

# *INSPIRE*



THE MONTHLY MAGAZINE  
FOR THE PARISH OF  
ST JOHN THE BAPTIST, FROME

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2025

The parish of Frome Selwood  
in the Frome Local Ministry Group

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August/September 2025



A detail from one of the Flower Festival displays—see pages 4-6

Photo Chris Gilbert

## The Vicar's view

July, as many of you will know, has been a busy month for St John's, no small part of it being taken up by the Frome Festival, and, again, I would like to give a big thanks to Elaine with all the volunteers and stewards who did so much to make the festival the joy and attraction that it was to our church. Most of you will know that the theme for the festival was 'Telling the Story', and this theme has been quite a rich source of thought to me, and I suspect others, lately. Watching the events of Frome Festival has helped me realise just how bad, at times, Christians can be at telling their story.

If I'm honest, if someone asked me to tell them the story of the Church, I would probably groan a little, talk about how we are trying to turn around the declining numbers, make a few jokes about endless meetings, committees and subcommittees grinding all activity to gridlock, moan a little about how difficult funding and grant giving is to get and finally close with a small comment on the increasing burden placed on those foolish enough to volunteer to help any given parish. That's my telling the story.

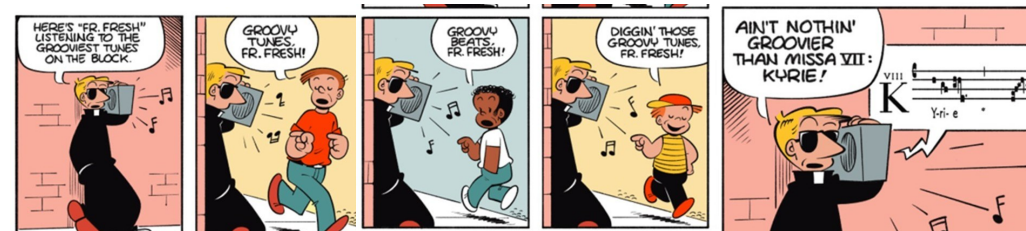
And yet, for all of my cynicism and pessimism when it comes to talking about Church, as I watched the hustle and bustle of the Frome Festival, I didn't see all the decline and burdens of institutional Church. What I saw were devoted people with great love for St John's as a building, as an outworking of God's Kingdom, working hard to help it fulfil its potential. I saw strangers who rarely come to Church otherwise exhibiting their art, arranging flowers, giving of their time and energy. I saw the whole community of Frome, people I had never met before, come in and marvel at our beauty, be moved by our choir, show interest in our history and mission and, most importantly, have (whether knowingly or unknowingly) an encounter with God.

There is a story about Church and Churchgoing – it is a story of decline and failure – but the more I see of the life and work of St John's, the more I am convinced that this story says more about the people telling it than it does about the facts. The story of St John's is one of perseverance and resurrection after every setback. In the story of St John's there is hope, in our story there is life for a needy world. We live in a society where even our most revered of institutions and leaders are

breaking under their own weight, where we dare not have hope in any person or promise because time and again they have proven to have feet of clay. And yet, for all of this, people still come to St John's eager to hear our story, St John's is still looked to, in the face of so many competing narratives. The promises that St John's stands witness to, that we are loved, redeemed and of value, have survived and endured as kings, institutions and politics have turned to dust. Just think of this: St John's was built before there was even an England, let alone a Great Britain. The country with its stories has changed, but our story has not; the stories of Saxons and Vikings have all faded from memory, but story endures and continues to give life and hope to the people who walk through our doors, provided there are people to tell it with sincerity.

For some, evangelism can be a dirty word, something that smacks of superiority, power play and derision, and at times it has been all of these, but at its heart and at its root meaning, evangelism is nothing more than 'sharing the good news', literally. Evangelism is telling the story; in a world full of stories about failure, broken people and empty promises, it is about telling people that there is redemption beyond our misdoings; in a world full of stories of violence and power, it is about telling people that love will yet triumph over all of these; in a world full of stories about how every place of security, from the NHS to policing, is failing, it is about telling people that God is building his Kingdom through us and there shall come a time when this world is remade and transformed into paradise. Good people, I beseech you to tell and keep telling the story of Christian faith – of Christian faith as found and lived at St John's. It might just be the hope that sates their desperation, the story they need to believe in.

**Yours in Christ, Rev. Seamus Hargrave**





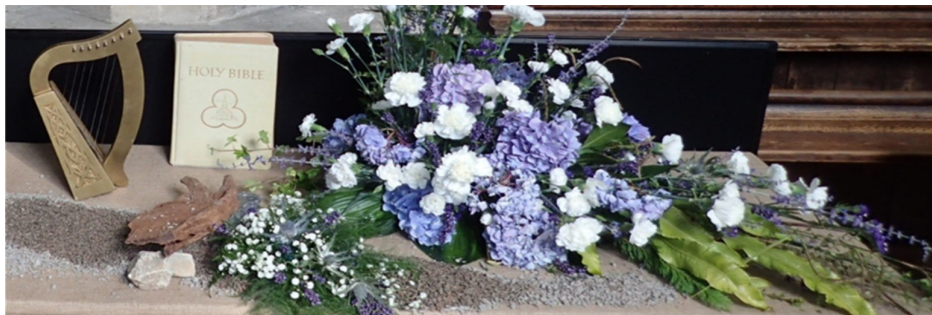


Another year, another busy, bustling Festival! 1560 people were recorded coming through the doors (and we probably missed a few). As always, some visitors were bemused: 'What exhibition?' 'What Festival?'

But as we patiently explained, it was 'Telling the Story in Fabric, Glass and Stone' (the words cleverly and painstakingly picked out on the information board by the nave altar). The first two exhibits telling the stories of St Aldhelm and Bishop Ken were handily placed so that one could turn and point to the statue of Aldhelm and then move to point to the windows of the Ken Chapel, before sending them off down the nave to make their own exploration.

I never cease to be in awe of the wonderful members of our own St John's Flower Team and the Frome Floral Art Society who can not only persuade flowers and foliage to stay where they put them (something I have never achieved) but can also devise such striking and memorable interpretations.

In no particular order, I remember the water cascading into wine; St John's head on a platter; the purple lilies for Thomas Ken among the lush greenery of Longleat forest; the depiction of the river Frome winding its way through the town; the starkness of the Easter scene contrasting with the intimate detail of the first Christmas (two orange



Photos on this spread: Chris Gilbert

gerberas for Mary and Joseph and a little white one for Jesus in the crib); the stunning altar display alongside one of our altar frontals that we rarely take the time to study; the opulent display of richness of the feast depicting the gluttony tile in the Baptistry; the chilling reminder of war in the story of Frome from Saxon to modern times.



There were some extra interesting events to factor in this year during the days of the exhibition: a rather large family event to celebrate the renewal of wedding vows; a funeral; extreme heat (of course); and the delightful absence of water (our grateful thanks to the neighbouring leak). Everyone took these, and all other unforeseen events, cheerfully in their stride.

As always, visitors drifted around the church, buying books, pausing for coffee and cakes, admiring the exhibition of art work from the Art for Well Being exhibition, venturing into the schools' exhibition, sitting quietly in the Ken Chapel set aside away from the main exhibition area. That this all worked smoothly is due to the immense amount of planning and hard labour that went into the exhibition itself, and to the logistics of organising all the support staff (stewarding and refreshments). Thanks are due to everyone who patiently stewarded, made cakes, carried water. But especial thanks to Mandy who seemed to spend the whole week in church making sure that all was well and to Elaine, the 'inspiration and perspiration' behind it all.





In addition to the magnificent visual displays, the church was the setting for three events put on by others – a talk about 18th century poet Elizabeth Rowe (who lived in Frome), a talk about working in churches by local stone mason Andrew Ziminski, and a performance by Kanekt, a fascinating blend of sitar, guitar, clarinet and violin.

There were also three events that we put on ourselves. The Introduction to Bellringing event was very well attended – people were

clearly thrilled to be able to go up into the ringing chamber and 'have a go'. Special thanks to Tony and to the bellringers.

On the Thursday, we were able to enjoy a splendid Festival Choral Evensong sung by our regular St John's Choir along with some singers from the very popular monthly Evensong. Together they gave us a very fine feast of choral music from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries which reflected the turbulent religious changes of that period.

'St John's by Candlelight' was unexpectedly thrilling. We put out every candle and tea light we could find for the Friday evening tour of the church, but really didn't know what shape this particular story telling was going to take. To our immense surprise, we were taken round the church, through the flickering candlelight, first by St Aldhelm, then by Bishop Ken, finally by Vicar Bennett. As each of these illustrious figures led us round, they told their part of the amazing story which is the history of our church. It was unexpectedly moving and entertaining!

The evening concluded with the singing of the ancient office of Compline, something with which we are quite familiar at St John's, but sung in the church illuminated by hundreds of guttering candles it was an intense experience. People who attended are still coming up to us and talking about it. With thanks to Eleanor, Neil, Seamus and Rosemary.

**Janet Caudwell**



## Reader Formation a short reflection



It is finished! after 2 years, 8 modules, 12 essays, many tutorials, meetings and days spent in the library, I have finished my studies and am now preparing for licensing. I have been to London to order the necessary Reader's Robes, and the licensing date is in the diary: Saturday 4th October, 2pm in Wells Cathedral. After all your patience and support, I very much hope that some of you might be able to join me for that service. Before then I have a couple of months to work out what shape my ministry will take!

At our last residential weekend in May, we were all asked to give a short presentation reflecting on our experience. All of you at St John's have been a very important and supportive part of my training, so it seems fitting that I should share my final reflection with you here:

We have come to this final weekend – it only seems like yesterday since we gathered here for the first time, the modules of our formation laid out like stepping stones before us. Now we are about to reach the other side – there have been stumbles, mis-steps, but one of the joys of this process has been knowing that there were friendly hands outstretched to steady us and guide us on our way.

Parallel to our college work have been our personal journeys within our training contexts – the people we have met who have encouraged us and supported us on our way – families, friends, discussion groups, training supervisors, people who have helped us discern our vocations and enabled us to grow in our embryonic ministries. I have valued the experience of our church going into and, thankfully, coming out of Vacancy – an experience that allowed me to share in the process of identifying the spiritual, missional and social aspirations of our congregation, to say nothing of working with three different training supervisors, each of whom brought a different perspective.

As we step out into our various ministries, answering our personal callings, we will be following the paths of generations before us, intent on spreading the Gospel and bringing people to faith – A daunting prospect for many of us, and there will be times when we ask the question Why, or How? We were asked to refer to short Bible



passages in this presentation. For me, choosing a Bible verse that resonates with my situation is a bit like selecting my desert island discs – it changes every time I think about it (and on that desert island we get to take the whole Bible, Shakespeare and a book.) I am tempted to adopt that old Acronym for the Bible: *Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth*, but I will conclude with three thoughts which, taken together, could also become a prescription for self-care:

- \* From the Bible, the psalm which brings so much comfort when things get difficult: Psalm 121, which begins and ends:  
*I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh even from the Lord; who hath made heaven and earth ... The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil; yea it is even he that shall keep thy soul. The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in, from this time forth for ever more.*
- \* A line from Shakespeare which is part of my daily mantra:  
*To thine own self be true.*
- \* and finally a familiar prayer:  
*God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference. Amen.*

**Rosemary McCormick**

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## **A Home for Mary**

As many of you will know, the statue of Our Lady in the Lady Chapel was temporarily housed beside the altar when the niche it inhabited became unstable. The time has come, at long last, to decide upon a permanent home for her. Through the month of August two proposals – one for putting her back in the niche and one for moving her forward and placing her on a small stand besides the votive candle stand – will be put before the congregation, with a vote on the proposals being held after the 10am service on 24th August.

Please email Rev. Seamus if you have any questions, and you are welcome to submit a vote by email if you will not be at the service on the 24th.

## **“... In aid of the choir development fund”**



Several of you might have been at services recently and heard these words, when collections have been taken in aid of the ‘choir development fund’ – but what exactly is that? The Sunday morning choir at St John’s is well established, and they enhance the singing at our Sunday services, whether robed and in the choir stalls, or (on the second Sunday of each month – their official ‘week-off’) sitting amongst the congregation in the pews. They are a hard-working choir, leading the hymns and sung sections of the Eucharist, in addition to learning an anthem for every service. Recently they have excelled themselves, learning some challenging music for our annual Festival Evensong, and all that extra work has paid off in the quality of singing we have heard on Sunday mornings. As I write this, they are about to go on their annual summer holiday – you won’t see them back in the choir stalls again until after the August Bank Holiday.

But there are more developments under way. In February we launched our ‘occasional choir’, which now boasts about fifteen members, who gather in the Lady Chapel at 3.45pm on the third Sunday of every month to learn the music that they will sing (after a tea and cake interval) at the 5.00pm service. Our next plan is to start a ‘training’ choir (but we need to think of a better name for them) which will be aimed at youngsters aged 8–13. This venture has huge implications not only for the future musical life of the church but also as a potential way of introducing more families and young people into our community, and as such I am hoping to enlist the help of the wider congregation.

The Royal School of Church Music, to which we are affiliated, is keen to promote choirs for young people, and have recently set up a ‘Young Voices Toolkit’ which offers guidance on different aspects of the enterprise, including suitable music, how to rehearse, and, very importantly, safeguarding. I shall be spending most of August

exploring their recommended 'best practice' with a view to starting the scheme mid-September, but I will need help. Our first step will be to advertise and recruit potential singers, ensuring that the necessary safeguarding paperwork is done – parents will need to give permission for their child(ren) to take part, and I am hoping that we might be able to charge some kind of membership subscription, to cover such costs as music, choir robes, church heating etc. I will also need assistance during the choir sessions – I will need to have at least one additional adult with DBS clearance with me for every session, and as a whole congregation we will need to make the youngsters and their families feel welcome once they start participating in our worship.

If you would like to read more about the RSCM Young Voices Toolkit scheme go to: <https://www.rscm.org.uk/young-voices-toolkit/?highlight=young%20voices%20toolkit>

For more information about how we might start a scheme at St John's please talk to me after a service, or email me at:

[rosemarymccormick@hotmail.com](mailto:rosemarymccormick@hotmail.com). I don't have all the answers yet, but I hope that together we might be able to establish something that could have a huge impact on the worshipping community of our church. And if you know of any potential members (the only qualification being that they are aged 8–13 and have an interest in singing) do please spread the word!

**Rosemary McCormick**

### Thank you, Rosemary!

*After Evensong on 20 July, the choir held an informal fizz and nibbles event during which they made a presentation to Rosemary to thank her for all her hard work as choir mistress.*



### Links in a Golden Chain 13

#### John Keble



John Keble lived from 1792 to 1866. He was a distinguished scholar at Oxford, but rejected an academic career to serve as a curate to his father, who was in poor health, and later as a parish priest at Hursley in Hampshire. He was a kind and sympathetic pastor, but best known as a poet and hymn writer. In 1827 he published, originally anonymously, a volume of poems entitled *The Christian Year*. It became a best seller, and 95 editions were printed in his lifetime. It remains in print, and an e-book edition can be had for 99 pence! The poems were links with all the feasts of the church's year, and the whole of the liturgical calendar. Some of the poems were written to be sung as hymns. In the original edition of *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, in 1861, 12 of his compositions are included. In the book that we use, *Hymns Old and New*, there are only four, reflecting changes in language taste over the years. His poetry demonstrated 19th century styles, which often seem over-sentimental to the contemporary reader, but *The Christian Year* had an immense influence in the churches of the English-speaking world. By the time the book was out of copyright, in 1873, over 375,000 copies has been sold in Britain. Keble was elected to the Chair of Poetry at Oxford (an honorific rather than a teaching post) in 1831 and held it until 1841.

In 1833 he preached a famous sermon in Oxford, 'National Apostasy', in which he criticised trends in public morality and governance. It was included in a series of pamphlets known as *Tracts for the Times*. He contributed other tracts, as did Edward Pusey and John Henry Newman. They gave rise to what became known as the Tractarian or Oxford Movement, which called on the Church of England to recover the spirit of the early years of the Christian faith and the reformed catholicity of its institutional life and spirituality. Newman and some other Anglicans came to despair of the C of E and became Roman Catholics. The majority remained loyal to the national church and over the past two hundred years have contributed to the recovery of

dignified worship and profound scholarship, both in this country and in the wider Anglican Communion.

In memory of this great priest a new Oxford College was established in 1870 and bears his name, It is worth a visit for its wonderful red-brick architecture by William Butterfield. In the chapel is the original painting *The Light of the World* by Holman Hunt. A later copy by the artist in the one in St Paul's Cathedral in London.

Keble was involved in many other publications, including translations of the early Christian writers in the series *The Library of the Fathers*, another book of poetry *Lyra Innocentum*, and twelve (!) volumes of sermons. This last has gone out of print, for which we might be a little thankful, but whenever we sing *Blest are the pure in heart* or *New every morning*, we might give thanks for a faithful, learned and creative priest who is honoured in our calendar of saints, and remains an inspiration to many in Christian Ministry.

**Kevin Tingay**

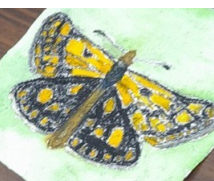
### Charcoal creations



I received a most unusual text from the NHS recently. Along with other service users, I was invited to participate in an art workshop at the RUH Bath Diabetes and Endocrinology Centre on a Saturday morning. The aim was to help with the desperately needed makeover of the rather bland, boring long corridor leading from the car park to the department.



This task is long overdue. Most of the other historic buildings adjacent to A19 have been demolished to make way for the large and shiny new Dyson Cancer Centre. It seemed that A19 would also be removed after over a century of service and hard use.



However, it remains an aged and remote outpost. From the style of building and layout, it probably dates from the First World War era when Combe Park was the site of the Bath War Hospital, only

later becoming the Royal United Hospital after the main hospital relocated there in 1932.

A medical consultant submitted a successful bid to the national charity Diabetes UK (as the NHS is notoriously short of money) to improve this ancient accommodation. A series of inclusive art workshops led by a mural artist was the result. As I arrived, large vases of grasses, leaves, flowers and seed heads were being carried in. The waiting room had been transformed. The corridor mural had been drawn out in charcoal, sealed, and the artist was overlaying the colours. It represents botanical specimens and insect life seen on a wild riverside walk. Eventually, the waiting room will be decorated in a coastal theme. We had a lovely sociable time, engaging in some challenging drawing exercises. It has rekindled my love of working with charcoal. It's a very sensual material, allowing flow and texture to be created, just like drawing with a stick of butter! Our first task was an observational, continuous line drawing, so that the charcoal had to remain in constant contact with the paper. This was followed by a detailed and focused study in charcoal, and finally painting in watercolour to illustrate a selected insect. These creatures are destined to take their place in the main corridor in their riverside habitat.

**Alison Henderson**



### Bennett Centre coffee morning



*A happy group enjoyed coffee and cake in Christine and Phil Holland's beautiful garden – and also raised a welcome £300 towards levelling the cloister courtyard to enable a stair lift to be installed.*





## The Rosary

The rosary – or at least the idea of it – is in some ways as old as the Christian faith itself. All of us know that prayer, both personal and corporate, is at the heart of Christian faith and vital to maintaining a good relationship with God. Ancient Judaism, from which we have inherited the Christian faith, expected its people to pray three times a day – morning, afternoon and night – and this corresponds with the normal cycle of Christian daily prayer – Mattins, Evensong and Compline – which priests, to this day, make a promise to say every single day of the rest of their lives. Originally it was expected that the entire 150 psalms would be said within these cycles of daily prayer – that has now mercifully been reduced! However, whilst it was still the expectation, Christianity began to spread from the educated gentiles and scripturally versed Jews to largely uneducated and illiterate societies who had neither the time nor resources to read the psalms let alone attend them in their religious context. These people still sought a way to participate in the corporate prayer of the Church, so Christian leaders began to design a series of 150 prayers to correspond with the 150 psalms, for people to say instead, often accompanied by a string of 150 beads to help the people keep count.

The very name 'bead', as in the small baubles on a necklace, comes from the Old English word 'Bede', meaning 'prayer'. This association naturally came from the fact that the most common context that a person would own a string of baubles would be as their rosary, so the bauble became synonymous with the prayer it represented. This common place in the English language shows the immense place the rosary held in the English mind and worship, as does the fact that they keep being discovered in English shipwrecks, graves etc long after the reformation. The rosary is very much a part of the Anglo 'prayerscape', whatever your denomination might be.

Another shift in Christian prayer happened around this time to help the Christian faith to take root in the hearts of average, illiterate

communities. Spirituality began to focus on what became known as the empathetic model of prayer, that is, trying to feel and imagine for ourselves the experience of figures within the Christian narrative. If we think about it, feeling love, grief, joy and pain are all the most universal experiences of our lives – we do not need great poems to understand what love is, any more than we need an in-depth psychological review to understand what sorrow is. They are a part of our very nature, and for a society who could not read or write, the Church encouraged them to participate in the bible in the best way they could, with empathy. People were encouraged to look on images of the last supper and feel their hunger being satisfied, to look on Our Lady cradling her infant Son and feel her maternal love, to look on the Crucifix and feel Jesus's pain. This is also, by the way, why around this time images of the crucifixion and other iconography become quite graphic to the point gratuitous – it was a bit of overkill on the artist's part to try to help onlookers participate in the emotion of the scene.

These two streams – empathetic prayer and the series of 150 prayers – converged in St Dominic (1170-1221). St Dominic was given the hard task of converting a group of people called the 'Cathars' who had fallen away from the Church, in large part because they thought God was incapable of feeling human pain and sharing the human experience. St Dominic, seeking a way of converting these people, received a vision from Our Lady where she gave him a string of 150 roses and taught him to use them to pray and meditate on the 'mysteries' or 'scenes' of the rosary. This form of empathetic reflective prayer on the life of Christ meant that many Cathars saw Christ's deep participation in the human experience and were brought back to the Church, and from this the rosary, in its modern form, spread through the rest of Christendom.

The rosary as we have it today is a set of beads still largely representing the prayers of the Daily Office. If you think about the prayers that are said in Mattins or Evensong – The Creed, the Glory be, the Our Father – these are all a part of the rosary, with the Hail Mary taking the place of the changeable psalms and canticles. This

does not mean that the Hail Mary subverts the psalms or scripture readings. The point is that when you are saying the 10 Hail Marys your mind is meditating/participating in a scene from Scripture or the early Church. With our lips we say the prayer (which is itself mostly compiled from scripture verses), but in our minds we are experiencing the Nativity, or the Resurrection, or the Last Supper.

The saying of so many prayers in a certain order is not the main point of the rosary; rather, it is allowing these prayers to form a basic timing of your meditation upon the rosary's mysteries, meditations on the Christian narrative. The idea of measuring time in minutes and seconds only really became possible to the common person in the 1700s-1800s, when clocks and watches became readily available. Before this, lesser measurements of time were often measured by what could be done in them – normally prayers. In Don Quixote, a puppet show is described as being destroyed 'in the space of two credos'. In saying the ten Hail Mary's repetitively we are setting aside the space of time in which it takes to say them to concentrate our minds upon entering more deeply into a Christian Mystery.

Nonetheless, the rosary was forbidden by the Reformation, in part because of the repetition of the rosary prayers but primarily for its encouragement to people to use their imaginations in engaging with the mysteries or scenes of the rosary. John Calvin, one of the foremost influences on the English Reformation, said 'The human mind is a factory of idols.' For early Reformers, therefore, any attempt to imagine or participate in the Divine outside what was revealed in scripture was forbidden, and those forms of devotion that encouraged the mind to dwell on images and ideas outside the very word of scripture were opening doors in the human soul to the deception and power of the Devil. Thus the early Reformation forbade rosaries, along with hymns, poems, statues and all art works and many other forms of devotion.

Mercifully, as Christians began to leave the, often toxic, politics that surrounded so much of Early Reformation polemics, they were given greater freedom to think through the full implications of the perhaps

rash discounting of God's capacity to use the beauty and materials of the world to engage us. If all human imagination and thought was necessarily directed to evil, how could Puritans be certain of their conversion, of their hearts being 'strangely warmed'. If our starting point is that we cannot use our minds, our resources, our material world to interact with God, then what does that make of the Incarnation? Of God's becoming Man and inhabiting our world? As C.S. Lewis later summarised, 'The body ought to pray as well as the soul. Body and soul are both the better for it. Bless the body ... but for our body one whole realm of God's glory – all that we receive through the senses – would go unpraised.' With all of these realisations entering the body of Christian thought, statues began to appear in churches again, hymns were slowly re-introduced into worship, and the rosary too found its way back into the spirituality of the Church of England, so much so that the former Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams is not only a regular prayer of the rosary but has spoken very positively of its place in the Christian's prayer. Further afield, one of the best books about the rosary, *Five for Sorrow, Ten for Joy*, was written by Rev. Neville Ward, a Methodist Minister. The Church of England, never slow to flog a dead horse, has just released its own Daily Prayer Rosary using Common Worship.

If you look at a rosary at face value, you will see a string of beads ending in a cross, a useful tool or a piece of jewellery, but it means so much more. The rosary is a journey that takes us through the great stations of the Church's journey until we find ourselves back where we began, at the heart of the cross. Each bead of the rosary is another successive generation, whose journey and prayers to God is pierced through by this ancient form of prayer, drawing them to their final destination, the cross of Christ. It is a prayer that over centuries upon centuries has grown and deepened with its own insight and understanding, and it is a form of prayer that is open to you, to see if you too can be carried on its journey through the life of Christ to find a deeper unity and prayer with him.

**Rev Seamus Hargrave**

## Twinning ceremony – 50 years ago

In September 1975 outside St John's church, a Twinning charter was signed by Jean Arthuis and Peter Bardgett – Mayors of Château-Gontier and Frome. Château-Gontier is a small town near Angers in the Mayenne.

Twinning was quite popular in those years, with memories of WW2 still relevant. It was so important for countries in Europe to have more connections with each other and to understand different cultures. Château-Gontier, like many towns in northern France, was already twinned with a town in Germany. This move had happened soon after the end of the war to encourage people in northern France to come to some kind of reconciliation after the years of Nazi occupation. I remember looking at the back wall of the Arthuis's house in Château-Gontier and seeing all the gunshot pot holes in the rendering – a stark reminder of those days.

In the earlier days of twinning there were regular exchanges between Frome College and the senior school in Château-Gontier and a particularly successful friendship between Critchill school and Institute Medico Educative. There were musical visits of the school band, and a local choir was formed to sing with choirs in Château-Gontier and later Murrhardt. One of the most successful exchanges was between the Fire Officers in Frome and the Sapeur Pompier. Sporting links included the tennis club, football and youth sporting



*The two mayors sign the agreement outside St John's*

events. Many friendships were formed within the town and later with Murrhardt when Frome then twinned with that town. The final town to join the alliance was Rabka-Zdroj in Poland – that as a result of encouragement by Western Germany to forge links with Eastern Europe after the demolition of the wall in Berlin.

The towns of Château-Gontier and Murrhardt have paid mayoral posts (Jean Arthuis went on to be a Deputy in the French government with financial responsibility and later an MEP) and an administration that sourced money from the European Union. Frome, however, has had to rely on the enthusiasm and availability of volunteers over the years, and also the post of Mayor here is a voluntary one, changing yearly, so it has not been so easy always to maintain the link.

Brexit was obviously a blow to the Twinning development – I remember the sadness in Château-Gontier when my last visit coincided with Theresa May triggering article 50, which formalised the UK's exit from Europe – but volunteers became older and the attitudes to twinning changed. So many families regularly take holidays abroad that exchanges are not so valued, and the regulations for taking trips abroad have become so complicated!

Happily, in spite of Brexit, good relationships have been maintained with our twin towns, albeit on a smaller scale, and so it seems fitting on the weekend of the 13/14 September to remember with fondness the beginnings of those friendships and alliances begun so formally 50 years ago outside St John's. There will be French flavour to our morning service on Sunday 14 September and a commemoration of that celebration outside the church after the service

**Dinah Bardgett**



*The garden in Château-Gontier*





### Frome marks VJ Day, 80 years on

Following the ceremonies in May to mark the 80th anniversary of VE Day and the end of WW2 in Europe, Frome Royal British Legion (RBL) are organising events to commemorate VJ Day and the end of World War Two in the Far East and Pacific.

Frome RBL Coordinator Jane Norris says: 'We will mark the 80th anniversary of VJ Day in a more sombre mood than we marked VE Day in May, but it is important that we mark the moment, never forgetting the 'forgotten army' and those who served in the Far East and Pacific.' Please join us for the following:

#### Thursday 14th August at 6pm: Service of Thanksgiving

At St John's Church in Frome and led by Jonathan Cheal. A service acknowledging the service of the many in the Far East and in the Pacific, the surrender of the Japanese on 15th August 1945 – Victory in Japan Day – and the end of WW2. Flags of the allied forces who were strategic in VJ Day will be draped at St John's Church.

#### Friday, 15th August: 80th Anniversary of VJ Day

At 11am, we will mark VJ Day with a short service of commemoration at the Frome Memorial, with standards and The Last Post.

From 6pm, VE and VJ bunting will be on display from Frome Memorial to St John's Church, illuminated as darkness falls.

From 7pm, quiet reflection at the Frome Memorial. Bring a lantern to create a 'light of hope', a light that keeps burning in remembrance.

#### Autumn – date to be confirmed

Frome Royal British Legion are organising a trip to the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire, a place of pilgrimage for veterans and their families and friends. We will publicise details as they are confirmed.

For further information contact Jane Norris on 07776 208531

### News from other churches

#### St Katharine's, East Woodlands

Our annual Songs of Praise is on Sunday, 31st August at 5.00 pm. No sermon – just a chance to sing some favourite hymns. Please do join us – it is always lovely to welcome our friends from St. John's each year. Please send your hymn request to me on 01373 464802 and we will try to include it.

**Pam Chapman**

Some members of St Katharine's congregation still subscribe to the printed edition of *Inspire*, and I am supposed to take them to church on the first Sunday of the month, but inevitably forget to collect them from the office, or lose them in the boot of my car.

On the first Saturday of the Festival, Victoria Turner, loyal member of St Katharine's congregation and a good friend of St John's, was on refreshment duty in church and I had the bright idea of fetching the magazines and giving them to her, knowing that she would deliver them safely.

When I arrived at St Katharine's the following day, Victoria told me of the adventures of the magazine bundle: at some point on Saturday afternoon she had suddenly remembered the magazines, which were no longer in her possession. She patiently tracked back her movements and found them. In the vegetable shop in town.

If you are reading this hard copy of *Inspire* in East Woodlands, be grateful.

**Janet Caudwell**

#### East Woodlands Village Hall

Our very popular **Cream Teas** take place from 3pm to 5pm every Sunday in August. All profits are shared equally between the church and the Village Hall.

**Pop up Pub** at 7pm on Friday 1st August and Friday 5th September. The **Woodlanders Show** will run from Mon 6th to Sat 11th October. Box Office 07510 919573. It's been running 48 years now and is not to be missed!

**Pam Chapman**

## SERVICES at ST JOHN's – AUGUST & SEPTEMBER 2025

### Regular weekly services in August and September

#### Sundays

- 8.45am Online service via Zoom – see weekly sheet for link
- 10.00am Choral Eucharist\*
- \* Sun 17 Aug: Guest preacher, Rev Dr Kirsty Borthwick
  - \* Sun 14 Sept: Holy Cross Day and Town Twinning Anniversary.
  - \* Sun 21 Sept: Guest preacher, Rev. Andrew Alden.
  - \* Sun 28 Sept: Harvest, followed by bring and share brunch
- 5.00pm Evening worship in the Lady Chapel:
- 1st: Evening Prayer
  - 8th: Benediction and Evening Prayer
  - 15th: Come and Sing Evensong
  - 22nd: Holy Hour
  - 29th: Flexible Fifth

#### Mondays

- 8.45am Morning Prayer in the Ken Chapel

#### Fridays

- 12.30pm Lunchtime Eucharist in the Lady Chapel

#### Saturdays

- 5.00pm Evening Eucharist in the Lady Chapel

### Additional services in August and September

- |               |         |   |
|---------------|---------|---|
| Wed 6 August  | 12.30pm | Eucharist—Transfiguration                   |
| Thu 14 August | 6.00pm  | Eve of VE Day 80th anniversary service      |
| Fri 15 August | 5pm     | Contemplative service – Blessed Virgin Mary |
| Mon 8th Sept  | 12.30pm | Eucharist – Nativity of Our Lady            |
| Mon 15 Sept   | 12.30pm | Eucharist – Our Lady of Sorrows             |
| Mon 29 Sept   | 12.30pm | Eucharist – Michaelmas                      |

## DIARY DATES – AUGUST & SEPTEMBER 2025

### August

- |     |    |           |                                      |
|-----|----|-----------|--------------------------------------|
| Sat | 2  | 9am       | United prayer                        |
|     |    | 10am      | Fundraising meeting                  |
| Sun | 3  | 11.15-2pm | Café & Mini Market                   |
| Mon | 4  | 7pm       | Parish share discussion              |
| Wed | 6  | 6.30pm    | Inspired to Read book group          |
| Thu | 7  | 7pm       | Thinking Allowed session (Vicariate) |
| Sat | 9  |           | No working party in August           |
| Thu | 14 | 6pm       | Eve of VJ 80th anniversary service   |
| Sun | 17 |           | Half marathon                        |
| Mon | 25 |           | Bank holiday                         |
| Tue | 26 | 11am      | Julian meeting                       |
| Thu | 28 | 7pm       | Thinking Allowed session (Vicariate) |
| Fri | 29 | 7pm       | Women's group meeting                |

### September

- |     |    |              |  |
|-----|----|--------------|--|
| Wed | 3  | 6.30pm       | Inspired to Read book group                  |
| Sat | 6  | 9am          | United Prayer                                |
| Sun | 7  | 11.15 to 2pm | Cafe and Mini-market                         |
| Sat | 13 | 10.30am      | Sidesmen/welcomers meet                      |
| Sun | 14 | 10am         | Service to include twinning 50th anniversary |
| Wed | 17 | 7pm          | PCC meeting                                  |
| Sun | 28 | 11.30am ish  | Bring and share harvest brunch               |
| Tue | 30 | 11am         | Julian meeting                               |

### October

- |     |   |              |                             |
|-----|---|--------------|-----------------------------|
| Wed | 1 | 6.30pm       | Inspired to Read book group |
| Sat | 4 | 9am          | United Prayer               |
| Sun | 5 | 11.15 to 2pm | Cafe and Mini-market        |

### Guest Preacher

On Sunday 17th August, we will welcome Rev. Dr. Kirsty Borthwick to St John's as our guest preacher. Rev. Kirsty is currently the Chaplain to Christ Church College, Oxford. Please do come and invite friends so that we give her the best Frome welcome!

## **We are all saints**

*Eds: Thank you to Joshua Townson, a diocesan Generous Giving Adviser, who was our visiting preacher on 6th July when our readings were 2 Kings 5.1-14 and Galatians 6.7-16.*

*He has kindly allowed us to publish his sermon here.*

Let's jump straight in, shall we? What might God be telling us this morning? I was particularly struck by the reading from Kings and Naaman's response to Elisha's command to go and wash in the Jordan. This story is a fascinating example of how humans approach faith. Naaman was an important and wealthy man suffering from leprosy. In desperation he tries to throw money at the problem, sending the King of Israel 'ten talents of silver, six thousand shekels of gold, and ten sets of garments'. When the King can't do anything Elisha the prophet steps in and tells Naaman that if he washes himself in the Jordan, his leprosy will be healed. Naaman is furious – it's almost like he's insulted – he's one of the richest men in the world. Telling him to do something simple like washing himself is beneath him – he was expecting to be told to do something outrageous like build a solid gold altar to God or some such. To him it didn't make sense that he should be asked to do something simple – God should expect more of him, as befits his wealth and importance. Thankfully his servants make him see sense and he does go, wash and be cleansed in the Jordan.

This story reminded me of a conversation I had with a colleague of mine that is sort of the reverse of Naaman but with the same misunderstanding of what God expects from us. We were talking about financial giving and I made a throwaway comment about the everyday practice of asceticism. (For those who don't know, asceticism is the practice of humility by detaching ourselves from the love of objects such as money.) My colleague immediately retorted 'This is not relevant to the people we're speaking to!' I was baffled and asked her what she meant. She said 'Asceticism is some highfalutin thing for saints, not for normal Christians.'

I was beginning to get irritated and said 'That's ridiculous – all Christians are saints. Everyone made holy by a relationship with

Jesus is a saint (saint literally just being Latin for holy person). This is a basic Christian concept – everyone who has been baptised and has a relationship with Jesus Christ is made holy in the blood of the lamb. Every Christian is a saint!'

Now we were in full-on argument mode! Her next response was that she meant that asceticism was for 'saint' saints, not for normal people. At this point I think I turned bright purple with indignation: 'Saint saints? Are some people holier in the eyes of God than everyone else?'

Thankfully at this point somebody stepped in and stopped the argument, but reading this morning's story I realised that my colleague was being like Naaman, but in reverse. She seemed to have this idea that holy stuff – saintly stuff – isn't for the likes of you and me. It's just for a few special people who are extra holy. She's the reverse of Naaman because instead of expecting to be asked to do something difficult, she thinks that because she's not a 'saint' that God doesn't expect much of her. Because she – and you and me as ordinary Christians – are not what she thinks of as a 'saint' she's excusing herself and us from the more challenging aspects of faith – the aspects that require us to try to be holy.

In the Church of England's communion service, one of the lines which can be used before we share communion together is 'God's Holy Gifts for God's Holy People'. It is so basic to the Christian message that Jesus makes us holy and that in communion we return to that holiness by sharing our holy meal together.

Trying to suggest that holiness is something extraordinary for a few special people seems to me to be far removed from Christianity. We are all holy – you, me, anyone who has a relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ is made holy in the blood of the lamb.

Perhaps I should take a step back now and ask the question 'Why am I sharing this story with you?' Well, I suppose it's a bit of a reminder. I wonder how often you think about yourself as a saint – one of God's holy people? I'm going to suggest that it's probably not that often. Just speaking for myself, I can say that every so often I will be doing something and the words 'Is this what Jesus wants me to do?' might



pop into my head. When I do think of myself as a follower of Jesus, it tends to be as a form of self-censorship: should or shouldn't I be doing this or that thing.

This is what Paul is talking about in his letter to the Galatians: *'If you sow to your own flesh, you will reap corruption from the flesh; but if you sow to the Spirit, you will reap eternal life from the Spirit. So let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time, if we do not give up.'* Basically it's an injunction not to sin. Do the right thing, not the wrong thing.

If we were just to read this section of Paul, we might be tempted to think that making good choices is what it means to be holy. But this is the Jewish way of looking at things – the Old Testament way. If we could be holy simply by not sinning then we wouldn't have needed Jesus to die. Paul takes a long time to very painstakingly set this out in his letter to the Romans but let me just share one of his conclusions: *'For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and to deal with sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, so that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit.'*

The Law of sin and death in this passage is the Old Testament law – a set of rules that tell us how not to sin. The Law of the Spirit, on the other hand, is a resetting of our mind on the Holy Spirit. An attempt to live ever closer to the Spirit and to become more like him in everything we do.

No simple task then! Certainly not. Being a Christian isn't simple. In many ways in the western world, and in England in particular, we've become complacent when it comes to faith. We've had a thousand years of Christianity being the default, so we've forgotten that it's actually supposed to involve quite a bit of work. And I don't say this to you as though I, in some way, am not complacent. I absolutely am,

I've very much fallen into that trap myself. As I was writing this, I realised how complacent I can be when it comes to practising my faith.

And it's that second part that is most easy to be complacent about. It's not so difficult to say 'Oh I shouldn't break this rule' or 'If I do this I won't sin.' But to live under the Law of the Spirit, to try every day to build a closer relationship to God, that's hard, that takes a lot of work. And it's even trickier because there isn't one clear-cut way to do this. Thinking back to my colleague; she thought that to be holy or to be saintly involved moving to the desert and becoming a monk or a nun, or selling all of our possessions and undergoing a great spiritual conversion. And that is why she was wrong. She, in a similar way to Naaman, thought holiness is for a special category of people who can perform great deeds, but true holiness isn't about the magnitude of the thing we do, it's about acting in a way that tries to draw us closer to God. As such, the everyday things we do are just as impacted by our faith as the deeds of the desert monks. It doesn't matter what it is we're doing but why we do it.

And that is the challenge for you – and for me. How do we work towards a closer relationship with God in our everyday lives? For each of us the answer will be different because we each have our own unique lives. It's up to each of us as individuals to think about how we might personally work on our relationship with God.

Luckily there is help available, in the shape of your very own vicar. There's a famous saying about the job of a vicar. It goes 'What is a priest? A priest is someone who makes saints.' The first and most important job of a vicar is to help you figure out how to build a closer relationship with God in your own personal life.

So I'd like to encourage you to do one thing – just one thing – to take the next step on building a closer relationship with God: book a meeting with Seamus and just chat. It's a space and time for you to think about your own life and where faith fits in, as well as receive a bit of guidance from someone whose job is specifically to help you figure these things out.

**Joshua Townson**



## Karl Jenkins

### The Welsh composer we listen to most

I have written before about the extraordinary talent that grew up where I came from, because sailors from all over the world married local women and settled down in South Wales: Shirley Bassey and Roald Dahl are two examples. This month we are looking at the extraordinary Welsh composer Karl Jenkins, whose maternal grandfather was a Swedish sailor who settled near Swansea after meeting his future wife in a local market.

Karl was born in 1944 in Penclawdd, a cockle-picking village on the Gower peninsula, and raised in the chapel-going tradition of many Welsh people up to around the 1970s. Karl gained his musical knowledge and training from his father, the local schoolteacher and choirmaster. He went to the local grammar school and then took 'a pretty comprehensive music degree at University with harmony, counterpoint, fugue and orchestration'. He also did a post-grad year at the Royal Academy of Music.

Initially his interest was not choral music but rock and jazz. He played saxophone, keyboards and the oboe, co-founding the jazz-rock group Nucleus, which won first prize at the Montreux Jazz Festival. In his twenties he gained rich experience writing for all combinations of instruments. Then he joined the jazz-rock group The Soft Machine for twelve years, becoming their main songwriter. When he left them, he wrote mainly music for advertising commercials for a few years, but he could never do anything by halves: he won the industry prize twice. Then he struck gold with *Adiemus*.

*Adiemus* started in 1994 as an advertising jingle for Delta Airways but blossomed into a worldwide phenomenon. The idea was to create a modern song using classical forms. It could only have been written by someone with classical music training. The lyrics themselves have no meaning. The vocals are used as an instrument to make music and not to convey a message. The song, written in the Dorian scale with no sharps or flats, is a mix of African-tribal and Celtic-style melodies. Karl Jenkins has said of *Adiemus* that 'The text was written

phonetically with the words viewed as instrumental sound, the idea being to maximise the melisma by removing the distraction, if one can call it that, of words.' It has produced many variants and achieved international fame, having been performed in dozens of countries and downloaded many millions of times. Mozart should have been so lucky.

Jenkins has written many other songs and choral works, some also without meaning as such but others set to Biblical or literary texts. His 2012 choral work *The Peacemakers* features extracts from religious texts and works by notable humanitarians. His 2014 cantata *The Healer – A Cantata For St Luke* is all about Luke the doctor. His 2016 work *Cantata Memoria: For the children* is a commemorative work remembering the children who perished in the Aberfan tragedy in 1966 when a mining spoil tip buried a school. Recorded with Bryn Terfel as the soloist, it brings back memories of 1966 and of the views of spoil tips from my childhood bedroom window in the 1940s.

Jenkins' most famous work is the *Armed Man – A Mass for Peace*, commissioned by the Royal Armouries Museum for the Millennium celebrations. It is dedicated to victims of the Kosovo crisis. It is similar to Benjamin Britten's 1962 *War Requiem*, being essentially an anti-war piece based on the Catholic Mass, which Jenkins combines with other sources, principally the 15th-century Burgundian folk song 'l'homme armee'. It is written for four-part chorus with soloists (soprano and muezzin) and a symphony orchestra. It charts the horror of the descent into war, with moments of reflection, shows the horrors that war brings, and ends with hope for peace.

It begins with a representation of marching feet, overlaid by the shrill tones of a military band. After the Call to Prayer and the Kyrie, 'Save Us from Bloody Men' appeals for God's help against our enemies in words from Psalm 59. The Sanctus has a military, menacing air, beginning with trumpets and ending in the screams of the dying: 'Torches' parallels this with an excerpt from the Mahabharata, describing the terror and suffering of animals dying. This is followed by the silence of the battlefield after action, broken by a trumpet solo. 'Angry Flames' describes the burning of the Khandava Forest, another

story from the Mahabharata. *Agnus Dei* is followed by 'Now the Guns have Stopped', a poem about the guilt of some returning survivors of war. After the Benedictus, 'Better is Peace' ends on a note of hope, drawing on Tennyson's poem 'Ring Out Wild Bells', and on a text from Revelation: 'God shall wipe away all tears'. Having sung the Armed Man with a local choir, I can confirm it is very approachable and quite awe-inspiring. Various versions are on YouTube, often with video accompaniments of horrors of war.

You can see that Karl uses whatever text is relevant, from all religions and secular works. He is helped by his wife Carol Barratt, a librettist to whom he has been married for nearly 50 years. Jenkins continues to compose. Moving beyond retirement age has not diminished his enthusiasm. His work *Tros y Garreg* was performed at the coronation of King Charles III in 2023. His *One World*, celebrating a peaceful planet, was written for the UN 80th anniversary. He also wrote a saxophone concerto when he was nearly 80. He is determined to 'not go gentle into that goodnight', a poem written within 5 miles of his birthplace.

Karl makes as much use as possible of modern technology in getting people hear his music. In 2021 he launched a new streaming series, 'Healing Light', featuring four specially curated EPs, to help listeners find moments of solace, sanctuary, prayer, healing, hope and peace in our current world.

**Chris Lewis**



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## The quiet revival in churchgoing

For a change, here is a bit of good news about churchgoing, hot off the press from the Bible Society. It seems that, since COVID, there has been a rise in church going, especially among young men. This article summarises a recent report from them called **The Quiet Revival**, which you can get from their website. I don't know the authors, but they are well qualified, their method sensible and the report is coherent. Perhaps we have turned a corner. The report sums things up this way:



In churches across England and Wales something amazing is happening, challenging predictions about the future of Christianity here. Where once we saw aging congregations and a steady decline in attendance, we now see dramatic growth, led by the young. Where once we saw apathy or even hostility to Christianity and the Bible, we now see increased openness. You may have heard the rumblings and rumours emerging over the past few years, you may even have noticed this in your own community, or it might have passed you by entirely – but this data shows that it is real.

This is the Quiet Revival. For the first time, this is demonstrated in the results of a large, robust and nationally representative population study that has tracked the religious attitudes and behaviours of England and Wales since 2018. We found that the Church is in a period of rapid growth, driven by young adults and in particular young men, and the Church demonstrates greater ethnic diversity than ever before. Both within and outside the Church, young adults are more spiritually engaged than any other living generation, with Bible reading and belief in God on the rise.

But we also see that active engagement with a church has a significant impact on the lives of attenders, with a high increase in mental and general life wellbeing – again particularly among young adults, a generation in the midst of a mental health crisis. It is also changing communities, with churchgoers more likely to feel a connection to their local area and get involved in social engagement

activities. Challenges remain for the Church and civic society in responding to this Quiet Revival, but its reality can no longer be denied. **Bible Society, 2025, [www.biblesociety.org.uk](http://www.biblesociety.org.uk)**

These results come from a very respectable polling organisation YouGov: two large surveys were conducted, of 19,000 adults in 2018 and of 13,000 adults in 2024. The surveys were conducted through YouGov's online panel to population targets, and were further refined with post stratification weighting. This may sound technical, but it means they tried their best to make sure the results were accurate. The following details can also be seen in the report:

- Having a Christian faith is again being normalised and is arguably even culturally attractive
- 12% of adults in England and Wales are attending church monthly
- Young adults are finding their way into church in remarkable numbers
- 32% of churchgoers aged 18-54 are from an ethnic minority
- The idea that Britons are to some extent Christian 'by default' is rapidly diminishing
- The 18-24 age group is showing above average engagement in spiritual practice
- Churchgoers show the lowest reports of feeling frequently anxious and depressed
- Young Christians report finding the Bible more challenging than older Christians
- 79% of churchgoers agree it's important to them to try to make a difference in the world
- Churchgoers are more likely to desire social change and to engage in social activities

The overall conclusion the Bible Society draws is that is that the tide of faith is coming in again, and the Church needs to adjust to a new and strangely hopeful reality. This would require a more confident approach rather than the slightly tentative one we have become used to in the last few years.

What should we make of this in St John's, Frome? First, we must

recognise these are national figures, and we should not expect things to be exactly the same in Frome. But it is good to have a bit of good news for a change and to recognise these trends if we see them here. When we see newcomers, we should encourage them to come again; we should listen to them if their ideas are different from ours; we should be proud of our heritage not apologise for it. St John's has much to offer: maybe we should be prepared to set up more new structures if they are wanted, for example, house churches; Sunday schools; mother and baby groups; street pastors; prison visitors; care home visitors; a church coffee bar; food bank distribution in church. Above all we must continue doing the little things well. Attractive services, where you can hear the speakers; a warm church; a clean church; tidy surrounds; an up-to-date website; church groups; a thoughtful magazine; occasional concerts; listening to each other and to strangers.

St John's is very good at doing these: and people notice.

**Chris Lewis**

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## **Inspired to Read**

### **Local authors: *The Wrong Daughter* by Dandy Smith**

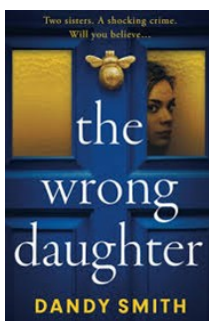
When we met at the beginning of July, we were delighted to welcome Frome Museum's Poet-in-Residence, Claire Crowther, to our general discussion on local authors. As a poet who has chosen to live and work in Frome, she was able to share with us some of her experiences of our town as a literary community. In Hunting Raven and Sherlock & Pages we have two wonderful, and very different, bookshops, to say nothing of the second-hand book shop on King Street, the many charity shops with their pre-loved volumes, and of course the library. There are literary events galore: the recent Frome Festival promoted a wide range of literary sessions, and there are book groups to suit everyone's reading interests. And here I am going to put in a plug for our own wonderful book group – a diverse group of people who enjoy exploring and discussing many different literary genres and themes – my only reservation is that I never have time to read all the books that I would like to!

So why has Frome become such a literary centre? Claire answered this by talking about the strong creative and independent spirit that has developed in the town over the past 20 years or so, and as one might expect from someone who has close connections with the museum, she related it to the town's economic regeneration. As the town's heavy industry declined, it went through a period of economic change, but, very importantly, when the developers started to move in, there were enough people to challenge them – to halt the demolition of our old neighbourhoods and to recognise their valuable heritage. This was possibly the beginning of Frome's fiercely independent spirit – that same spirit that has elected our politically independent town council, and once again stood up to the might of the developers over the Saxonvale site. This is a spirit that allows for independent and creative thinking, and as a community we reap the benefits. We are a small town. yet we support two theatres and a cinema (all locally and independently operated), art galleries and workshops as well as music, dance and drama.



Claire also revealed some of her personal writing process – how she finds inspiration in the places and people around her, in her own words: ‘*Poems don’t come out of nowhere*’. She shared with us the fact that it can take her up to 18 months to create a single poem as she allows her ideas to grow and develop, a bit like raising a child. She also described the process as ‘painting with words’. She told us that poetry as a form allowed her to be more creative in her use of words – and described herself as a ‘quirky’ poet.

Frome authors write in many different genres – there are several whose writing is firmly rooted in Frome’s historic past, while others use Frome and the surrounding area as the backdrop for their writing. Then there are others for whom Frome does not directly appear in their books, but they live and work here. Some have multi-book deals with national publishers, while others are self-published, but they all contribute to our vibrant literary community.



One of the books I read before the local authors discussion was *The Wrong Daughter* (2024) by Dandy Smith. Although not a Frome native (she grew up in Kettering), she studied creative writing at Bath Spa and has made Frome her home, and June 2025 saw the publication of fourth novel, *The Wedding Vow*. I should say that I would not usually choose to read dark psychological thrillers – I really feel uncomfortable when a character is being deliberately manipulated and abused, so I will not be rushing out to buy any more of Dandy Smith’s books, but that is my personal preference, and I have read some very enthusiastic and complimentary reviews of her work, written by people who do not share my aversion to the genre. This is a book which references Frome and suggests that the plot is set in this area of Somerset, but another of my reservations was that I couldn’t really make it fit geographically. The plot was well paced, and I can see why people like it – if the genre is to your liking, it would no doubt make a very good summer read.

Other local books/authors you might want to consider:

Frances Liadet: *We must be brave* – historical novel set in WWII

A recent book group outing to hear Jeremy Vine speak at the Merlin



Peter Clark: *Damascus Diary* – drawing on the author’s personal experience as Director of the British Council in Syria, 1992–1999

Susannah Walker: *The Hard Way* – Why is our natural landscape, especially long distance paths, still largely inaccessible for women?

Luke Sherlock: *Forgotten Churches* – a beautifully illustrated account of some of our ancient churches.

There are so many more – do join the discussion and share some of your own favourites with us.

Forthcoming Inspired to Read meetings:

**Wed 6 August:** Book of the month: *Precipice* by Robert Harris – a compelling read, scandal and intrigue at the heart of government on the eve of WWI

**Wed 3 September:** Science Fiction – a chance to discuss a diverse literary genre: suggested reading: *The Midnight Library* by Matt Haig.

**Wed 1 October:** Book: *English Pastoral* by James Rebanks

**Rosemary McCormick**

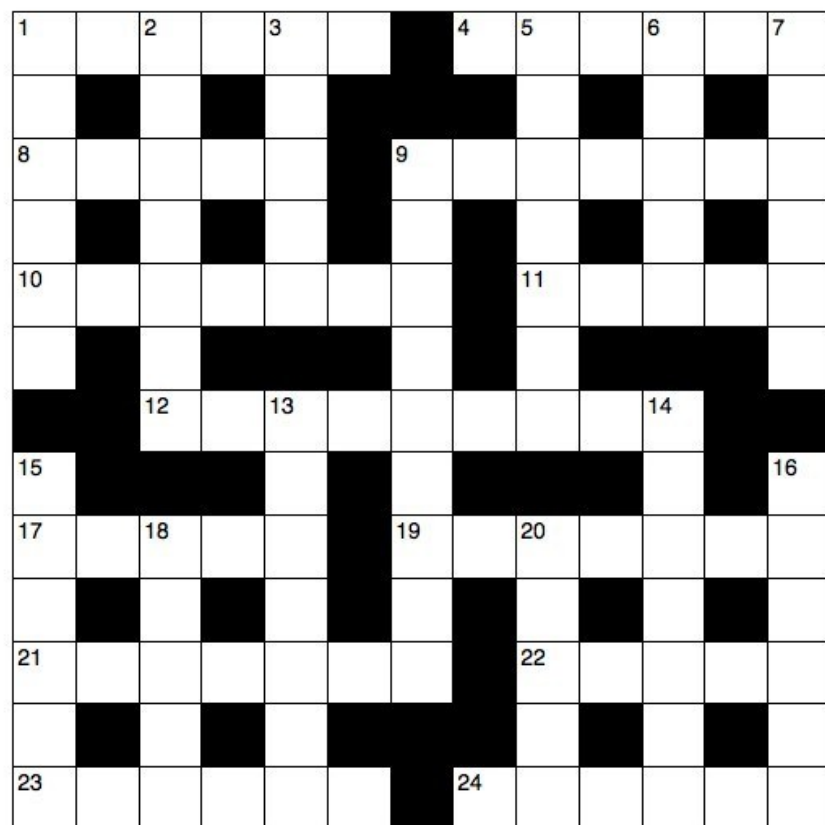


**The Bennett Centre**  
community space for Frome

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[www.bennettcentre.com](http://www.bennettcentre.com)

## AUGUST CROSSWORD



### Across

- 1 'The people were — at his teaching' (Mark 1:22) (6)  
 4 'He saved —; let him save himself' (Luke 23:35) (6)  
 8 He addressed the crowd in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:14) (5)  
 9 Father of James and John (Matthew 4:21) (7)  
 10 One who charges another with an offence (Job 31:35) (7)  
 11 ' — thy ministers with righteousness' (Book of Common Prayer) (5)  
 12 and 15 Down 'All — is God-breathed and is — for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness' (2 Timothy 3:16) (9,6)

- 17 'No — of the field had yet appeared on the earth and no plant of the field had yet sprung up' (Genesis 2:5) (5)  
 19 Made to feel embarrassed (Isaiah 24:23) (7)  
 21 This man built his house on sand (Matthew 7:26) (7)  
 22 David's hypocritical message to Joab on the death in battle of Uriah: 'Don't let this — you' (2 Samuel 11:25) (5)  
 23 Detest (Job 10:1) (6)  
 24 'God made two great lights, the greater light to govern the day and the — light to govern the night' (Genesis 1:16) (6)

### Down

- 1 To make a serious request (1 Corinthians 1:10) (6)  
 2 Launches an assault against (Genesis 32:8) (7)  
 3 'The wicked man — deceptive wages' (Proverbs 11:18) (5)  
 5 Tuba ale (anag.) (7)  
 6 'The day thou gavest, Lord, is — ' (5)  
 7 Old Testament measure of weight, equivalent to about 12 grammes (Exodus 30:13) (6)  
 9 Where Elijah restored life to the son of a widow with whom he lodged (1 Kings 17:10) (9)  
 13 Paul said of whatever was to his profit, 'I consider them — , that I may gain Christ and be found in him' (Philippians 3:8) (7)  
 14 City visited by Paul, described by the city clerk as 'the guardian of the temple of the great Artemis' (Acts 19:35) (7)  
 15 See 12 Across  
 16 Rioted (anag.) (6)  
 18 She had a surprise when she answered the door and found 8 Across outside (Acts 12:13) (5)  
 20 Maltreat (1 Chronicles 10:4) (5)

### Answers to the crossword in the July magazine

ACROSS: 1, Riches. 4, Abner's. 7, Soul. 8, Damascus. 9, Statutes. 13, Add. 16, Craftsmanship. 17, Old. 19, Redeemer. 24, Walls are. 25, Wise. 26, Target. 27, Thief. DOWN: 1, Rest. 2, Courtyard. 3, Sadhu. 4, Arm he. 5, Nose. 6, Round. 10, Tutor. 11, Timid. 12, Sense. 13, Ashbelite. 14, Dips. 15, Echo. 18, Lhasa. 20, Exact. 21, Erect. 22, Flog. 23, Mede.

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**SERVICES ROTA FOR AUGUST 2025**

| Date/Week   | Services               | Readings   | Duties for the 10am service |             |                                    |           |
|---|------------------------|--|-----------------------------|-------------|------------------------------------|-----------|
|   |                        |  | Readers                     | Prayers     | Sidespersons                       | Chalice   |
| Sunday 3 August<br>Seventh after Trinity              | 10.00am Holy Communion | Hosea 11.1-11<br>Psalm 107.2-9,43 (or 107.1-9)<br>Colossians 3.1-11<br>Luke 12.13-21   | N McCormick<br>E Gilbert    | Rev Seamus  | D Bardgett<br>B Essex<br>C Holland | J Davies  |
| Sunday 10 August<br>Eighth after Trinity              | 10.00am Holy Communion | Isaiah 1.1, 10-20<br>Psalm 50.1-8, 23-end<br>Hebrews 11.1-3, 8-16<br>Luke 12.32-40   | R McCormick<br>S Caden      | J Caudwell  | E Gilbert<br>A Crook               | A Crook   |
| Sunday 17 August<br>Ninth after Trinity               | 10.00am Holy Communion | Isaiah 5.1-7<br>Psalm 80.1-1, 9-end<br>Hebrews 11.29-12.2<br>Luke 12.49-56   | B Essex<br>A Barr-Sim       | R McCormick | J Bruges<br>K Gurr                 | A Crook   |
| Sunday 24 August<br>Tenth after Trinity               | 10.00am Holy Communion | Jeremiah 1.4-10<br>Psalm 71.1-6<br>Hebrews 12.18-end<br>Luke 13.10-17  | C Harrison<br>S Smith       | L Bushell   | A Crook<br>M Smitherman            | J Davies  |
| Sunday 31 August<br>Eleventh after Trinity            | 10.00am Holy Communion | Jeremiah 2.4-13<br>Psalm 81.1, 10-end<br>Hebrews 13.1-8, 15-16<br>Luke 14.1, 7-14  | C Holland<br>N McCormick    | J Bruges    | E Gilbert<br>J Davies              | C Holland |
| Vicar: Revd Seamus Hargrave<br>Reader: Janet Caudwell |                        | Sundays: 8.45am Zoom service; 5pm Evening Worship (Third Sunday - Choral Evensong)<br>Mondays at 8.45am Morning Prayer, Fridays at 12.30pm Lunchtime Eucharist<br>Saturday at 5pm Evening Eucharist<br>Tuesday 26 at 11am Julian meeting |                             |             |                                    |           |

**SERVICES ROTA FOR SEPTEMBER 2025**

| Date/Week   | Services               | Readings   | Duties for the 10am service       |            |                                 |           |
|---|------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|------------|---------------------------------|-----------|
|   |                        |  | Readers                           | Prayers    | Sidespersons                    | Chalice   |
| Sunday 7 September<br>Twelfth after Trinity           | 10.00am Holy Communion | Deuteronomy 30.15-end<br>Psalm 1<br>Philemon 1-21<br>Luke 14.25-33   | J Arnall-Culliford<br>R McCormick | Rev Seamus | D Bardgett<br>K Gurr<br>B Essex | A Crook   |
| Sunday 14 September<br><b>Holy Cross Day</b>          | 10.00am Holy Communion | Numbers 21.4-9<br>Psalm 22.23-28<br>Philippians 2.6-11<br>John 3.13-17   | E Gilbert<br>A Barr-Sim           | J Caudwell | J Bruges<br>M Veakins           | J Davies  |
| Sunday 21 September<br>Fourteenth after Trinity       | 10.00am Holy Communion | Amos 8.4-7<br>Psalm 113<br>1 Timothy 2.1-7<br>Luke 16.1-13   | C Harrison<br>C Holland           | L Bushell  | A Crook<br>M Smitherman         | C Holland |
| Sunday 28 September<br><b>Harvest Festival</b>        | 10.00am Holy Communion | Deuteronomy 26.1-11<br>Psalm 100<br>Philippians 4.4-9 OR Revela-<br>tion 14.14-18<br>John 6.25-35  | S Smith<br>S Caden                | A Crook    | C Holland<br>J Davies           | A Crook   |
| Sunday 5 October Six-<br>teenth after Trinity         | 10.00am Holy Communion | Habakkuk 1.1-5; 2.1-4<br>Psalm 37.1-9<br>2 Timothy 1.1-14<br>Luke 17.5-10  | N McCormick<br>B Essex            | Rev Seamus | D Bardgett<br>K Gurr<br>B Essex | J Davies  |
| Vicar: Revd Seamus Hargrave<br>Reader: Janet Caudwell |                        | Sundays: 8.45am Zoom service; 5pm Evening Worship (Third Sunday - Choral Evensong)<br>Mondays at 8.45am Morning Prayer, Fridays at 12.30pm Lunchtime Eucharist<br>Saturday at 5pm Evening Eucharist<br>Tuesday 30 at 11am Julian meeting |                                   |            |                                 |           |



## AUGUST SUDOKU

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|   |   | 7 | 3 |   |   |   |   |   |
|   |   | 4 |   |   | 6 |   | 3 | 9 |
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| 5 |   | 9 |   | 2 |   |   |   |   |
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| 2 |   |   |   | 6 |   |   | 1 |   |
| 1 | 3 |   | 5 |   |   | 2 |   |   |
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See how the wild flowers grow! They don't work to earn, or craft their own clothes, but even King Solomon with all his wealth was not dressed as well as they are. Lk 12:27-28