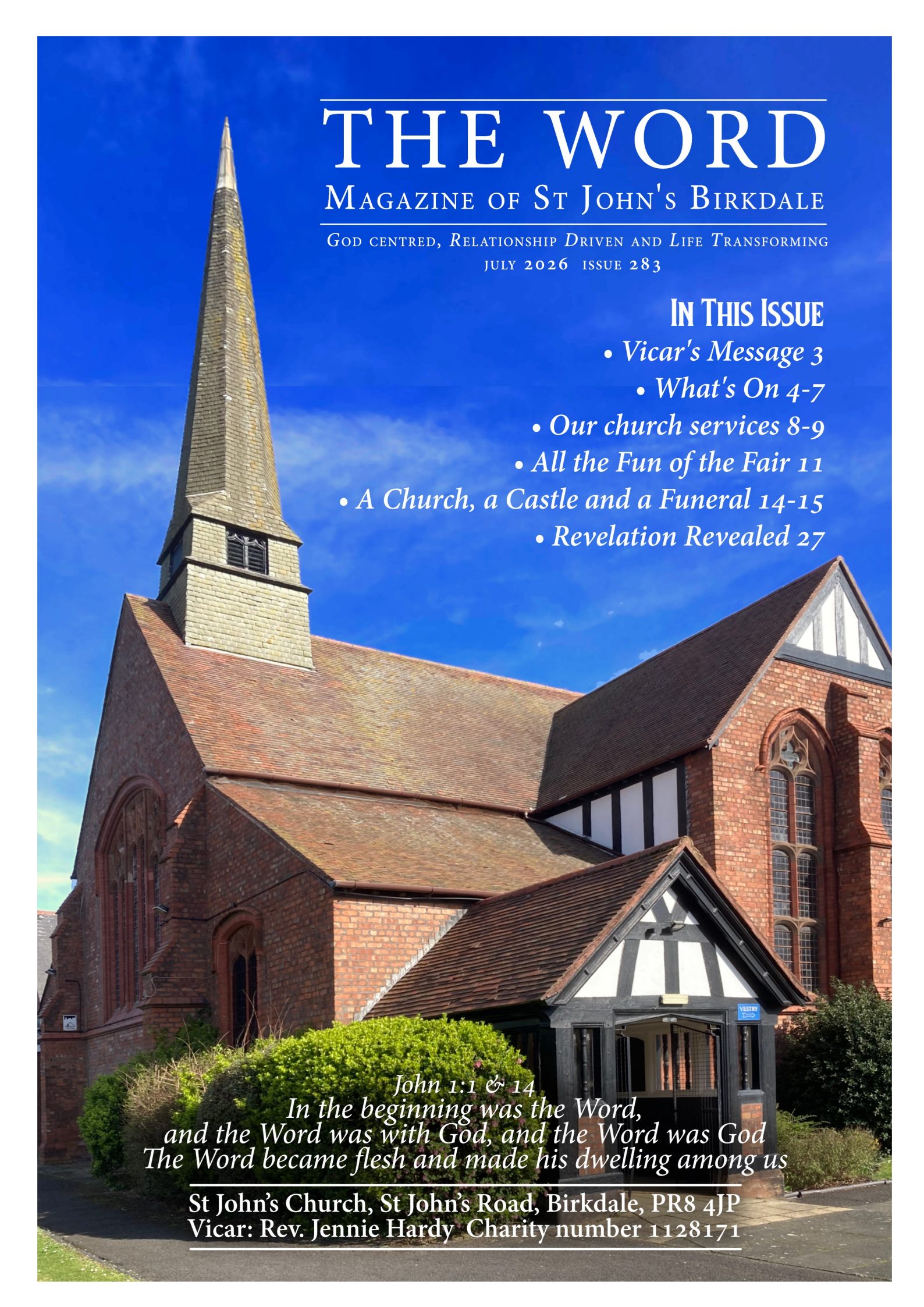




THE WORD

MAGAZINE OF ST JOHN'S BIRKDALE

GOD CENTRED, RELATIONSHIP DRIVEN AND LIFE TRANSFORMING

JULY 2026 ISSUE 283

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

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

IN THE WORD THIS MONTH

After a successful Summer Fair in June we are pleased to include this month a review by Ian Bennett with some well presented pictures which he took, and a message of thanks from Sylvia Kent and a jumble of other photographs kindly provided by Jennie and assembled by the Editor.

We are also pleased to continue to publish articles by our resident philosopher and historian John Shakespeare. He has now completed his task of writing 100 articles, and the last 25 of them will soon be published in a compendium entitled "What's It All About" (volume 4). His own Complete Works of Shakespeare? Not so. He has now embarked on a new series of articles on "ologies" and we make no ap—ology for including his first ology on page 25: Criminology.

We also make no apology for running again the plea for support for Queenscourt Hospice. If our readers can support it, please do. It's there for all of us and we never know when we or a loved one might need it.

THE OPEN GOLF CHAMPIONSHIP

Our readers will be aware that in less than two weeks from now The Open Golf Championship will take place at The Royal Birkdale Golf Club.

St John's Church has agreed to allow an organisation to have exclusive use of our church hall and car park from 7th July until 22nd July in connection with this great sporting event. The church will receive a payment for this.

Our church services at St John's will continue as normal throughout July but **our congregation will not be able to use the car park between those dates**. The car park gates will be locked at the end of each day. The church cannot accept any liability for vehicles parked without permission. If you live near enough to the church to walk there or to cycle there, please do. If you can only attend by driving to the church please try to arrange to travel with others so that the number of cars arriving in and parking on St John's Road will be kept to a minimum.

WHO'S WHAT AT ST. JOHN'S

Vicar:	Rev. Jennie Hardy (07872 400718)	Girl Guides:	Mrs. Janette Law (565951)
Clergy (retired):	Rev. Roy Doran (572387)	St. John's Brownies:	Mrs. Helen Jones and
Reader:	Mrs. Christine Baker (560518)	Brownie Guiders:	Mrs. Lesley Scott
Churchwarden:	Clive Morris (564206)	St. John's Rainbows:	Mrs. Lesley Scott
PCC Treasurer:	Mrs. Amanda Potts (07530 950100)	Church Flowers:	Mrs. Cath Whiteside (07732 993025)
PCC Secretary:	Mrs. Christine Baker (560518)	Magazine Editor:	Stuart Baker (560518)
Gift Aid Secretary:	Mrs. Sylvia Kent (564071)	Design and artwork:	Ian Bennett MBKS
Parish Hall Secretary:	Mrs. Jean Morris (564206)	Magazine Printer:	Mrs. Christine Baker (560518)
Electoral Roll Officer:	Stuart Harris (563789)	Buildings Inspector:	David Halsall (07790 822343)
Deanery Synod Reps:	Clive Morris (564206) Colin Jackson (07713567099) Anthony Guy	Vergers:	Anthony Guy 07938 130 881
Lead Safeguarding Officer & Recruiter	Stuart Baker (560518)	Eco Champions:	Mrs. Elizabeth Rothwell and Duncan Rothwell (564192)
Transport Officer:	Mrs. Jean Morris (564206)	Leadership Team:	Rev. Jennie Hardy Rev. Roy Doran Mrs. Christine Baker Clive Morris
Church of England Children's Society:	Mrs. Sylvia Kent (564071)	Contacts & information:	
Mothers' Union:	Mrs. Linda Caton (564737)	Editor's email:	stjohnbirkdaletheword@gmail.com
		Church email:	info@stjohnsbirkdale.co.uk
		Website:	https://www.stjohnsbirkdale.co.uk

MESSAGE FROM THE VICAR:

Good day reader, I'd like to begin by asking you a question - What are you thankful for?

Often when we pray the temptation is to come to God with a shopping list of all the things we want and need. Often these are good things, we want healing for the sick, we want finances to help us share with others, we need patience to help us endure those same others at times! But what I've found in my prayer life is that coming to God in our prayers from a place of thankfulness leads to praise and also leads to more considerate prayers from me too!

“...come to the Lord and shout for joy...”

Psalm 100 tells us to come to the Lord and shout for joy, to worship Him with gladness and that the way to come before Him is with joyful songs!

I find this instruction so helpful and affirming as singing joyful worship songs to the Lord is one of my favourite things to do and it



Rev'd Jennie Hardy

often naturally leads me into prayer. Prayers that begin with praise and thanksgiving help us to come before the Lord with an attitude of gratitude and helps us to discern what to ask of the Lord in prayer. This might be for the Lord Himself to be magnified, for His will to be done, acknowledgments of our own failures and repentance as well as asking for help and for our needs and this is essentially the direction given by Jesus in Matthew 6 when He teaches His disciples how to pray.

Our current sermon series at St John's is on the topic of thankfulness. You can listen back to the sermons on our website. Clive opened the series by elaborating on what three marks of a thankful Christian might be. A thankful Christian is a

growing Christian; a thankful Christian is also a giving Christian and this all leads to a glowing Christian.

... glow and grow for Jesus in Birkdale...

We grow as believers when we are thankful because we appreciate the Lord and His Word, so we spend time with Him through it, through reading the scriptures and we would also worship and pray more, not just on Sundays, it becomes a daily pattern. This in turn leads us to want to serve, to want to give and to do so with a cheerful heart as scripture encourages, which in itself leads to a glow! Those people who are generous givers of both time and resources are the kinds of people who glow, who shine, who are often the first to volunteer and the last to grumble.

That's the kind of Christian I want to be. What about you? Perhaps we could all practise thankfulness more, beginning in our prayer lives and let's see if we can go, grow and glow for Jesus in Birkdale!

Love Jennie xx

THE GOOD AND BAD KINGS OF ENGLAND...

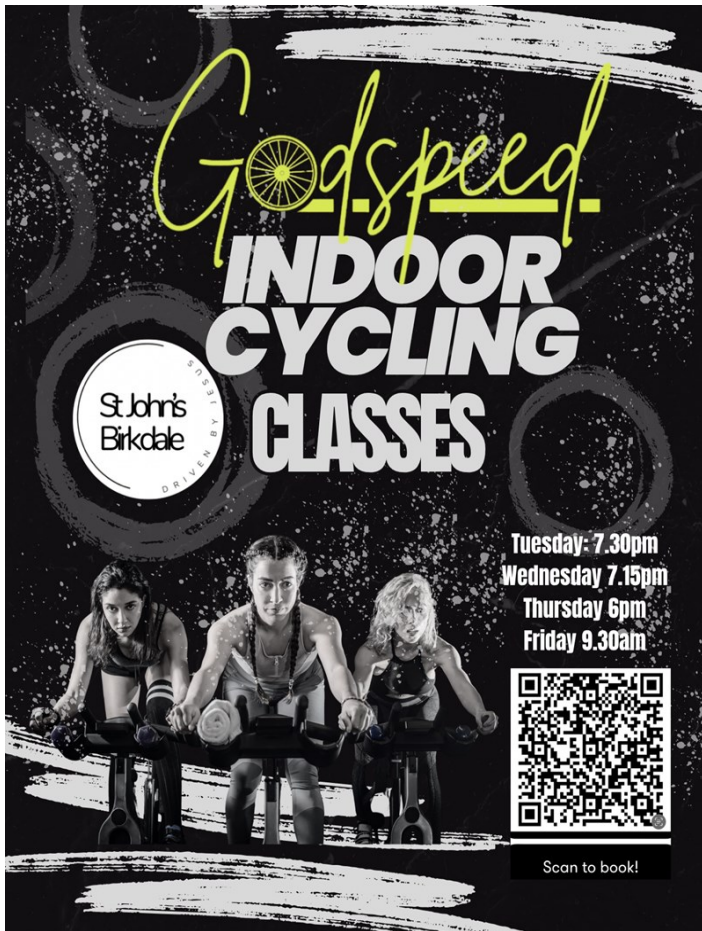


Dennis Davies is having a month off from his research into our monarchs. Like Arnold Schwarzenegger, he will return!

Miscellaneous observations on life

- An egotist is a man who talks about himself so much that you don't have a chance to talk about yourself. – *V Havner*
- Education is never as expensive as ignorance. – *Anon*
- Golf: a game in which the balls lie on the ground and the players lie in the clubhouse. – *Anon*
- *With sales in mind*: Fashion is a form of ugliness so intolerable that we have to alter it every six months. – *Oscar Wilde*
- Your house: a portion of land covered by a mortgage. – *Anon*
- Fisherman: one who drops the fish a line but seldom hears from them. – *Anon*

WHAT'S ON AT ST. JOHN'S



Godspeed
INDOOR CYCLING CLASSES

St John's Birkdale

Tuesday: 7.30pm
Wednesday 7.15pm
Thursday 6pm
Friday 9.30am

Scan to book!

3rd Monday of the month
7.30pm

St John's Birkdale

DRIVEN BY

♥

Growth

DISCIPLESHIP
EXPLORED

@ Stuart & Christines
food. fellowship. fun.

info@stjohnsbirkdale.co.uk



St John's Birkdale

DRIVEN BY

♥

Pray Together

1st & 3rd THURSDAY @ 7.30pm
on Zoom
Meeting ID: 83550743780
Passcode:
7ehHEK

July 2nd & 16th.
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.



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

2026 PROGRAMME

16 TH JANUARY	FILM TITLES ARE DISPLAYED ON THE CHURCH NOTICE BOARDS
20 TH FEBRUARY	
27 TH MARCH	
17 TH APRIL	
29 TH MAY	
26 TH JUNE	
24 TH JULY	

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

WHAT'S COMING TO ST. JOHN'S



St John's
Birkdale

DRIVEN BY IES

TICKETS
£8

YOU'RE INVITED TO A

STRAWBERRY TEA

INCLUDES LIVE MUSIC

4 JULY

STARTS AT 14:00

HOSTED BY THE BAKERS AT
34 OXFORD ROAD

For more information
info@stjohnsbirkdale.co.uk

**PRE-PURCHASE OF TICKETS IS ESSENTIAL
SO WE CAN KNOW HOW MANY TO CATER FOR**

WHAT'S COMING TO ST. JOHN'S

St John's
Birkdale

DRIVEN BY JESUS

SEE WEBSITE & SOCIALS
FOR MORE DETAILS

UPCOMING EVENTS AT ST JOHN'S

27TH
SEP

Harvest Celebration

Bring & Share Lunch after church



9TH
OCT

Dancing with the Stars

Different Dance Genres with
instruction from Kaz!



6TH
NOV

Quiz Night

Fun & Themed



28TH
NOV

Southport Orchestra

Performance in Church



4-5TH
DEC

Christmas Tree Festival

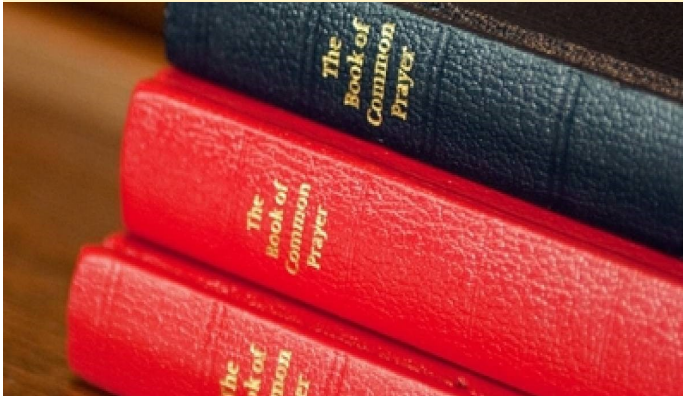
And Fair



WHAT'S ON WEDNESDAYS

MIDWEEK COMMUNION SERVICE

1st & 3rd Wednesday s at 10.30am



There will be a Midweek traditional Communion service at 10.30am in church on **Wednesdays 1st and 15th July.**

On 1st July the service will be followed by Brunch.

On 15th July it will be followed by tea, coffee and biscuits.

St John's Birkdale
SOFTLY
DRIVEN BY

JOIN OUR KNIT & KNATTER GROUP

The 4th Wednesday, monthly
2:30pm
In the vicar's vestry

Refreshments provided

Fee: Just £1

Contact: info@stjohnsbirkdale.co.uk
Call: Christine on: 01704 560518

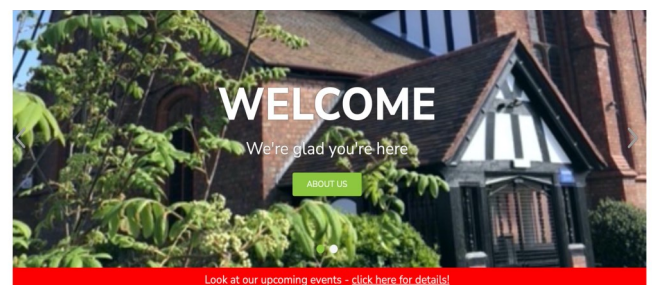


**THERE WILL BE NO MEETINGS
IN JULY AND AUGUST.
BIBLE STUDY WILL RESUME IN
SEPTEMBER**

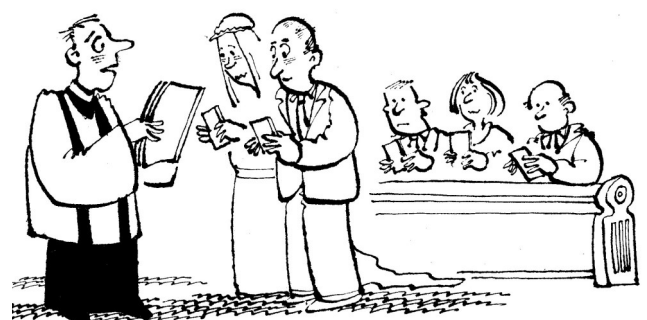

**God's
Word**
STUDY
GROUP

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

revroydoran@btinternet.com



Visit our website
stjohnsbirkdale.co.uk



...er, if I could just tear you away from your mobile phones for a moment...

CHURCH SERVICES IN JULY

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



WEDNESDAY 1st JULY
10.30am
IN CHURCH

**Worship on the Fifth Sunday after
Trinity**

SUNDAY 5th JULY

8.30am Holy Communion in church only

**10.30am Holy Communion in church and via
zoom and phone**

Collect for the Fifth Sunday after Trinity

Almighty God, send down upon your Church the riches of your Spirit, and kindle in all who minister the gospel your countless gifts of grace; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The subject of Jennie's talks:

Thanksgiving Commands

The Text: Psalm 100

1 Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth.
2 Worship the Lord with gladness; come before
Him with joyful songs.
3 Know that the Lord is God. It is He who made
us, and we are His; we are His people, the
sheep of his pasture.

4 Enter His gates with thanksgiving
and His courts with praise; give thanks to Him
and praise His name.
5 For the Lord is good and His love endures
forever; His faithfulness continues through all
generations.

**Worship on the Sixth Sunday after
Trinity**

SUNDAY 12th JULY

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 after Trinity

Creator God, you made us all in your image: may we discern you in all that we see, and
serve you in all that we do; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The subject of Clive's talks:

Learning from Jesus' Parables

The Text: Matthew 13: 1-9, 18-23 NIV

That same day Jesus went out of the house
and sat by the lake. Such large crowds
gathered around him that he got into a boat
and sat in it, while all the people stood on the
shore. Then he told them many things in
parables, saying: "A farmer went out to sow
his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some
fell along the path, and the birds came and
ate it up. Some fell on rocky places, where it
did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly,
because the soil was shallow. But when the
sun came up, the plants were scorched, and
they withered because they had no
root. Other seed fell among thorns, which
grew up and choked the plants. Still other
seed fell on good soil, where it produced a
crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what
was sown. Whoever has ears, let them hear."
"Listen then to what the parable of the sower

means: When anyone hears the message
about the kingdom and does not understand
it, the evil one comes and snatches away
what was sown in their heart. This is the seed
sown along the path. The seed falling on
rocky ground refers to someone who hears
the word and at once receives it with joy. But
since they have no root, they last only a short
time. When trouble or persecution comes
because of the word, they quickly fall
away. The seed falling among the thorns
refers to someone who hears the word, but
the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of
wealth choke the word, making it
unfruitful. But the seed falling on good soil
refers to someone who hears the word and
understands it. This is the one who produces a
crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times
what was sown."

CHURCH SERVICES IN JULY

**MIDWEEK TRADITIONAL
COMMUNION SERVICE**
Followed by Tea, Coffee
and Biscuits



WEDNESDAY 15th JULY
10.30am
IN CHURCH

**Worship on the Seventh Sunday
after Trinity**

SUNDAY 19th JULY

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 after Trinity

Generous God, you give us gifts and make them grow: though our faith is small as mustard seed, make it grow to your glory and the flourishing of your kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The subject of Roy's talks:

Learning from Jesus' Parables

The Text: Matthew 13: 24-30, 36-42 NIV

Jesus told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared. The owner's servants came to him and said, 'Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?' 'An enemy did this,' he replied. "The servants asked him, 'Do you want us to go and pull them

up?' 'No,' he answered, 'because while you are pulling the weeds, you may uproot the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.' " Then he left the crowd and went into the house. His disciples came to him and said, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field."

Our readers are encouraged to read Jesus' explanation and then listen to Roy's talks on this.

**Worship on the Eighth Sunday
after Trinity**

SUNDAY 26th JULY

8.30am Holy Communion in church only

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

Collect for the Eighth Sunday after Trinity

Lord God, your Son left the riches of heaven and became poor for our sake: when we prosper save us from pride, when we are needy save us from despair, that we may trust in you alone; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The subject of Christine's talks:

Learning from Jesus' Parables

The Text: Matthew 13: 31-33, 44-52 NIV

He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches." He told them still another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into about sixty pounds of flour until it worked all through the dough." "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it. Once again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish. When it was full, the fishermen pulled it up on the shore. Then they sat down and collected the good fish in baskets, but threw the bad away. This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous and throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.



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 War Between Parishes

The Rectory,
St James the Least of All

My dear Nephew Darren,

So, now you have enjoyed your first Summer Fete. Don't say I didn't warn you. It may be small consolation but remember that they only happen once a year – although in your case, you still have another 30 to endure before retirement.

I negotiated our own last week. As usual, the band from our neighbouring parish of St Eusebius played. There has been much bad blood in the past between our two villages. The trouble started on the day that St James the Least of All never told St Eusebius that the Vikings were coming up the river. We may have long since buried the hatchet, but both sides remember where they put it.

Tension between the two communities down the centuries has moved on from occasional slaughter to something a little more refined. Just as I began my opening speech to crown the Rose Queen, the band struck up with the National Anthem. When the hog roast started, they played "smoke gets in your eyes" and when it came to the necessary music for the maypole dancing, they all disappeared into the beer tent.

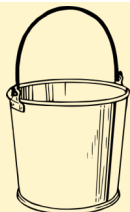
With great Christian charity, we shall bide our time. In September we have the annual football match between the two churches' Servers. Last year, in addition to winning the match, the St James' boys sent three of their side off with concussion. Naturally, I visited them in hospital. Miss Prendergast, as always, played Gypsy Rose Lee. If the tall, dark, dear lady tells me one more time that I am about to find romance with a tall dark lady, while she flutters her eyelashes at me, I swear I shall throttle her with a bell rope. Besides, I already have a beautiful dark lady in my life – and my Labrador is devoted to me.

The only real hiccough came when I bought 12 packets of fudge from Mrs Masheder to present to our choirboys. Yet again, she had misread salt for sugar in the recipe. After I presented the packets at Mattins the following day, a formal complaint was rapidly made by a parent to the police that the Rector was attempting to poison their son. But as I explained to the officer, if I had intended to poison anyone, I would have done it far more discreetly – and infinitely more efficiently.

Your loving uncle,
Eustace

Bucket list

I'm proud to announce that I have completed the first item on my bucket list. I have the bucket.



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

You're invited



Sun, laughter *and all the fun of the fair*

Although numbers fell short of expectations, with face painting for the children (and a few adults!), the cafe quite busy and the arrival of donkeys eagerly awaited, those attending last month's Summer Fair clearly enjoyed themselves.

Prior to the opening, a team of volunteers had arrived early to set out the halls in the now tried and tested arrangement of child aimed activities in the small hall and vendor stalls around the periphery of the large hall surrounding cafe tables for the later arrival of hungry hordes. Sadly that did not happen, at least not in the expected numbers. Although the cafe was busy throughout there were a lot of empty spaces.

Around the hall were stalls selling a variety of products ranging from plants to books and bric-a-brac, with promotional displays for our own Godspeed class and the Elsie's Story charity.

While activities including face painting, a twister game and a less arduous area for the younger ones kept children occupied indoors, in a new departure for the event, others bounced away outside on a bouncy castle complete with a slide chute.

Meanwhile, the arrival of the donkeys was eagerly awaited, some parents and grandparents seemingly more eager than their offspring! Donkey rides actually became the most popular activity of the fair with children eager for their turns and more than one grandparent openly wishing that she was younger!

Apparently there were other community events taking place across Southport which no doubt impacted on our fair. Although attendance did not meet our expectations, looking around the event it was clear that it had actually attracted people who are not in our congregation, a number of them having been seen arriving from houses in St John's Road, so given that our fair generated over £800, perhaps it's not all in the numbers.



PHOTO ROUND UP FROM THE SUMMER FAIR



Clockwise:
Jennie & Cheryl; Tony's plant stall;
Spinning Jennie; Linda, Mandy &
Janette in the kitchen; Cath and
David ready to serve; Christine
trying to change water into wine;
and in the centre, the star of the
Fair.

A message of Thanks from Sylvia,,,,,, How blessed we were to be able to enjoy such a beautiful, sunny, summers day for our Summer Fair recently, along with the fellowship and companionship we were able to share, and it was very gratifying to hear people say that they enjoyed the day. The children enjoyed the added attraction of having donkey rides as well as bouncing on the bouncy castle. A good time was definitely had by them! Unfortunately, we seemed to have clashed with other events which were taking place in Southport, which meant that we didn't get as many people as usual visiting our Fair. That said, the event raised just under £1,000, and on that note, as always, I wish to thank those who came along to support us to help raise that amount. We really appreciate your time and generosity, especially in today's financial climate. However, none of that would have been possible without the hard work and dedication of the Fair Committee, who give of their time in creating the different stalls with the many varied items for sale. Also being able to enjoy lunch and a cuppa in the café. My grateful thanks to them all. Of course, I could not forget to thank everyone who helped in so many other ways i.e setting up the tables in the hall and clearing away afterwards, the hard work in the kitchen, the editor of THE WORD for the advertising and to all those who donated many items for the stalls and beautiful raffles. Again, we couldn't do it without you, and so my grateful thanks to you all. I hope you enjoy the rest of the summer days and any holidays you may have planned.

St Paul's Cathedral displays Tyndale's 500-year-old Bible

To mark the 500th anniversary of the printing of William Tyndale's first English Bible St Paul's cathedral has put one of the few remaining copies of it on public display. Such was the opposition to the Bible being available in English in the early 16th century that hundreds of copies of it were burnt.

Tyndale was born in about 1494 in Gloucestershire. He loved the Scriptures and became a priest. In the 1520s he started translating the New Testament from Greek into English. He was challenged about this by a priest to whom Tyndale famously replied "if God spares my life I will cause the boy who driveth the plough to know more of the Scriptures than you do." He wanted to make the Bible accessible to everyone in their own language and not merely the preserve of the educated priests and monks.

There was a law which prohibited the translation of the Bible unless it was authorised by a Bishop. After unsuccessfully seeking permission from the Bishop of London Tyndale went to Germany and continued his work there.

He completed his translation of The New Testament in 1525 in Cologne, but it was not fully published until 1526 when it was printed in Worms. Thousands of copies were printed and were smuggled into England where there was an eager market for them.

Tyndale had also learnt Hebrew and started to translate The Old Testament into English and moved to the great printing centre of Antwerp. This was very dangerous because (as we have read in Dennis Davies' historical articles in recent years under the title "What If") Protestant opinions were considered heretical and punishable by death.

Tragically, this fate befell Tyndale. He was betrayed, condemned as an heretic, and was executed by strangulation and burning in 1536. Tyndale was not condemned because of translating or publishing Scriptures, which was not a crime in the Low Countries, but for the promulgation of Lutheran views that the Catholic states considered seditious or a threat to peace.

His New Testament was the first ever to be published in English. It was later absorbed into

the King James Version of the Bible, and revised versions of it are the basis of our Revised Standard Version of The Bible.

His words and phrases seeped into Shakespearean text and into many hymns. Only three copies of the original edition are known to exist. One is in the British Library, a pristine copy is in

Stuttgart, and the third, which is only a partial copy, is in St Paul's.

The text owned by St Paul's has only been available to view by the public once, in 2017, and never before as part of an open exhibition.

In 1526, St Paul's was at the centre of efforts to destroy Tyndale's work, led by the Bishop of London, Cuthbert Tunstall, who deemed the translation to be "heretical" and attempted to destroy every copy he could lay his hands on to prevent smugglers from secretly distributing it around England.

Half a millennium later the cathedral is going to great lengths to protect its surviving copy, using a display case that is light and temperature-controlled and "near bulletproof".

The exhibition at St Paul's, "A dangerous calling", will run until the end of next February and will also display a 1534 edition by Tyndale containing the first five books of the New Testament and other Bible editions from 1537 and 1539.

The Oxford English Dictionary quotes Tyndale's works more than 800 times. Some new words which he coined are still in use today, including "Passover" and "scapegoat."

Stuart Baker



The first page of Tyndale's Gospel of St John

Sources and acknowledgements:
500 years of Tyndale, by Neil Rees (The Bible Society).
The Times Newspaper, Kaya Burgess (Religious Affairs correspondent).
Wikipedia

A Church, a Castle . . . and a funeral

The second location on Janet and Ian's visit to the Lake District

Over the past few years, once the bad winter weather has passed and Britain has brightened somewhat we have fallen into a now regular pattern of taking a break at some point every month. And without fail, our intended aim is to sit back, do nothing (save for a leisurely visit or two to some ancient relics), and to relax for a week or so to recharge our batteries, aims that fly out of the window on the first day of every trip.

Last month's feature for example - Cartmel Priory - was visited before we had even reached our base for the week, and then on each of the following days we visited yet another village with yet another church and even more stories to unravel. Although most of those destinations were familiar old haunts, each day presented something new and overall the week was enchanting.

On the second day of our trip we drove a few miles along the peninsula to Dalton-in-Furness. Having once been the county town of the Furness area we were

expecting something rather grandiose but the Dalton of today appears to be stuck in a time warp.

The pictures of the castle keep and cross in the grounds we had seen before our visit turned out to be the complete building which is really just a tower. Although now a National Trust property, there were no ruins, no grounds and no cafe. Even worse, on the day we visited the castle was closed.

Our next port of call was to the nearby church of St. Mary which has a rich history dating back to the 12th century. Moving forward to 2002 St. Mary's parish was extended to become the parish of St. Mary's Dalton and St. Peter's Askam, a move that has been replicated elsewhere as congregations have dwindled. Given the close ties between our own church and those of St. Peter and St. James, could that trend also affect us here at St. John's at some point in the future?

St. Mary's follows a conventional building layout with main congregation pews in



the nave and medieval choir stalls in a chancel overlooked by a beautiful and intricate stained glass east window. For no real tangible reason I tend to think of stained glass windows as being very old, perhaps even having been installed at the time the church had been built and that often is the case. At least one window in the nave at St. Mary's however is much newer, being dedicated to Paul and Eliza Northey by their daughter Laura as recently as 1958 and depicting St Christopher, St. Cecilia, St. Catherine and St. Francis in four magnificent vertical panels.

Another feature literally catching my eye was a magnificent gleaming polished brass eagle lectern that reminded me of a similar lectern at St Thomas' in Radcliffe where in my youth I was a boy chorister. With no brass to polish, our similar, but wooden lectern at St. John's is easier to maintain. When we visited there was no mid-week communion so with the church being prepared for a funeral service our time inside the church was up and we headed back outside.

As was the fashion back in the 60's and 70's, St. Mary's graveyard has been grassed over. Unusually however, the

headstones were relocated along the boundary, just the tomb of local artist George Romney (1734 - 1802) a prolific portrait artist remaining. Romney was quite a local celebrity, painting gentry and families around the area.

The grassy area gives the grounds a more open feel while retaining the old headstones in that way keeps the links with former parishioners alive. With no service and having viewed the church, we walked back to the church hall for our now overdue coffee, only to find that it also was closed! Our only remaining course seemed to be a walk into town to hopefully find a coffee shop.

But even there we were thwarted for we could not find a single coffee shop or cafe. There was a Post Office and five pubs, one of which advertised a food offering but had closed down due to a bulging wall, so in desperation to quench our thirst we ended up with a shandy and a cola.

Our next visit, and there will certainly be one, will not be on a Tuesday and we will take our own packed lunch and a flask of coffee to enjoy while we are sitting on the fish slabs at the village cross.



GOD IN THE ARTS

Church buildings might provide a series of visual aids to spiritual meditation. The Revd Michael Burgess considers the significance of the church monuments. This month he reflects on church pulpits

'He gave us eyes to see them' Church Pulpits

It is a steep climb of 199 steps that leads the visitor to Whitby from the streets below to the church of St Mary's that stands near the ruined abbey. Having negotiated the climb, the visitor enters the church and is greeted by a glorious array of Georgian furnishings: box pews and a triple decker pulpit with candlesticks and cushions. The clerk would sit at the bottom level to give out the notices, the parson would lead the service in the middle, and then he would ascend to the third level to expound the Word of God.

George Herbert says that for the country parson the pulpit should be 'his joy and his throne.' Sydney Smith had a different slant when he wrote on going into the pulpit of All Saints Church in Foston in 1806: 'When I began to thump the pulpit cushion on my first coming to Foston, the accumulated dust of 150 years made such a cloud that for some minutes I lost sight of the congregation.' Not so at Whitby where the church is cared for and well loved.



Photo credit: Chris06, CC BY-SA 4.0 via Wikimedia Commons

Today preachers often remain at ground level, the better to interact with their congregations, but here at St Mary's Church the pulpit is a sign of the importance of teaching the Word: not because the preacher stands eight feet above contradiction, but to allow people to see and hear.

The word 'pulpit' means a platform or raised area to address the gathered family of God. As we look on in the pews, it stands often on our left. But God looks at us from the east end of the church and the pulpit stands at his right hand: a sign that the sermon can be the divinely inspired message of prophet and teacher, and so become living and active in the minds and hearts of its hearers.

WILLINGLY WORKING HEARTILY

Recently some of our congregation have been refurbishing the radiators in the church hall where the paint was flaking and falling off. This is nearly completed and looks much better for our hall users who hire the premises and for our own people to enjoy the space.

We thank Anthony Guy and Martin Rimmer for the many hours which they have spent in doing this.

And we thank Carl Davey who has repaired some defective areas of the path leading from the car park to the front porch.

There is always more to do: painting, decorating and routine maintenance, and any help would be much appreciated.

Some of us are restricted in our ability to help because of working commitments or unavailability but if any of our readers are

able and willing to assist with any jobs please contact Anthony on 07938 130 881 and offer to help with future projects.

As the apostle Paul wrote to the Christians in Colossae: "whatever you do, work heartily as for the Lord."

STOP PRESS! On Thursday 2nd July some of our congregation will meet at 10.00am to clean the space between the church and the church hall (the children's play area). It is overgrown with weeds and all the equipment needs a thorough clean. More willing workers will do the job in less time and it will be a good way of giving practical help to our church. If **YOU** are able to come and help, we shall be delighted to see you!

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, the Fox, and the Lion

The Ass and the Fox, having entered into partnership together for their mutual protection, went out into the forest to hunt. They had not proceeded far when they met a Lion. The Fox, seeing imminent danger, approached the Lion and promised to contrive for him the capture of the Ass if the Lion would pledge his word not to harm the Fox. Then, upon assuring the Ass that he would not be injured, the Fox led him to a deep pit and arranged that he should fall into it. The Lion, seeing that the Ass was secured, immediately clutched the Fox, and attacked the Ass at his leisure.

The morals:

Traitors must expect treachery
Never trust your enemy
(but as Christians we should hope and pray not to have any! Ed.)

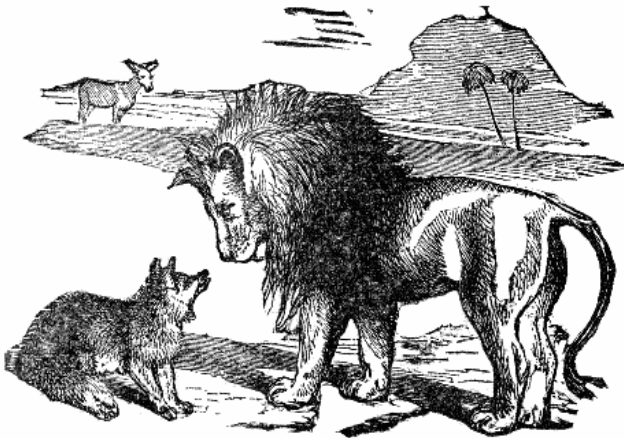


Illustration by John Tenniel

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 July **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.

Fear Not

A poem by Penny Candlin

Fear not for I have redeemed you
I have called you by your name
You are mine I have redeemed you
You will encounter many troubles in this world
But I will be with you through them all
I will not leave you or forsake you
I will hold your hand and guide you
Trust in Me put your faith in Me
and not your own understanding
Fear not for I have overcome the world
I have put an end to judgement when you
open your heart to Me
Fear not what others may say or think
Remember you are beautifully precious in My
sight
Fear not tomorrow because I want you to enjoy
today
Fear not, I Am your God the Almighty One.

The Story Behind "Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken"

In 1800 Vienna was under bombardment by Napoleon's troops. The Austrian composer, Haydn, then old and frail, asked to be carried to his piano where he made his own defiance of Napoleon by solemnly playing through his composition 'Emperor's Hymn' which he had composed for the Emperor, Franz II's birthday. Haydn never touched his piano again, and died a few days later, aged 77.

That is where the tune for this well-loved hymn came from. It quickly became the tune of the Austrian national anthem. It was later adopted by the Germans, as the tune for August Heinrich Hoffmann von Fallersleben's anthem Deutschlandslied, which began with the famous words: 'Deutschland über alles' (Germany above everything). In the ensuing political upheavals, the tune survived in the German national anthem, but was abandoned by the Austrians in 1946.

In the meantime, the tune had also reached England, as early as 1805. It was then that the words of a hymn by John Newton were first paired up with it. This meant that when the Austrian Emperor Franz visited his grandmother Queen Victoria, at Windsor Castle, he most likely would have sung his own national anthem tune to English words written by a converted slave trader turned country vicar!

John Newton's inspiration for this hymn comes from Psalm 87: 'Glorious things are spoken of you, O city of God' (vs3) and also a text from Isaiah 33:20-21: 'Look on Zion... there the Lord in majesty will be for us a place of broad rivers and streams...'

John Newton's hymn celebrates the joy of knowing that the Church is the new Jerusalem (Zion) where God abides. He rejoices that God protects his people and promises to supply their needs. He leads them into the Promised Land, just as long ago he led the Israelites through the wilderness to their Promised Land.

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WORD SEARCH

Solution on page 30

It was 250 years ago, on 4th July 1776, that the US Declaration of Independence was adopted by the Second Continental Congress. The original signed parchment still exists, behind bullet-proof glass at the National Archives in Washington. An original draft of the Declaration was made by Thomas Jefferson, and was amended by Benjamin Franklin and John Adams. It runs for only 1,320 words. The Declaration included the phrase: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."



JULY
FOURTH
DECLARATION
INDEPENDENCE
SECOND

CONTINENTAL
CONGRESS
WASHINGTON
DRAFT
THOMAS

JEFFERSON
BENJAMIN
FRANKLIN
JOHN
ADAMS

TRUTHS
CREATED
EQUAL
CREATOR
INALIENABLE

RIGHTS
LIFE
LIBERTY
PURSUIT
HAPPINESS

WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA?

An Introduction to the Books of the Bible: 1 Thessalonians

By Canon Paul Hardingham

1 Thessalonians is the earliest of Paul's letters, written when he was in Corinth during his second missionary journey (Acts 18:1–18) in 49–51 AD.

Thessalonica was the capital of the Roman province of Macedonia, as well as being a flourishing centre for trade and philosophy. After founding the church (Acts 17:1–9) Paul was forced to leave, when he was falsely accused of speaking against Caesar. As the new Christians were left with little spiritual support, Paul wrote this letter to encourage them.

Paul addresses a number of issues throughout this letter. As they weren't expecting persecution, Paul reminds them that this is normal Christian experience (3:3–4). He also challenges those in the church who were living off wealthier Christians rather than earning their own living (4:9–12; 5:14).

However, the most prominent theme in the letter is the second coming of Jesus. It is mentioned in every chapter of the book (1:10; 2:19–20; 3:13; 4:13–18; 5:1–11, 23–24). The Thessalonians were unclear about the timing of the day of the Lord (5:1–2). Some church members had died (4:13), and people weren't sure what would happen to them at Christ's return (3:10; 4:13). However, Paul assures them that when Jesus returns, the dead in Christ will rise to meet the Lord with the living (4:15–17). Therefore, believers don't need to fear God's wrath, but rather are assured of inheriting his salvation. Living in the light of Christ's return calls for holy and blameless lives (3:11–4:8; 5:23).

'May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.' (5:23).

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**

W CROSS R D

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

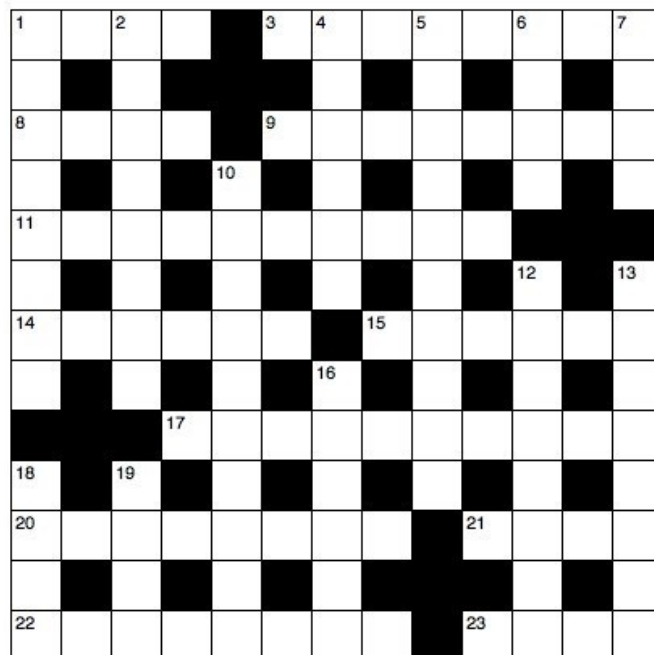
Solution below

Across

- 1 Proverbs describes her as being 'of noble character' (Proverbs 31:10) (4)
 3 'Shall we go up again — against the Benjamites, our brothers?' (Judges 20:23) (2,6)
 8 A descendant of Shem (Genesis 10:28) (4)
 9 'Anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my —' (Luke 14:27) (8)
 11 Resentment (Ephesians 4:31)(10)
 14 In Cain(anag.)(6)
 15 'Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to—' (Psalm 139:6) (6)
 17 Intense (1 Thessalonians 4:5)(10)
 20 Third Order of the Roman Catholic Church(8)
 21 'At midnight the cry rang out, "Here's the bridegroom! Come out to — him"' (Matthew 25:6) (4)
 22 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in —' (2 Corinthians 12:9) (8)
 23 'As the — pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God' (Psalm 42:1) (4)

Down

- 1 Nickname of popular First World War chaplain, the Revd G.A. Studdert Kennedy, — Willie (8)
 2 Occasion of religious joy (Lamentations 2:22) (5,3)
 4 'We three kings of — are' (6)
 5 Allegation or charge (Jude 9) (10)



- 6 Kind (1 Chronicles 12:33) (4)
 7 'Open your — and look at the fields!' (John 4:35) (4)
 10 Also known as the Feast of Lights (John 10:22)(10)
 12 Area that saw the healing of two demon - possessed men and a herd of pigs stampeding to their deaths (Matthew 8:28) (8)
 13 Forebear (James 2:21)(8)
 16 Name given to the first two books of the Apocrypha (6)
 18 Esau sold his birthright for this (Genesis 25:34)(4)
 19 Rear(anag.)(4)

In our Book of Remembrance

In July

- 1st David Smith, 2005
 5th Selena Clare, 1965
 7th Denis Haslam, 1983
 9th Leslie Holme, 1974
 Tom Ball, 1994
 10th Sarah Shaw, 1969
 11th George Close, 1978
 15th Alan Burton, 1999
 16th Colin Johnson, 1979
 James Turner, 1986
 19th Geoffrey Sanders, 1994
 20th Frank Pacey, 1969
 Patricia Gregson, 2024

- 23rd Evelyn Moore, 2004
 24th John Moss, 1987
 27th Thelma Karran, 2010
 28th John Kent, 1995
 30th Robert Hind, 1960
 Jimmy Beaumont, 2001
 31st Rosemary Quinton, 1998

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, Wife. 3, To battle. 8, Obal. 9, Disciple. 11, Bitterness. 14, Niacin. 15, Attain. 17, Passionate. 20, Tertiary. 21, Meet. 22, Weakness. 23, Deer.

DOWN:

1, Woodbine. 2, Feast day. 4, Orient. 5, Accusation. 6, Type. 7, Eyes. 10, Dedication. 12, Gadarene. 13, Ancestor. 16, Esdras. 18, Stew. 19, Area.



GARDENERS' CORNER

By Tina Lloyd

Whoever plants a garden plants happiness.....

July is peak flowering season for most gardens and can be a glorious paintbox of Summer colour. Happy gardening.

At – a – glance check list.

Keep on top of watering containers and baskets. Weekly feed container grown annuals or bedding plants. Keep dead heading to prolong flowering.

Lawns

When cutting the grass in hot dry spells, raise the mower blade. Avoid watering the lawn, except newly laid lawn, in long hot and dry weather. Keep lawn edges trimmed to keep neat and tidy.

Trees, Shrubs, Flowers.

Keep on top of dead heading roses. Prune Wisteria (see THE WORD, May edition, for further/full pruning). Clip privet and other fast growing hedges. Divide clumps of bearded iris and re-plant. Plant Autumn flowering bulbs. Water and feed annuals regularly. Continue to keep watered any newly planted trees, shrubs and perennials. Feed containers weekly.

Vegetables and Herbs.

Keep vegetables well watered in dry spells. Sow maincrop carrots, early peas, spring cabbage, turnips and pak choi. 'Stop' outdoor tomatoes. Cut and dry or freeze herbs.

Under cover.

Water and feed tomatoes. Water well and feed any other greenhouse plants. Ventilate the greenhouse well. Apply a layer of shading paint in the greenhouse if the weather is too hot. Train a standard fuchsia.

Water Garden.

Provide more oxygen, if necessary, by running a fountain. Divide water irises.

Key plants blooming in July

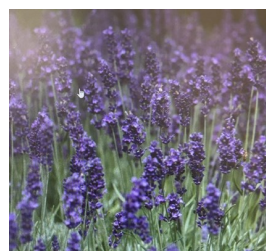
Penstemons (perennial).

These are lovely July garden border fillers and look like traditional cottage garden plants. There are many varieties in various colours and are very easy to grow. Peak flowering season - July to October. Pruning: it is advisable to leave the old growth on right through the winter til the following spring when risk of frost has passed, then cut down to good new growth.



Lavender (perennial/evergreen small shrub).

Lavenders are equally happy in a cottage style garden, in a herb garden or in a modern flower bed or pots. 'Munstead' and 'Hidcote' are fully hardy. Peak season – July and August. Pruning: prune immediately after flowering. It might seem early but it gives the plant time to form new growth for more flowers the following year. Do not cut into old wood when pruning.



Hebe (shrub)

Hebes are summer flowering shrubs with bottle-brush flowers. The smaller the leaves are generally thought to be harder & more frost resistant. They are very popular & are evergreen, giving structure in the garden all year round. They range from small compact groundcovers to large shrubs. Flowers: Bloom from midsummer to mid autumn with spikes of purple, pink, blue or white flowers. Thrives in full sun or part shade. Rarely need pruning, lightly trim plants after flowering to maintain a neat shape if required.



Ceanothus (shrub).

These are some of the most glamorous shrubs you can grow, with their big heads of fluffy blue flowers. Some are evergreen. Highly attractive to pollinators. Prune Spring flowering shrubs straight after flowering and Summer/Autumn flowering types are pruned in Spring if required.



Other plants in their prime.

Clematis, Deutzia, Potentilla, Astilbe, Astrantia, Centaurea, Campanula, Delphiniums, Echinops, Hardy geraniums, Menarda, Nepeta, Phlox, Salvia, Scabious, Veronica.

REFLECTED FAITH— INTERCESSIONS

Rev. Dr. Jo White continues her series on aspects of Christianity

Last month we reflected on the Creed within our service. This month, we consider what comes next.

In the Book of Common Prayer, the Creed and the sermon appear in a different order, but in both traditions intercessions follow. In Common Worship, they come straight after the Creed.

By this point, we may feel we have already prayed a great deal, so what makes intercessions different?

Intercessions focus entirely on the needs of others. They are public prayers, not centred on 'me' but on the wider world. They gather the concerns of the Church, the world, our community, those in need, and those who have died, along with those who mourn and as a whole congregation we bring them before God.

They are not a time to slip in a couple of

adverts for next week's summer fair and a prayer for enough volunteers to come forward – please see Mrs Jones after the service – or to tell the congregation of someone's ill health or funeral arrangements! These prayers usually follow that order, though sometimes in reverse. Either way, there is a clear pattern that helps the congregation engage. We may begin broadly with the world and move towards the local and personal, or start close to home and widen our view.

For example, with a theme such as farming, intercessions might include churches in rural communities worldwide, countries dependent on food production, government ministers responsible for agriculture and fisheries, local farmers and food workers, and those in need or recently bereaved within the community.

Style matters as much as content. These are the prayers of the people, so they should use language that feels natural and accessible.

Often, simplicity works best.

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 ends this series by considering

SLOTH

'Through laziness, the rafters sag; because of idle hands, the house leaks.' (Ecclesiastes 10:18).

This month we are looking at *Sloth*, the last of the Seven Deadly Sins. This is more than just laziness! The Latin root of the word is 'acedia' ('without care'), meaning it represents spiritual apathy, distraction or indifference in our lives. Sloth can have a significant effect on our spiritual lives, as it enables other sins to gain a foothold eg lust, anger or envy. Another consequence is that we can fail to respond to God's calling in our lives and his gifts go unused. There is no satisfaction in sloth, as real joy comes when we are ready to step out of our comfort zones for God.

How do we overcome sloth in our lives? Paul writes, *'Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord'*

(Colossians 3:23). We can ask ourselves some key questions:

Am I living with unconfessed sin? Can I identify sins or habits that are getting in the way of my spiritual intimacy with God?
Have I neglected the spiritual disciplines? In what ways have I neglected spending quality time with God in prayer, reading his Word or being still in his presence?

What fills my mind daily? What are the distractions that occupy my time and thinking eg social media, technology, people or habits? How can I let go of these things to give space for listening to God? The Holy Spirit can convict us of those things that we need to confess and let go. Are we ready to switch off our screens, seek to help others in need and give time to God?

'Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervour, serving the Lord.'
(Romans 12:11)

CHURCH NOTICE BOARDS
THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS



KEEP ON KEEPING ON

by the Revd Roy Shaw, a retired but active priest in the diocese of York, where he is a spiritual director.

In the church year, we've now come to that long season- it seems to go on forever- variously called 'Trinity' or 'Ordinary time'. Each of those labels tells us something about the approximately six months between Pentecost and Advent Sunday. 'Trinity' reminds us that with Pentecost, God has made himself known to us in all his fullness (or at least as much as we can bear) as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. 'Ordinary time' tells us that this is the season where, now armed with the insights and power of the Holy Spirit, we can revisit the life of Jesus with new eyes, new heart, see new things in the faith, see new opportunities to serve God.

This is the time when those words of Jesus (John 15 v15) 'I have made known to you everything I have learned from the Father' come into play. It may seem a long season, it may feel like the drudgery of 'Keep on keeping on' without the excitement of Christmas, Easter and Pentecost to lift our spirits, but it is ordinary time charged with the knowledge that we have everything we need in the resources of God. The love of the Father, the words and works of the Son, the power of the Spirit will energise us as we 'keep on keeping on' through this long season.

This long season up to the end of November is a reminder that working out our love for God in our community is probably more about perspiration than inspiration. Few are called to be heroes of the faith, but all are called to faithfulness, and somehow or other, with the transforming power of the Spirit, we are all able to keep on keeping on, doing little things with great love.

Here's a lovely prayer I learned from our son's godmother which captures some of the mindset of the Trinity season/Ordinary time; it may help you 'keep on keeping on' through the months ahead;

Let not our soul be busy inns that have not room for thee and thine, but quiet homes of prayer and praise where thou mayest find fit company; where the needful cares of life are wisely ordered and put away, and wide sweet space is kept for thee.

Amen to that. Ordinary- but challenging!

MICAH'S MESSAGE

Lester Amann considers the man who told the truth to Israel....

Why is the news so full of depressing stories? Why can't they report some good news for a change? Indeed, our world is always full of troubles, and we may wonder if better times will ever come.

Similar comments might have been directed at many of the Old Testament prophets who nearly always said negative and gloomy things. The people of Micah's day had many problems. They were surrounded by warring nations and peace in their time was unlikely.

It was Micah's task, as God's messenger, to tell the people how it was and how it was going to be, no matter how painful the facts. Micah was deeply concerned with the social ills of his day and spoke out against false prophets who were leading the people into contrived hopes and errors.

Micah was quite forthright. He announced that God would punish the people for their sinfulness and their enemies would overcome them. Micah came with bad news and there seemed no end to his reprimands and denouncements.

But in the desert was an oasis. Amidst his descriptions of imminent pain and suffering, Micah looked forward to a time of peace with freedom from injustice, fear and war. Micah delivered God's promise that from Bethlehem there would come a ruler to free them from their oppression. Their Saviour would come. (Micah 5:2)

Of course, Micah's hearers did not understand about the Babe at Bethlehem but were told to stand firm in their faith no matter what troubles or disasters would befall them. They were to look forward to their deliverance whenever that would be.

Amidst Micah's attack on the deplorable actions of leaders and the nation's wrong values and behaviour, he gave hope that God was with them in the failures and difficulties. Only God could take them through their troubles to a place of peace.

Micah's message still stands for us today. God wants us to mend our wilful ways; to correct bad attitudes and behaviour; to strive for heaven's values of justice, peace, equality, love and harmony.

As we approach a new year, we would do well to respond to Micah's words:

What does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God. (Micah 6:8)

CRIMINOLOGY

by John M. Shakespeare

Criminology is the study of what constitutes a crime and what actions define someone as being a criminal. The basic answer must be, someone who breaks the law is a criminal, whether it be exceeding the speed limit or committing murder. Crime is generally defined as an action or omission which violates the law, causes harm to society or individuals, and is punishable by the state. It is a public wrong, prosecuted by the state rather than a private dispute between individuals. In our country a breach of a religious law may be regarded as a sin but it is not a criminal offence unless our law has also made that conduct a crime (eg theft, murder, and perjury).

With regard to the seven Deadly Sins, the source goes back to the 4C, when sins were classified by Evagrius Ponticus (345-399 AD), a Christian monk and ascetic, and then by John of Cassian also known as John of Cassius (360-435 AD), a Christian monk, theologian and ascetic.

In the 6C, Gregory the Great also known as Pope Gregory I (540-604 AD), formulated the traditional seven Deadly Sins. These were Pride, Greed, Lust, Envy, Gluttony, Anger and Sloth. It may seem that these are not in themselves crimes as we know crimes in today's terms. However I believe that some of those sins give motivation to some of today's crimes e.g. Lust can lead to rape, Anger and Envy can lead to physical assaults and there is that old saying, "that Pride comes before a fall". To quote Winston Churchill (1874-1965), "The mood and temper of the public in regard to the treatment of crime and criminals, is one of the most unfailing tests of the civilisation of any country".

I believe that the foundations of many of our current laws could possibly be traced back to the Ten Commandments, as given by Moses i.e. You shall have no other God but me, You shall not make any graven images, You shall not misuse the name of the Lord in vain, You shall remember the Sabbath day, You shall honour your father and mother, You shall not murder, You shall not commit adultery, You shall not steal, You shall not give false testimony, You shall not

covet your neighbour's belongings. If you are not a practising Christian then some of these commandments will not be applicable as to what you can or cannot do, but those prohibiting theft, murder and perjury apply to everyone.

The Armed Forces have their own system of crime and punishment.

Probably the worst crime in the forces is being absent without leave (going AWOL). Other crimes may be concerned with attention to dress or the care of your military weapons. Being sentenced to a Detention Centre (The Glasshouse), is similar to being sent to prison as a service person.

So what makes a criminal is a question that haunts the legal system. Some say that it is possibly linked to one's genetics, others say that it is caused in families by observing the example of others. The Mafia is said to be a family led criminal system, where crime is inherited and passed on between generations. Theft is perhaps the commonest form of crime committed by the majority of criminals. A fitting quotation to end this article is from G.K. Chesterton (1874-1936), an English author and philosopher, "Thieves respect property, they merely wish the property to become their property, so that they may perfectly respect it".



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at the back of church or give regularly and most efficiently through the Parish Giving Scheme



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The background of the poster is a warm, golden-yellow color. In the top left corner, there is a large, stylized sun with rays emanating from it. In the bottom left corner, there are illustrations of yellow and blue wildflowers. The bottom half of the poster features a blue sky with white clouds and a blue sea. A large, stylized treble clef is on the left side, with musical notes floating around it.

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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 Thyatira. This month we shall look at what he wrote to the Christians in **Sardis**

"I know your works. I know that you have a reputation for life, but that you are dead."

Those are not the words with which we would be likely to commence a letter, but that was how John started his missive to the Christians in Sardis. Strong stuff! Why?

Approximately 700 years before the letter was written Sardis had been one of the greatest cities in the world. It was a city of the East and was hostile to the Greek world. Its wealth was legendary. The river which flowed through it flowed through a bed which had at an earlier time borne gold. A simile dating back to that time refers to a wealthy man being "as rich as Croesus" who had been a king of Sardis. He led Sardis to disaster in a war against the Persians. Centuries later, when it had become part of the Roman empire and derived wealth from the woollen and dyeing trades, it was destroyed by an earthquake.

When John wrote his letter to Sardis the Christian community there had become spiritually lifeless. Scottish theologian James Moffatt described the Christians at Sardis as maintaining a hollow façade of religion and noted that "nothing can be done with a nominal Christian who cannot recognise that he needs repentance and that Jesus is really outside His life."

John's letter was an exhortation to wake from their deadly lethargy, to be watchful of the wiles and temptations of the devil and to stand firm in their faith.

Christians must be on the watch against false teachings. In Paul's last address to the elders of Ephesus he warned them that grievous wolves would invade the flock from outside and that men inside the flock will arise to speak perverse things.

In his letter John urged the Sardians to continue to remember the thrill with which they first heard the good news and to repent and keep the commandments of the gospel. This was a warning against what William Barclay has called "spasmodic Christianity".

The letter concludes with a threefold promise to those who keep the faith:

1. they will be clothed in white raiments, which we may interpret as the whiteness of light which is the garment of God himself;
2. their names will not be wiped from the Book of Life; they will be numbered amongst the faithful citizens in the kingdom of God;
3. Jesus, who is for ever true to those who are true to him, will confess their names before God.

In short, the letter serves as a timeless call to integrity, urging believers to ensure their outward actions and reputations match their inward spiritual character.

Stuart Baker

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



Next month we shall look at what John wrote to the Christians in Philadelphia.

Diary Note:

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

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.

A Scientist Reflects: Suffering and the Image of God

Since the cost-of-living crisis in 2021/22, Food Banks have become a necessity for many desperate families. When they are given food, people reveal a variety of emotions: from relief, happiness and hope, through to quiet sadness, resignation, and desperation. Most often they display a mixture of several of these feelings at the same time.

I believe that our cries for answers at times like this, and our deep longing for things to be better, kinder, more just, less painful and chaotic, are a sign that we are made in the image of God. The Bible describes God creating men and women, instructing them to rule over the earth, and giving them the freedom to choose what they will do. The world God made was described as “very good”, but human wrongdoing caused a rift between people and God, and also between us and the rest of Creation. From a scientist’s perspective, it seems that the *potential* for accidents, disease and death – for both animals and humans – may have been part of God’s very good creation, and there was a real threat of famine, albeit far rarer than in our current

mismanaged version of creation. How would we have managed life in what Genesis describes as an un-subdued world if our relationship with God hadn’t broken down, and evil hadn’t been unleashed? Maybe painful experiences would have been experienced as challenges that brought us closer to each other and to God, rather than bringing us the experience of suffering (which I would define more particularly as involving distress, isolation and fear)? Of course, these are theoretical questions that no one can answer, but perhaps they are worth exploring.

God has already responded to suffering at a root level by taking it on Himself. Through His death and resurrection, Jesus broke the power of sin and death. We do not yet see the final results of those decisive actions – the end of suffering for all those who trust Him – but we can already feel their impact. For example, many people have experienced the wonderful effect, either in their own lives or by receiving kindness from others, which is described by these words: “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” (Ezekiel 36:26).

Some of the people who receive food are, in the words of one community leader, “really desperate”, but yet they still trust God to meet their needs. My hope is that the worldwide Church will, with God’s help, be part of the answer to their prayers – demonstrating our true status as people made in the image of God.

Here are some tips for a cooler house

If the summer heat is getting to you, you might consider the following:

Close your curtains and blinds during the day.

Block out the sunlight. That may be hard to do in a country where we don’t see the sun as often as we’d like, but sadly that sunlight pouring through your windows will not only brighten but also heat up your house.

At night, aim to create a breeze that flows through your house. This is easy to do - simply open windows on opposite walls or at opposite sides of your home. Let the air circulate as much as possible.

Try to reduce heat from your appliances. Your stove, television, dishwasher, hairdryer, fridge

and freezer all generate some heat. Can you do without any of these during the daytime?

Aim for cool flooring. Try and use wood flooring and ceramic or porcelain tiles.

Consider using breathable fabrics over your sofa and chairs. Sitting on natural fabrics such as cotton or linen throws is cooler than sitting on man-made fabrics.

If all else fails, **try an electric fan**, placed on the floor in front of a bowl of ice water, and aimed at the opposite wall of your room. But they are expensive to run, and do not cool the air. They merely increase the velocity of it, so that it feels cooler.



Save Queenscourt's Services



For the cost of a weekly coffee,
why not donate just £5 a week
to help save your local hospice

queenscourt.org.uk/donate



the elderberries gardening club

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



The club offers talks from guest speakers, trips to historical houses and gardens, and social events. To find out more, email:

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



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WHAT'S ON IN OUR NEIGHBOURING CHURCHES

Social Events at St James' Birkdale (Lulworth Road)



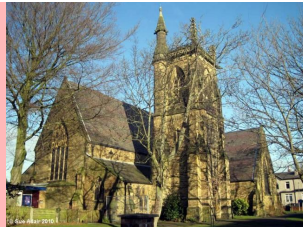
First Tuesday of each month:

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)



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

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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

Meeting Identification Number: 835 5074 3780.

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

Password: 7ehHEK. When prompted to do so, enter that number and then press HASH (#)

BUT PLEASE CHECK YOUR CALL PACKAGE CHARGES WITH YOUR PROVIDER

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

Was it really that long ago?...

75 years, on 13th July 1951 Arnold Schoenberg, the Austrian-born American composer died. One of the most influential composers of the 20th century, though the Nazis considered his music degenerate, because he was Jewish.

60 years ago, on 30th July 1966 the 1966 FIFA World Cup final took place. England beat Germany 4 – 2. English player Geoff Hurst became the first (and, so far, the only) player to score a hat-trick in a World Cup final. And his second goal almost definitely crossed the line!

50 years ago, on 4th July 1976 Operation Entebbe took place. Israeli commandos staged a counter-terrorist hostage-rescue mission at Entebbe Airport in Uganda, following the hijacking of an Air France plane on 27th June.

Also 50 years ago, on 20th July 1976 NASA's Viking 1 lander successfully landed on Mars, and sent back the first photographs from the surface of Mars.

Also 50 years ago, on 29th July 1976 the pier-head of Southend Pier in Essex was destroyed by fire. It is the world's longest pier. It re-opened in 1986, but then a tanker crashed into it, creating a 70-foot gap. It reopened again in 1989, but two further fires, in 1999 and 2005, caused significant damaged. It reopened in July 2012.

40 years ago, on 23rd July 1986 the marriage of then Prince Andrew and Sarah Ferguson in Westminster Abbey took place. They became the Duke and Duchess of York and divorced in 1996.

Also 40 years ago, on 28th July 1986 British estate agent Suzy Lamplugh failed to return from an appointment in London, sparking the biggest missing person investigation since Lord Lucan. She has never been found.

30 years ago, on 1st July 1996 candidates taking the British driving test also had to pass a written exam for the first time.

Also 30 years ago, on 5th July 1996 Dolly the sheep was born. She was the first cloned mammal at the Roslin Institute in Edinburgh. Dolly died in 2003.

25 years ago, on 2nd July 2001 Barry George was convicted of killing British TV presenter Jill Dando in April 1999. He was sentenced to life imprisonment, but later acquitted and the case remains unsolved.

20 years ago, on 1st July 2006 Fred Trueman, cricket player and broadcaster died. Seen as one of the greatest bowlers in cricketing history.

10 years ago, on 13th July 2016 Theresa May became Prime Minister (until 2019) after David Cameron resigned following the UK's referendum on leaving the European Union.

Church Hall Users

Tuesday

10am - Low Impact Circuits Training.

11.15am - Fitness Drumming.

Call or message Kaz on 07540 369942 to book a place.

Wednesday

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

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

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

elderberriesgardening@gmail.com

Thursday

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

Contact: ageingwellmerseyside@outlook.com.

6.00-9.00pm:

St John's Rainbows (6.00-7.00pm)

St John's Brownies (6.00-7.15pm)

and Girl Guides (7.15-9.00pm).

Contact: Janette Law 01704 565951

Friday

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.

Time Choices by Daphne Kitching

(Lk 10:38-42)

Martha is distracted,
too busy

preparing for the needs of the day.

Not enough time... not enough time.

Mary is focused,

taking time to meet the needs of the heart.

Sitting still,

seeing through the paraphernalia of every
day

with a new clarity that changes her world.

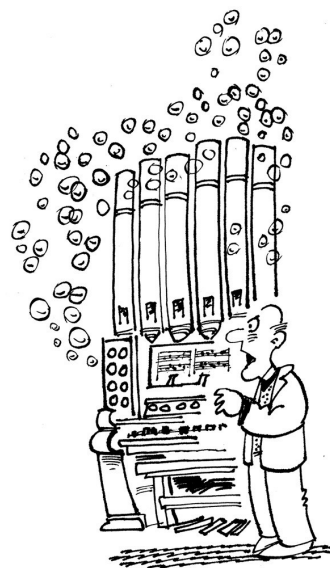
Mary listens to Jesus.

She chooses life.

There is time...there is time.

We all have our life time.

What will we choose?



For the last time! - Which member of the Junior Choir
put bubble mixture in the organ-blower?!

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To Stuart Harris on 2nd July
Deborah Whittaker on 10th July
Howard Taylor on 20th July
Sylvia Musgrove on 29th July

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



The vicar was already regretting ordering the new stained-glass window from IKEA



"Wait a moment, dear, this isn't a tourists'-attraction ratings guide, it's a Health and Safety warning!"

The Last Laughs



"Good news on the lottery-funding for the organ repairs. Vicar – three of our numbers came up for £25!"

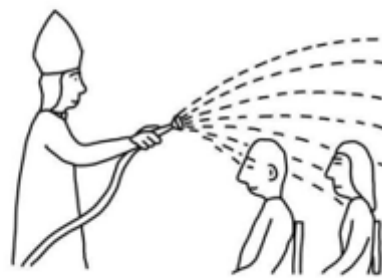
RITUALS FOR HOT WEATHER



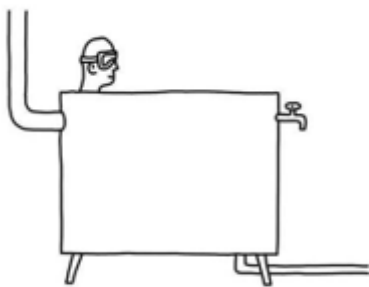
THE BRINGING FORTH OF THE FANS



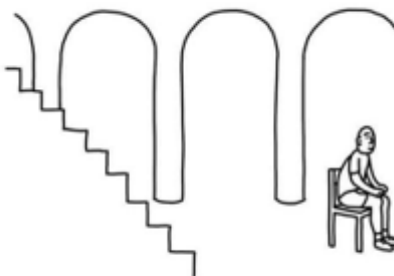
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11:05am – 11:35am Balance Improver – £3.00

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

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