
Alexandra Walton

Conductor
Soloist

Southport Orchestra will be
delighted to perform this
concert in our church and
will share the proceeds of
tickets sales with us. So
please put this date in your
diary and come and enjoy an
evening of wonderful
classical music. Your
attendance will support the
orchestra AND our church!

Brahms
Academic Festival Overture
Arnold
Flute Concerto No. 2
Franck
Symphony in D minor



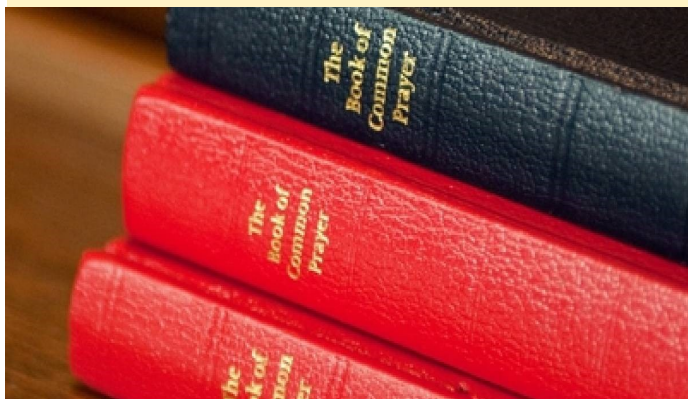
Tickets available now at southportorchestra.co.uk
email admin@southportorchestra.co.uk, call 07795 662245 or buy on the door
Adults £12 | Under 18s £6

Tickets will also be available from Stuart and Christine Baker

WHAT'S ON WEDNESDAYS AT ST JOHN'S

MIDWEEK COMMUNION SERVICE

1st & 3rd Wednesdays at 10.30am



There will be a Midweek traditional Communion service at 10.30am in church on **Wednesdays 5th & 19th November**. On 5th November the service will be followed by Brunch: do stay and enjoy fellowship and a bite to eat. On 19th November the service will be followed by tea, coffee and biscuits.

2nd & 4th Wednesdays
7.30pm



Growth

HOME
GROUP

@ Clive & Queen Jeans

food. fellowship. fun.

info@stjohnsbirkdale.co.uk



2nd & 4th Wednesdays
2pm

God's Word

STUDY
GROUP

@ the small hall, St John's
Church PR8 4JP

revroydoran@btinternet.com

St John's Birkdale
DRIVEN BY SPIRIT

Are you ready to dive into the wonderful world of knitting? Whether you're a complete beginner or looking to refine your skills, our knit & natter is the perfect opportunity to learn and create in a fun and supportive environment. Learn to knit or crochet if you can't already and make blanket squares to make into rugs for church for extra warmth.

JOIN OUR NEW KNIT & KNATTER GROUP

The 4th Wednesday of each month
2:30pm
In the vicar's vestry @ St John's church PR8 4JP

STARTS 24TH SEPTEMBER 2025
Refreshments provided

Fee: Just £1
Contact: info@stjohnsbirkdale.co.uk
Call: Christine on: 01704 560518

CHURCH SERVICES IN NOVEMBER

Worship on the Twentieth Sunday **SUNDAY 2nd NOVEMBER**

after Trinity

8.30am Holy Communion in church only
10.30am Holy Communion & Baptism, in church and via zoom and phone

Collect for the Twentieth Sunday after Trinity

God, our light and our salvation: illuminate our lives, that we may see your goodness in the land of the living, and looking on your beauty may be changed into the likeness of Jesus Christ our Lord.

The subject of Jennie's talks:

Transformed but Struggling

The Text: 2 Corinthians 3: 12-18 NIV

12 Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold. **13** We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to prevent the Israelites from seeing the end of what was passing away. **14** But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away. **15** Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. **16** But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. **17** Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. **18** And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

MIDWEEK TRADITIONAL COMMUNION SERVICE

Brunch will be served after the service



WEDNESDAY
5th NOVEMBER
10.30am
IN CHURCH

Worship on the Twentyfirst

Sunday after Trinity

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

SUNDAY 9th NOVEMBER

8.30am Holy Communion in church only

10.30am Service of Remembrance in church and via zoom and phone

Collect for the Twentyfirst Sunday after Trinity

Almighty God, in whose service lies perfect freedom: teach us to obey you with loving hearts and steadfast wills; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The subject of Jennie's talks:

Remembrance

The Texts:

2 Thessalonians 2: 1-5 & 13-end NIV

Being saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth.

Luke 20: 27-38 NIV

God is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for to him all are alive.



CHURCH SERVICES IN NOVEMBER

Worship on the Twentysecond
Sunday after Trinity

SUNDAY 16th NOVEMBER
8.30am Holy Communion in church only
**10.30am Service of the Word in church and
via zoom and phone**

Collect for the Twentysecond Sunday after Trinity

God, our refuge and strength, bring near the day when wars shall cease and poverty and pain shall end, that earth may know the peace of heaven through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The subject of Clive's talks:

Living a Changed Life

The Text: Hebrews 11: 1-13 NIV

1 Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. **2** This is what the ancients were commended for. **3** By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible. **4** By faith Abel brought God a better offering than Cain did. By faith he was commended as righteous, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith Abel still speaks, even though he is dead. **5** By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death: "He could not be found, because God had taken him away." For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God. **6** And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. **7** By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that is in keeping with faith. **8** By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. **9** By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. **10** For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God. **11** And by faith even Sarah, who was past childbearing age, was enabled to bear children because she considered him faithful who had made the promise. **12** And so from this one man, and he as good as dead, came descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sand on the seashore. **13** All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth.



**MONDAY 17th
NOVEMBER**

Growth

THE BIBLE COURSE
EXPLORE THE BIG STORY!

@ Stuart & Christines
food. fellowship. fun.

info@stjohnsbirkdale.co.uk

**WEDNESDAY
19th NOVEMBER
10.30am
IN CHURCH**

**MIDWEEK TRADITIONAL COMMUNION
SERVICE**



**Tea, coffee and biscuits will be served
after the service**

CHURCH SERVICES IN NOVEMBER

Worship on the last Sunday
after Trinity

SUNDAY 23rd NOVEMBER
8.30am Holy Communion in church only
**10.30am Service of the Word in church and via
zoom and phone**

Collect for the last Sunday after Trinity

Merciful God, teach us to be faithful in change and uncertainty, that trusting in your word and obeying your will we may enter the unfailing joy of Jesus Christ our Lord.

The subject of Roy's talks:

Together we are stronger

The Text: John 17: 1-end NIV

Summary of the central points of the sermons:

The church is connected. "Together We are Stronger" because: · There is strength in numbers · We are one · Growth requires change We need to come together as the church, and we need to do this not just to stay safe but to have strength moving forward in what God has called us to. A reminder to us that we are created for community and coming together is not just about getting more people to come to church on Sunday mornings, but to using the unique gifts that God has given each person to further the Kingdom.

Worship on Advent Sunday

**Joint service with St James' &
St Peter's & LRM**

SUNDAY 30th NOVEMBER
8.30am Holy Communion in church only
**10.30am Service of the Word in church and
via zoom and phone**

Collect for Advent Sunday

Almighty God, as your kingdom dawns, turn us from the darkness of sin to the light of holiness, that we may be ready to meet you in our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

The subject of Jennie's talks:

**Together we can change the world
(of Birkdale)**

The Text: Ephesians 4: 1-16 NIV

1 As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. **2** Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. **3** Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. **4** There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; **5** one Lord, one faith, one baptism; **6** one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. **7** But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. **8** This is why it says: "When he ascended on high, he took many captives." **9** What does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? **10** He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe. **11** So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, **12** to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up **13** until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. **14** Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. **15** Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. **16** From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL AND CHRISTMAS FAIR

FRIDAY 5th & SATURDAY 6th DECEMBER

Having enjoyed a lovely summer this year, it seems to have made a swift exit and autumn has swooped in with a vengeance, reminding us that Christmas will soon be upon us with all our Christmas festivities and our Christmas Tree Festival and Christmas Fair.

As always, the team are busy working hard in preparation to make this event another huge success, but this will not be possible without your help. If you are able to donate any items for the raffle or gifts for any of the stalls it would be much appreciated.

We will have various stalls including home-made cakes, tombola, bottle stall, raffle hamper, good quality book stall; children's crafts; Christmas plant stall; hand crafted wooden items; a selection of fragranced hand-made candles and wax melts, either for your Christmas table or as an ideal gift. As an added bonus we are also pleased to welcome three new stalls, i.e, Christmas gifts, assorted handmade gifts and Avon skin care products, so there's plenty to choose from when you are looking for that ideal Christmas present or just the perfect treat for yourself.

Boxes are now available at the back of church for your contributions; however, if you join our services via zoom or are unable to come to church for any reason, please telephone me on 564071 and I shall be happy to collect your gifts from you. Similarly, please see the hamper lists at the back of church and kindly sign against the item you wish to donate, or alternatively, refer to the hamper lists attached in **THE WORD**, and let me know if you would like to contribute anything, which again I shall be happy to collect.

Lastly, don't forget you will also be able to visit our cafe with its home-made meals, sandwiches and cakes, tea and coffee, or stop for a delicious mince pie with mulled wine or non-alcoholic punch if you prefer! so you won't even have to worry about driving.

Please support our stalls with whatever you are able to provide. Your generosity on these occasions is always much appreciated, especially with the continual calls made on you throughout the year. We are very grateful to you all.



Do remember to put the dates in your diary and come along and support us with as many family, friends and neighbours as possible.

HELPERS ARE REQUIRED

Dates for your diary:

1. Saturday 29th November: Erect banner outside church (daytime, time to be arranged)

Sunday 30th November:

2. at 12.30pm, after the morning service: Decorate the church halls with Christmas decorations.

3. at 2.00pm, erect the boards over the pews in the side aisles to support the trees.

Wednesday 3rd December:

4. at 9.00am, delivery of the trees and erecting them on the boards in church; followed by hoovering and tidying.

Thursday 4th December:

5. at 7.00pm, setting up the hall with tables and chairs.

Monday 9th January:

6. at 9.00am: take down the trees; store the boards, and clean the church.

PLEASE CONTACT SYLVIA KENT WITH YOUR AVAILABILITY TO ASSIST AT 1, 2 & 5 ABOVE, AND JUDITH FOSTER AT 3, 4 & 6 ABOVE.

Those who will come and help with erecting and dismantling the supporting boards and erecting the trees should bring gardening gloves or some other sturdy gloves.



The Rev Dr Gary Bowness continues his tongue-in-cheek letters from 'Uncle Eustace'

On What It Takes To Be An Ordinand

The Rectory,
St James the Least of All

My dear Nephew Darren,

I was intrigued that you have been nurturing someone called Dave who is considering ordination. Since Dave had never travelled outside the city, your decision to send him to me was understandable. Sadly, I don't think he is cut out for the ministry.

We did our best. In a fit of hospitality, the Colonel invited this Dave to stay at the Lodge, and to join his Saturday pheasant shoot as a beater. But Dave said firmly that he was against beating any kind of bird and abhors all kinds of murder. It seems young Dave is a vegetarian! You might have warned us. The Colonel is now concerned that Dave is connected in some way with the Green Party. You cannot be too careful these days.

Then Miss Saxby and Miss Tarby stepped in. They enjoy mushrooming, and kindly took young Dave off to the woods. It is not their fault that they are a bit deaf and so did not hear his cries of distress when he lost them among all the trees. They just assumed he had gone back to the Colonel's, and so of course they did not organise a search party until much later. Fortunately, the church warden's spaniel has a keen nose and found Dave before midnight. During all that time, Dave seemed to have had nothing better to do than slide about on fallen leaves and trip over hidden logs in the dark. He was even babbling about having heard a crying ghost. We feared he might be delirious but then realised he meant the local owl. He also seemed surprised by the darkness and asked how we manage without any streetlights at all in the parish. We explained the obvious – we simply follow the example of the well-refreshed when leaving the pub, and feel our way along the walls.

On Sunday morning Dave rushed into the church to warn me that there were several loose sheep in the churchyard. I decided then that he should return to the safety of the city. There was no point in letting him near most of our church ladies, who would have savaged him on sight.

The visit only proves the obvious: potential ordinands should be carnivorous, cricketing fly-fishers, most at home in well-worn tweeds and preferably accompanied by a muddy dog. How else will they get along with normal folk?

Your loving uncle, Eustace

St John's collected £217.92 for The Children's Society recently. Thanks to Sylvia Kent for organising our collection.



Rotary



**CHRISTMAS
TOY
COLLECTION**

Southport Rotary Club are collecting **new** toys to be sorted and distributed to families in Southport. They are given a list of places which have names of the families in need of toys. Wrapping is not essential, but if they are wrapped they need to have a label with the relevant age and gender of the child for whom the toy is intended. Rotarians will be sorting the toys on the 16 December.

If members of St John's would like to give a toy or toys please bring them to church by **not later than Sunday 14th December.**

Do you know what to do in an emergency?

If a member of our congregation or a visitor to the church hall suffers from what appears to be a heart attack or a cardiac arrest would you know what to do?

Do you know that there is a difference between a heart attack and a cardiac arrest and that they have to be responded to in different ways?

We have a Defibrillator at church (see below) but in an emergency would you know how to use it?

Those questions can all be answered if you attend a Defib Workshop at St John's on Friday 21st November which will last from 10am-12noon.

Joanne Duff, a Cardiac Physiologist employed by Heartbeat Northwest, will explain the difference between the two types of potentially fatal heart conditions and explain how they should be treated in an emergency whilst waiting for paramedics to arrive.

Joanne will demonstrate and teach how to perform chest compressions and will show us how to tell if a defibrillator is appropriate and how to use it.

We all hope that we will never have to put that knowledge and training into practice, but emergencies can happen without any warning and there is no point in having a defibrillator if we do not know how to use it. A quick response is essential if life is to be saved.

Joanne's tuition workshop will be limited to a maximum of 20 participants and **needs a minimum of 10 to be viable.**



Defib workshop

St John's Church, Birkdale

Friday 21st November

10-12pm

- Heart anatomy & physiology
- Heart attack v cardiac arrest
- Role of chest compressions
- Role of defibrillators
- Hands on experience

Money raised from this event will support Heartbeat and the service they provide

www.heartbeat-NWCC.org.uk

Book your place Christine Baker christinebaker178@outlook.com

We are extending an invitation to our own parishioners and also to St James', St Peter's and LRMC.

Joanne asks for a donation of at least £100 which goes to support the work of Heartbeat Northwest.

If 20 people take part we would ask everyone to contribute £5 to the donation: a tiny sum for such valuable and life-saving knowledge.

To book your place please contact Christine Baker (email address on the poster above).

In the event of Medical Emergency at St John's:

We have two trained First Aiders: Rev Jennie, and Janette Law.

If neither of them is available there are two points of contact: Clive Morris and Stuart Baker. They are not trained First Aiders but if they are available they can be contacted and they will contact the emergency services if necessary or give access to the First Aid kit which is kept in the church hall kitchen.

We have a Defibrillator. This is in the entrance lobby in the church hall next to the door which opens into the corridor leading to the church. Instructions for use of the Defibrillator are contained in the machine.

We recommend that worshippers and other visitors to our church should carry a mobile phone with them. We do **not** have a payphone in the church or hall.



Scaling the Heights

We are constantly indebted to David Halsall for his regular professional examination of the church fabric – even when he tells us that there is a loose slate precariously hanging from the very top of the steeple.

The first visit from a roofer just provided a summary of the damage – because he only brought a 20 metre extending platform. The offending tile was nearer to 30 metres up.

It took a while to source this height of platform, coupled with the necessity of reversing the wagon it would be based on, through our front gate. Once the perfect platform was found, the driver was completely confident of the driveway opening – “it’s all right, I’ve been before about ten years back!”

The machine arrived, the gate was removed and the wagon and platform reversed in with a 2 inch clearance.

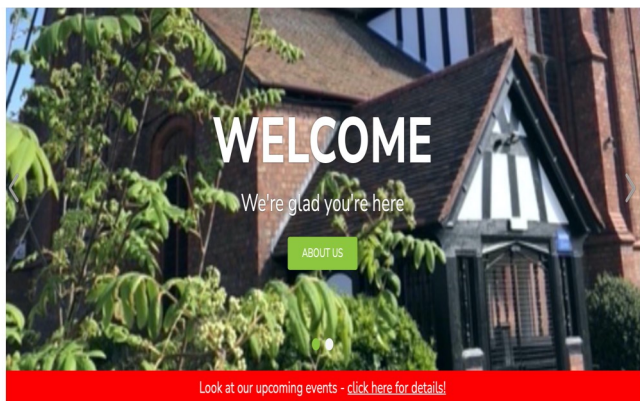


The platform was extended, raised across our roof and on up to the steeple. Once up there the job was completed quite quickly and he moved on to the bell tower, only accessible from a side hatch on the steeple.

The roosting pigeons were less than impressed at being disturbed – more so when David rang the bell. The structure is thankfully in decent condition and if anyone wants a large quantity of what we shall call “guano” – it is available for a small donation if you bring your own extending platform.

Please also be aware that a day’s 30 metre platform hire, complete with a roofer, will set you back a mere £3000. Repairing and maintaining our church is an expensive business. So please take an admiring glance up there next time you walk beside the west window – you may see a few confused and homeless pigeons.

Clive Morris



Visit our website
stjohnsbirkdale.co.uk

The next Archbishop of Canterbury will be The Rt Revd and Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE, the current Bishop of London. She will be the 106th Archbishop of Canterbury since St Augustine arrived in Kent from Rome in 597, and will be the first woman to be appointed to this high office.



Prior to her ordination Dame Sarah was a specialist cancer nurse and then the Chief Nursing Officer for England. She described nursing as “an opportunity to reflect the love of God.” She was the Bishop of Crediton before being appointed to the See of London. She will legally become the Archbishop of Canterbury on 28th January 2026 and her installation ceremony at Canterbury Cathedral will take place on the Feast of the Annunciation on 25th March.

The Canterbury Tales

Our readers may remember that Nottingham University issued "trigger warnings" to its students of English Literature warning them about the "expressions of Christian faith" which are found in the Canterbury Tales. While the stories also contain explicit references to rape, violence, mental illness and anti-Semitism, the university's warning made no reference to these themes.

All the characters in the stories are immersed in a Christian experience so there is bound to be a lot of expressions of faith. Stuart Baker has been revisiting some of these stories and hopes that our readers have not been upset by "the expressions of Christian faith" or the worst of mankind's behaviour in some of them. This month he concludes this series and looks at

The Wife of Bath's Tale

A lusty young knight in King Arthur's court committed a serious sexual outrage upon a beautiful young maiden. The people were repulsed by the knight's behaviour and demanded justice. Although the law demanded that the knight be beheaded, the queen and ladies of the court begged to be allowed to determine the knight's fate. The queen then gave the knight a year to discover what women most desire.

The year passed quickly. As the knight rode dejectedly back to the court knowing that he would lose his life, he suddenly saw 24 young maidens dancing and singing. As he approached them the maidens disappeared, and the only living creature was a foul old woman who approached him and asked what he sought. The knight explained his quest, and the old woman promised to give him the right answer if he would do what she demanded for saving his life. The knight agreed. When the queen bade the knight to speak, he responded that women most desired sovereignty over their husbands. (This was the opinion of the Wife of Bath who was married five times and manipulated all of her husbands. Ed).

Having supplied him with the right answer, the old woman demanded that she be his wife and his love. The knight, in agony, agreed. On their wedding night, the knight paid no attention to the woman next to him. When she



questioned him, he confessed that her age, ugliness, and low breeding were repulsive to him. She reminded him that true gentility is not a matter of appearances but of virtue. She told him that her looks could be viewed as an asset. If she were beautiful, many men would be after her; in her present state, however, he could be assured that he had a virtuous wife.

She offered him a choice: an old ugly woman such as she, but still a loyal, true, and virtuous wife, or a beautiful woman with whom he must take his chances. The knight said the choice was hers. And because she has "won the mastery," she told him, "Kiss me . . . and you shall find me both . . . fair and faithful as a wife." Indeed, she had become a lovely young woman, and they lived happily ever after.

Moral lessons of this tale:

It is difficult to extract morality from this story at the heart of which is a man who thought he was entitled to take what he wanted and who violated an innocent and vulnerable woman. The reader's attention is not drawn to the harm done to the victim but is concentrated on the plight of the offender who, against his will, had redemption forced upon him and thereafter, without deserving it, he lived happily ever after. Although mercy is a Christian value the person who receives mercy should be truly penitent. This knight was not sorry at all.

But if we can draw any positive lesson from this tale it may be this:

True nobility comes from character, not from birth

That concludes our look at these stories which were written more than 600 years ago. Some aspects of human life have remained the same. People can be just as good or bad now as they were then. As they say in France, "plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose".



Harvest and Revive

Harvest 2025 at St John's was quite special. Firstly, children and adults joined Rev Jennie in the chancel for the family song with very energetic actions. Then later, along with Martin, the children returned for a guess the taste game. After being blindfolded, first Martin and then each of the children were spoon-fed a range of different foods which they then had to identify and from some of the expressions, not all were enjoyed! The game really underlined the harvest message.

The message itself linked to a bible reading from Mark chapters four and five, read by Jean Morris. The message was brought to us by Canon Andy Roberts, who more than a decade ago had set up the Revive International organisation to which St John's have contributed financially for some time. Revive supports children in Brazil who are victims of abuse and trafficking.

Andy, now CEO of Church Mission Services (CMS) outlined how Revive works with the children following the teaching of the bible reading. Details of Revive International's work can be found in St John's web site at: www.stjohnsbirkdale.co.uk

Following the service, Andy joined many of the congregation in the hall, sharing a truly sumptuous 'bring and share' harvest meal with everything from a pot of local Scouse to much lighter choices, before leaving to return home to Oxford (via York!).



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The church can accommodate 250 and can be available by arrangement for concerts by musical and choral groups. **If you would like to enquire about using the church please contact Clive Morris - phone 01704 564206.**

The Nicene Creed: The Church and the Future

by Canon Paul Hardingham

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

'We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church': The Creed affirms the four marks of the church, defining a truly orthodox Christian community:

one: despite the many different churches and traditions, there is only one Church to which we all belong. *'There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.'* (Galatians 3:28).

holy: the church is a holy community set apart for God (*ekklesia*, lit 'called out'), whose mission is to reflect God's holiness in worship and live out His love in the world.

catholic: this doesn't refer to the Roman Catholic church, as the word means '*universal*', reminding us of the unity of the church across the whole world and all denominations.

The church aims to apply the same gospel in whatever situation, context or culture it finds itself.

Apostolic: The apostolic ministry of the church ('*apostolos*') is one of being sent to communicate the good news of the gospel: *'Therefore go and make disciples of all nations.'* (Matt 28.19).

'We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins': As baptism is a sign of belonging to the church, it can only happen once. The issue addressed in the Creed is that of Christians who left during persecution, but wanted to be accepted back by rebaptism. It affirms the principle '*one Lord, one faith, one baptism*' (Ephesians 4:5). Today, those baptised as children, theologically can't be re-baptised to demonstrate an adult commitment. However, they can be confirmed or reaffirm their baptism vows.

'We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come': The Creed ends with a statement of hope, that we will share in Jesus' resurrection life after death. It is not simply about the immortality of our soul, but the resurrection of our bodies. They will be transformed to fit us for life of heaven for eternity: *'The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable...it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.'* (1 Corinthians 15:42-44).

Prepare

A poem by Penny Candlin

Prepare the way for the Lord
Make your house ready for the Lord
Make sure no stone is unturned
All things said in secret will be proclaimed from the rooftops
All things hidden in darkness will be brought to the light
Prepare the way for the Lord
Bring out your very best and lay it before the Lord
Bring out tambourine and harp and praise the name of the Lord
Confess to the Lord all your transgressions and He will forgive
Confess to the Lord time that has been wasted
Prepare the way for the Lord
Give thanks to the Lord for all He has done and will do
Give thanks for the Lord for His love and mercy
Pray to the Lord for he hears you when you cry out to him
Pray to the Lord and spend time in His presence
Prepare the way for the Lord
Listen to the Lord for what He has to say
Listen to the Lord for He is kind and gentle of heart
Give to the Lord your time and talents
Give to the Lord all that He has given you
Prepare the way of the Lord

St John's Prayers for those in need

We believe in the power of prayer and we are eager to include as many people who currently need prayer in our twice monthly prayer meetings and on the screen on a



Sunday. We aim to keep the prayer list current and to receive regular updates on people who need longer term prayer so that we can pray meaningfully at the zoom prayer meeting. Names will be on the list for a month at a time, so the lists will be refreshed at the beginning of each calendar month.

If you would like to be on the list for December **please let Rev. Jennie know** with a current update of why you would like prayer so that we can use that information on a Thursday. If you would like to add someone else to the list, provided you have asked their permission, then pass their name, and any other information on why they would like prayer, to Jennie.

W CROSS R D

The Bible version used in our crosswords is the NIV. Reproduced by permission of BRF and John Capon,.

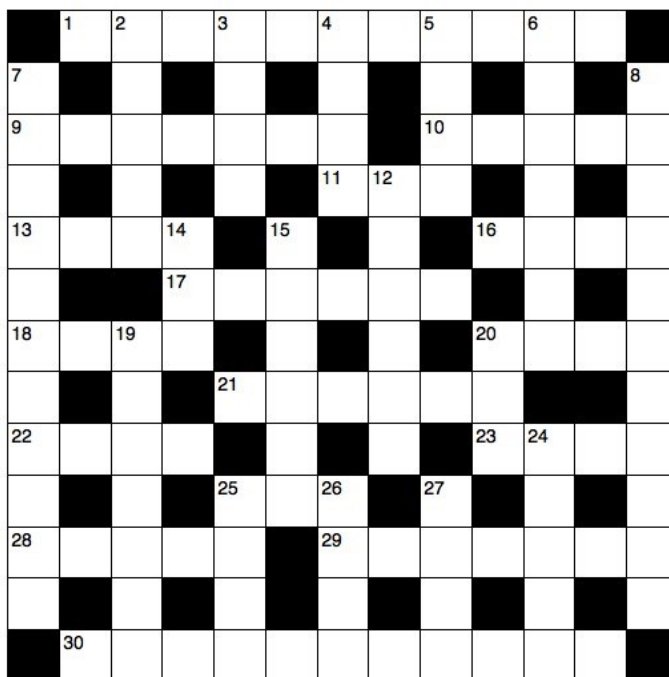
Solution below

Across

- 1 The sixth disciple (Matthew 10:3) (11)
 9 'And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the — —' (Matthew 6:13) (4,3)
 10 Love intensely (Song of Songs 1:4) (5)
 11 From Mt Carmel to Jezreel, Elijah — all the way (1 Kings 18:46) (3)
 13 One of the Midianite leaders who was captured and killed after Gideon's victory in the valley near Moreh (Judges 7:25) (4)
 16 Metallic element (4)
 17 At line (anag.) (6)
 18 'Cursed is everyone who is — on a tree' (Galatians 3:13) (4)
 20 Where Samson killed a thousand Philistines with a donkey's jawbone (Judges 15:14) (4)
 21 He succeeded Moses (Deuteronomy 34:9) (6)
 22 'When he saw him, he took — on him' (Luke 10:33) (4)
 23 'For — is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction' (Matthew 7:13) (4)
 25 'The god of this — has blinded the minds of unbelievers' (2 Corinthians 4:4) (3)
 28 Fear or terror (Psalm 31:22) (5)
 29 'We, who are many, are one body, for we all — of the one loaf' (1 Corinthians 10:17) (7)
 30 Assyrian ruler assassinated by his sons while worshipping his god Nisroch (2 Kings 19:37) (11)

Down

- 2 'For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made —' (1 Corinthians 15:22) (5)
 3 'After supper he — the cup' (1 Corinthians 11:25) (4)
 4 The request of a man of Macedonia in Paul's vision: 'Come — to Macedonia and help us' (Acts 16:9) (4)
 5 He disobeyed his father Judah by refusing to impregnate his dead brother's wife (Genesis 38:9) (4)



- 6 I veto me (anag.) (7)
 7 Fourth king of Judah (1 Kings 15:24) (11)
 8 Priest of God Most High, who blessed Abram (Genesis 14:18) (11)
 12 'I have made you — — for the Gentiles' (Acts 13:47) (1,5)
 14 Implore (1 Samuel 15:25) (3)
 15 'Out of the eater, something to eat; out of the — , something sweet' (Judges 14:14) (6)
 19 'I am the most ignorant of men; I do — — a man's understanding' (Proverbs 30:2) (3,4)
 20 'Sin shall not be your master, because you are not under — , but under grace' (Romans 6:14) (3)
 24 Native of, say, Baghdad (5)
 25 The last word in the Bible (Revelation 22:21) (4)
 26 Heroic tale (4)
 27 'Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you —' (John 8:32) (4)

In our Book of Remembrance In November

- 1st Edward Craig, 1982
 Samuel Leather, 1985
 2nd Charles Perry, 1983
 Daniel Mitchell, 1989
 4th Sydney Roberts, 1991
 6th John Lloyd Howarth, 1949
 7th James Rimmer, 1987
 8th Andrew Thomson, 2009
 9th Ruth Heap, 1982
 Arthur Moon, 1998
 10th Jacqueline Goadsby, 2000

- 12th Percy Mackinder, 1980
 Charles Smith, 1964
 Edna Vernon, 1986
 Patricia Ann Coop, 2010
 13th Edna Rubert, 1986
 14th John Marriner, 2002
 15th Arthur Wilson, 1988
 16th Kenneth Whitehead, 1999
 17th Harriet Hamer, 1962
 18th Kathleen Butterworth 2005
 19th Kai Andersen, 1986
 20th Albert Jackson, 1949
 John Moore, 1963
 23rd Frank Rimmer, 2008

- 24th Stanley Loines, 1993
 26th Peggy Heap, 1993
 27th Jeffrey Heap, 1944
 Reginald Wall, 1988
 28th Joan LeClair, 1994
 29th Christine Taylor, 1983
 John Rimmer, 1983
 Ronald Horrocks, 1979

If any of our readers wish to have the name of a deceased relative inscribed in the Book of Remembrance please contact Stuart Baker on 01704 560518

ACROSS: 1. Bartholomew, 9. Evil one, 10. Adore, 11. Ran, 13. Oreb, 16. Zinc, 17. Entail, 18. Hung, 20. Levi, 21. Joshua, 22. Pity, 23. Wide, 25. Age, 28. Alarm, 29. Partake, 30. Sennacherib.
DOWN: 2. Alive, 3. Took, 4. Over, 5. Onan, 6. Emotive, 7. Jehoshaphat, 8. Melchizedek, 12. A light, 14. Beg, 15. Strong, 19. Not have, 20. Law, 24. Iraq, 25. Amen, 26. Epic, 27. Free.

CROSSWORD SOLUTION

God in the Arts

The Revd Michael Burgess surveys great works of sacred art.

'He gave us eyes to see them': Francison de Zurbarán 'Jacob and his twelve sons'

In the Old Testament the story of Jacob is a vivid saga of struggle and conflict: Jacob vies with his brother Esau, he has a difficult time with Laban, there are tensions in his family, and finally he wrestles with a divine stranger. And yet in the book of Genesis his days end with promises from God: he will be blessed with descendants, a land, fruitfulness and the assurance of God's presence with him. He is given a new name and a new destiny as 'Israel.' We sense all this struggle and blessing in a remarkable series of thirteen paintings, 'Jacob and his twelve sons' by the Spanish artist, Francisco de Zurbarán.

They hang in the dining room of Auckland Castle at Bishop Auckland. Bishop Auckland grew as a thriving market town and then in the industrial age became the centre of the Durham coal industry. It was also the site for the prince bishop of Durham's palace. In the medieval period the bishop was as powerful as the monarch of the land, with an army that rivalled the king's own forces. Auckland Castle became the country seat for the prince bishops, and in the 18th century Bishop Richard Trevor made the palace more Gothic and imposing than ever before. To mark the 1753 Act that allowed Jews to be naturalised in England, he purchased the portraits of Jacob and his sons by Zurbarán for £124.

Zurbarán normally painted monks and saints, and this particular series was meant for the colonies. But they were seized by pirates and then sold to a London merchant. The one depicting Benjamin was bought by Lord Ancaster, and so Bishop Trevor was only able to buy twelve. He commissioned Arthur Pond, a jobbing painter, to make an exact copy of Benjamin to complete his set. The series of canvases, each eight feet tall, was in the news recently when there was a possibility they might be sold. They were saved by a Trust, now dedicated to developing the site of the Castle, which includes not just the dining room, where the paintings hang, but a very fine chapel of St Peter, a throne room, and beautiful gardens.



Jacob (above) and his sons are each painted against the daylight sky, and each has its individual characteristics. Judah for instance is clad in a brown and gold garment with a gold circlet crowning his head as the ancestor of King David and Joseph, the husband of Mary. Gad is a strong soldier. Jacob, the father of these twelve sons, is a bearded old man, bowed down with the weight, not just of his years of struggle, but perhaps also the burden of destiny laid on his shoulders as both a blessing and a responsibility. For in the Old Testament, we learn that God often chooses the ones overlooked by the world: the young boy David above his more likely brothers, Isaac above Ishmael, and in the saga behind these impressive paintings of Zurbarán, Jacob, the second born son, but here blessed as the father of God's people.

THE INFLUENCE OF RELIGION ON LAW

Reflections of Lord Denning, one of the foremost English Judges of the twentieth century.

INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY

Although society itself is largely responsible, neither religion nor the law excuses the criminal himself. Christianity has always stressed the responsibility of each individual for his own wrongdoing. It does not say to him "Poor thing, you couldn't help it, could you? You came from a broken home and nothing else could be expected." That would lead him to believe that he is more sinned against than sinning and implies that strenuous moral effort on his part is unnecessary or futile. The Christian approach is different.

It allows no easy excuse but demands of every one that he must repent and reform. One of the opening sentences of the Book of Common Prayer of 1662 is "When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive": and as it is said in the Gospel of St. Luke:

"There is joy in the presence of God over one sinner that repenteth."

THE GUILTY MIND

In order to hold a person individually responsible for his crime, so as to be liable to punishment, it is obviously necessary that he should have a guilty mind. This requirement is first found in St. Augustine's sermons where it is said that you are not guilty of perjury unless you have a guilty mind. Thence it found its place in the laws of Henry I, when it was laid down as law that "Actus non facit reum, nisi mens sit rea", that is, there is no guilt unless there is a guilty mind. That has been the rule of English common law from that time to this. In order that an act should be punishable, it must be morally blameworthy. It must be a sin. Of course, there are special reasons for making some conduct or lack of care 'absolute offences' (such as parking or other traffic offences in which the doing of the act constitutes an offence even if the doer does not intend to commit the offence; but these are exceptions).

Copyright in Lord Denning's book is owned by the Lawyers' Christian Fellowship whom we thank for their kind permission in allowing us to publish extracts from it.



Lord Denning,
drawn by Sallon

Reflecting Faith: Do we hear God's Word today?

by Rev. Dr. Jo White

For the last few months, we've been looking at the way that church services are put together. After the Gloria each week, we hear 'God's Word' as written in the Bible. This is usually three passages: one from the Old Testament, one from the epistles, and one from the gospels.

But *how much* do we hear of God's Word? Though we say we want to 'hear God's word', actually the amount we hear week on week is quite minimal.

In bygone days, when the 1662 Book of Common Prayer was universally used in churches, it brought with it a two year lectionary: (unlike today's three year lectionary: lectionary being the recommended or obligatory Bible readings for each day).

This gave congregations, if they came to daily services both morning and evening (which in those times they most likely did) during the course of a year, an opportunity to hear read *the whole Old Testament once, the New Testament twice and all the Psalms twelve times.*

What a contrast to today! In most UK churches, attendance is now at only one service each week, mostly on Sunday. During that service, perhaps 15 or 20 Bible verses might be read.

Now, there are around 31,100 verses in the Bible, which means that at a generous 30 verses a week the congregation will hear around 1,560 verses in a year – that's around 5% each year. So even on a three-year cycle, with a few extra readings for good measure, we hear no more than 20% of the Bible.

I suspect there are two key reasons for this diminution of Bible verses being read. Firstly, church services have got shorter and take up far less time. Secondly, congregations have become more literate, and so it is thought that they do not need it all read out to them.

It would be interesting to know how much of the read-aloud-Bible people is heard, listened to and absorbed today, with the shorter verses being read to them coupled with much shortened sermons.

Next time you go to a Sunday church service listen to the Bible reading with keen ears. How much do you recall a few days later? How much of the Bible that you have not heard recently in church have you read for yourself?

WORD SEARCH

Solution on page 25

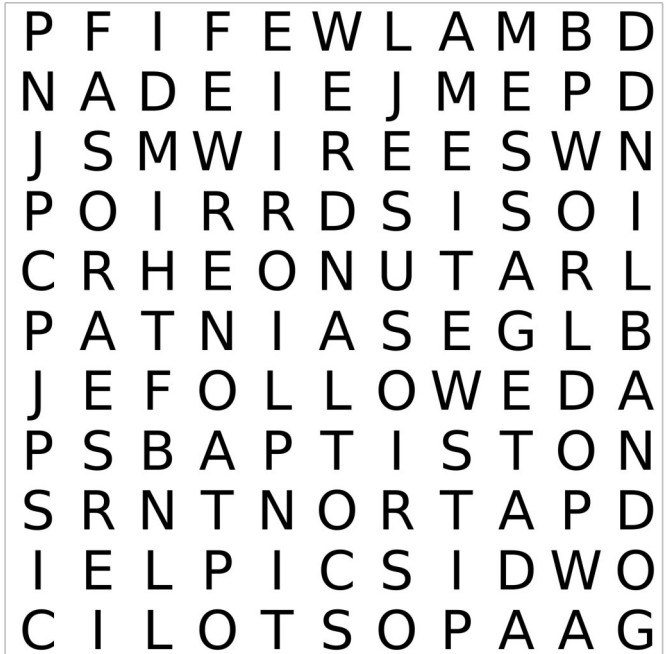
St Andrew (Feast Day 30th November)

St Andrew is the patron saint of Scotland, though his only connection with the country is that some of his bones were reputedly transported in the 8th century to Fife and preserved at a church in a place now named St Andrews.

Andrew was one of the first disciples of Jesus, and the very first to bring someone else to Christ - his own brother. Like many fervent Jews at the time Andrew and an unnamed companion had been drawn to the prophet John the Baptist. When one day John pointed out Jesus to Andrew and his friend, and described him as the 'Lamb of God', the two young men assumed that the next stage of their spiritual search was about to unfold. So as Jesus made off, they followed him.

When Jesus turned and asked them what they were 'seeking', all they could come up with was a lame enquiry about his current place of residence: 'where are you staying?'

The reply of Jesus was the most straight-forward invitation anyone can receive: 'Come and see'. So they did, and the results of their response were life changing. For Andrew brought his brother, Peter, to Jesus, and soon the little apostolic band who would carry the message of Jesus to the whole world was formed. And right at the front of the column, as it were, was Andrew, the first disciple of Jesus.



**ANDREW
PATRON
SAINT
SCOTLAND
FIFE**

**FIRST
DISCIPLE
JOHN
BAPTIST
LAMB**

**GOD
FOLLOWED
JESUS
COME
SEE**

**PETER
APOSTOLIC
BAND
MESSAGE
WORLD**

An Introduction to Books in the New Testament: Ephesians

Canon Paul Hardingham continues his series exploring books in The Bible.

Paul wrote the letter of Ephesians around AD 60, while in prison at Rome. It was probably a circular letter to be read in the house churches of Ephesus and the local area. Paul founded the church over a period of three years (Acts 19:1-20:1) between 52-55 AD. Ephesus was the leading city and commercial centre in the region, famous for its temple to the goddess Artemis (Diana).

Paul's aim in writing his letter was to help his readers understand the dimensions of God's purpose and grace for them and His eternal plan for the church. The believers needed to understand their status 'in Christ' and the call to live a life worthy of Christ. Ephesians is divided into two halves: chapters 1-3 concern

theological issues, while chapters 4-6 deal with the practical outworking of faith.

Having shown God's purpose for the church, Paul shows how God has reconciled individuals to Himself by grace (2:1-10). He has reconciled people to each other by breaking down the barriers through Christ's death (2:11-22). This is the 'mystery' revealed by Paul (3:1-13) and he shows how Christ's gifts promote unity and maturity (4:1-16). The believer's new life stands in contrast to the old way of life without Christ (4:17-6:20).

The great overarching theme of the letter is that we are rescued by God not just for our personal benefit, but to bring praise and glory to Him in our lives: 'He made known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfilment - to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.' (1:9,10).

God in the Sciences

This series is written by Dr Ruth M Bancewicz, who is Church Engagement Director at The Faraday Institute for Science and Religion in Cambridge. Ruth writes on the positive relationship between Science and Christian faith.

Wonder and Worship

"I was travelling, and out early in the morning: at first there was a vast fog; but, by the time that I was seven or eight miles from home towards the coast, the sun broke out into a delicate warm day. We were then on a large heath or common, and I could discern, as the mist began to break away, great numbers of swallows (*hirundines rusticae*) clustering on the stunted shrubs and bushes, as if they had roosted there all night. As soon as the air became clear and pleasant they all were on the wing at once; and, by a placid and easy flight, proceeded on southward towards the sea".

How many church leaders today have time to enjoy their surroundings? Gilbert White was a vicar who became famous for his observations about the flora and fauna of his parish. His letters about the local wildlife through the seasons were so beautifully written that they are still in print today, more than 200 years after they were first published as *The Natural History and Antiquities of Selbourne*.

White is a great example of someone who saw science and faith in harmony. He writes that he hopes his readers will be inspired to "pay a more ready attention to the wonders of the Creation". His stories are often so vivid that he gets away with packing in quite a bit of scientific detail, painting a more accurate picture of the wonderful events he observed as he travelled around the countryside. White's book is one of the classics of nature writing, and there's even an apocryphal story online that this is one of the most printed books in the country, after the Bible and Shakespeare.

White may have been one of those people with a capacity for endless activity, or perhaps he took rather more care over natural history than his vocation. Either way, I do think that anyone - from the parish priest to the youngest member of the congregation - could learn from his appreciation of creation. It is well worth spending ten minutes every now and again staring into a bush, pond or tree - especially in winter when it's easy to hurry indoors and put the kettle on. Experiencing wildlife first-hand is wonderful fuel for our worship of God and care for His creation. As Psalm 111 says, "Great are the works of the Lord; they are pondered by all who delight in them" (NIV).

*(White's book can be downloaded for free at <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/1408>)

OVER... AND OUT!

The English cricket season has come to an end and we can look forward to the Ashes series in Australia during the winter.

Old Father Time, the Grim Reaper weather vane at Lord's Cricket Ground, reminds us that we are all mortal beings and that eventually, for all of us, the bails will be lifted, the stumps will be drawn one last time and our innings will be reviewed...

David Wall has submitted this verse:

**Lord, the Umpire of our lives,
Help us to play our innings with a straight bat;
Accept life's Yorkers without complaint;
And when at last our wicket falls
May we have knocked up a worthy score.**



This reminds the editor of an old anonymous poem "A Cricket Advice" in which these lines appear:

**"Be this your Counsel then: Succeed
with Grace
And should you fail, fail with a
gene'rous Face.
Deny no Praise even if 'tis at your
Cost,
A match that makes for Friendship is
well lost,
And consolation to th' unlucky speak,
Which you yourself may wish another week.
E'en lend your Bat, and if comes back chipped,
Betray no slightest hint of being hipp'd.
And thus in all observe that Cricket grows
Not out of mere Results as some suppose
But from sweet Temper, equable Address,
Friendship with Fortune, sportsmanship no less;
As when the Gods bright Olympus met."**

THE GOOD KINGS AND BAD KINGS OF ENGLAND

By Dennis Davis

**Dennis continues his research
into our Kings and this month
he looks at**

George III

"Farmer George"

I am sure that many readers have watched the TV film about King George the 3rd . He was given the name Farmer George by certain satirists who mocked him for his interest in improving better farming methods and using different types of crops such as turnips, cabbages, his use of clover and lucerne (alfalfa), and the use of seed drills instead of broadcast sowing and better strains of cattle which resulted in the abandonment of the old method of leaving land in fallow every 4th year. It was the beginning of mechanical farming as seen advocated by Jethro Tull.

George was born on the 4th of July 1738 at Norfolk House, the son of Frederic the Prince of Wales. He became heir to the throne on the death of his father in 1751. He was the third Hanoverian Monarch of the German Royal family to reign over Britain. He was actually born in England and was seen as an English King and he spoke English as his first language. He had a rigorous education under the supervision of his mother. This was to prepare him for eventual leadership and moral instruction.

He married Charlotte Mecklenburg Strelitz on the 8th of September 1761. Two weeks later they were

crowned at Westminster Abbey. They had a happy marriage bearing 15 children. In the eyes of the British public they became the ideal family and unlike his predecessors he never had a mistress. In 1761 George bought Buckingham House for Queen Charlotte as a comfortable family home. It later became the present day Buckingham Palace.

In 1788, George began to suffer the first bout of illness. Doctors were at a loss to explain the condition and all known treatments were unsuccessful. He was put in a strait jacket and other forms of restraint and Queen Charlotte was kept separated from him. He suffered further episodes during his life. It was later thought that it was an hereditary porphyria disorder, but that did not explain the manic symptoms that were present. A more modern approach suggests his manic symptoms were the symptoms of the bipolar (manic/depressive) disorder although it was not known as such at that time.

George died on 29th Jan 1820, the country was already in mourning for his son, Edward the Duke of Kent who had died 6 days earlier. George lay in state in the royal apartments at Windsor Castle the following day and his Funeral took place at St Georges Chapel. He was carried by 10 Yeomen of the Guard, the procession route was lined by the Grenadier Guards, with every 4th man carrying a flambeau to light the way.

George, I think, stands out as one of the Good Kings despite his suffering and the alleged brutal treatment of him during his illnesses.



*King George III
Portrait by Sir William Beechey*

the elderberries gardening club

The group meet from 10.30am-noon on the **second Wednesday of every month** at **St. John's Church** on St. John's Road in Birkdale.



The club offers talks from guest speakers, trips to historical houses and gardens, and social events.

To find out more, email elderberriesgardening@gmail.com or call Shelley Lewis-Lavender on [01704 560690](tel:01704560690).

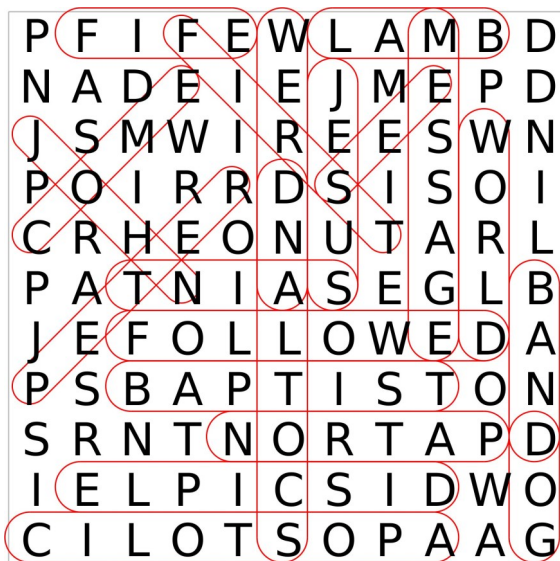


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A warm home for the winter

The clocks have gone back, and we are putting our gardens to sleep for the winter. But this autumn, when you tidy up, do not tidy away too much. It is not only humans who enjoy being warm in winter. Many insects and wild creatures will be relying on some ground cover or hideaway to call



'home' for the winter. Several piles of twigs or pruning, left around your garden in discreet places, will provide great winter 'snugs' for toads, grass snakes and other small garden inhabitants. 'Spent' seed heads provide cover and food for birds over the winter.

Above all, before you light any bonfires on 5th November, take care that there are no hibernating hedgehogs inside!

DEFINING TRUTH

by John M. Shakespeare

The enigma of Truth poses the question to us all, as to why is it not so simple or obvious as we might imagine? It can be argued by some on occasions that it is perhaps better that we do not know the exact truth about a person or situation. The mental and physical well being of an individual may well be at stake depending on the truth of a situation.

J.W. Leibniz (1640-1716), a philosopher, mathematician and statesman of his time, had a number of theories about truth. To back his principle of "Sufficient Reason" he claimed that God had reason to create the World, and that it was God's influence that created situations within this world. Our minds he saw as finite, whilst God's was infinite, therefore there are some truths that cannot be deduced by our own reasoning alone, but are contingent on the influence of God.

A Biblical view of truth is expressed in John Chapter 8 verses 31- 32, "Then Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him "If you. continue in my word, you are truly my disciples and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free".

Scepticism is a challenge offered to an idea put forward, and we doubt the truth of it. In some ways I believe this is a healthy attitude to adopt, since it seeks in an open-minded way, to allow us to probe an assertion that some may believe is true, but requires some credence to prove it.

Some of the best and cleverest brains in the world are trying to find and develop an antidote to the current coronavirus crisis. The truth of its origins and its virulence are not yet clear.

Away from minimalism and pragmatism, I believe we have a definition of truth that in its simplest form can be considered as follows: a belief is true when actions taken in pursuit of what is believed turn out to be successful i.e. the submission must then be true!

Instinctive reactions to what we are hearing or seeing reflects the degree of truth we give to a transaction. I believe that sometimes we can gain a misleading impression, from what is said, or any action taken, which can confuse its truthfulness. Some things told to us may not be deliberate lies, but may have been

"economical" with the truth. The perceptions of people vary according to their experiences, e.g. accounts of a happening can differ between people, whilst they believe they are each telling the truth.

To quote Arthur Conan Doyle (1859-1930), in words he attributed to Sherlock Holmes, "When you have eliminated all which is impossible, then whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth".



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Account Number: 86882120

Time to remember the Persecuted Church – 2nd November

Have you ever felt frightened to go to church? Afraid that someone might see you and report you to the authorities?

380 million Christians around the world have that anxiety, because one in seven Christians worldwide live in countries with high levels of persecution. That includes one in five in Africa and one in seven in Asia. These Christians make up the Persecuted Church, and live with the threat of discrimination, violence, imprisonment, and even death.

To support these suffering Christians, The International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church (IDOP) is held each year in November. It is a good month to choose, because November is the month of remembrance – not only of our armed forces on Remembrance Sunday, but also of all Christian saints and martyrs who have given their lives for Christ, on All Saints Day and All Souls Day.

And so, on **2nd November** thousands of Christians in churches across the UK will pray for the Persecuted Church worldwide. They will also send practical help through supporting well-established UK organisations such as Open Doors, Release International and Christian Solidarity Worldwide. These work to advocate for persecuted Christians in the UN and to advocate with national governments. They also distribute humanitarian aid to the affected communities around the world.

Worldwide, at least 4,476 Christians were killed last year for their faith. Nigeria alone accounted for 3,100 of them. Other countries in sub-Saharan Africa have seen rising numbers of Christian deaths.

Worldwide, at least 4,744 Christians were detained. They were arrested and detained without trial. Some were then sentenced and imprisoned for following Jesus. In India alone, 1,629 Christians were detained without trial and another 547 were sentenced to prison. Believers were incarcerated for their faith in Eritrea, Bangladesh, Iran amongst others.

Worldwide, at least 210,000 Christians were driven from their homes last year and forced into hiding. Again, almost half of these were in Nigeria, where militant Islamism is on the rise.

As for individual countries, in Algeria alone last year, *all* the Protestant churches were ordered to close, or were forced to stop regular services. In Mexico, where organised crime is rampant, any Christians who protest at the violence become themselves a target for abduction and murder. In Kyrgyzstan, violence against Christians is also on the rise, as the authoritarian government further represses religious freedom.

the story of what one woman in Nigeria faced

Asabe's life was turned upside down and devastated in one appalling, never-to-be-forgotten night earlier this year.

The Nigerian wife and mother's home was viciously attacked by Fulani Islamists,

who slaughtered one of her sons and set fire to their house, killing other family members in the process.

In total, more than 50 men, women and children were killed in the evening attack on Zike village in Nigeria's Plateau State. The Fulani raiders were armed with guns and machetes. Asabe's home was one of the first to be targeted. The attackers forced their way into the home, dragged Asabe's 14-year-old son Jerry outside and, in Asabe's words, 'killed him like a goat.'

They then ransacked the house, before setting fire to it—with the rest of the family still inside. As the fire took hold, Asabe tried to stop her six-year-old daughter Joanne from crying, fearful as she was that the militants would return and kill them all.

But then, as they were trapped inside and the heat of the blaze became unbearable, she encouraged her daughter to cry, reasoning that if the attackers returned and killed them it would be a quicker, less painful death. Thankfully, other villagers heard the cries and came to the rescue.

Asabe's husband, Moses, was taken to hospital, but later died from his burn injuries. Their ten-year-old son James was another victim, having died in the fire. Asabe's mother-in-law, Talatu has been left with badly burned hands.

Many other Christian communities have suffered this year in violent raids by Islamist Fulani herdsman.

If we can do nothing else, we can pray for all who are persecuted for their faith.

WHAT'S ON IN OUR NEIGHBOURING CHURCHES



Ainsdale Village Singers is a small and friendly community choir, singing a wide variety of different types of music in arrangements of up to

four parts: sopranos, altos, tenors and basses.

We do not hold auditions and it is not essential to be able to read music. Our MD is Stewart Hankinson, an experienced, professional teacher, performer and conductor who joined us in 2017. He teaches at Liverpool University, from which he holds a Masters degree with distinction in Music Performance and Pedagogy, as well as having qualifications from several music colleges.

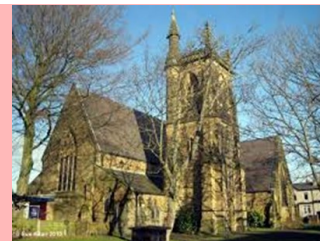
We rehearse in the large hall attached to Ainsdale Village Church, Station Road, Ainsdale PR8 3HW.

The venue is accessible by car or public transport. We meet between 7.30pm and 9.30pm every Thursday evening during school term times.

We are currently rehearsing for Christmas events, the first of these being the "Christmas Tree Festival" at St John's Church and we will also have a tree at this event to raise money for our chosen charity for this year which is "The Learning Rooms" and we are delighted that their singing group will be joining us for this event and also at our Christmas Concert "Haul out the Holly" which will also be performed at St John's Church (see next page). We hope that many of you will be able to attend these events in the lovely surroundings of the church.

If you are interested, please contact our Secretary, Chris on 07963 469951 or by email at sec.ainsdalevillagesingers@gmail.com

Social Events Coming Soon at St Peter's Birkdale (St Peter's Road)



Saturday 13th December:

Alistair Lee (professional singer) presents
"Night at the Musicals" (7.00pm)

Wednesday 17th December:

Christmas Bingo (2pm-4pm)

For more details about these events please contact dale@hotmail.com

ST PETER'S CHURCH, BIRKDALE

Night at the Musicals

FEATURING

ALISTAIR LEE

ENTRY £10
DEC 13TH | (INCLUDING LIGHT SUPPER)
BRING YOUR OWN DRINKS

EVENT STARTS 7PM

TICKETS FROM:
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Social Events Coming Soon at St James' Birkdale (Lulworth Road)

First Tuesday of each month: Games Afternoon in the church hall. 1.00pm for lunch (pre-book at St James' church office 01704 564907 the week before) or 1.30-3.00pm for games.

Third Sunday of each month: Afternoon Tea in Welcome Area 2.30-4.00pm. Open to anyone who would like some company along with tea/coffee and homemade cakes.



Saturday 29th November:
Murder Mystery event (evening).

AINSDALE VILLAGE SINGERS
Ainsdale Village Singers Present

A concert of festive songs
directed by Stewart Hankinson
accompanied by Brenda Redmond

Featuring
the Learning Rooms Singers
directed by David Lonsdale

On
Sunday December 14th at 2 PM
At St Johns Church, Birkdale
St Johns Rd PR8 4JP

Tickets: £8
Contact Steve:
07760 380265

Supporting the Learning Rooms

HAUL OUT THE HOLLY

the Learning Rooms the hub

Warm Space

Struggling with the cost of living? Feeling lonely?
Looking for a quiet, safe place to gather your thoughts?
Or, just need a friendly chat over a hot drink?

EVERY THURSDAY 10am - 4pm

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TUESDAY MORNING

NINE THINGS THAT ARE HAPPENING



Miscellaneous observations on life

God wants spiritual fruit, not religious nuts. – Anon

Silence is often misinterpreted but never misquoted. – Anon

Do the maths ... count your blessings. – Anon

Faith is the ability to not panic. – Anon

If you worry, you didn't pray. If you pray, don't worry. – Anon

Joining the Sunday morning services and Thursday evening prayers by zoom or by telephone

To join the **weekly Sunday morning services at 10.30am** by **ZOOM**:

The Identification Number every Sunday will be: 812 3403 0688

The Password every Sunday will be: 201823

To join the **weekly Sunday morning services at 10.30am** by **TELEPHONE**:

The telephone number you must ring is: 0203 481 5240

The Meeting Identification Number every Sunday will be: 812 3403 0688

When prompted to do so, enter that number and then press HASH (#)

The Password every Sunday will be: 201823.

When prompted to do so, enter that number and then press HASH (#)

To join the **twice-monthly Thursday evening prayers** at 7.30pm by **ZOOM**:

The Identification Number every Thursday will be: 835 5074 3780

The Password every Thursday will be: 7ehHEK

To join the **twice-monthly Thursday evening prayers** at 7.30pm by **TELEPHONE**:

The telephone number you must ring is: 0203 481 5240

The Meeting Identification Number every Thursday will be: 835 5074 3780.

When prompted to do so, enter that number and then press HASH (#)

The Password every Thursday will be 7ehHEK. **SUBJECT TO BEING CHANGED.**

When prompted to do so, enter that number and then press HASH (#)

BUT PLEASE CHECK YOUR CALL PACKAGE CHARGES WITH YOUR PROVIDER

IF YOU NEED ANY HELP: Please contact Clive (564206) or Rev. Jennie for any further details you require.

Was it really that long ago?...

65 years ago, on 2nd November 1960 a British jury cleared Penguin Books of obscenity for publishing D.H. Lawrence's novel Lady Chatterley's Lover. This is often considered the beginning of the permissive society in Britain.

Also 65 years ago, on 8th November 1960, John F Kennedy was elected as the 35th President of the USA.

62 years ago, on 22nd November 1963, President John F Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas, Texas. It is the official view that he was shot by a lone gunman, Lee Harvey Oswald, but many other theories have emerged about the involvement of others.

60 years ago, on 9th November 1965 the death penalty was abolished in the UK

50 years ago, on 3rd November 1975 Britain's first North Sea oil pipeline was officially opened.

40 years ago, on 15th November 1985 the Anglo-Irish Agreement was signed by the Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and Irish President Garret Fitzgerald. It gave the Irish government a consultative role in the affairs of Northern Ireland.

30 years ago, on 20th November 1995 Princess Diana admitted that she had committed adultery, and spoke openly about her separation from the Prince of Wales in a frank interview with the BBC. In 2021, BBC journalist Martin Bashir was accused of using deception, including fake bank statements, to persuade her to give the interview.

25 years ago, on 9th November 2000 Eric Morley, TV host, died. Known for establishing the ballroom dancing competition Come Dancing (1949 – 98). It was succeeded by a celebrity version, Strictly Come Dancing, in 2004.

20 years ago, on 30th November 2005 John Sentamu became Archbishop of York (until 2020). He was the first black archbishop in the Church of England.

10 years ago, on 13th November 2015 the Paris Attacks took place when suicide bombers and armed terrorists from Islamic State (IS) attacked a football stadium, rock concert, cafes and restaurants. 130 people were killed and 416 injured. IS said the attacks were in retaliation for French air-strikes on IS targets in Syria and Iraq.

Church Hall Users

Wednesday

10.30 – 12 noon 2nd Wednesday of the month only. **Elderberries Gardening Club**

A social gardening club, where speakers are invited to talk on various topics, and visits and social events throughout the year.

Contact: Shelley Lewis Lavender on 01704 560690 or via email:

elderberriesgardening@gmail.com

Thursday

1.00pm to 2.00pm: Balance Classes for the Elderly.

Contact: ageingwellmerseyside@outlook.com.

6.00-9.00pm:

St John's Rainbows (6.00-7.00pm)

St John's Brownies (6.00-7.15pm)

and Girl Guides (7.15-9.00pm).

Contact: Janette Law 01704 565951

Friday

1.00pm-2.30pm Jolly Tots for tots, babies and bumps

6.30-9.30pm Once per month **St John's Film Nights**

A chance to see some great modern films. Tea, coffee and homemade cake available.

Contact: Christine Baker 01704 560518.

Remembrance

*In November we come to remember
How war tore our country apart,
From village and town and all around
Men and boys left home and hearth.
Mothers and wives and sisters all
Saw their brave young men go away,
For some it meant the ultimate price
As they gave their tomorrows for our today.
Another Man left His home above
To rescue this world from sin,
It cost Him His life which He freely gave
So new life could enter in.
In this world there will always be war,
But the time will surely be
When the earth shall be filled with the glory
of God
As the waters cover the sea.*

By Megan Carter

On 10th April 2019 microfractures were discovered in the structure of Hammersmith bridge, resulting in its closure to all traffic. On 15th April 2019, less than a week later, the mighty church of Notre Dame in Paris was severely damaged by a major fire.

The church is much older than the bridge, and much trickier and more expensive to repair. But today, six and a half years later, Notre Dame is back in all her glory... and London traffic is still jammed by the closure of an important river crossing...

Two sad days

*Two sad days, six years ago
With just one week that interposed;
At Notre-Dame dread flames glow
And Hammersmith's old bridge was closed.
Today in Paris – see that church!
Restored beyond her glory days!
Hammersmith though – in the lurch
Still neglected, there she stays.
Dearest reader, you may judge
How the French engaged top gear
While the British still don't budge –
And may not yet for many a year!*

By Nigel Beeton

£130 for our church: Home Insurance offer from Ecclesiastical Insurance Company

Take out a home insurance policy with Ecclesiastical – one of the UK's most trusted home insurance providers and a Which? "Best Buy" – and Ecclesiastical will donate £130 to our church.

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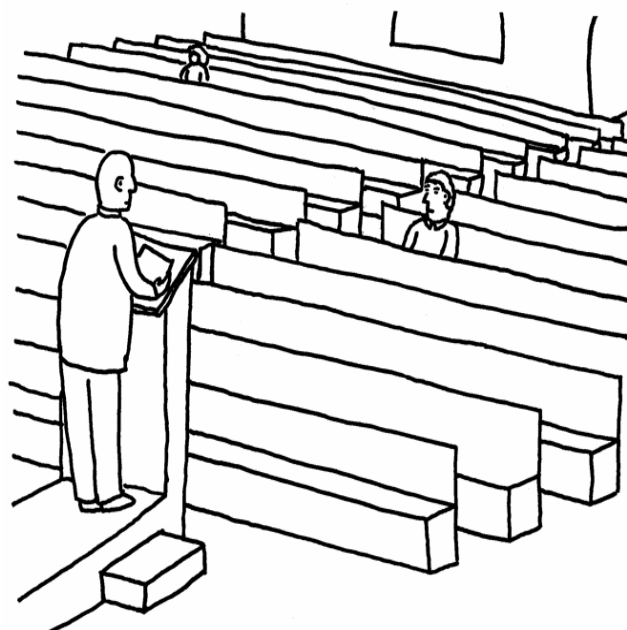
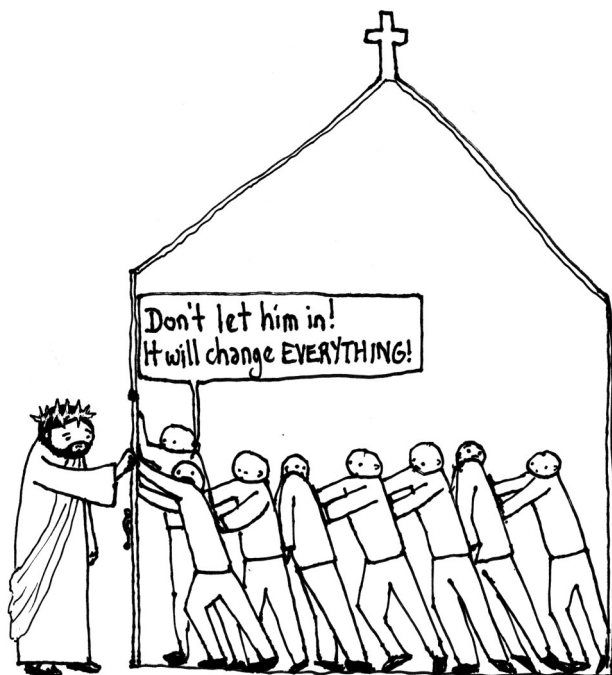


To Jean Morris on 1st November
Janette Law on 18th November
Rosemary Gleave on 19th November
Roy Doran on 30th November

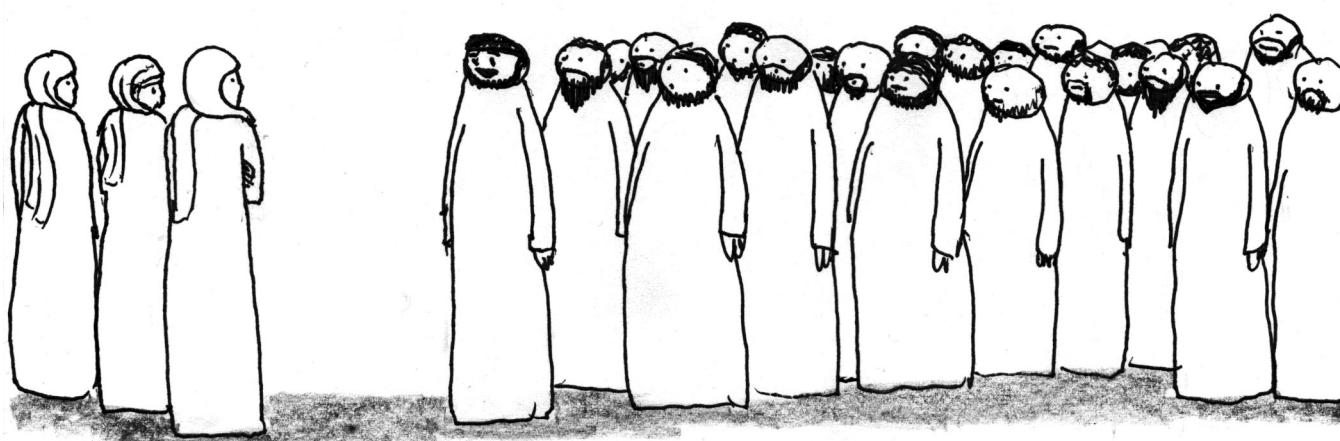
If there are any birthdays, anniversaries or other reasons to celebrate which our readers would like to share with others **DURING DECEMBER** please let the Editor know by email to stjohnbirkdaletheword@gmail.com

The Last Laughs

CartoonChurch.com



IT IS NOT ABOUT THE NUMBERS



"SO LADIES, THANKS FOR BEING THE FIRST TO WITNESS AND REPORT THE RESURRECTION AND WE'LL TAKE IT FROM HERE."



Low Impact Exercise Classes

Liverpool Road Methodist Church Fridays

10:15am – 11am Low Impact Dance Fitness – £4.00

A mixture of aerobics and dance to help you have fun and lose your tum!

Good music and lots of laughs.

Ideal if you are first on the dance floor or have two left feet – if you're having fun you're doing it right!!

11:05am – 11:35am Balance Improver – £3.00

Using a variety of proven balance techniques to help improve your balance, confidence and coordination.

These can be done seated, standing whilst holding on or unsupported if you're feeling like showing off!

11:45am – 12:15pm Seated Dance Exercise – £3.00

Using a mixture of exercise and dance moves – to a background of sing along tracks to help you have fun and keep moving.

Ideal for those who find a standing session uncomfortable

Beginners Very Welcome

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CHRISTMAS FAIR RAFFLE
FRIDAY 5TH DECEMBER 2025

ITEM	NAME	TEL NO	TICK
<u>Christmas cake</u>			
<u>Christmas pudding</u>			
<u>Brandy sauce</u>			
<u>Box mince pies</u>			
<u>Shortbread biscuits</u>			
<u>Tin ham</u>			
<u>Jar Baxters jam</u>			
<u>Jar Baxters marmalade</u>			
<u>Mixed nuts</u>			
<u>Biscuits for cheese</u>			
<u>Chutney</u>			
<u>Bottle wine</u>			
<u>Cranberry sauce</u>			
<u>Small jar Nescafe coffee</u>			
<u>Small packet Yorkshire tea</u>			
<u>After eight dinner mints</u>			
<u>Box chocolates</u>			
<u>Tin John West salmon</u>			

PLEASE SIGN AGAINST THE ITEM YOU WISH TO DONATE AND TICK WHEN YOU HAVE PLACED IT IN THE BOX, AND ENSURE YOUR ITEMS ARE BROUGHT TO CHURCH LATEST BY SUNDAY **30th NOVEMBER.**

CHRISTMAS FAIR RAFFLE
SATURDAY 6TH DECEMBER 2025

ITEM	NAME	TEL NO	TICK
<u>Christmas cake</u>			
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<u>Tin John West salmon</u>			

PLEASE SIGN AGAINST THE ITEM YOU WISH TO DONATE AND TICK WHEN YOU HAVE PLACED IT IN THE BOX, AND ENSURE YOUR ITEMS ARE BROUGHT TO CHURCH LATEST BY SUNDAY **30th NOVEMBER**.