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# THE WORD

MAGAZINE OF ST JOHN'S BIRKDALE

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GOD CENTRED, RELATIONSHIP DRIVEN AND LIFE TRANSFORMING

MAY 2026 ISSUE 281

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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*

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

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## VERY HAPPY NEWS

We are delighted to report in these pages that our Vicar, Rev Jennie Hardy and Mr Anthony Guy have announced their engagement to be married. The ceremony will take place on Saturday 19th September here at St John's. We wish them every happiness and pray that God will bless them and support them in their life together.

## SITUATION BECOMING VACANT

Rev Sam Johnson, Vicar of St James' and St Peter's since 2023, has recently given notice to the Bishop of Liverpool that he will leave parish ministry during the summer and hopes to serve God's Kingdom in a different way. He has applied for the position of chaplain with Mercy Ships. We wish him well in his application and pray that he and his wife and young children will be happy in their new environment, wherever and whatever that will be. Meanwhile we should pray for St James' and St Peter's which will soon enter another interregnum.

## PARISH REGISTER

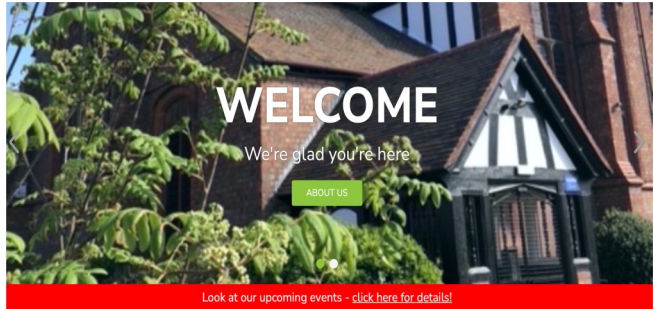
### Holy Baptisms

#### Sunday 5th April

Natalie Audoire  
Zackary Downey  
Anthony Guy  
Shirley Horrocks  
Freya Rimmer  
Charlie Seddon  
Millie Seddon



See page 10 for how they took the plunge!



## Visit our website

[stjohnsbirkdale.co.uk](http://stjohnsbirkdale.co.uk)

## WHO'S WHAT AT ST. JOHN'S

<b>Vicar:</b>	Rev. Jennie Hardy (07872 400718)	<b>Girl Guides:</b>	Mrs. Janette Law (565951)
<b>Clergy (retired):</b>	Rev. Roy Doran (572387)	<b>St. John's Brownies:</b>	Mrs. Helen Jones and
<b>Reader:</b>	Mrs. Christine Baker (560518)	<b>Brownie Guiders:</b>	Mrs. Lesley Scott
<b>Churchwarden:</b>	Clive Morris (564206)	<b>St. John's Rainbows:</b>	Mrs. Lesley Scott
<b>PCC Treasurer:</b>	Mrs. Amanda Potts (07530 950100)	<b>Church Flowers:</b>	Mrs. Cath Whiteside (07732 993025)
<b>PCC Secretary:</b>	Mrs. Christine Baker (560518)	<b>Magazine Editor:</b>	Stuart Baker (560518)
<b>Gift Aid Secretary:</b>	Mrs. Sylvia Kent (564071)	<b>Design and artwork:</b>	Ian Bennett MBKS
<b>Parish Hall Secretary:</b>	Mrs. Jean Morris (564206)	<b>Magazine Printer:</b>	Mrs. Christine Baker (560518)
<b>Electoral Roll Officer:</b>	Stuart Harris (563789)	<b>Buildings Inspector:</b>	David Halsall (07790 822343)
<b>Deanery Synod Reps:</b>	Clive Morris (564206) Stuart Baker (560518)	<b>Verger:</b>	Anthony Guy
<b>Lead Safeguarding Officer &amp; Recruiter</b>	Stuart Baker (560518)	<b>Eco Champions:</b>	Mrs. Elizabeth Rothwell and Duncan Rothwell (564192)
<b>Transport Officer:</b>	Mrs. Jean Morris (564206)	<b>Leadership Team:</b>	Rev. Jennie Hardy Rev. Roy Doran Mrs. Christine Baker Clive Morris
<b>Church of England Children's Society:</b>	Mrs. Sylvia Kent (564071)	<b>Contacts &amp; information:</b>	
<b>Mothers' Union:</b>	Mrs. Linda Caton (564737)	<b>Editor's email:</b>	<a href="mailto:stjohnbirkdaletheword@gmail.com">stjohnbirkdaletheword@gmail.com</a>
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		<b>Website:</b>	<a href="https://www.stjohnsbirkdale.co.uk">https://www.stjohnsbirkdale.co.uk</a>

## MESSAGE FROM THE VICAR:

Dear Word readers!

I'm writing to you today in the spirit of our 'Trust and Obey' sermon series as I write about the Alpha course that we will be hosting at St John's. In Luke 5:5 Simon Peter finally obeys Jesus' command to let down the nets,

"Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets." It is in this spirit that we are to run another Alpha course, to let down our nets to reach out to people, to make new disciples and to help us all in our current discipleship to grow in our walk with Jesus, being equipped with knowledge and blessed with food, fellowship and good teaching.

Jesus commands us all to 'make disciples'. That's people who follow Jesus and the Alpha course is a great course which is easy to run which clearly illustrates the gospel, gives people a chance to ask questions and a place where we can build connection and relationships. Do pray about three things: should you do the Alpha course; can you help serve at the Alpha course; and who can you invite to come along!

### **What's it all about, Alpha?!**

So, what is Alpha? For those who may not be familiar with the Alpha course some background may be helpful. The Alpha course was written by Rev



**Rev'd Jennie Hardy**

Charles Marnham of Holy Trinity Brompton Church in London and began in 1977. It was first used as a basics course for those within the church but over time developed into a course for seekers outside of the Church. When in 1990 Nicky Gumbel took over leading the course it saw huge expansion and it is now estimated that over 25 million people have experienced Alpha in over 140 countries and in over 100 languages.

**"an opportunity to grow in your faith..."**

Personally, I have led the Alpha course a number of times in churches, cafes and even pubs! I valued doing the course as a new Christian as it helped me to learn and grow and even when running the course since I always learn something new every time. This is partly due to the diversity of the course and people who are on the course. I have seen many people become Christians from the impact of the Alpha course and we will

hear a personal story from one or two people on the launch of the course on **Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> May.**

The course will run for 10 weeks and will include a Holy Spirit Day when we will spend a day away focussing on the Holy Spirit. The topics covered include, 'Is there more to Life than this?', 'Who is Jesus?', 'How can I have faith?', 'Why and how should I read the Bible?', 'Who is the Holy Spirit?', 'How can I resist evil?' and more!

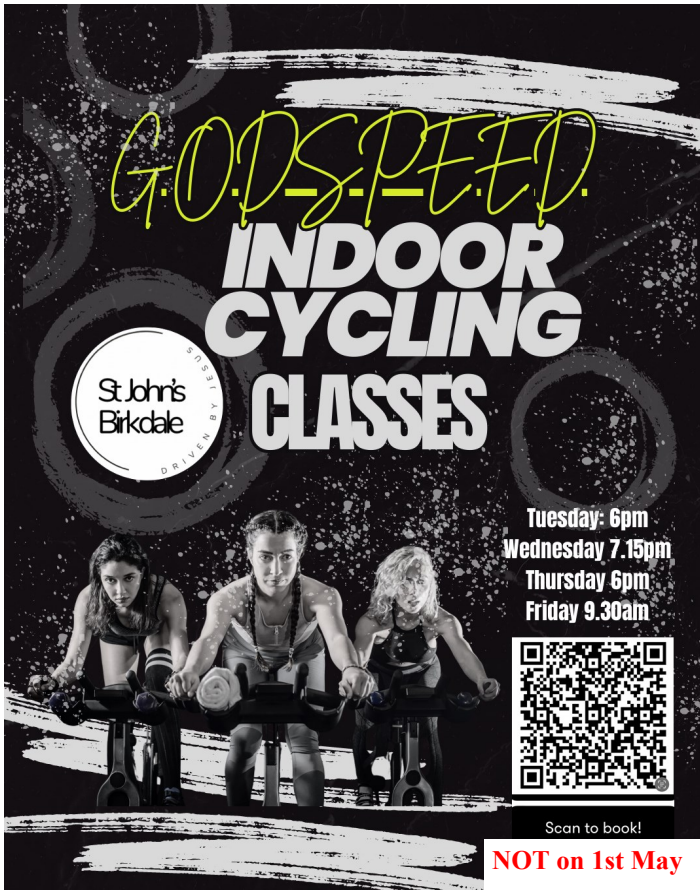
Each evening will consist of a welcome, a light meal, a talk and a discussion on your table led by a table leader and a helper. Everyone is welcome, I've found the most exciting guests are the ones who say they are atheists! This leads to some interesting discussion! So, there's no limits on who you can invite to come along, everyone really is welcome. If there's someone who you have been praying for why not take this opportunity to invite them.

Why not use this as an opportunity to grow in your faith and be a part of a group that will be introducing people to Jesus for the first time! I can't think of anything better to do personally! I'm going, it's going to be great, why don't you come too – and bring a friend!

Please also do be praying for the course over the coming weeks as we prepare, that we will all deepen our faith and are able to draw others into the Kingdom of God as we go!

Hope to see you there!  
Love, Rev Jennie xx

# WHAT'S ON AT ST. JOHN'S



**G.O.D.S.P.E.E.D.**  
**INDOOR CYCLING CLASSES**

St John's Birkdale

Tuesday: 6pm  
Wednesday 7.15pm  
Thursday 6pm  
Friday 9.30am

Scan to book!

**NOT on 1st May**



ST JOHN'S BIRKDALE **FILM NIGHTS**  
CHURCH HALL, ST JOHN'S ROAD, BIRKDALE PR8 4JP

**2026 PROGRAMME**

16<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY  
20<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY  
27<sup>TH</sup> MARCH  
17<sup>TH</sup> APRIL  
29<sup>TH</sup> MAY  
26<sup>TH</sup> JUNE  
24<sup>TH</sup> JULY

FILM TITLES ARE DISPLAYED ON THE CHURCH NOTICE BOARDS

ATTENDANCE IS COMPLETELY FREE  
A DONATION OF NOT LESS THAN £5 TO COVER REFRESHMENTS APPRECIATED  
6:30PM REFRESHMENTS | 7:00PM SCREENING | BOOK WITH CHRISTINE 01704 560518



St John's Birkdale

**Jolly Tots**

Every Friday in term time  
1pm - 2.30pm

For tots, babies & bumps  
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



3rd Monday of the month  
7.30pm

St John's Birkdale

**Growth**

DISCIPLESHIP  
EXPLORED

@ Stuart & Christines  
food. fellowship. fun.

info@stjohnsbirkdale.co.uk

## Money

There is the story of a minister who got up one Sunday and announced to his congregation: "I have good news and bad news. The good news is, we have enough money to pay for our new building programme. The bad news is, it's still out there in your pockets."

# WHAT'S COMING TO ST. JOHN'S

St John's Birkdale SOCIETY DRIVEN

## EVENT SCHEDULE 2026

<b>3</b> FEB	<b>3.30pm - 5.30pm</b> <b>MESSY CHURCH</b> MESSY PLAY & CRAFTS FOR FAMILIES
<b>7</b> MAR	<b>7pm</b> <b>BARN DANCE</b> DO-SI-DO-ING & CHILLI
<b>3</b> APRIL	<b>2pm</b> <b>MESSY EASTER</b> <b>6.30pm</b> <b>FISH SUPPER &amp; FILM</b> A FILM TO HELP US REFLECT ON GOOD FRIDAY
<b>15</b> MAY	<b>7pm</b> <b>PAINTING WORKSHOP</b> A BLANK CANVAS - ARTIST JULIE WILL INSTRUCT US HOW TO PAINT A MASTERPIECE CREATIVELY

INFO@STJOHNSBIRKDALE.CO.UK      St John's Hall, St John's Road, PR8 4JP

St John's Birkdale SOCIETY DRIVEN

# PAINT & SIP

**TICKETS £10**

WHEN: **15/05**  
AT: **7.30PM**



CANVAS AND TUITION PROVIDED  
COME AND CREATE A MASTERPIECE!

BRING YOUR OWN DRINKS & A GLASS  
SNACKS PROVIDED

ST JOHNS HALL  
ST JOHNS ROAD PR8 4JP

St John's Birkdale SOCIETY DRIVEN

ST JOHN'S

# Messy Church

**FOR FAMILIES**  
FOOD - CRAFTS - SINGING - DANCING

**TUESDAY 7th MAY**

**ST JOHN'S HALL, ST JOHN'S ROAD, PR8 4JP**

PLEASE TELL US ABOUT ANY SPECIAL DIETARY NEEDS

INFO@STJOHNSBIRKDALE.CO.UK

St John's Birkdale SOCIETY DRIVEN



# Pray Together

**Thursday @ 7.30pm**

**In the vestry and on zoom**

**Meeting ID: 83550743780**

**Passcode: 7ehHEK**

**May 7th & 21st.**

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.

# WHAT'S COMING TO ST. JOHN'S

## SUMMER FAIR SATURDAY 20<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 11am to 3pm

With the Christmas Fair now behind us, the team are working hard towards our upcoming Summer Fair, and we look forward to it being another successful event. Please make a note in your diary and bring as many friends and family to support and enjoy our event.

There will be an assortment of stalls consisting of a bottle stall, books, good as new bric-a-brac, raffle, merchandise from our Godspeed Spin class, 3D printed toys, Elsie's Story gifts, hand-made children's jewellery, paintings and plants, and so there will be plenty of choice if you are looking for a gift for someone or just a treat for yourself. Shop till you drop, then why not enjoy a refreshing cuppa and sandwich or a delicious home-made cake in our café.

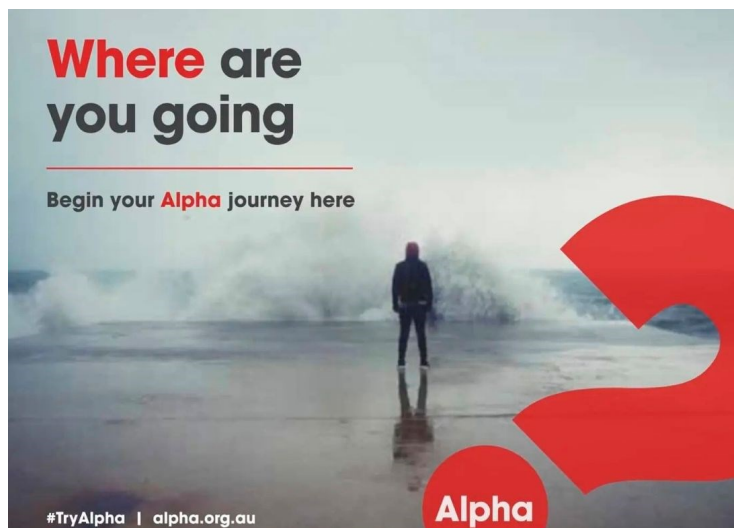
As always, we are very much aware of the many requests made on you all in these difficult times, but we would be very grateful for your generous donations for the raffle i.e. any kind of toiletries, tins of food or bottles. A box will be available at the back of church from Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> May for your contributions.

Also please don't forget any full or empty wine bottles (with a screw top) for our bottle stall, which can be left in the box marked "bottles" at the back of church, along with any unwanted bottle bags.

Many thanks. Sylvia Kent

### Ten Fun Facts

1. You can't see your ears without a mirror.
2. You can't count your hair.
3. You can't breathe through your nose with your tongue out.
4. You just tried number 3.
6. When you did number 3 you realised that it was possible, but you looked like a dog.
7. You are smiling right now because you were fooled.
8. You skipped number 5.
9. You just checked to see if there is a number 5.
10. Share this with your friends so they can breathe like a dog too.



## St John's Birkdale 6th May 7:30pm 10 week course

You're invited



# 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 6th & 20th May**.

On 6th May the service will be followed by Brunch.

On 20th May 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](mailto: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](mailto:revroydoran@btinternet.com)

St John's Birkdale

## JOIN OUR KNIT & KNATTER GROUP

The 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday, monthly  
**2:30pm**  
In the vicar's vestry

Refreshments provided

Fee: Just £1

Contact: [info@stjohnsbirkdale.co.uk](mailto:info@stjohnsbirkdale.co.uk)  
Call: Christine on: 01704 560518

# CHURCH SERVICES IN MAY

## Worship on the Fifth Sunday of Easter

SUNDAY 3rd MAY

8.30am Holy Communion in church only

10.30am Holy Communion in church and via zoom and phone

## Collect for the Fifth Sunday of Easter

Risen Christ, your wounds declare your love for the world and the wonder of your risen life: give us compassion and courage to risk ourselves for those we serve, to the glory of God the Father.

### The subject of Clive's talks:

### Obedience is Destiny

#### The Text: Genesis 12: 1-4 NIV

1 The Lord had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you. 2 "I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a

blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." 4 So Abram went, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Harran.

**MIDWEEK TRADITIONAL COMMUNION SERVICE**  
Followed by Brunch in the small hall



WEDNESDAY 5th MAY

10.30am  
IN CHURCH

## Worship on the Sixth Sunday of Easter

SUNDAY 10th MAY

8.30am Holy Communion in church only

10.30am Service of Praise & Prayer in church and via zoom and phone

## Collect for the Sixth Sunday of Easter

Risen Christ, by the lakeside you renewed your call to your disciples: help your Church to obey your command and draw the nations to the fire of your love, to the glory of God the Father.

### The subject of Jennie's talks:

### Who is God?

#### The Text: Genesis 1: 1-27 NIV

*The entire text of these verses is too long to set out in these pages. It is the story of the six days of Creation of everything:*

1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 2 Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

3 And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.... And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day....

On the second day God created the sky.

On the third day God separated the sea from the land and created vegetation and plants and trees bearing seeds.

On the fourth day God created the sun, the moon and all the stars in the sky.

On the fifth day God created all the fish in the seas and the birds in the sky.

On the sixth day God created all the wild animals and livestock. Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.



Jacqui Parkinson's imagination of the beginning of Creation in her textile art "Threads Through the Bible"

# CHURCH SERVICES IN MAY

## Worship on the Seventh Sunday of Easter

**SUNDAY 17th MAY**

**8.30am Holy Communion in church only**

**10.30am Service of Praise & Prayer in church  
and via zoom and phone**

**Collect for the Seventh Sunday of Easter:** Risen, ascended Lord, as we rejoice at your triumph, fill your Church on earth with power and compassion, that all who are estranged by sin may find forgiveness and know your peace, to the glory of God the Father.

**The subject of Roy's talks:**

**Father God**

### **The Text: John 14: 1-14 NIV**

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. 4 In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. 6 There was a man sent from God whose name was John. 7 He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. 8 He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

9 The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. 10 He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. 11 He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. 12 Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— 13 children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. 14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

### **MIDWEEK TRADITIONAL COMMUNION SERVICE**

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



**WEDNESDAY 20th MAY**

**10.30am  
IN CHURCH**

## Worship on Pentecost Day (Whit Sunday)

**SUNDAY 24th MAY**

**8.30am Holy Communion in church only**

**10.30am Service of Praise & Prayer in church and via  
zoom and phone**

**Collect for Pentecost:** Holy Spirit, sent by the Father, ignite in us your holy fire; strengthen your children with the gift of faith, revive your Church with the breath of love, and renew the face of the earth, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**The subject of Christine's talks:**

**Son of God**

### **The Text: John 10: 22-38 NIV**

22 Then came the Festival of Dedication at Jerusalem. It was winter, 23 and Jesus was in the temple courts walking in Solomon's Colonnade. 24 The Jews who were there gathered around him, saying, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly." 25 Jesus answered, "I did tell you, but you do not believe. The works I do in my Father's name testify about me, 26 but you do not believe because you are not my sheep. 27 My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. 28 I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand. 29 My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. 30 I and the Father are one." 31 Again his Jewish opponents picked up stones to

stone him, 32 but Jesus said to them, "I have shown you many good works from the Father. For which of these do you stone me?" 33 "We are not stoning you for any good work," they replied, "but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God." 34 Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in your Law, 'I have said you are "gods"'? 35 If he called them 'gods,' to whom the word of God came—and Scripture cannot be set aside— 36 what about the one whom the Father set apart as his very own and sent into the world? Why then do you accuse me of blasphemy because I said, 'I am God's Son'? 37 Do not believe me unless I do the works of my Father. 38 But if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father."

**Trinity Sunday: there will NOT be a service at St John's. As it is the 5th Sunday of the month we shall be joining Liverpool Road Methodist Church at 10.45am.**

## Taking the plunge for Jesus!

### Full Immersion Baptism at St. John's on Easter Sunday

**On Easter Sunday** six adults and one teenager were baptised during our morning service. This was definitely a first for St John's: full immersion in a baptism pool! For the avoidance of doubt, this was a borrowed pool and not one which had been excavated beneath the nave floor.

The water was about 2 feet deep and had allegedly been warmed but the shivers and goosepimples of those who emerged from the depths suggested otherwise.

Those who were baptised were Anthony Guy, Freya Rimmer, Natalie Audoire,

Zackary Downey, Charlie Seddon, Millie Seddon and Shirley Horrocks.

The congregation was delighted to welcome them into the family of Christ at St John's and gave them and Rev Jennie and Jonathan Lawson (the two dunkers) hearty applause. Before being immersed Zackary read Psalm 23 to us and Anthony shared his testimony of how his faith had been rekindled after suffering a very serious road accident and attending our Alpha course last year.





*The Church of England still retains some singular parish clergy. Take the parish of St James-the-Least-of-All, for example. Here the elderly Anglo-Catholic vicar, Eustace, continues his correspondence to Darren, his nephew, a low-church curate recently ordained... by the Revd Dr Gary Bowness.*

## ON DEALING WITH SUMMER FETES

The Rectory,  
St James the Least of All

My dear Nephew Darren,

So, you are beginning to plan your first Summer Fete in your new parish. That you appear to be looking forward to it shows how little you know about them.

Parishes hold Summer Fetes so that their clergy can preach more meaningfully on purgatory. Their ostensible purpose is to raise money for the church – which is wholly illogical. The parish could double the money raised if the Fete were dropped, none of the endless preparations made, if everyone spent a pleasant afternoon in their own gardens and each person simply donated £20 to the church instead. But we still feel obliged to go to endless trouble, making ourselves miserable so we can show each other what a good time we are having. That it generally pours seems to make the entire event even more grimly satisfying.

No, the real reasons for a Summer Fete are twofold. First, it gives the entire parish the chance to inspect the Rector's garden. Whatever state it is in, it will cause disapproval. If it is poorly kept, then I am clearly being ungrateful for having three acres of lawn to enjoy. Mowing it each week should be one of my delights; what else would I do with a whole day off each week anyway? The hand mower, kindly given by Colonel French is assumed to be quite adequate – and rumour has it that I need to lose weight anyway. The mower was presented to me when the Colonel bought his own gardener a sit-on motor mower – which is of a size and opulence that makes me assume it has a drinks cabinet and satellite navigation.

The second reason for a Fete comes as a special perk for the organisers. It gives them a chance to inspect the inside of the Rectory. Under the pretence of looking for a little more sugar, they can systematically inspect all the kitchen cupboards and comment on their contents. By the end of the day, the whole parish will know what marmalade I spread on my toast, that I use unnecessarily expensive washing powder, and where I have unsuccessfully tried to hide the gin.

The details of what then happens while the Fete is in progress must wait until my next letter, when we will have had our own. It is now time for Evensong, drinks with Major Mallet and his wife, and then a quiet evening with a good book, while I toy with other possible hiding places for the gin this year.

Your loving uncle,  
Eustace

### **Editor's note:**

Dear Uncle Eustace, what a delightful old curmudgeon he is! And how different St James in the Least of All is from St John's in Birkdale.

We shall have our Summer Fair on Saturday 20th June. Sylvia Kent and many others will be working hard to make it an enjoyable event.

It will be held at church so you won't have a chance to explore the Vicarage to see where the Vicar keeps her expensive washing powder, or what marmalade she uses.

And of course she would only keep gin for strictly medicinal purposes.

But if you cannot attend, or if you prefer to spend the afternoon in your own garden, please feel free to adopt Uncle Eustace's suggestion of making a donation to the church instead. All gifts will be gratefully received.

And in the hope of avoiding what Eustace describes as the grim satisfaction of holding the fair in the pouring rain, let's pray for a lovely summer afternoon!

Do come and support it if you can.

## GOD IN THE ARTS

The Revd Michael Burgess surveys great works of sacred art.

### 'He gave us eyes to see them': Stained Glass Windows

You may know the story of the little girl with her family during a guided tour around a cathedral. As the bright sun streamed through one of the windows, she asked the guide who were the people depicted there. "Those are the saints," he replied.

Later that evening the girl told her mummy, "I know who the saints are." "Do you, dear? Who are they?" the mother asked. The little girl replied: "They are the people who let the light shine through."

When the summer sun rises, its light catches the east window of a church I look after. It shines through the figures and colours of the Annunciation scene to bathe the chancel in a warm glow.

Later as the sun sets, it shines once again through the west window showing Christ surrounded by angels, with the same wonderful effect.

They are two stained glass windows by the Victorian designer, Kempe. But in St Mary's Church, Fairford in Gloucestershire, there are an incredible 28 windows of medieval glass that have survived the centuries and continue to astonish the visitor.

As the sun catches this array of windows, the colours take on a new, vibrant life. We see scenes in the life of our Lord and our Lady, Old Testament prophets, New Testament apostles and the communion of saints. The eye moves round and we reach the west



“... saints are the people who let the light shine through...”

window portraying Christ in majesty and the day of judgement. This great work has been attributed to the royal glazier, Barnard Flower, who was influenced by the late medieval illuminated prayer books. The windows are a living witness to his skill and faith.

George Herbert has a poem that calls us to shine out like the church windows. It is easy, he says, to be “brittle crazy glass”, but in God's good grace we can become like a window where colours and light, belief and life can combine and mingle to radiate out into the world.

## PRAY IN MAY



**HAITI'S CHILDREN ARE RUNNING OUT OF OPTIONS.**

**MORE THAN HALF  
THE POPULATION,  
5.7  
MILLION PEOPLE  
FACING FOOD  
INSECURITY**

Donate now at [marysmeals.org.uk/haiti](https://www.marysmeals.org.uk/haiti)

This May, our parish is invited to join **Mary's Meals UK** in their annual **Pray in May** campaign praying for children worldwide who rely on a daily meal at school.

Mary's Meals UK has produced a range of **free prayer resources**, including prayers, reflections, stories and a prayer calendar, suitable for use in services, parish groups, and personal prayer.

These resources help us reflect on how prayer can lead to hope and practical action for those most in need:

<https://www.marysmeals.org.uk/get-involved/churches-and-prayers/pray-in-may-resources>

## THE POWER OF PENTECOST

The celebration of Pentecost this month could be described as a birthday party for the church, when we remember the gift of the Holy Spirit to the first disciples (Acts 2:1-13). What are we celebrating?

### God's Promise:

The disciples obeyed Jesus' instructions as they gathered in the Upper Room: 'Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift My Father promised' (1:4). They met expectantly in prayer for God's promised gift. Just as we look forward to birthday presents, how eager are we to receive more of the Spirit in our lives?

### God's Power:

'All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit' (4). The disciples needed the power of the Spirit to be different: not fearfully gathered behind locked doors, but instead energised to make Christ known. The Spirit can transform our lives into the likeness of Jesus and give gifts to equip our witness. Although the disciples' experience of this power was overwhelming, it was essentially an encounter with God's love. For us, this can be equally emotional or quiet, but *all* of us are included, and nobody is excluded from this experience.



### God's Purpose:

The disciples 'began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.' (4). The Spirit empowered their witness, so that everyone heard them speaking in their own 'native language' (lit: *dialect*, v8). We all have a story to tell of God's activity in our lives, and the Spirit will translate our words and actions into a language that those around can understand! At Pentecost, 3000 people were added to the Church in one day! What do we expect of the Spirit in our day?

'Let the church return to Pentecost, and Pentecost will return to her. The Spirit of God cannot take possession of believers beyond their capacity of receiving Him' (Andrew Murray).

Canon Paul Hardingham

## THAT TAKES THE BISCUIT!

Did you know that Britain is the country with the highest biscuit consumption in the world? According to industry research, we each eat about 500 biscuits a year. And the great biscuit dunking debate – over which biscuit holds up best when dipped in tea – can spark surprisingly passionate discussion.

Biscuits have been part of our daily lives for centuries. Their dose of sweet, tasty comfort is loved by 2-year-olds and 90-year-olds, and every age in between.

And so **National Biscuit Day (29th May)** is held each year to honour this beloved snack. Our national favourite seems to be the chocolate digestive, followed by shortbread and chocolate fingers. But don't underestimate the appeal of custard creams, hobnobs, chocolate chip and oatmeal cookies!



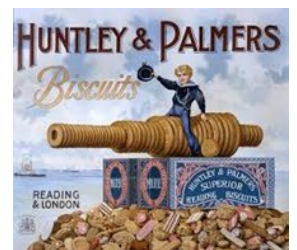
The McVitie's Digestive, first produced in 1892, is one of the most iconic biscuits in British history. Today, it remains a bestseller alongside other classics like the Rich Tea, the Bourbon, and the Jammie Dodger.

The word 'biscuit' comes from the Latin *panis biscotus*, meaning 'twice-cooked bread'. In Roman times, flour-based provisions were baked twice, to remove moisture, making them durable enough for long journeys. Ancient Egyptian sailors and Roman soldiers relied on these early biscuits as a portable, long-lasting food source.

The transformation from practical sustenance to sweet treat began around the seventh century, when Persian bakers added eggs, butter, cream, and eventually sugar and honey to their recipes, creating some of the earliest cookies in history.

By the Middle Ages, biscuits had spread across Europe, with each region developing its own favourite.

The Industrial Revolution brought mass production to the biscuit world. British firms like McVitie's, Huntley and Palmers, and Carr's produced biscuits on an unprecedented scale. In 1831, Huntley and Palmers even invented the decorative biscuit tin, which not only kept biscuits fresh but also made them an attractive gift item.



## THE INFLUENCE OF RELIGION ON LAW

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

### FAMILY LIFE

There is one more subject which I must mention, and, in some ways, it is most important of all. It is the institution of marriage. The Christian Church has always maintained that marriage is a life-long union, for better or worse, so long as both shall live.

Divorce was never allowed so as to give the right to re-marry. This principle was in marked contrast to other legal systems such as the Jewish laws or the Roman law which always permitted divorce to a greater or less extent.

The principle of the indissolubility of marriage was in England for centuries not only the law of the Church but also the law of the land. It had a profound influence on the social life of the country. The family is the primary social unit. The well-being of the whole community requires that children should, so far as possible, be brought up by their own parents as members of one family, with all the give and take that family life demands, and also with the security that it affords.

The institution of marriage is the legal foundation of this family life. The principle of indissolubility was the binding force which cemented it. Now the State has abandoned the principle and divorce is easily obtained.

The result is that people have come to regard divorce as a matter which can be arranged between the parties. In so doing, they only too often disregard the interests of their children and

pursue their own selfish ends.

Every thinking person is profoundly disturbed by this state of affairs. It has a grave effect on the family unity and on the national character. It is almost impossible for the State to retrace its steps so as to make the divorce law more difficult.

The only real remedy is the growth of a strong public opinion condemning divorce, and, I would add, condemning infidelity. It should not be regarded, as it now is, as the private concern of the parties with which no one else has anything to do. And if the law fails to uphold the institution of marriage, how can we expect young people to do so? Very many now live together, as if married, without bothering to marry at all. No one seems to mind. But so often their associations quickly come to grief. This development is undermining the institution of the family, and the whole fabric of society. It even strikes the law itself. These are all matters of great concern to everyone who has the interests of this country and heart.

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Editor's note: it is not the function of THE WORD to express political views or to make moral judgments on people who divorce or their reasons for doing so. We publish Lord Denning's article because he was a lawyer and thinker of great renown and his views may accord with those of many of our readers but they may jar with some others. Although divorce is legally quite easy to obtain it can cause immense emotional turmoil and it does not always indicate a selfish disregard for the welfare of children of the family. But we do agree that marriage, the loving commitment of two people to each other, is the bedrock of Christian society.



Lord Denning,  
drawn by Sallon

## Water/Wine Bottle Stall

At the **Summer Fair on June 20th** we shall have a Water/Wine Bottle Stall, but to make this possible we need your help.

Please can you donate the following:

- Full bottles of wine—any type
- Empty screw-top wine bottles with the screw tops on
- Bottle bags

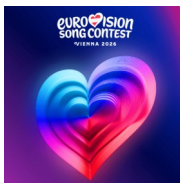
There will be boxes at the back of church for these items.

Thank you in advance for your help.



## HAPPY 70TH BIRTHDAY!

This year's Eurovision Song Contest, to be held 12<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> May in Vienna, will look a bit different as it marks its **70<sup>th</sup> birthday**.



That is because Iceland, Ireland, the Netherlands, Slovenia and Spain have opted out, as a protest to the inclusion of Israel in the contest, following the war in Gaza. That is the largest number of boycotting countries in the contest's history since 1970.

On the other hand, at least Bulgaria, Moldova and Romania are set to return this year. Eurovision is a long-established annual international celebration of music. This year's programme will consist of two semi-finals, on 12<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> May, and then a final on the 16<sup>th</sup>. It will be held at Wiener Stadthalle in Vienna, and presented by Victoria Swarovski and Michael Ostrowski. Broadcasters from 35 countries will also participate.

Britain has won the Eurovision five times in 70 years:

- 1967 Puppet on a String
- 1969 Boom Bang-a-Bang
- 1976 Save Your Kisses for Me
- 1981 Making Your Mind Up
- 1997 Love Shine a Light

And a second place:

- 1968 Congratulations

But, sadly, we have received "nul points" twice:

- 2003 Cry Baby
- 2021 Embers

**Our readers are invited to write to the Editor to tell him what was your favourite British Eurovision entry and why you liked it.**

## Fire

A poem by Penny Candlin

How I wish it had already been kindled  
Those in slumber need to awake  
The flame of the Holy Spirit needs to be ignited  
The richness of God's glory needs to be exposed  
The shackles of the night need to be discarded  
The burden of emptiness needs to be brought to the light  
The faithful need to stand up to be counted for what is right  
The power of the Holy Spirit needs to burn in hearts  
The chaff of disillusionment needs to be blown away  
A new dawn of trusting and knowing the Lord  
A prayer an action a new way of living  
The time of fire is now.

## 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. 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 May **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.

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

**We have three trained First Aiders:  
Rev. Jennie, Janette Law and Jayne Parkinson.**

If none 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 which 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.



*Our defibrillator (outlined in red)*

## COLOURFUL CLERGYMEN

In recent issues we have looked at the lives of some historical clergymen who were colourful because they were scoundrels and an embarrassment to the cloth. This month we delve into the bizarre life and eccentricities of Reverend George Harvest, Rector of Thames Ditton in the 18th century, who was dubbed "An Absent Man, Parson and Comedian" and who, if the stories about him are even partly true, was surely one of the most absent minded of men.

The source material comes from a pamphlet published in the 1790s. In fairness to Harvest it should be remembered (even if he might not have) that lampooning pamphlets by anonymous authors were not uncommon, but as the stories were about an actual character we can suppose that they contained at least an element of truth.

Harvest became engaged to his Bishop's daughter, A good catch for a parson, one might think. But on the day of his wedding he entirely forgot the appointment at the church and went fishing for gudgeon. Not such a good catch! His betrothed was not amused at being left in the lurch and never saw him again.

We might think that this would have been a

salutary lesson. But no. Some time later Harvest became engaged to an amiable young woman of some fortune, and a date was fixed for their nuptials. On that day, again apparently forgetting the arrangement, Harvest left his home in the morning and fell into company with some other fellows and dined with them. It was only at dusk that he remembered where he should have been. He then set off and ran like a madman, arriving home dishevelled and barely recognisable. History does not record what words ensued but for the second time Harvest remained unmarried.

His memory, if judged according to his actions, seems to have been a perfect sieve, for anything would fall through it; and he was found to have forgotten his own name. His ideas were so confused sometimes, that he had been known to write a letter to one person, direct it to another, and address it to a third, who could not devise who it came from, because he had forgotten to write his name at the bottom of it.

There are many other stories about Rev Harvest and we shall have another look at him in June.

**Stuart Baker**

Source: 18th century pamphlet printed by J Mitchell of Newcastle on Tyne

## Liberation, celebration and commemoration – a Channel Island story by Clive Morris

They say that life holds many surprises and that was certainly the case for Mavis Beckingham when she received a call from a local Funeral Director enquiring about her late husband - who died in 2014 - and events from the end of the Second World War.

During the War, the Channel Islands were occupied by German forces who built fortifications and laid mines on land and sea in readiness for an Allied invasion, which never came. It was an occupation which lasted for 5 years until the German forces surrendered across Europe. On Guernsey the sight of a Royal Navy warship anchored off the coast was a cause for true celebration – and it has been celebrated through Liberation Day, a public holiday, on 9<sup>th</sup> May every year since 1945.

In 1945 **Captain Harry Beckingham** (photo)



was in charge of what we would know as a Bomb Disposal squad. During the war itself, the average life expectancy of a soldier working in such a squad was just three weeks.

The Germans were known to have laid more than sixty-six thousand explosive mines around the Islands and if life were to return to normal, they all had to be cleared. Stretching into 1946, Captain Beckingham lead a newly formed Explosives Device Ordnance Team based in Guernsey's central police station – where it has remained.

Eighty years later, Guernsey is commemorating the Team and their dangerous work, with 80 specially minted coins. They didn't however know how to contact those connected to Harry until they hunted down his obituary and got in touch with Howard's Funeral Directors – who in turn made a call to Mavis.

She is honoured to be receiving one of the coins in Harry's memory: a dearly loved, sadly missed husband who was a very brave man.

# AESOP'S FABLES

Stuart Baker revisits these ancient stories in search of the morals or truisms which they contained. This month he looks at

## The Ass and his Purchaser

A man who wanted to buy an Ass went to market, and, coming across a likely-looking beast, arranged with the owner that he should be allowed to take him home on trial to see what he was like. When he reached home, he put him into his stable along with the other asses.

The newcomer took a look round, and immediately went and chose a place next to the laziest and greediest beast in the stable. When the master saw this he put a halter on him at once, and led him off and handed him over to his owner again. The latter was a good deal surprised to seem him back so soon, and said, "Why, do you mean to say you have tested him already?" "I don't want to put him through any more tests," replied the other. "I could see what sort of beast he is from the companion he chose for himself."



Donkeys in the Stable by John Constable  
[Wikimedia Commons]

### The moral:

A man is known by the company he keeps.

## More Blankets by our Knitters and Knatterers

Our K&Ks meet on the 4th Wednesday each month at 2.30pm. Do come and join us as we make more blankets to keep us warm in church.



## ABRAHAM: THE MAN WHO MADE THE BIGGEST LEAP OF FAITH IN HISTORY

Lester Amann considers the man who is our 'spiritual father'...

If we need to get somewhere by public transport, we look at the route and trust the driver knows the way. By faith, we accept that he or she will get us safely to where we want to go.

It was very different for Abraham. God told him to leave his homeland and begin a journey, physically (and spiritually) to an unknown destination. He didn't even understand why God wanted him to move, but he trusted God anyway.

Abraham was born in a country far from Israel, now modern Iraq. His story covers hundreds of miles along with various events and incidents. Although he encountered numerous difficulties and challenges, Abraham lived in close fellowship with God. We might like stability in our lives, but Abraham was unable to settle permanently anywhere. He lived a temporary existence.

Slowly, gradually, God revealed to Abraham what he had to do. He was not perfect. In fact, he made several mistakes but God's plans for Abraham were not thwarted. God showed patience. Despite this man's failings, at times, God revealed His purposes.

God often calls people without giving them all the details! If we knew everything, we would not need faith. God does not always explain to us His ways - neither completely nor in one go. Abraham discovered aspects about God as time went on. It was a journey of faith; a life lived one step at a time.

We may look at Abraham's life and think we cannot have faith like him. If we were put to severe testing, we know we would fail. Our journey with God is different from his, but by his example we can rely on God's promises.

Abraham's life challenges us to believe in a great God and to obey Him. Like Abraham, at the end of our journey of faith, we have an eternal destination waiting for us.



God calls Abraham, by Wenceslaus Hollar, 17th cent.  
Wikimedia Commons

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# WORD SEARCH

Solution on page 30

## A prayer for the Middle East

Lord, we pray for the conflict in the Middle East, and how it is damaging the lives of so many millions of people. You, Lord, make wars cease to the end of the earth; You break bows, shatter spears, and burn shields with fire [Psalm 46:9]. Through Your Holy Spirit, move upon the leaders of the nations to de-escalate this crisis. We hear of wars and rumours of wars (Matt. 24:6), but You Lord are our rock, our fortress and our deliverer. Our hope is in You. Let Your name be exalted among the nations; may You be exalted in the earth [Psalm 46:10]. *Kyrie eleison – Lord have mercy.*



MIDDLE  
EAST  
CONFLICT  
PRAY  
DAMAGE  
WAR

CEASE  
EARTH  
BREAK  
BOWS  
SHATTER  
SPEARS

BURN  
SHIELDS  
FIRE  
CRISIS  
MANY  
LIVES

MILLIONS  
LORD  
OUR  
ROCK  
FORTRESS  
DELIVERER

HOPE  
KYRIE  
IN  
YOU  
MERCY

## An Introduction to Books in the Old Testament: Ezekiel

By Canon Paul Hardingham

Ezekiel was a prophet who proclaimed judgment to God's people in the 6th century BC. He was among the group of Jews exiled in Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar.

Ezekiel received his call when he was 30 years old through a vision of the glory of God. His ministry finished 22 years later with a vision of the restored Temple in Jerusalem.

Ezekiel spoke to a community forced from its home, who had broken faith with God. He presents a God who rules over all people and history. He is a God who desires to be known and acknowledged ('then they will know that I am the Lord').

As a priest, Ezekiel was deeply concerned with the holiness of God. This call to holy living includes an emphasis on individual responsibility (chapter 18), which is a significant milestone in biblical thought.

Ezekiel offers a vision of true hope for those who have undergone judgment. He promises a restored Temple as a sign of God's presence among his people. He also promises a future 'prince' who will rule with justice and restore God's relationship with his people (34:23-4).

In restoring them morally and spiritually, God promises to use them to bring light to the Gentiles. They will demonstrate the holiness of God's name, because they will know him from the heart. This is the promise that is fulfilled in Jesus and made possible for us:

*'I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.'* (36: 26-27).

Do you want to rent a space?

# CHURCH & HALL AVAILABLE TO RENT FOR CONCERTS, PARTIES, MEETINGS...

ST JOHN'S CHURCH BIRKDALE



Are you looking to hire a space for a regular group activity or for a family celebration such as a children's birthday party? Our halls are ideal.

We have both a large hall and a small meeting room available for hire for an hourly charge. A professional standard kitchen is also available.

If you would like to make a booking for any of our rooms in the church hall please contact Jean Morris - phone 01704 564206.

### Small Meeting Room

- Dimensions - 30ft x 15ft (9.1m x 4.57m)
  - Equipped with chairs and tables
  - TV monitor screen
- Ideal for meetings and small gatherings

### Large Hall

- Dimensions - 55ft x 33ft (16.76m x 10m)
  - Equipped with chairs and tables
  - Theatre style capacity for up to 100
  - Ideal for parties, concerts, clubs, meetings
- Regular or one-off events

### Kitchen

- Fully equipped, professional kitchen including cooker, heated cupboard and dishwasher.

### Church

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

# WORD CROSS WORD

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

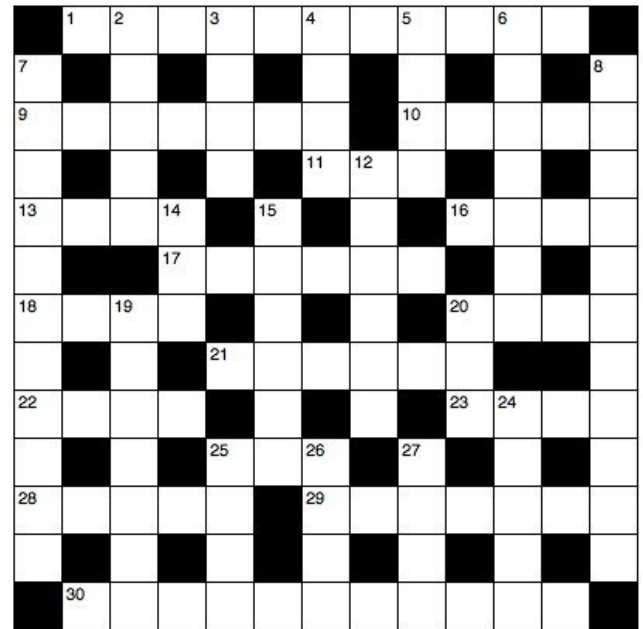
Solution below

## Across

- 1 Overpowered (Deuteronomy 11:4) (11)
- 9 'The — are mantled with corn' (Psalm 65:13) (7)
- 10 'Each man—a sword to his side' (Exodus 32:27) (5)
- 11 On the death of Jesus the curtain in the temple was torn from— to bottom (Matthew 27:51) (3)
- 13 Stagger (Isaiah 28:7) (4)
- 16 'Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought—and doesn't do it, sins' (James 4:17) (2,2)
- 17 Stir up or provoke (Acts 13:50) (6)
- 18 Burden (Luke 11:46) (4)
- 20 'As far as the east is from the—, so far has he removed our transgressions from us' (Psalm 103:12) (4)
- 21 Sign (Luke 23:38) (6)
- 22 'After that, Jesus poured water into a basin and began to—his disciples' feet' (John 13:5) (4)
- 23 The nature of the seven ears of corn which swallowed up the good ears in Pharaoh's dream (Genesis 41:23) (4)
- 25 Has (anag.) (3)
- 28 'This is the account of Shem, Ham and Japheth, — sons' (Genesis 10:1) (5)
- 29 'I will...make them drunk, so that they...sleep for—and—awake' (Jeremiah 51:39) (4,3)
- 30 Paul said of him, 'he often refreshes me and is not ashamed of my chains' (2 Timothy 1:16) (11)

## Down

- 2 Worth (Matthew 13:46) (5)
- 3 'A bruised — He will not break' (Matthew 12:20) (4)
- 4 'Suddenly a great company of the heavenly — appeared with the angel' (Luke 2:13) (4)
- 5 Slip (anag.) (4)



- 6 'Take an awl and push it through his — — into the door, and he will become your servant for life' (Deuteronomy 15:17) (3,4)
- 7 Bountiful (2 Corinthians 8:2) (11)
- 8 'Therefore, as we have —, let us do good to all people' (Galatians 6:10) (11)
- 12 Acquire (2 Timothy 2:10) (6)
- 14 Container cover (Numbers 19:15) (3)
- 15 'He...became obedient to death, even death on— !' (Philippians 2:8) (1,5)
- 19 Refrain (1 Peter 2:11) (7)
- 20 'She began to—his feet with her tears' (Luke 7:38) (3)
- 24 One who worships Brahma, Vishnu or Shiva (5)
- 25 'Give to everyone who—you' (Luke 6:30) (4)
- 26 'I lift up my eyes to the hills; where does my—come from?' (Psalm 121:1) (4)
- 27 One of those whom the Lord said would be taken from Jerusalem and Judah as judgment on them (Isaiah 3:2) (4)

## In our Book of Remembrance In May

- 2nd Mary Lockie, 1990  
Leslie Duffield, 2011
- 3rd Elizabeth Boon, 1977  
Amy Bell, 1987
- 4th Gerald Rimmer, 1977
- 7th David Astley, 2001  
Barbara Brown, 2002  
Bessie Steventon 1997
- 8th Robert Brookfield, 2020
- 9th David Jones, 1986
- 10th Clarissa Roberts, 1958  
Wilfred Gott, 1968

- 12th George Williams, 2011
- 15th Kathleen Hiley, 2021  
Mary Bailey, 2022
- 16th Dorothy Hall, 2013
- 18th Ian Stuart, 2010
- 20th Alan Livesley, 1985
- 29th William Bullen, 1997
- 30th Florence Boswell-Reid, 1993

**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**

## CROSSWORD SOLUTION

ACROSS: 1, Overwhelmed, 9, Valleys, 10, Strap, 11, Top, 13, Reel, 16, To do, 17, Incite, 18, Load, 20, West, 21, Notice, 22, Wash, 23, Thin, 25, Ash, 28, Noah's, 29, Ever not, 30, Onesiphorus.  
DOWN: 2, Value, 3, Reed, 4, Host, 5, Lips, 6, Earlobe, 7, Overflowing, 8, Opportunity, 12, Obtain, 14, Lid, 15, A cross, 19, Abstain, 20, Wet, 24, Hindu, 25, Asks, 26, Help, 27, Hero.

# When is High just *Too High*?

Janet & Ian Bennett worship at Britain's second smallest cathedral

..... and view the largest stained glass window



**As a boy chorister in my earlier life** at a towering anglican church with a capacity double that of St. John's, every time that BBC *Songs of Praise* features a choir singing soaring descants I am again aged eleven. And that is especially so when the featured choir is robed in white surplices over burgundy cassocks and with Elizabethan style pleated ruffs.

First with the Men's Group visit to Liverpool Cathedral for evensong, then a few weeks later a visit with Janet to Carlisle Cathedral on our way to Scotland, also for sung evensong, I have again been transported back to my youth.

Carlisle Cathedral is our regular break when driving north but never previously for a service. Surprisingly, and despite the church's cathedral status, the congregation was actually much smaller than ours at St John's with the congregation, clergy and choir all accommodated at the west end (rear) of the Grand Nave. I was also surprised to find that although the medieval choir stalls (circa 1400) were just four rows in front of us, all three clergy were seated three rows behind us.

Compared to the Liverpool service, Carlisle evensong featured a far greater involvement by the choir, with which I could associate from my own chorister days. As with St Johns each Sunday, my biggest problem was continual switching of my hearing aids between the induction loop for the clergy spoken passages and standard settings for the sung sections. As anticipated, the choral sections benefitted magnificently from the cathedral acoustics and the wonderful Willis pipe organ added another level to the whole experience.

But some of this is subjective. As a former chorister with a love of Christian choral music and pipe organs, the worship elements were at a high for me. Janet however struggled. Although both of us relish the experience of the cathedral, on this occasion Janet found the soaring choral elements of the service too high church, or in her words too oooOOOooaaAAhhhaa highbrow and unable to discern the words being sung. As we experience at St John's, that of course is all down to the reverberation, delay and echo of a high building. In my case I followed the words of the responses and the Nunc Dimittis on my service sheet while the soft glow of the soaring choir surrounded me.

We will visit the cathedral again in the future but whether that will be for a service remains to be seen.

While Liverpool Cathedral is the largest in Britain, Carlisle is actually the second smallest cathedral yet still boasts many special features. And while I am not qualified to discuss the architectural elements, as a visitor I am always impressed. In particular the roof, east window, organ and cloisters are especially impressive.

Starting life way back in 1122 as a Norman Priory Church and becoming a cathedral in 1133, there have been more additions and expansions over the years than could be detailed here but the east window and roof are perhaps the first features that will be noticed by a new visitor.

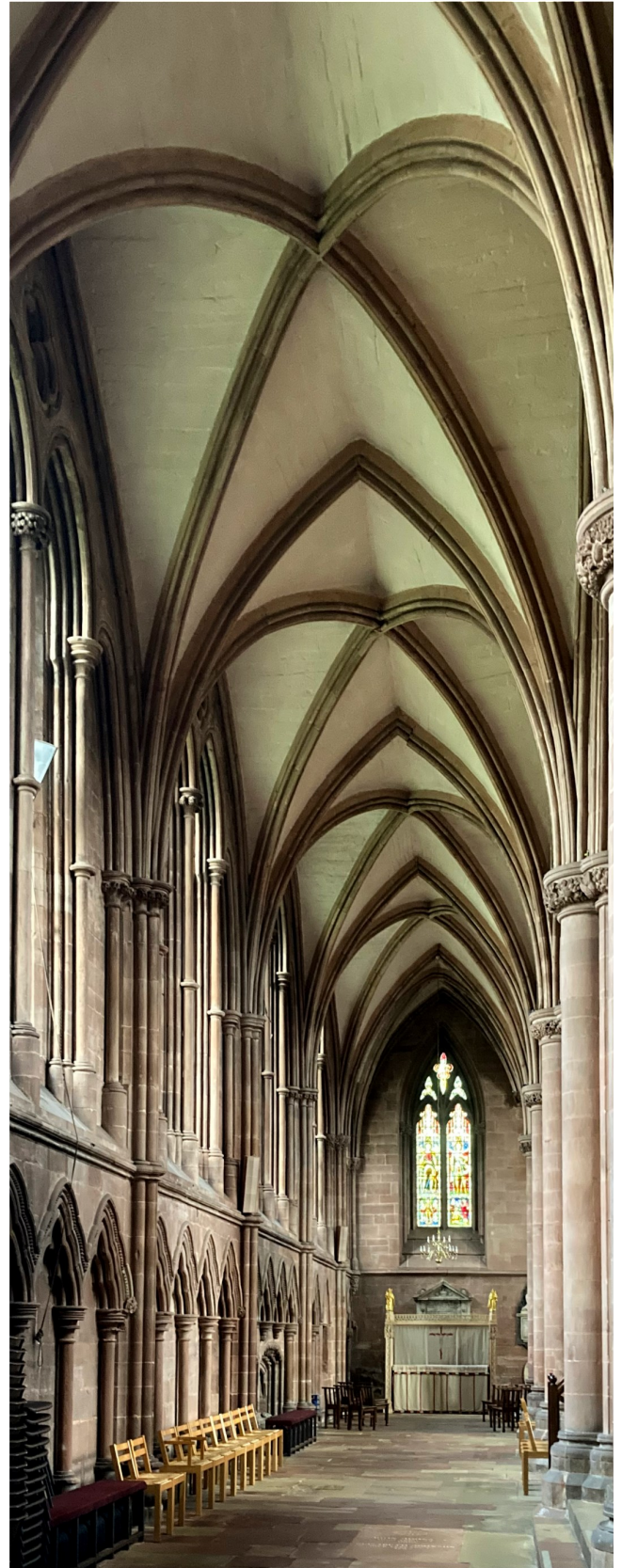
The east window is the largest window in the 'flowing decorated Gothic' style in England. Although the window was also voted as *The Nation's Favourite Stained Glass Window* in the Divine Light media campaign, for me it is surpassed by the *Starry Heaven* barrel roof and is the best church roof I have ever seen. Designed by Owen Jones (1809-1874) the ceiling comprises blue panels, each containing 16 gilded stars - except one! Each time we visit I stand for ages until my neck aches looking for the missing star but to date I have not been successful.

As for my passion - the pipe organ - there has been an organ at the cathedral since 1571 but the current Willis organ dates from 1856 and is considered to be one of the cathedral's treasures. Played for every service, the organ has four manuals, 72 stops and no less than 4000 pipes, with some of that pipework even remaining original after 170 years of use, maintenance and refurbishment. Personally, I enjoy a visit to Carlisle cathedral when the organist is practising. Johann Sebastian Bach and César Franck in full flow are simply a magnificent sound.

Carlisle Cathedral isn't on our doorstep but I do recommend a visit if anything in this feature has been of interest. It is a simple run up the M6 to junction 43 for a total of 107 miles. Parking is easy in The Lanes Shopping Centre just three or four minutes walk from the cathedral while for an overnight break there is a Premier Inn just four miles up the M6 at junction 44.

*Just a thought . . .*

Our organ at St. John's doesn't get played these days, so couldn't we take a leaf out of Christ Church's book of midweek music and run our own series of short recitals with visiting organists?





## GARDENERS' CORNER

By Tina Lloyd

### To plant a garden is To believe in tomorrow

.....

**May** is, for me, one of the most exciting months in the garden, because new flowers seem to open every time you step outdoors....Relish it! Happy gardening.

#### At-a-glance-check list

From the middle of the month onwards if there is no frost forecast, plant out bedding plants and pot-grown dahlias sweet peas started off under glass.

#### Lawns

Remove weeds.  
Mow lawns weekly.  
Keep lawn edges trimmed.

#### Trees, shrubs & climbers

Prune forsythia if required.  
Tie in new growth on climbers like clematis  
Protect plants if late frosts are forecast.  
Last chance to plant out container grown shrubs in the garden before the weather gets too hot.  
Cut privet hedges as long as there is no bird nesting activity.

#### Flowers

Support tall growing perennials.  
Divide clumps of primroses, polyanthus after flowering.  
Cut back alyssum, arabis, and aubrieta after flowering .  
Continue to tie-in and train sweet peas.  
Feed plants grown in pots & containers with a liquid feed.

#### Vegetables & Herbs

Water the vegetable patch in dry weather  
Sow swede, peas, radish, lettuce, & spring onion.  
Plant out leeks.  
Continue earthing up potatoes.  
Harvest asparagus if ready.

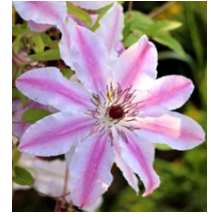
#### Under Cover

Continue to prick out and pot on any seedlings.  
If the weather is still cold & frosty, continue hardening off bedding plants & frost tender vegetable plants by standing them outside on fine days but returning them to the greenhouse at night.

## Key Plants Blooming in May

#### Clematis 'Nelly Mosser'

A good old faithful. Nelly Mosser is one of the first large flowering clematis hybrids to open. Pink & mauve stripe flowers tell you that summer is nearly here.



This variety can reach 30ft but can be kept in check by pruning in February. Always cut back to a pair of buds. Flowers May, June & September.

As with all clematis, they are best planted with roots in the shade, flowers in the sun.

#### Climber Wisteria floribunda



Is the classic early summer-flowering climber. Known for its beautiful, long, trailing streamers of lilac-blue, pea-like flowers. Although there are many varieties in other colours. The white wisteria is a stunning variety.

Wisteria can be trained over pergolas, arches, along fences or walls or round the edge of a carport roof.

A wisteria can also be trained up a strong, sturdy pole to create a standard tree. New plants can be slow to flower in the first couple of years, so if possible, purchase one already in flower then you know it will bloom the following year and onwards. The right pruning is essential for any Wisteria to flower to its full advantage.

**Pruning:** Each July cut all the long whippy tendrils back to about 6ins (15cm) This stops the plant running wild but more importantly puts more energy into the shorter growth. Then, **prune again** in January cutting back the new growth it continued to make throughout the summer to about 4/5ins (10/15cm) This hopefully should repay you with glorious blooms.

#### Geum 'Mrs Bradshaw' (perennial)

This is a lovely cottage garden perennial & very reliable with brick-red flowers on long, strong stems. Flowers for weeks if you can keep deadheading once blooms fade. Flowers May - August. Is happy in any reasonable soil in sun or dappled shade. Pruning not required.



#### Other Plants In Their Prime

Cotoneaster. Potentilla. Sambucus. Spirea. Ceanothus.  
Pittosporum. Varieties of clematis. Brunnera. Euphorbia.

## REFLECTED FAITH— THE CREED (PART 1)

There are various sections that make up a Communion service. While different denominations, and different styles of churches even within the same denomination, may do things differently, generally speaking they all include the same foundational elements.

So, after the Bible readings, and then sermon, what follows next?

In Common Worship (CW) we 'immediately' jump to our feet and proclaim our faith!

If you follow the Book of Common Prayer (BCP), the Creed comes between the Gospel reading and the sermon – which is my excuse for forgetting to say it more than once when I've conducted the latter service first (if you get what I mean) on a Sunday morning.

The question is, 'Why is it placed here?' Wouldn't it make more sense to have it at or close to the beginning of a service; so that we can be sure everyone in the

congregation is on the same page, so to speak.

Or why not at the end, just before we go out into the world taking our faith with us? Why here?

When (BCP) it follows directly after the Gospel reading, it's as though having heard the words of Jesus we rush to say 'I believe that. I believe in who said it. And I believe in ... etc, etc.' Rather like after your favourite team has scored a goal!

Where we've had the sermon first (CW), it's as though the 'explanation and contextualisation' by the preacher makes it so plain that we can do nothing less than join together and reaffirm our baptismal faith.

### *This month*

Pause for a moment before you say the Creed next time and consider where in your service it is placed. What has encouraged you to be able to say it from your heart? Was there a word, phrase or sentence that particularly gripped you and prompted you to your feet? Or was it just words written on the service sheet with a direction to stand?

## THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS

Our series looks at the Seven Deadly Sins, a list compiled by Pope Gregory 1 in AD 590 to describe the nature of sin. This month Canon Paul Hardingham considers

### LUST

*'Lust is the craving for salt by a man who is dying of thirst'* (Frederick Beucher).

Lust is usually understood as an intense desire for sexual pleasure, but can include other things eg food, success or fame. Objectifying a person for our own selfish pleasure can leave us feeling guilty, ashamed or disappointed. Our relationship with God is spoilt, as we create an area of life which is not under God's authority. As Jesus says: *'You have heard that it was said, "You shall not commit adultery."*

*But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.'* (Matthew 5:27,28).

How can we deal with lust in our lives? Confess it to God: *'If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.'* (1 John 1:9). Lust feeds on secrecy, yet God

already knows our thoughts and desires. Focus on Jesus, who loves and accepts us for who we are. Confess our desires to Him, knowing that He wants to cleanse us of our sin.

*Renew your Mind: 'Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – His good, pleasing and perfect will.'* (Romans 12:2).

Overcoming lust requires an understanding of our thinking. We need to acknowledge when lust affects us, understand the triggers for our thoughts (circumstances, time) and address them by asking for God's strength to overcome them.

*'Lust is a poor, weak, whispering thing compared with that richness and energy of desire which will arise when lust has been killed.'* (CS Lewis).

### CHURCH NOTICE BOARDS THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS



**LUST** (COVETING THY  
NEIGHBOUR'S FONT, LAYOUT, ETC)

## THE GOOD AND BAD KINGS OF ENGLAND...

By Dennis Davis

After last month's excursion north of the border Dennis returns to the southern part of this sceptred isle and revisits the life of

### King Henry I

1068-1135

Henry was the 4<sup>th</sup> son of William the Conqueror and the most able of them. He was born at Selby in Yorkshire when his father was on campaign in the north. As he was the youngest son it was not envisaged that he would become King and he may have been destined for the clergy. He was given an education, probably by the church, in Latin and several of the Arts. He also studied English Law at Abingdon Abbey and he even collected a menagerie at his home at Woodstock Palace. According to mediaeval chroniclers he kept animals such as lions, leopards, lynxes, camels and porcupines. He became known as Beauclerc, "Fine Scholar" and became one of the most able monarchs of the Norman era. He was the only one to be born in England and possibly the first to speak English.

Henry came to the throne in August 1100, three days after the death of his elder brother William (Rufus) who was killed by an arrow whilst out hunting. He feared that his eldest brother, Robert (Curthose), would try to claim the throne. Robert was in Normandy and was preparing to invade England. Henry engaged him in battle and defeated him, and detained him as a prisoner for 28 years in various castles in England and Wales. He established peaceful relations with Scotland by marrying Matilda, the daughter of the Scottish King.

In November 1120 his two legitimate sons were drowned when as a result of the crew and passengers being drunk the White Ship struck a submerged rock off the coast near Barfleur and sank. Henry would not allow any of his illegitimate sons to inherit the throne of England or Normandy but decreed that his daughter Matilda should inherit the crown. The Barons agreed to this but later went back on their word. This led to future wars between Matilda and Stephen for the English throne.

Henry ruled by centralising his administration at the royal court and using viceroys in Normandy. When he was absent in Normandy a group of advisors ruled England. There was in those days a struggle between monarchs and the Church over who had the authority to appoint bishops and abbots and this brought Archbishop of Canterbury Anselm into conflict with the King when he refused to accept the King's authority. Anselm chose to go into exile in 1103. Henry later brought the Church and state together by releasing Anselm from exile in 1107 and resumed his position as the Archbishop of Canterbury.

In 1118 Henry's wife Matilda died and Henry remarried Adeliza, daughter of the Count of Louvain. There were no children from this marriage.

Henry died in Normandy after eating eels which did not agree with him but which he insisted on eating nevertheless. His body was mummified and brought back to England and was buried at Reading Abbey which did not survive the reformation. A large Celtic Cross now stands on the site of the old west front.

He was succeeded by Stephen of Blois.



# 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.

## HUMILITY

A few years ago, I visited the Smithsonian Museum's Hall of Human Origins. Our guide, the curator of anthropology, was keen to help Christians understand his research. Whatever you make of the evidence for human evolution, the fact remains that other species a bit like us were around before we came on the scene – or in the case of Neanderthals, at the same time. Part of the exhibit included lifelike reconstructions of the face and hair of several different hominins, displayed on pillars at the right height for each species. So, I could crouch down to 'meet' *Homo floresiensis* or stand tall to look into the eyes of *Homo heidelbergensis*. Most of these – beings? creatures? – were on other branches of the evolutionary tree to us, and we share a common ancestor much further back. I did, however, feel as if I was meeting my forebears.

As I walked between the statues I asked myself, "Why us?" There's evidence that Neanderthals used symbolism as we do, and also buried their dead. Did they have the potential to evolve to a point where they could do similar things to us? The curator

explained how, as the ice ages came and went, human beings moved around but other species appear to have stayed put and suffered the consequences – they just weren't ready yet for that big change. As I took in the displays about how we began to gather socially around a fire, make music or write, I felt humbled. We managed to adapt, but we could so easily have disappeared with the rest.

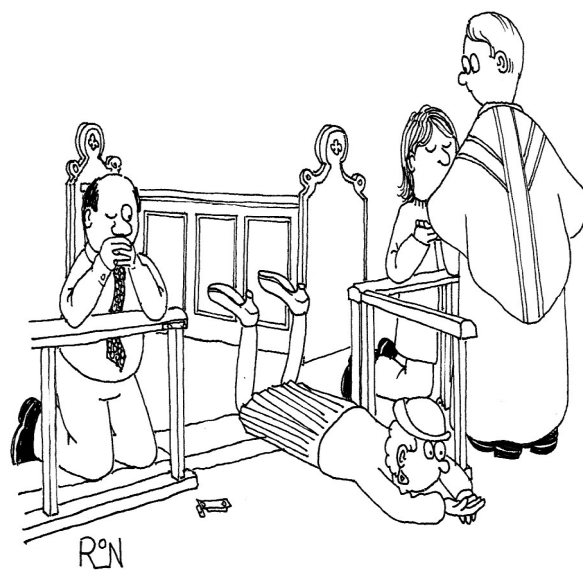
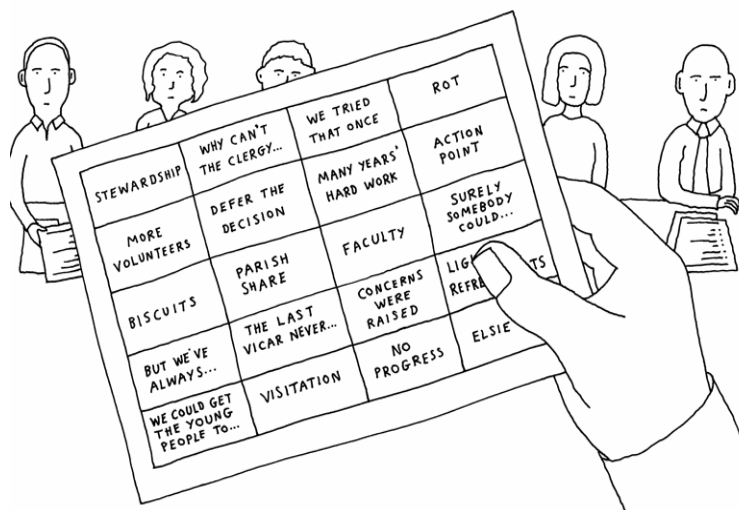
In his book *The Message of Creation*, theologian David Wilkinson shares his view that being made in the image of God has nothing to do with our own cleverness or abilities, but instead it is a gift. God created us on purpose (I believe through the long slow process of evolution) and chose to enter into a relationship with us, making us His representatives on earth.

Thankfully I don't have to figure out how to interact with other human-like hominins today. I do, however, have an equal share in humankind's God-given commission to tend and keep creation. Am I ready to go further than ensuring my own species' survival – not necessarily because we have evolved further than our ice-age ancestors, but because I have one of the 'new hearts' promised in Ezekiel 11:19? Can I work together, in a true spirit of humility, with people from all over the world to ensure the full diversity of life can flourish?

\*For resources on this question, try the [Faraday Institute](#), [BioLogos](#), and [Christians in Science](#).

## P.C.C. BINGO

WORDS AND PHRASES OFTEN USED DURING MEETINGS OF THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL



Anthony made a note to fix the bolt

## THE MIGHTY PEN

By John M. Shakespeare

One of my favourite novelists, Kingsley Amis (1922-1995), once wrote, "If you can't annoy somebody with what you write, I think there is little point in writing". Let me quickly say that it is not my intention to annoy anyone with what I write, but I am happy to encourage discussion about my writings.

The written word as expressed through the medium of poetry can have, I believe, the magical effect of changing our own mood, from despair to joy and from sadness to acceptance. Take the first verse of the poem "I Thank You God", by the American poet E.C.Cummings (1894-1962):

**I thank you God for this most Amazing day: for the leaping green spirits of trees and the blue true dream of sky: and for everything which is natural, which is infinite, which is yes.**

Sometimes we read what seem to be meaningless statements in our newspapers, which purport to be factual comments. I know that I find some adverts difficult to grasp the meaning of, which I would say makes them pointless.

Our lives gain structure from our religious and political beliefs, which are like maps to follow throughout our lives. The caveat being that the maps must have certain accuracy or we end up feeling lost. Therefore, in both religious form or political form, I believe that messages must be simple enough to be understood and believed.

In the 18C in Europe the Catholic Church had much control over what could be published. Voltaire (1694-1778) was well known throughout Europe for his outspoken views and writings. He is credited with saying, "I hate what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it". Many of his plays and books were publicly burned, and he actually served time in the Bastille prison in Paris for his writings. He is perhaps best known for his book "Candide" published in 1759, which asked questions about the religious views of that time.

The 19C saw the German philosopher Karl Marx (1818-1883), begin writing. He was concerned with the grim conditions that the Industrial Revolution, had created for many of its workers in both England and Europe.

He saw the world as a struggle between the Capitalist rich and the Proletariat poor. He wrote a critique of the system, in the book he is best known for "Das Kapital". A restless energetic man, as demonstrated in his writings, he lived all over Europe, and finally ended his days in the City of London.

The written word plays an important part in Christian teachings, through the medium of the Bible. To quote Romans (Ch 15 verses 4-6), "For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope. May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another in accordance with Christ Jesus". I believe that the written word can give more force to feelings expressed sometimes, than the spoken word.

I leave you with the words of the Russian playwright, Anton Chechov (1860-1904), "A writer must be as objective as a chemist, he must abandon the subjective line. He must know dungheaps play a very reasonable part in any landscape, and that evil passions, are as inherent in life as good ones".



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## REVELATION REVEALED



*The vision from God as  
imagined by  
Jacqui Parkinson*

Last month we looked at John's letter to the Christian community in Ephesus. This month we shall look at what he wrote to the Christians in **Pergamum**.

This city was about 15 miles from the sea which could be seen from the top of the hill on which Pergamum had been built. It had been the

capital of the ancient Seleucid kingdom. It was not on any of the great trading routes and was not as commercially powerful as Ephesus or Smyrna but it was an unrivalled centre of culture in that region. Its library housed 200,000 parchment rolls. The word *parchment* is derived from the name of that city. It was a pagan religious centre and regarded itself as the custodian of the Greek way of life and worship, and was the region's administrative centre.

William Barclay says that to have been a Christian in Pergamum in the first century AD would have been difficult but if Christians had always run away from difficulty Christianity would not have flourished. But in Pergamum they stayed and were faithful.

The letter to the Christians at Pergamum congratulated them for their loyalty but also criticised those of them who also indulged in pagan religion and who committed fornication. The letter told them to repent or else the angel would go to war with them with the sword of his mouth, which was the word of Christ.

To those who would overcome the difficulties and continue to be faithful Christians the angel offered the *hidden manna* (which means the blessings of the Kingdom of God) and promised a white stone with a new name on it.

There are many interpretations of the reference to the white stone with a new name. Barclay

opines that the most likely explanation is that in those days many people carried a small stone amulet bearing the name of a pagan god to be called upon in times of trouble. John's letter was saying that to those who remained loyal to the Christian faith their reward would be that instead of carrying a stone with a god's name on it they would have the name of the true and only God who would protect them in life and death.

This month a poem by Megan Carter has been published which refers to **The Seven Churches in Asia** (*Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea*) and we reproduce it here:

**Christ moves amongst His churches  
And sees straight into their hearts,  
Encouraging with promises  
As each one plays their part.  
In Ephesus and Smyrna  
There's love, suffering, and pain  
Thyatira and Pergamum are holding on  
Remaining true to His name.  
In Sardis and Philadelphia,  
Aware of all their deeds,  
He knows their strengths and weaknesses  
And highlights all their needs.  
Laodicea is called lukewarm  
Being neither cold nor hot,  
How sad when purchased with His blood  
Such grace is soon forgot.  
So learning from these churches  
Let us long to hear His call,  
As He comes for His bride with trumpet sound  
When the Lord will be all in all.  
(He that has an ear let him hear what the Spirit is  
saying to the churches.)**



Next month we shall continue our circular tour of these seven churches by considering what was written in the letter to the Christians at Thyatira.

*Stuart Baker*

**Sources include William Barclay  
"The Daily Study Bible" The  
Revelation of John**

**Diary Note:**  
The exhibition "Threads Through the Bible" will move to Chester Cathedral and will be displayed from 9th May to 26th June. It would be an excellent day out, and for those who have Merseyrail passes you can travel there and back for free!

## 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](mailto:elderberriesgardening@gmail.com) or call Shelley Lewis-Lavender on [01704 560690](tel:01704560690).



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# WHAT'S ON IN OUR NEIGHBOURING CHURCHES

## Social Events at St James' Birkdale (Lulworth Road)



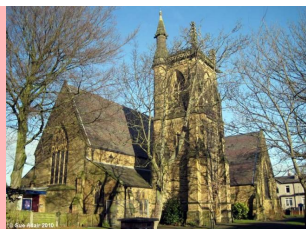
### First Tuesday of each month:

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.

## Social Events at St Peter's Birkdale (St Peter's Road)



### Sunday 14th June

Open Day & Garden. 2pm. Tea, coffee and cakes £5.

### Saturday 22nd August

Family Fun Day 1pm-4pm. Fabulous healthy, homegrown outdoor plant stall. Tea, coffee & cakes. Free entrance.

### Saturday 26th September

The Wanderers- cabaret style concert. 7pm. £10, includes a light supper.

### Friday 23rd October

Phil Shotton. Dafe Society Trio. 1920's style Jazz. 7pm. £10, includes a glass of red or white wine.

### Saturday 21st November

Quiz, 3pm in the hall. Tea, coffee & biscuits. £5.

### Saturday 5th December

The Wanderers Barn Dance in the church. 7pm, includes a light supper. £10.

### Friday 11th December

Christmas Bingo. 1pm-3pm in the hall.

# 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**  
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A warm welcome guaranteed by our friendly hosts at our 'enhanced' warm space, community hub and library. We offer free tea, coffee and biscuits as well as newspapers, puzzle books, activities and occasional guest speakers alongside other services. FREE WI-FI and computer access.

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**Sefton Warm Spaces**

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## Sports Events for Southport Churches

Calling all Southport Christian Churches looking to engage with people through Sport

13th April 2026  
£15 per person



**Driving range & Putting Competition**  
Interview with Howard Bennett, PGA Master Professional  
Buy your own drink but buffet provided  
6pm @ Formby Driving Range

11th May 2026  
£5 a table

**Sports Quiz**

Hosted by Christians in Sport  
short talk on Christian faith  
7pm @ Christ Church, Lord Street



10th June 2026  
£25 per person

**Faith & Football**

Hot Buffet with after dinner speaker  
Bill Bygroves, LFC Chaplain  
7pm @ Southport FC, Haigh Ave

Sign up through your local Church  
Local Churches should email: [info@1peter4.co.uk](mailto:info@1peter4.co.uk)



Supported by Christians in Sport

## 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**:

Identification Number: 812 3403 0688 Password: 201823

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

Telephone number: 0203 481 5240

Meeting Identification Number: 812 3403 0688

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

Password: 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**:

Identification Number: 835 5074 3780 Password: 7ehHEK

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

Telephone number: 0203 481 5240

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

### **Was it really that long ago?...**

75 years ago, on 17<sup>th</sup> May 1951 the Peak District National Park was established. It was Britain's first National Park.

65 years ago, on 10<sup>th</sup> May 1961 South African golfer Gary Player became the first non-American to win the Masters Tournament in Augusta, Georgia.

Also 65 years ago, on 12<sup>th</sup> May 1961 Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin became the first person in space and the first person to orbit the Earth.

50 years ago, on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1976 the UK won the 1976 Eurovision Song Contest with *Save Your Kisses for Me* by Brotherhood of Man.

Also 50 years ago, on 7<sup>th</sup> May 1976 politician John Stonehouse, who infamously had tried to fake his own death in 1974, resigned from the Labour Party, leaving the government in a minority. After his death in 1988 it was revealed that he had been a Czech spy since 1962.

40 years ago, on 11<sup>th</sup> May 1986 Halley's Comet made its closest approach to Earth during its most recent visit. It will return to Earth's vicinity in 2061 and 2134.

Also 40 years ago, on 17<sup>th</sup> May 1986 TV journalist John McCarthy was kidnapped in Beirut, Lebanon by the militant group Islamic Jihad. Released 1991.

Also 40 years ago, on 26<sup>th</sup> May 1986 the Chernobyl disaster took place in Ukraine, then within the Soviet Union. It was the world's worst nuclear power plant accident, killing 31 people outright, and leaking radiation across the western Soviet Union and Europe.

30 years ago, on 1<sup>st</sup> May 1996 during the BSE ('mad cow disease') outbreak, the government announced that it would begin slaughtering all cattle over the age of 30 months to eradicate the disease. In the end, 80,000 cattle were slaughtered

25 years ago, on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2001 NASA launched its Mars Odyssey spacecraft to search for evidence of water and volcanic activity on Mars. It found water and ice below the surface.

15 years ago, on 29<sup>th</sup> May 2011 Prince William and Catherine (Kate) Middleton were married at Westminster Abbey in London. They were given the titles Duke and Duchess of Cambridge.

10 years ago, on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2016 Victoria Wood, comedian, actress, singer and songwriter died. Remembered for *Victoria Wood as seen on TV*.

Also 10 years ago, on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2016 the Paris Agreement on Climate Change was signed. It came into effect on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2016.

## Church Hall Users

### Wednesday

10.30 – 12 noon 2<sup>nd</sup> 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](mailto:elderberriesgardening@gmail.com)

### Thursday

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

Contact: [ageingwellmerseyside@outlook.com](mailto: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.

## Promise of the Father

(Lk24:44-53, Heb 11:1-3)

Blessing led to leaving,  
and leaving to a new coming,  
a coming in power and joy  
to worship and to witness  
to God's plan fulfilled  
in the reality of Jesus, living.

This is the promised day,  
the day of clothing  
with power and presence,  
and a fresh sending  
of those with opened eyes  
in every generation,  
releasing hope and faith-filled certainty,  
making sense of everything.

Come Holy Spirit, clothe me, send me.

*By Daphne Kitching*

## Prayer for Pentecost 2026

Loving Father and giver of all gifts,

This month we thank You for the gift of Your Holy Spirit which You promise to all who call on Your name, turn away from self-centred living and put their trust in Jesus.

Help us to do that, Lord.

Then, when events in the world and the circumstances of our own lives are difficult to understand, we have Your Holy Spirit who brings life and power.

He is faithful and constant. He will lead us into all truth and give us the words and thoughts we need to experience Your peace in the midst of turmoil.

At this time when we remember the birth of Your church, may we open our hearts to receive Your Spirit afresh and move into each new day confident that we are yours and that in You is our true security.

In Jesus' name. Amen.

*By Daphne Kitching*

## £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.

**For a price quotation ring 0345 777 3322**





To **Ann Shakespeare on 9th May**  
**Clive Morris on 13th May**  
**Ian Bennett on 15th May**  
**David Halsall on 21st May**  
**Mandy Potts on 26th May**  
**Beverley Cummings on 29th May**  
**Sue Paterson on 31st May**

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

## The Last Laughs

### Warm Water?

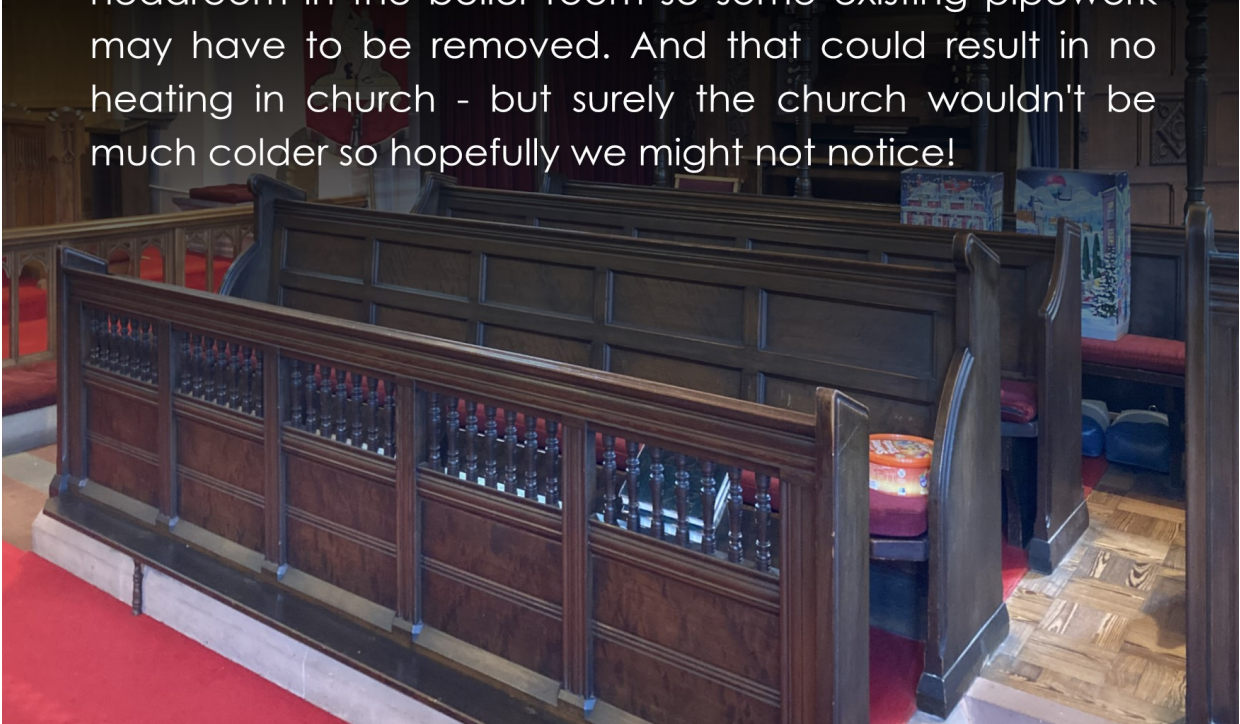
**Our feature about a full immersion baptistry pool** under the nave last month prompted more than a little interest and confusion. Based on Jennie's proposed full immersion baptismal scheduled for Easter Sunday using a temporary portable pool that she announced in March, our story was just a package of fun for April Fool's Day.

For confirmation, there are no plans to dig a hole in the nave or to install a permanent pool under the parquet.

Actually there's a much better location under the choir stalls in the chancel between the centre aisle and the organ which is directly above the boiler room so will not require any earth removal.

Installing the pool directly above the boilers will also give access to hot water for the baptistry pool but will reduce headroom in the boiler room so some existing pipework may have to be removed. And that could result in no heating in church - but surely the church wouldn't be much colder so hopefully we might not notice!

**A Little Humour on the Side:**  
**Breakable:** There was a very gracious lady who was posting an old family Bible to her brother in another part of the country. "Is there anything breakable in here?" asked the postal clerk. "Only the Ten Commandments," answered the lady.



# Keep Moving Club



## 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

## Work at your own Pace

For more information please call Kaz Parkinson on 07540 369942.

Or come along and try us out – first session free



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