

# *St. George's Montezbury*

Magazine 50p



*August 2025*





# LIFTING UP OUR EYES

With Rev Stuart Carter

## Does God have a purpose for my life?

*<sup>11</sup> In him we were also chosen,<sup>1</sup> having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, <sup>12</sup> in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. <sup>13</sup> And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, <sup>14</sup> who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory. (Ephesians chapter 1;11-14)*

Does God have a purpose for my life?.

Since I first became a Christian, I have understood that being a believer and a disciple of Jesus means living with purpose. I have always believed that I was not only loved by God but that he had a plan and purpose for my life, just as he has for every other human being on the planet.

But what could that be? Whatever it was I was determined to find out. I thought that if I could, I would be the world's best at whatever it was.

For me, the path of discovery led eventually to full time missionary work and then ordination in the Church of England. I hasten to add that for others it could just as easily lead them into a life of craftsmanship, or business, or retail, or the arts, or social work, or sport, and the list goes on. One of my favourite lines from the film "Chariots of Fire" is when the athlete Eric Liddell declares, "I believe God made me for a purpose, but he also made me fast, and when I run I feel his pleasure!"

But what does it feel like to live with a sense of purpose and God's calling in your life?

Does it mean having full confidence in your ability to accomplish everything you feel called to do?

Does it mean always being sure of what you're doing and how and why?

Does it mean always being the best, or at least on the way to being the best

at whatever role or job or vocation you find yourself in?

I'm afraid that kind of confidence has always eluded me.

I used to believe that I was *not* God's first choice for the ministry he had called me to. I could look around and see much more capable people more effective and gifted than me. I was doing my best to keep up with what I believed God was calling me to do, but deep down I knew it was because the *really* good ones were already doing other things, so he was just having to make do with whoever was willing and available – and that was me.

It was a lie! I *was* his first choice!

Don't get me wrong! It's not because I am somehow unknowingly the best at everything I do. Truth be told, after all these years as a follower of Jesus I still feel like a rookie, a beginner, and sometimes like an apprentice who might all too often be found looking for tins of tartan paint and left-handed screw-drivers.

No. I'm just saying that God didn't make a mistake when he called me to serve him. He meant to do it. He chose me. He predestined me *to 'be for the praise of his glory'*, even if that glory might simply be the fact that someone like me could be his choice at all!

I used to believe that I was doing my best, and hoped God would be pleased with that. There's a world of difference between that and the belief that God called and chose me and was pleased with *me*, long before I actually *did* anything.

Our purpose or vocation in life is God's gift, not his demand. You and I have been chosen according to his plan not to do everything for him, but to be *for the praise of his glory*'. He invites us to live with and for him. Our responsibility is mostly one of faith and obedience, so that he can do what he wants in and through us – that's all that matters. In the meantime, *he* will arrange and organise whatever difference that might mean for us or for the world.

The heartbeat of our calling is not what we may or may not achieve. It's the fact God delights in us enough to intentionally include us, giving us the unearned privilege of becoming fellow workers with him.

We get to 'share his yoke' as Jesus puts it. That means living and pulling with him to plant and harvest for the Kingdom of God (a world of love, joy peace and justice) in whatever place or position he puts us in.

The specific service we engage in and the tasks undertaken may change over time, but God's intent to include you and me to play our part with him in his divine purposes remains the same. He delights in us – that's why we're here. He's done it on purpose. Each one of us is his first choice. Let that, not a list of past or future achievements, be your encouragement and joy as you serve him.

*"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord,  
"plans to prosper you and not to harm you,  
plans to give you hope and a future." (Jeremiah 29;11)*

Rev Stuart Carter

### ***When I say I am a Christian***

When I say, "I am a Christian," I'm not shouting, "I am saved!"  
I'm whispering, "I get lost; that is why I chose this way."

When I say, "I am a Christian," I don't speak of this with pride.  
I'm confessing that I stumble and need Someone to be my Guide.

When I say, "I am a Christian," I'm not bragging I am strong.  
I'm professing that I'm weak, and I pray for strength to carry on.

When I say, "I am a Christian," I'm not bragging of success.  
I'm admitting I have failed and cannot ever pay the debt.

When I say, "I am a Christian," I'm not claiming to be perfect.  
My flaws are all too visible, but God believes I'm worth it.

When I say, "I am a Christian," I still feel the sting of pain.  
I have my share of heartaches, which is why I cry His name.

When I say, "I am a Christian," I do not wish to judge.  
I have no authority; I only know I'm loved.

*Author unknown*

# Readings and Services for this MONTH

Here are the Sunday Service details, and the readings which you may enjoy at home if you are unable to join a church service this month.

Services and Readings for August 2025		
Date	Service	Readings
3 <sup>rd</sup> August 7 <sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity	Holy Communion 10.30am	Psalms 49. 1-9 Colossians 3. 1-11 Luke 12. 13-21
10 <sup>th</sup> August 8 <sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity	Morning Worship without Communion 10.30am	Genesis 15. 1-6 Hebrews 11. 1-3, 8-16 Luke 12. 32-40
17 <sup>th</sup> August 9 <sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity	Holy Communion 10.30am	Jeremiah 23. 23-29 Hebrews 11. 29- 12. 2 Luke 12. 49-56
24 <sup>th</sup> August Bartholomew The Apostle	All Age Family Worship 10.30am	Psalms 145. 1-7 Acts 5. 12-16 Luke 22. 24-30
31 <sup>st</sup> August 11 <sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity <b>Group service outdoors at Shelve.</b>	Holy Communion 10.30am	Proverbs 25. 6-7 Hebrews 13. 1-8,15-16 Luke 14. 1, 7-14



# Our church COMMUNITY

**Welcome to  
The Tea Break**



**Wednesdays 2pm - 4pm**  
St George's Church  
Pontesbury

**OASIS** **FREE lunch & companionship** for anyone living in  
Pontesbury, Minsterley and surrounding villages, who has been  
recently bereaved ...

... on the 2nd & 4th Tuesdays every month, 12pm - 1.30pm  
Minsterley Methodist Chapel, Horsebridge Rd, Minsterley.

Transport is Available—Friends & Family are Welcome too.

Contact Heather Ryder for more information, at  
[ryder928@btinternet.com](mailto:ryder928@btinternet.com) or 01743 790359

**ST. George's Prayer Chain**, a small group of people who  
believe that prayer can make a difference, is being revived under Mary  
Worrall's leadership. Each person within the group offers daily prayer for  
anyone who asks for prayer—**would you like to join this group?**

Please contact Mary Worrall  
[maryew15mp@gmail.com](mailto:maryew15mp@gmail.com) or on 01743 791069

All information given is given in confidence.

*Has anyone sampled this podcast? Why not try it and see?*

## **Prayer grows in popularity**

Well over three million people have now used the Church of  
England's Daily Prayer app and podcast which offers  
Morning and Evening Prayer in audio form.

Launched during the pandemic, the service has seen over  
12 million downloads, with thousands tuning in each day. Blending  
scripture, music, and reflection, it reflects a wider resurgence  
of interest in regular prayer and spiritual rhythm, showing that  
ancient words continue to find new life in modern formats.

**Search** <https://www.churchofengland.org/daily-prayer-app-and-podcast>

# Looking at GOD

*Thoughts from Canon Paul Hardingham:*

## Transfiguration

*'There Must Be More to Life Than This'.* These words from Freddie Mercury of Queen will resonate with many of us, when we are looking to get more out of life, even as Christians. At a deeper level, we want to see and hear more clearly what God is doing in our circumstances. The Transfiguration of Jesus, which we remember this month, helps us to consider this issue (Luke 9:28-36).

Jesus was transfigured alongside Moses and Elijah, 'As He was praying, the appearance of His face changed, and His clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning.' (29). To understand our circumstances, firstly we need to see Jesus as God wants us to see Him. The disciples' eyes were opened to see Jesus' divinity. The presence of Moses and Elijah confirmed Him as God's promised Messiah. By helping us the grasp who Jesus really is, this event powerfully calls us to entrust our lives into Jesus' hands to experience His presence and power.

Secondly, if we are to make sense of our circumstances, we need to hear what God says about His Son. A cloud covered them and 'a voice came from the cloud, saying, 'This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to Him.'" (35). God affirmed His love and call on Jesus as His beloved and chosen Son. Do we hear God speaking these same words to us? When we know that we too are loved and accepted by God, this transforms our understanding of our lives.

Whatever our circumstances, they can be transformed by what we see and hear. Open your eyes to see a transfigured world. Open your ears to hear a transfiguring voice. Open your heart to become a transfigured life.

*'No one who meets Jesus ever stays the same.'* (Philip Yancey)





*It can be hard to pray sometimes, and most of us need all the help we can get!  
Some further thoughts here written by the Revd Dr Herbert McGonigle,  
formerly of the Nazarene Theological College, Manchester*

## Praying with the prayers of the Bible:

### Prayer from the Depth of Despair

*Read Jonah 2:2-9.*

Twice in the Bible there is a record of prayers prayed in hell. In Jesus' parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, the former prayed for both release from his torment and that a warning would be sent to his family (Luke 16:24-31).

Here in the book of Jonah this chapter opens with the words, 'Then Jonah prayed to the Lord his God' (v.1) The prophet prayed from what he described as 'the belly of hell' (KJV), or 'from the depth of Sheol' (v.2).

The first chapter of the book tells how Jonah was commissioned by God to go and preach in Ninevah, the capital city of the great Assyrian Empire. Instead, Jonah ran away from his home country, from (he thought) the presence of God and from hearing God's command. The Assyrians had long been the all-conquering enemies of Israel and Jonah was either afraid to go to Ninevah, or he did not want them to hear God's word – or both.

So, he ran away and took ship for Tarshish (i.e.Spain). During a violent storm he confessed to the sailors that he had disobeyed God and reluctantly they threw him overboard (1:12-14). The Lord had 'appointed a great fish' which swallowed the prophet and from deep inside its belly, he prayed to the Lord. God heard Jonah's prayer, the fish spewed him out and his life was spared (2:10).

Jonah's prayer, prayed when he was sure he was about to die, has much to reach us about praying. *First*, even in our disobedience, God hears us when we pray humbly and sincerely. Jonah's terrible calamity was directly the result of his running away from God. It wasn't because of circumstances, it wasn't inevitable, it wasn't fate or just 'one of those things;' it was his disobedience that brought about the disaster. How gracious God is! Even in our running away from Him, He still loves us and hears our prayers.

*Second*, we can pray anywhere. If Jonah could cry to the Lord when, in his own words, 'in the heart of the seas,' when 'all the waves and billows' passed over him (v.3), how many places may we not find to come before the Lord in prayer? There is the quiet time at the day's beginning, a moment of reflection in a busy schedule, between meetings, as we drive the car or travel in the bus, or plane or ship – so many places where we can 'lift up our hearts' to the Lord.

*Third*, no situation is too difficult for God. The God who 'hurled a great wind upon the sea' (1:4), who 'appointed a great fish to swallow up Jonah' (1:17); who prepared 'a plant' and 'a worm' to bring about His purposes (4:6,7), is the Sovereign Lord of earth and heaven. He can hear us and help us in our deepest distress, in the

hours when life seems to be tumbling in all round us.

*Fourth*, the Lord can deliver! Jonah's prayer from the depth of hell ends with the ringing assurance, 'Deliverance belongs to the Lord' (2:9). We all need to hear that! Today, whatever our need, our pain, our disappointment, our fear, our weakness, our besetting sin – with the Lord there is deliverance.



## What's the Big Idea?

### An Introduction to the Books of the Bible: 1 Corinthians

*'When people become Christians, they don't at the same moment become nice. This always comes as something of a surprise' (Eugene Peterson).*

After founding the church in Corinth Paul spent a year and a half with them, showing them how to live out this new life as a community of believers. Corinth was a major commercial centre in Greece and a crossroads for travellers and traders across the Empire. Its people placed a high premium on wisdom, but Corinth was also known for its immorality. Little wonder that the church was plagued with so many problems! However, after Paul left the church factions developed, immorality was rife, and worship had become a selfish grabbing for the supernatural. Paul's letter, written around AD 55 in Ephesus, is a response to these problems.

It is clear that, although the church was gifted (1:4–7), it was immature and unspiritual(3:1–4). Paul's purpose for writing was to:

- \*instruct and restore the church in its areas of weakness, correcting erroneous practices such as divisions (1:10—4:21), immorality (ch. 5; 6:12–20), litigation in pagan courts (6:1–8) and the abuse of the Lord's Supper (11:17–34).
- \*correct false teaching concerning the resurrection (ch. 15).

This letter is very relevant for us today, as we are also powerfully influenced by our cultural environment. Many of the questions and problems that confronted the church at Corinth are still with us. Yet despite the problems, Paul's focus remained on knowing Christ in His life and trusting in the power of the cross: *'For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.'* (2:2).

## Give Him a call!

The phone was a great invention. How easy, to press a few numbers on our small devices and speak to someone the other side of the world. Once a phone was a luxury item; now we take it for granted that this gadget in our pocket enables us to contact anyone, at any time, in any place.

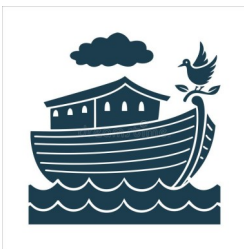


However, how many times have you rung someone, only to be given a recorded message giving a variety of options? Then you must wait in a queue for ages before your call is answered. A voice informs you that 'your call is important to us' ... but meanwhile you are left waiting, listening to endless music.

Yes, a phone may be useful in all kinds of circumstances, but they can also be very frustrating! So, it's good to know that God can be contacted immediately we need Him.

There is no celestial call centre where our messages are delayed or referred. With prayer we can call on God directly. This service is free, with no charges. He hears our every call, and we can be confident that our Creator will answer us in ways which are only for our good.

'When you pray, I will answer you. When you call to me, I will respond.' (Isaiah 58:9)



*Here are some insights into the Bible from the Revd Richard Bewes, formerly Rector of All Souls Langham Place, London.*

### How big was the Flood?

*A Mesopotamian disaster, or a world catastrophe? The Flood continues to fuel speculation worldwide.*

That is the precise point – we don't even have to explain which flood we're talking about; Noah's Flood is firmly embedded in the human memory on every continent.

There is a Hindu tradition about a great flood, and a ship of safety finally landing on a northern mountain. In China, Fa-he, the reputed founder of Chi-

nese civilisation, is represented as escaping from the waters of a deluge – and reappears as the first man in a new world, accompanied by his wife, three sons and three daughters: eight people in all.

There is the famous Babylonian Epic of Gilgamesh with its detailed myth-legend of a great flood. The Fiji islanders have accounts of a flood, in which a family of eight was saved. In South America, paintings have been discovered, representing a flood, a man and his wife on a raft, with a mountain featuring in the story, as well as a dove. Even the Cherokee Indians have a similar story. Only Africa seems to be without a traditional flood story.

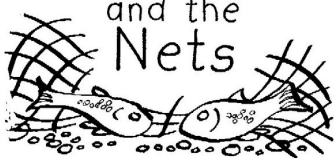
I believe that the book of Genesis gives us the original, inspired and definitive account of this mega event. It could have been Shem, one of Noah's sons, who later told his children of this great epic of his life, and, as people fanned outwards from Mesopotamia, so the story travelled outwards as well – inevitably becoming garbled in the process, and mixed up with legend and folklore.

How big was the Flood, then? The right answer is that it was of all-time, universal dimension and significance. Certainly we can make out a strong case for a literal worldwide flood – with the release of the great waters both from below and above (Genesis 7:11,12) But we may also observe that the phrase of Genesis 7:19 – that 'all the high mountains under the entire heavens were covered' can be paralleled by Acts 2:5, where – on the Day of Pentecost – those who were present were 'from every nation under heaven'. Those nations are then listed out in detail, and they are all from the then known world of Luke the writer – around the Mediterranean basin. So, the Flood itself need not have extended across the entire world.

Can we respect the differing views among reverent students of Scripture? If we cannot, we are in deep trouble. Once we get into lengthy and heated debates as to whether the flood covered every dot of land-space on the world, we are in danger of exhausting ourselves and diverting people from hearing the real message of the Flood. And what is that?

First, it widens the problem – from a garden to the whole world. The Flood conveys a universal warning. Second, it produces a model – for our entire understanding of judgment and grace, for ultimately the safety of the ark is found in Christ. Third, it sets the stage – for the drama of salvation that is to be unfolded from Genesis 12 onwards.

# The parable of the Fish and the Nets



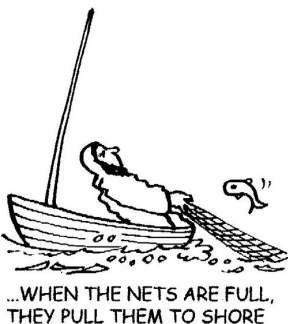
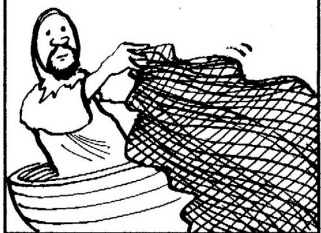
JESUS OFTEN TOLD  
STORIES WITH  
HIDDEN MEANINGS



ONCE JESUS SAID THE KINGDOM  
OF HEAVEN WAS A BIT LIKE  
CATCHING FISH!

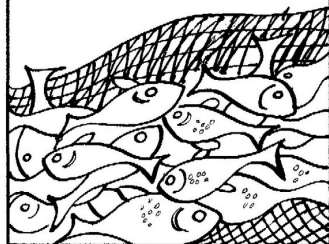


WHEN PEOPLE GO FISHING  
THEY THROW THEIR NETS  
INTO THE LAKE...

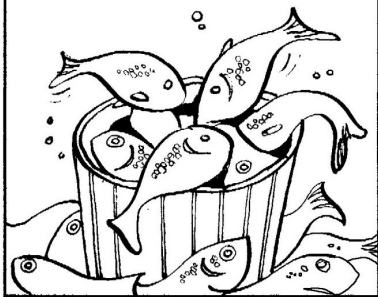


...WHEN THE NETS ARE FULL,  
THEY PULL THEM TO SHORE

ONCE ON SHORE THE FISH  
HAVE TO BE SORTED OUT.

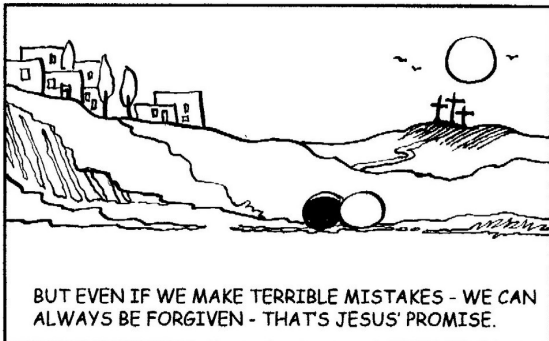


THE GOOD FISH GO INTO BUCKETS

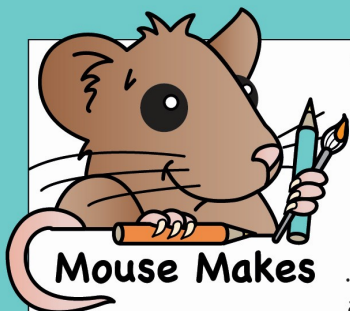


THE BAD FISH GET THROWN AWAY!

JESUS EXPLAINED THAT WE TOO WILL  
BE SORTED LIKE THE FISH. WE CAN  
CHOOSE TO DO GOOD OR BAD THINGS  
WITH OUR LIVES.



BUT EVEN IF WE MAKE TERRIBLE MISTAKES - WE CAN  
ALWAYS BE FORGIVEN - THAT'S JESUS' PROMISE.



## Mouse Makes



Just as the different parts  
of our body need each  
other to make a **whole**,  
living person so  
Christians need each  
other to make a  
whole living church!



"Just as a **body**, though **one**, has **many** parts,  
but all its many **parts** form one body,  
so it is with **Christ**. For we were all baptised  
by one **Spirit** so as to form one body...  
Even so, the body is not made  
up of one part but of many...

...Now you are the body of Christ,  
and **each** one of you is part of it."

from 1 Corinthians 12:12-27



K N E E S  
J O W H O L E  
T E E T H H Q J V  
E A F H E A D O E  
Y C F M A N Y I R  
H E B O D Y N Y  
C E Y E S D E F  
H T K C P M D I  
R U Q U I O I N  
I N F T R U F G  
S I M O I T F E  
T O G E T H E R  
O N O S E A R S  
N G D B Q I E N  
G I W O U A N F  
V U F A P A R T S M  
K E T L R L M V Y D  
B W S L E G S Q E B

Look in the Bible verses for the words written in **bold**  
then look for these words too!

GOD • TOGETHER • EQUAL • ALL • EVERY  
HEAD • EYES • EARS • MOUTH • TONGUE  
TEETH • NOSE • ARMS • HANDS • FINGERS  
LEGS • KNEES • FEET • TOES • GIFTS



"Though we are  
many, we are one  
body in **union**  
with Christ,  
and we are  
**joined** to each  
other as  
**different**  
parts of  
one body."  
from  
Romans 12:1-7



# Looking at CHURCH, at home and worldwide

*The Revd Dr Jo White considers ....*

*Reflecting Faith: Saying 'Farewell—at the end of a church service*

Last month we considered how we are welcomed at the beginning of a church service, as we come together to enter into the real presence of God. This month let's consider how we say 'goodbye' at the end of the service.

For the leader of the service doesn't just say something like, "Thanks for coming, lovely to see you - have a great week." Rather, there's a promise and a blessing for each of us as we take what we have 'received' from the service into the world.

*So the crunch question is: what do you get out of coming to a church service?*

The ideal is: You have been met with a friendly welcome followed by music you love, played at the perfect speed with no squeaky singers in the congregation. Then, an inspiring sermon which gives you something to think about for the coming week. After that, prayers that speak of what is on your heart and what you have heard on the news that week. Finally, good fellowship and a cuppa after the service, where you can feel part of 'them', rather than ignored because you are only visiting.

Following all that good stuff, you go out of the church with a spring in your step!

.... Of course, in the real world not all those boxes get ticked.

But still we can go to church with hope, and ideally, we leave it in peace. The time that we spend together is the 'easy' bit. The real challenge begins when we go out the door and back into the daily round of home life and work. But we can be sure that we do not leave God at the church door. He always comes home with us, and He is there to help us throughout the coming week. That is why we can indeed 'go in peace'.

## ***This month***

When you next go to a church service take note of the leader's closing words and your expected responses to them. How heartily can you agree with them? How do they make you feel?

## Online Services



‘Online’ or ‘Live streaming’ services essentially started during the Covid lockdowns in 2020, as many churches filmed their services and broadcast them through YouTube or other channels. It was difficult to know how many of their members actually watched these services, although YouTube did count the number watching at any particular moment.

The Church of England (C of E) attempted to collect details from its 15,500 churches of those providing such service filming and broadcasting – what they called ‘Church at Home’. These numbers, being based on a large percentage of churches who replied, have given some idea of the impact caused by Covid on church attendance.

In 2020 it was estimated (across all denominations) that attendance was about 44% of what it might have been with no Covid.

When in 2021 some relaxations were allowed, total English attendance was 78% of the pre-Covid attendance trend. In 2022, when virtually all restrictions had been withdrawn it was 87%, and in 2023 it was 94%.

Cathedrals tend to have attenders spread over a wider geographical area, and most do film and record their main service (97% did so in 2020 and 94% in 2021, falling to 82% in 2022 but increasing to 93% in 2023, the latest figure. In 2020 64% of services were downloaded, 34% in 2021, but 49% in 2022 and 43% in 2023.

It shows that the number of churches and cathedrals live-streaming their services has dropped in the last three years (as might be expected as greater numbers returned in person). While this suggests a continuing decline in live-streaming, it is still a very useful aid for older members of the congregation unable easily to get out or those in Care Homes.





*Kenneth Harrod, Head of Theology and Media at Release International, the voice of persecuted Christians, considers the different ways Christians experience persecution...*

## What does the modern persecution of Christians look like?

In the Acts of the Apostles we read, at different times, of disciples being threatened; of disciples being imprisoned. We see disciples, on occasions, fleeing. We read of disciples paying the ultimate price—martyrdom.

To talk of Christians suffering persecution for Christ and the gospel is to realise that this is something that takes different forms in different places. And that means the way we respond—in order to love and care for persecuted Christians—will vary, too.

On-going oppression, for example, may leave the Church bereft of resources and needing help to equip its pastors. By contrast, where Christians have been forced to flee in the face of violence or the threat of violence there may be immediate life-sustaining needs that must be met. Martyrdom or imprisonment throws up the need to care pastorally for widows or for families struggling to cope.

The one constant is all of this is the call to pray for those who suffer because of their faith in Christ—which is always the first thing persecuted Christians ask for. If possible, that prayer ought to be *specific*: for real people in real places, who are really suffering because of their Christian faith.

Release International is a UK-based ministry, called to love and serve those who suffer persecution for Christ and the gospel. Release International works through Christian partners on the ground; partners who understand the needs of those who are suffering, and who have a calling to respond to those needs. We can help those who help the suffering.

And so here in the UK Release International calls Christians to express fellowship with those who suffer—and to do so prayerfully, pastorally and practically. To find out more about how you and your church can be involved in caring for persecuted Christians, go to: [releaseinternational.org](https://releaseinternational.org).



*Peter Crumpler reports on the problems  
facing seafarers today...*

## *'Don't forget the seafarers,' says Christian mission agency*

A Christian mission agency has called for the welfare of nearly two million seafarers to be taken into consideration, as the global shipping fleet cuts costs by adopting new technologies.

The Mission to Seafarers (MtS) runs 121 welfare centres in ports around the world, and its people visit more than 40,000 ships each year. Seafarers face dangerous oceans and seas to transport more than 90 per cent of the world's goods and fuels – making them essential key workers who often go unrecognised by the general population.

MtS Secretary General Peter Rouch has expressed concern that often ships' crews are overlooked when investment is being made in new technology.

He said: "Conditions aboard ships should not focus solely on minimising costs but also on ensuring the health and well-being of the crew. Humanly, as well as operationally sustainable crew sizes, shift rotations, and shore leave are essential for maintaining the mental and physical health of seafarers.

"Overworked crew members are more likely to make costly mistakes, which can harm the shipping industry of course, but the more important aspect is to understand seafarers as much more than a simple resource."

Mr Rouch explained that while the shipping industry was embracing digital technology and low-carbon fuels, the needs of seafarers often remained secondary. He had heard a politician from a leading maritime nation name the major issues facing the industry over the next five to ten years – but failing to address the human aspects of seafarers' working lives.

Peter Rouch added: "At its core, any human activity such as a commercial activity like shipping should serve the flourishing of humanity, and this includes the well-being of seafarers.

"The Mission to Seafarers, grounded in faith and a vision that values human dignity and human community in and of itself, continues to advocate for sea-

farers' well-being and we are glad to partner with others in the shipping industry who share these values."

Collectively, there are more than 1.89 million seafarers across the world, made up of many nationalities. They often spend up to nine months at a time far away from their family, friends and loved ones. This can lead to loneliness and mental health issues.

### *A Breton fisherman's prayer*

*Protect me, dear Lord;  
My boat is so small,  
And Your sea is so big.*



### *God in the Sciences: Keeping Calm in the Storm*

*Dr Ruth Bancewicz is based at The Faraday Institute for Science and Religion in Cambridge, writes on the positive relationship between Science and Christian faith.*

One of the most famous stories about Jesus is the calming of the storm (Luke 8:22-25). Of course, anyone could say that the wind stopped suddenly of its own accord, but the disciples were not fooled. They had seen a number of these 'coincidences' in Jesus' ministry, and they weren't about to ignore this one. Jesus had calmed the waves with only His words. Wasn't this an act of God? Who else could be in complete control of creation?

Jesus dealt graciously with the very pressing and practical issue of the raging storm before He did a bit of teaching, asking His followers "Where is your faith?" It's not surprising that they were scared, given the circumstances, but clearly Jesus expected better of them. He had already been teaching them

for some time, and clearly knew they were ready to trust Him.

In similar circumstances, Christians often do several things in quick succession. We start by panicking and being afraid. After a while we might remember what we know about God's character and pray for help, trusting that whatever happens He will help us to handle it. Most often, we don't get the storm-calming effect when we ask for it, but battling on with faith and God's help is much easier than trying to keep going in a panic.

'Peace' in this kind of situation is a very active holding on to what we know about God. The difference between trusting and not trusting can be like night and day in terms of stress levels. I have found that it can make the difference between unmanageable stress and something that stretches me and teaches me something new.

Knowing some science can help us to trust God. A Being who created the whole universe, sustaining the wonderfully creative processes that produced diverse life on earth, must be both extremely powerful and extremely wise. The God who can both calm the waves and walk on them must be in complete control of the things He made. When this knowledge goes hand in hand with experience of God's intimate love for us and care for us in every situation that we find ourselves in, I am reassured that He's got things in hand.

I will always need help from others to pray faithfully in stormy situations, but hopefully I've seen enough now not to panic for too long. Time (and my closest friends) will tell!



QUOTE: Faith is the capacity to trust God while not being able to make sense out of everything. -*James Kok*

# Our local COMMUNITY

*Many of our readers will remember this charity, which was part of our local community for many years. Perhaps you too will have been involved in raising money for Muheza, in one way or another?*

## Pontesbury-Muheza Link

Nearly 30 years ago, the Pontesbury-Muheza Link was created to support a local doctor in his efforts to improve health care in a remote area of Tanzania. 30 years on, the Charity has now finally closed, having provided the people of Tanga with £230,000 of support, most of it raised locally through the fantastic efforts and generosity of a large number of people. This is a final newsletter, with a reminder of the story of the Link, summarising what has been achieved and thanking everyone for their generous support.

In 1994 a GP from Pontesbury Medical Practice, Dr Ian Bradley visited Muheza District in the Tanga region of Tanzania, looking at provision of medical services in rural areas. In 1996 Ian took early retirement from the Practice and made a commitment to return to Muheza to help improve the medical provision in the villages and Health Centres.



In 1996 the Rector of Longden, Annscroft and Pulverbatch instigated a Tanzanian evening at Longden School to gain local support for enabling Dr Ian to achieve his aims. The meeting was a success, people from all over the Pontesbury Deanery were interested in supporting Dr Ian's work, thus the Pontesbury-Muheza Link was born. The objectives of the link were: **To enable the provision of medical services in the Tanga region of Tanzania including education and support of Medical Personnel and relief of hardship in the region.** The Link obtained charity status in 1997.

Local support for this charity in the years since 1997 has been amazing. Local

churches were very supportive, providing venues and refreshments for meetings and events, and circulating Link updates. Money was raised at Garden Parties, Coffee Mornings, Lent Lunches, sponsored walks, Update meetings and various musical or drama events. People sold greeting cards, produce, preserves and plants. Donations, gifts from Trusts, Sponsorships and bequests also contributed over 25 years to a magnificent **£230,000**.

Ian never asked for expenses for his regular trips to Tanzania, monitoring how the various projects progressed, and in the year 2000 he was awarded an OBE for his charitable work in Tanzania and The Pontesbury Project. Ian sent regular reports of progress while he was in Tanzania often with photographs. Trustees and committee members of the Link never claimed expenses. 22 people residing in different areas of South Shropshire served the committee over the 28 years of its' existence. This number included 3 different chairpersons, 3 different treasurers, 1 Secretary and a total of 7 Trustees, with committee members. A newsletter was produced for all donors each year.



It is very difficult to cover all the projects that the Link managed to support. The first venture was to pay a local builder to spend time in Tanzania constructing a rain water collection system at Mkuzi Health Centre which had no running water or electricity. Pontesbury scouts sent torches to the centre to help delivery of babies at night! Shortly afterwards we

welcomed Grace, Julius and Agnes to visit Pontesbury to study our NHS. Later, all three of them were sponsored to improve their medical qualifications, and have kept in touch over the years.

The Link paid expenses for Village Health Workers to attend seminars training them to return to their villages to treat minor illnesses; sponsored the training of numerous nurses, including Agnes who achieved a degree in nursing, four Clinical Officers, a teacher and hopefully Arnold Nathan Mwenga will qualify as a Doctor in July 2025; wards and an operating theatre were built at Maramba Health Centre and the roof of the maternity unit at Msejani was mended, helping to maintain the infra structure of the 3 Health Centres; travelling expenses were paid for Mobile Clinics; several bicycles

were bought and a motor bike to help health workers and a supervisor.



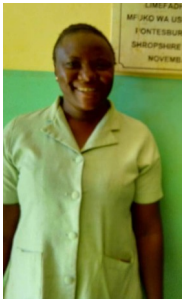
Articles were sent out to help hardship in the area via a container that was organised by a Link between Hereford Hospital and Muheza Hospital. Members embraced this project with enthusiasm. Hundreds of teddies were knitted in Cardeston for AID's orphans, schools in Shrewsbury and

Wolverhampton gave textbooks, stationery, kits and footballs; members donated blankets and sheets and soaps for wards; hundreds of sewing machines were serviced in Bayston Hill each one containing a sewing kit; donated tools for carpentry, plumbing and gardening were mended and serviced in Pulverbatch. All were packed, the volume measured, labelled and transported to Hereford for each container going out to Tanga.

Containers were discontinued when transport costs became prohibitive.

Local people visited Muheza and Ian hosted them and introduced them to people that worked in the health service and they visited the schools and Health Centres the Link supported.

For many years the Link made annual donations towards the salaries of 2 Medical Attendants working at the Maramba Health Centre, Prisca and Musa.



Musa retired some years ago, and has now sadly died, but we continued to pay Prisca (photo left) up to and including this year, and she has also now retired. The last of the money left in the Link's bank accounts was transferred to Tanzania for Prisca and Arnold Nathan in July 2024 and the bank account then closed. Arnold Nathan should qualify as a Doctor this July.

Sadly, Dr Ian died last year, and at the time of his funeral a tribute for his life was held in Muheza. The person speaking at the end said "Dr Ian was one of the good men". This was followed by a tribute in Swahili.

So, nearly 30 years on, the Pontesbury-Muheza Link's bank accounts have been closed, and the Charity Commission informed. We have closed

through necessity, not because our work has been completed - there is an enormous amount that needs to be done to help improve medical services in the Tanga region of Tanzania. But Link trustees realised that the Charity could not continue without a Dr Ian making regular personal trips to the region to discover what needs to be done, and to put in place arrangements to securely handle our charitable donations. And despite there still being huge local support for and interest in the work of the Link, new faces would be needed to ensure its continuation. So, three years ago, at our final Update Evening, we announced that the Link would now be closed to future donations, and its funds disbursed over the next three years. That 3-year managed closure process has now concluded.

Sheila Waddington-Feather



### **Open all Summer**

We have been open all Summer every Tuesday and Thursday mornings. This is all

due to our local and loyal volunteers. Behind the scenes they are collecting donated items, sorting and transporting it. Also setting up and packing up on the days we are open. Thanks to a brilliant team.

**Home deliveries** across the area are carried out by volunteers to people who have financial or other needs but are housebound. A referral is needed before a decision on eligibility can be made.

### **The Cost of Food**

Local people are very generous with their donations of food and other items. The biggest issue we face is the increasing cost of food, which has meant:

^ Donations of items to us are considerably down. Minsterley Morrisons is no longer a donation collection point as our bin was often moved or removed.

^ It costs the Foodbank more each month to buy in items. We do this very carefully, and to a budget, but also try to be responsive to people's needs. Thank you, we appreciate the community's continued support for our service.

### **Good News**

Along with other Foodbanks we applied for some specific financial support from Shropshire Council, via the Shropshire Food Poverty Alliance. We have had good news that this funding will be forthcoming in Autumn/Winter and must be used to provide vouchers for Foodbank users. This is good timing with increased energy and Christmas costs.



**To use the Foodbank, or find out more:**

Call for a chat with Rev. Greg Smith 07902 794653 or Rev. Richard Lonsdale 07922 830488 email [reavalleyfoodbank@gmail.com](mailto:reavalleyfoodbank@gmail.com) or your local clergy. You can also be referred by a GP, school, nursery, social/health worker, housing provider or other support agency. See our website: <https://reavalleyfoodbank.co.uk/> or Facebook.

*Who? by Daphne Kitching  
(Matthew 16:13-16)*

*They say  
He was a good man,  
A great teacher,  
A fascinating figure  
Who inspired social action,  
Works of art and architecture.  
A man of compassion,  
And high moral values.  
That's the sort of thing  
They say.*

*But Jesus -  
Sent by His Father,  
Spanning history,  
Standing on the evidence  
Of His life and death,  
Resurrection and ascension -  
Jesus,  
In the power of His Spirit,  
Cuts through the they and then,  
To the you and now,*

*"But you,  
What about you,  
Who do you say I am, today?"*



# Bible Bite


## A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in Ruth chapters 3 and 4

Naomi and Ruth had returned to Bethlehem as widows. Ruth had worked during the harvest in the fields of Boaz, a near relative.

Naomi told her daughter-in-law Ruth

You need someone to marry and look after you. I have a plan



I will do all you ask of me.

So Ruth went to where the grain was threshed. Boaz was on guard that night...




...but she stayed out of his sight until he was asleep.

Then she uncovered his feet and lay down by them.



At midnight, Boaz woke, and was shocked to find her there.



As my relative who must look after me, will you marry me?

You have a closer relative; I will ask him tomorrow. If he will not marry you, I will do so gladly. Lie down now, and sleep.



Just before dawn, Ruth returned to Naomi.



All we can do now is wait.

Boaz went to the meeting place, and waited for the relative to pass.



Naomi wants to sell the land she inherited from her husband, and as nearest relative, you get first refusal.



I want to buy the land.


Then you must marry Ruth as the land must be inherited by her son

In that case, I don't want to buy it.

Then I will buy the land and marry Ruth.



So Boaz married Ruth and they had a son.



My life is no longer bitter!

and he was an ancestor of King David!

# The wider COMMUNITY

## Lord's Prayer tops Shakespeare, Dickens, Churchill and National Anthem in public recognition poll

People in the UK are more likely to identify correctly a short extract from the Lord's Prayer – also known as the Our Father – than one from the National Anthem and other sources chosen for their deep cultural resonance, a new poll has found.

The polling, carried out for the Church of England, also found the reference in the prayer to being forgiven and forgiving others was the element people found most meaningful to them.

Pollsters Savanta surveyed more than 2,000 people across the UK. They asked them to match seven famous lines - spanning areas ranging from literature and history to popular culture – with their source, from a list of correct answers.

Overall, the phrase from the Lord's Prayer was recognised correctly by the largest number of people (80.3 per cent), just ahead of Star Wars (79.9%).

They were followed by Hamlet's "To be or not to be" (73 per cent) the extract from the National Anthem (63 per cent); the line from Churchill's 'The Few' speech (61 per cent); and You'll Never Walk Alone (58 per cent).

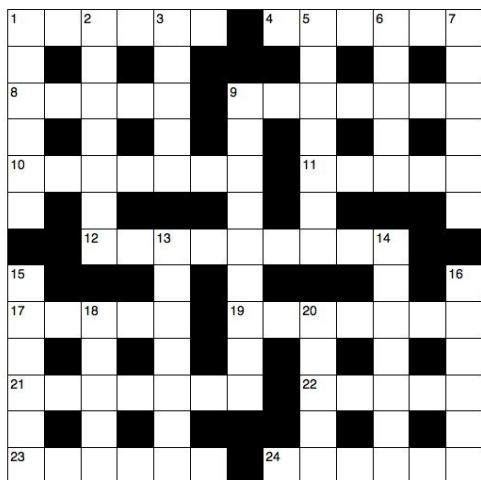
Overall, 89 per cent of those surveyed said that they had previously heard of the Lord's Prayer or the Our Father. This was highest among those who described themselves as Christian (95 per cent), but also by 88 per cent of those who said they had no religion.

The Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell, is currently leading a 'Lord's Prayer Tour' of events at churches and cathedrals across the north of England attended by thousands of people, as part of his *Faith In The North* initiative.

He said: "In a world of shifting cultures and changing circumstances, the Lord's Prayer remains a steady guide - perhaps never more so than now.

"Lines like 'Give us this day our daily bread' speak powerfully to today's challenges, reminding us to seek sufficiency, not excess, and to consider what 'enough' truly means."

# *This month's CROSSWORD PUZZLE ...*



## 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)

**9** Where Elijah restored life to son of 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)

**20** Maltreat (1 Chronicles 10:4) (5)      **18** She had a surprise when she answered the door and found 8 Across outside (Acts 12:13) (5)



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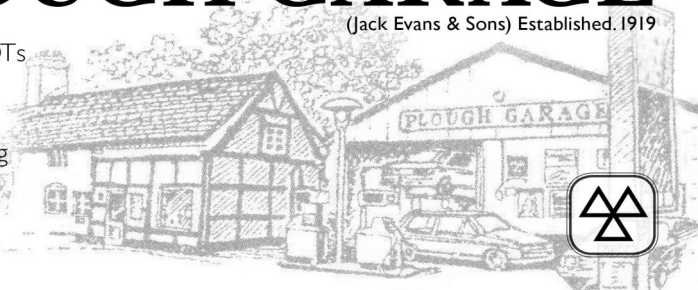
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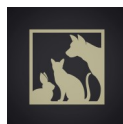




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