

# **RYHOPE VIEWS**



**JUNE - JULY 2025**



**ST PAUL'S CHURCH MAGAZINE £1.50**

Large print available on request

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#### EUCCHARIST/HOLY COMMUNION

Sundays at 8am and 10:15am  
Wednesdays at 9:30am

#### EVENSONG

1st Sunday of the month at 6pm

#### OFFICE HOUR/ENQUIRIES

Tuesdays 6pm – 7pm

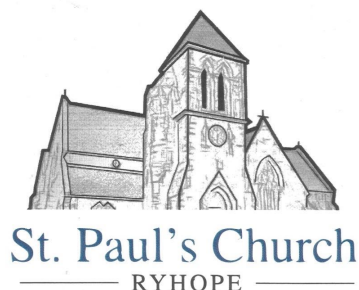
### ANNOUNCEMENT

Please be aware that there will be no 8am Eucharist on 22<sup>nd</sup> June.

Apologies for any inconvenience.

### RYHOPE CHOIR

Led by Tony Bowler  
Thursdays from 6pm - 7pm



### ST PAUL'S S.H.O.P.

Supporting & Helping Our Parish  
24 Ryhope Street South  
Sunderland  
SR2 0RW

#### OPENING TIMES

Mon, Tues, Thurs & Fri 10am to 4pm  
Wed 10am to 1pm

#### CLOSED

Bank Holidays & Weekends



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The Rev and The Robin



## JULY

### SUBMISSIONS

We would love to hear from you with your thoughts and reflections, poetry, or short stories. Please email us on [ryhopeview@outlook.com](mailto:ryhopeview@outlook.com) or if you don't have access to email, speak to Reverend David or Joanne in church.

## VIEW FROM THE VICARAGE

Dear All,

I sometimes wonder if all the problems in the world aren't down to lack of communication. We're all one people yet we all speak different languages and that's how problems arise. It isn't just miscommunication with people from other nations either. It's miscommunication with our own people also. These days the young and the old completely misunderstand each other. They speak completely different languages while still speaking English. I sometimes wonder if the older generation are being left behind while banks and services close and everything is moved online. It creates a needless division within our society.

This is what happens when people speak different languages, and no attempt is made to bridge the gap. It creates isolation, and isolation leads to people feeling vulnerable. Sometimes this vulnerability leads to anger and frustration. I think that at the heart of our society there is a deep feeling that people are wanting to be heard and yet no one is listening. If that's not a breakdown in communication I don't know what is.

It was never meant to be like this. The early chapters of the Bible paint a picture of human beings all speaking one language and understanding each other completely. The division of languages that we experience today is put down to people getting too big for their boots and thinking that they're better than God. We're probably not meant to take this literally, but it does illustrate the fundamental nature of the problem. From the earliest times we've known that we're better when we talk and work things out together. Our tragedy is that we know this simple truth and yet fail to act on it.



*Tower of Babel*, by Lucas van Valckenborch, 1594, Louvre Museum

That God wants us to do something about this is shown in the message of Pentecost. The disciples of Jesus experience an outpouring of the Holy Spirit, enabling them to speak different languages. What this means is that the many nations that have gathered in Jerusalem hear themselves being addressed in their native tongue. Just for a moment the barriers are down, and full communication is possible. God's people have become one again.

Sometimes I've heard of other instances of this in the life of the church. I've heard of instances of people suddenly breaking out into other languages and being understood by other people. I've never experienced this myself. Maybe the Day of Pentecost was the only day in history when the gathered nations in Jerusalem understood each other completely. Wouldn't things be different if that was the case today?

But even if the Day of Pentecost was a one-off it still gives us an ideal to strive towards. That image of all God's people talking to each other and understanding each other despite their differences is something we all should aim for. Reunification should be the aim of all of our hearts, even if it's impossible in our lifetime or even if it's only possible in heaven.



God gives us gifts to help us make some progress. He might not give us the gift of languages in the way he used to. Probably if we want to speak another language we'll have to go back to school. But he gives us the even better gift of love. If we have love in our hearts any language barrier can be overcome. Maybe the other big problem of our world is the lack of love. May God give us love so that we can work with him to change the world.

Gracious Spirit, Holy Ghost,  
taught by Thee, we covet most,  
of Thy gifts at Pentecost,  
holy, heav'nly love.



*Your friend and vicar,  
David.*

## PRAYERS

### A PRAYER FOR JUNE

Dear Lord,

June is the loveliest month, with long days and the beauty of summer all around us. Thank you that, in the church's year this month, we remember one of the loveliest of your followers – Barnabas, known as the Son of Encouragement.

He encouraged the believers in Antioch to *remain true to the Lord* with all their hearts. Through his ministry of encouragement, a great number of people were brought to know you.

Lord, we all thrive when we are encouraged. And we, your people, so need to be encouraged today in this world which can seem so confusing and discouraging.

So, thank you for those who have encouraged us in the past, and for those who encourage us now.

Help us to read your living unchanging Word and to remain true to you with all our hearts. Help us to be a *Barnabas* to those we know who might be struggling. May we bear fruit in our discipleship.

*In Jesus' name. Amen.*

*By Daphne Kitching*

Christ has died  
Christ is risen  
Christ will come again  
Hallelujah!

### A PRAYER FOR JULY

Lord, in this month, we, your church, remember Thomas.

Thomas, who asked questions and doubted when he didn't see You with his own eyes. And Lord, You walked through those locked doors of his questions and doubts specifically to meet his needs.

Help us to come to you, honestly, with our questions and doubts, knowing that You understand and will meet our needs too.

Help us to recognize You with eyes of faith - the only One who can help us.

May we declare, with Thomas, in humility, devotion and thankfulness, 'My Lord and my God!'

*We pray in your powerful name, Lord Jesus. Amen.*

*By Daphne Kitching*

## FROM THE **REGISTERS**

### Baptisms

#### **APRIL**

- 6** Benjamin Harris  
Arlo Hutchinson
- 20** Ralph Ewen  
Elencia Warwick
- 27** Sydney Vincent



#### **MAY**

- 4** Ember Martin

*We welcome you into the fellowship of faith.*

### Wedding Thanksgiving

#### **MAY**

- 2** Jack Murray & Yukari Terakado

*What God has joined together, let no one put asunder.*





# Funerals

## APRIL

- 9** Maureen Hodgson
- 11** Janice Otterson
- 16** Douglas Percival
- 25** Denise Snaith

## MAY

- 12** Irene Calvert
- 13** Gladys Noton
- 14** Elizabeth Weeks
- 16** Susan Clennell

## JUNE

- 9** Joyce McCartney
- 11** Elizabeth Scott

*Rest eternal grant unto them O Lord.*



# CHURCH CALENDAR

## JUNE

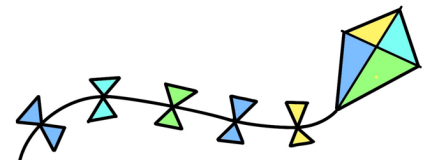
- |           |  |                             |
|-----------|--|-----------------------------|
| <b>9</b>  | Funeral of Joyce McCartney<br>Parochial Church Council Meeting | <b>1:30PM</b><br><b>7PM</b> |
| <b>11</b> | Funeral of Betty Scott (At Sunderland Crematorium)             | <b>11:30AM</b>              |
| <b>14</b> | St Paul's Church Summer Fayre                                  | <b>11AM</b>                 |
| <b>15</b> | Trinity Sunday   | <b>10:15AM</b>              |

## JULY

- 19** Parish Day Out - To Be Confirmed

## AUGUST

- |          |   |               |
|----------|---|---------------|
| <b>6</b> | <b>TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD</b><br>Eucharist | <b>9:30AM</b> |
|----------|---|---------------|



# HIGH DAYS & HOLY DAYS

## JUNE

- 1** Justin, Martyr at Rome, c.165
- 3** The Martyrs of Uganda, 1885-7 and 1977
- 4** Petroc, Abbot of Padstow, 6th century
- 5** Boniface (Wynfrith) of Crediton, Bishop, Apostle of Germany, Martyr, 754
- 6** Ini Kopuria, Founder of the Melanesian Brotherhood, 1945
- 8** Thomas Ken, Bishop of Bath and Wells, Nonjuror, Hymn Writer, 1711
- 9** Columba, Abbot of Iona, Missionary, 597  
Ephrem of Syria, Deacon, Hymn Writer, Teacher of the Faith, 373

### **11 BARNABAS THE APOSTLE**

- 14** Richard Baxter, Puritan Divine, 1691
- 15** Evelyn Underhill, Spiritual Writer, 1941
- 16** Richard, Bishop of Chichester, 1253  
Joseph Butler, Bishop of Durham, Philosopher, 1752
- 17** Samuel and Henrietta Barnett, Social Reformers, 1913 and 1936
- 18** Bernard Mizeki, Apostle of the MaShona, Martyr, 1896
- 19** Sundar Singh of India, Sadhu (holy man), Evangelist, Teacher of the Faith, 1929
- 22** Alban, first Martyr of Britain, c.250
- 23** Etheldreda, Abbess of Ely, c.678

### **24 THE BIRTH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST**

- 27** Cyril, Bishop of Alexandria, Teacher of the Faith, 444
- 28** Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons, Teacher of the Faith, c.200

### **29 PETER AND PAUL, APOSTLES**

#### **ALTERNATIVE DATES**

Peter the Apostle may be celebrated alone, without Paul, on 29 June.

# HIGH DAYS & HOLY DAYS

## JULY

**1** Henry, John, and Henry Venn the younger, Priests, Evangelical Divines, 1797, 1813 and 1873

### **3 THOMAS THE APOSTLE**

**6** Thomas More, Scholar, and John Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, Reformation Martyrs, 1535

**11** Benedict of Nursia, Abbot of Monte Cassino, Father of Western Monasticism, c.550

**14** John Keble, Priest, Tractarian, Poet, 1866

**15** Swithun, Bishop of Winchester, c.862

Bonaventure, Friar, Bishop, Teacher of the Faith, 1274

**16** Osmund, Bishop of Salisbury, 1099

**18** Elizabeth Ferard, first Deaconess of the Church of England, Founder of the Community of St Andrew, 1883

**19** Gregory, Bishop of Nyssa, and his sister Macrina, Deaconess, Teachers of the Faith, c.394 and c.379

**20** Margaret of Antioch, Martyr, 4th century

Bartolomé de las Casas, Apostle to the Indies, 1566

### **22 MARY MAGDALENE**

**23** Bridget of Sweden, Abbess of Vadstena, 1373

### **25 JAMES THE APOSTLE**

**26** Anne and Joachim, Parents of the Blessed Virgin Mary

**27** Brooke Foss Westcott, Bishop of Durham, Teacher of the Faith, 1901

**29** Mary, Martha and Lazarus, Companions of Our Lord

**30** William Wilberforce, Social Reformer  
Olaudah Equiano and Thomas Clarkson  
Anti-Slavery Campaigners, 1833, 1797 and 1846

**31** Ignatius of Loyola, Founder of the Society of Jesus, 1556

### **ALTERNATIVE DATES**

The Visit of the Blessed Virgin Mary to Elizabeth may be celebrated on 2 July instead of 31 May.

Thomas the Apostle may be celebrated on 21 December instead of 3 July.

Thomas Becket may be celebrated on 7 July instead of 29 December.

## HIGH DAYS & HOLY DAYS

### AUGUST

4 Jean-Baptiste Vianney, Curé d'Ars, Spiritual Guide, 1859

5 Oswald, King of Northumbria, Martyr, 642

6 THE TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD

7 John Mason Neale, Priest, Hymn Writer, 1866

8 Dominic, Priest, Founder of the Order of Preachers, 1221

9 Mary Sumner, Founder of the Mothers' Union, 1921

10 Laurence, Deacon at Rome, Martyr, 258







A festive poster for St Paul's Summer Fayre. At the top, a banner of triangular flags spans the width. The title 'St Paul's Summer Fayre' is written in a large, bold, black serif font, slanted upwards. Below it, the date and time 'Saturday 14th June at 11am' are also in a bold, black serif font, following the same upward slant. The background is a warm orange-to-yellow gradient. In the center, a list of activities is arranged: 'Raffle' and 'Craft Stall' are in the middle; 'Chocolate Tombola' is below them. To the left, 'Birthday Cards' and 'Baby Gifts' are listed, accompanied by three small butterfly illustrations. To the right, 'Bric-a-Brac' and 'Toy Stall' are listed, accompanied by one butterfly illustration. Below the activities, the text 'And many other attractions' is written in a bold, black serif font. At the bottom, there is a line drawing of a church with a tall steeple, flanked by two large, leafy branches. The text 'St Paul's Church' and '— Ryhope —' is centered below the church drawing.

**St Paul's  
Summer Fayre**  
**Saturday 14th June at 11am**

**Birthday Cards**  
**Baby Gifts**

**Raffle**  
**Craft Stall**  
**Chocolate Tombola**

**Bric-a-Brac**  
**Toy Stall**

**And many other attractions**

**St Paul's Church**  
**— Ryhope —**

# **Open Table at Sunderland Minster**

**June 8<sup>th</sup> at 5pm**

**Celebrate Pride with us**



**You're more than welcome here**

A service of praise and thanksgiving

Followed by shared food and community.

Contact [revjacquityson@sunderlandminster.org](mailto:revjacquityson@sunderlandminster.org) for further details



# Sunderland Minster Craft and Vintage Fair



Also craft de-stash  
items on sale

Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> June 2025  
10:00am – 2:00pm

Admission 50p, children free

*Refreshments available*



Local Crafts

Hand Made Gifts  
Cake

Next Fair: Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> July 2025

High Street West, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear, SR1 3ET  
Tel: 0191 565 4066

E-mail: [minsterfair@gmail.com](mailto:minsterfair@gmail.com)

Web: [www.sunderlandminster.org.uk](http://www.sunderlandminster.org.uk)





## OTHER NEWS

### CHURCHES ENJOYED BUMPER EASTER ATTENDANCES

Clergy have reported packed services over Easter, as increasing numbers of young people are coming to church.

It follows the recent survey by the Bible Society, which found that the share of the population who attend a service a month has risen from eight per cent in 2018 to 12 per cent last year. But surprisingly, the figures for those aged 18 to 24 have *quadrupled*, to 16 per cent.

Philip North, Bishop of Blackburn, said that the numbers at services were up by as much as a half in some areas. He said that, despite so much recent bad publicity about the Church, “there is such a hunger for faith, especially among the young.”

The rector at one church in London said: “The world is a much more frightening and chaotic place than when I was growing up. People in their 20s and 30s have had two major financial crashes, a pandemic, a land war in Europe, a housing crisis. The world is not a place for optimism right now. The stability and comfort that God can provide is something that appeals to young people.”

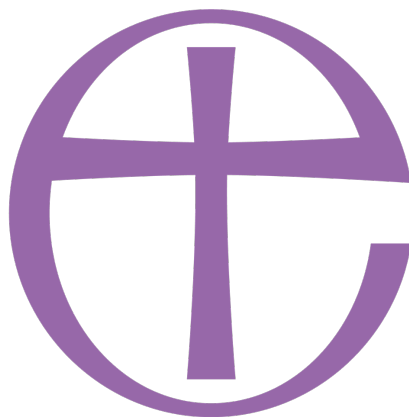
Churches certainly provide a sense of community, a social network as well as a spiritual one, which can help young people who are struggling to connect with others.

The Bible Society survey also found that, whereas in 2018 just four per cent of 18 to 24 year-olds attended church once a month, now 16 per cent of the same age group are doing so.

And, although British people are still more likely to be non-believers, those who *are* Christian are practising their faith with greater zeal.

Meanwhile, the Church of England has seen a boom in visits to its church-finding website, with views on [AChurchNearYou.Com](https://www.churchnearyou.com) soaring. Visits last year hit 198.6 million – up from 128.1 million in 2023 and a rise of more than three quarters on the previous year.

The figure does not include the 9.7-million-page impressions from the site’s army of local editors, who maintain and update parish pages, adding and tagging worship services, events and community action projects such as food banks.



THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND

## **FAITH OF THE NORTHERN SAINTS EXPLORED IN SHORT FILM**

The power of the Lord's Prayer is celebrated in a new short film that is part of the Archbishop of York's current 'Faith in the North' initiative.

**Then as Now** is available to watch from the [Archbishop of York's YouTube channel](#) (from 6 May).

Set in the magnificent landscape of the north-east, the film interweaves the faith of the old northern saints from the 7<sup>th</sup> century (including St Cuthbert and St Hild) to the faith of Christians today.

**Then as Now** was created by an ordinand at St Hild College, Oliver Murray.

Oliver Murray explains: "This film is about rediscovering the power of the Lord's Prayer alongside the men and women who first shared it, spreading the light of faith in the north. It's incredible to see how this ancient prayer still speaks to our hearts, offering guidance and comfort in every season of life."

**Faith in the North** is a prayer, storytelling and church-planting movement led by Archbishop Cottrell. His aim is to encourage people across the Northern Province to explore the Lord's Prayer afresh during 2025.

Archbishop Cottrell says: "The Lord's Prayer has been spoken through the centuries by countless people seeking strength, direction, and peace.

"If you've never prayed before, this is the best place to start and if you've been praying this for some time, it's a great opportunity to engage anew with each line of the prayer. Join me in rediscovering Christ's story in our hearts and communities today."





## **11,000 PEOPLE TAKE PART IN CONSULTATIONS FOR THE NEXT ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY**

More than 11,000 people have so far participated in the consultations for the next Archbishop of Canterbury. It was carried out online, by post and in person between February and March this year.

The public consultation was a unique opportunity to influence the future of leadership within the Church, helping to discern the gifts, skills and qualities that will be required in the 106th Archbishop of Canterbury, to meet the needs of the Church today and in the years to come.

The themes that emerge through this consultation will sit alongside the 'Statement of Needs' produced by the Diocese of Canterbury, as well as other information provided by the National Church and Anglican Communion. This information will inform the Canterbury Crown Nominations Commission of the needs of the mission of the Church of England and the wider Anglican Communion.

## **COFE BISHOPS URGE PRIME MINISTER TO RETHINK MIGRATION RHETORIC**

Fifteen Church of England bishops have joined Jewish, Muslim, and other Christian leaders in urging the Prime Minister to reconsider migration rhetoric that they warn risks deepening division and undermining compassion.

They have signed a joint letter to the Prime Minister, calling for a more compassionate and respectful tone in the national conversation around migration.

The letter, coordinated by HIAS+JCORE, a UK-based Jewish organisation that advocates for racial justice and refugee rights, expresses deep concern that current political rhetoric risks "strengthening those who would divide us" and undermines the UK's proud tradition of offering sanctuary to those in need.

Among the signatories are 15 Church of England bishops, including: Bristol, Chelmsford, Gloucester, Guildford, Leeds, Leicester, Lichfield, Lincoln, London, Manchester, St Albans, Sheffield, Shrewsbury, Southwark and Winchester.

Together, the leaders warn that the Prime Minister's recent reference to the "incalculable" damage done by uncontrolled migration risks "strengthening those who would divide us."

While acknowledging public concerns around migration, the signatories stress the need for a response which is "principled, and lowers the temperature of the debate, respecting the dignity of all who make up our nation."

## HOUSE OF BISHOPS STATEMENT ON GAZA

The House of Bishops, which met recently in York, issued a statement on the situation in Gaza.

*"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God." (Matthew 5:9)*

Recalling our Easter Statement (14<sup>th</sup> April) following the Government of Israel's bombing of the Anglican Al Ahli Hospital, we cry out in protest at the death, destruction and suffering that men, women and children have endured in Gaza, Israel and the region these last 20 months. We abhor war in all its forms and see it as a sign of human brokenness.

"Nothing justifies the heinous terror attacks committed by Hamas on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2023. In such circumstances nations have a right to self-defence in line with international law, and to hold perpetrators to account.

"Yet, the Government of Israel has shown through its statements and actions that this is no longer a defensive war, but a war of aggression. We strongly affirm that the Palestinian inhabitants of Gaza and the West Bank have a right to live in peace and security in their homeland. Any forced displacement of people would constitute an egregious breach of international humanitarian law.

"We have watched with horror and outrage as siege and starvation are used as a weapon of war in Gaza, and as hospitals and health facilities have been systemically targeted.

"Over the last three months, the Israeli government's deliberate denial of food and medical aid to an entire civilian population is an atrocity that defies our common humanity. It is the very definition of collective punishment and has no moral justification.

"We note that the Israeli Government has been challenged before the International Court of Justice. Starving children cannot wait for legal rulings given that every country has an obligation to prevent crimes against humanity. As Bishops we are compelled to state clearly and unequivocally that the death, suffering and destruction being inflicted on Gaza is a grave sin that violently assaults God-given human dignity and the very integrity of God's creation.

"We call on all sides to end the war. We call on relevant UN bodies to be allowed to administer all necessary aid in line with long standing humanitarian principles. We call for the immediate release of all hostages without condition. The continued expansion of settlements in the West Bank, the appalling levels of settler violence, and the forced displacements and house demolitions must cease.

“We support and applaud all those Jewish voices, both inside and outside of Israel, that are courageously pressing the Israeli Government to end the war. We add our voices to those urging the Government of Israel to turn away from its current trajectory and to affirm life and human dignity for all.

“We welcome the British Government’s decision (20<sup>th</sup> May) to suspend negotiations with the Israeli government on a new free trade agreement. This is a necessary first step.

“Fuelling this war by the selling of arms to Israel does not serve the ends of peace consistent with international humanitarian law. The use of dehumanising language by members of the current Israeli government is dangerous and must be challenged. To maintain the hope of a long-lasting peaceful solution, governments should now formally recognise Palestine as a sovereign and independent state. To delay further invites despair.

“For our own part, we commit to pray and to work for an end to this war, the release of all hostages and to support efforts to secure a long-term settlement that delivers security, justice and peace for Israelis and Palestinians.

“We are deeply conscious of the real sense of fear that many within the Jewish community here feel at this moment. We treasure our relations with our Jewish brothers and sisters and will continue to condemn antisemitic rhetoric or action in all its forms. We condemn the shocking and senseless murder of two Israeli embassy staff in Washington DC.

“We encourage dioceses and parishes to continue supporting the ongoing appeal for the Diocese of Jerusalem, including the restoring of medical facilities and the buildings of the Al Ahli Anglican Hospital in Gaza. Such efforts reassure our Palestinian Christian brothers and sisters and all other Christian communities that they are not forgotten. We give thanks for their steadfastness and faithful witness and invite churches across the country to join us in praying for their ministry in sharing the light of Christ in such dark times.”

## **‘CHILLING READING’ – BISHOP SARAH RESPONDS TO ASSISTED SUICIDE IMPACT ASSESSMENTS**

The Bishop of London, Sarah Mullally, the Church of England’s lead bishop for health and social care, has recently responded to the Government impact assessments on the bill to introduce assisted suicide in England and Wales.

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), together with the Ministry of Justice, had published a main assessment and an equality impact assessment on the Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill.

Bishop Sarah said: “The impact assessment of the Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill makes for chilling reading as it highlights particular groups who would be put at risk by a change in the law, including those who are subject to health inequalities, and those vulnerable to domestic abuse.

“It also sets out the financial savings of introducing an assisted dying service, through reduction in care costs, palliative and end of life care costs and state-provided benefits.

“It is crude to see these cost savings set out in this way, and it is easy to see how numbers of this nature could contribute to someone feeling that they should pursue an assisted death rather than receive care.

“Each human life is immeasurably more valuable than the money that may be saved through their premature death.

“Every person is made in the image of God and holds an irreducible value that is worthy of care and support until the end of their life.

“We must oppose any change in the law that puts the vulnerable at risk rather than working to improve access to desperately needed palliative care services.”

## **PERSECUTION OF CHRISTIANS WORLDWIDE**

### **OPEN DOORS WORLD WATCH LIST**

*We continue our series looking at the top countries in the world to persecute Christians.*

*We are using the data from Open Doors World Watch List for 2025.*

#### **FOURTH MOST DANGEROUS COUNTRY IN THE WORLD FOR CHRISTIANS**

After North Korea, Somalia, and Yemen, where in the world is it most dangerous to be a Christian?

The World Watch List puts Libya in fourth place.

Libya has a population of nearly 7.5 million people. Of those, 35,500 are Christians (0.5%). The official religion of Libya is Islam, and its government is currently in some crisis, with two groups fighting for control. There are also numerous violent clashes with nearby Sudanese forces.

In Libya, following Jesus is a huge risk for anyone. Libyan Christians with a Muslim background face violent pressure from their families and communities to renounce their new faith. Foreign Christians are targeted by Islamist militant and criminal groups, who may kidnap and even kill them.

Christians in Libya are at risk everywhere, but the city of Sirte is notorious for the presence of radical Islamist groups. Groups linked to the now-defunct Islamic Dawn Coalition control areas around the capital city, Tripoli, and parts of the city itself. In the east, radical groups are present in Benghazi city.

Migrant Christians trying to reach Europe often end up in overcrowded detention centres around Tripoli, are handed over to criminal officials or human traffickers.

**OPEN DOORS** works with local partners and churches in North Africa to provide leadership and discipleship training, livelihood support, legal aid, trauma counselling, Bibles and pastoral care.

**IF YOU WANT TO HELP, PLEASE GO TO: [HTTPS://WWW.OPENDOORSUK.ORG](https://www.opendoorsuk.org)**





## LOOKING AT GOD

### THE NICENE CREED: WHO IS GOD?

Canon Paul Hardingham considers a bedrock of our Christian belief: that God is Trinity.

2025 sees the 1700th anniversary of the Nicene Creed. We use it at Communion services, but how much notice do we take of the words? In this new series we are looking at what it means to believe in God as Trinity.

**WE BELIEVE:** In Greek, the Creed begins 'we believe' (in Latin, 'I believe.'). It was formulated at the time of Arius, who declared that Jesus was the first and greatest of God's creatures, but not the same as God the Father. His teaching proved so damaging that the Emperor Constantine called an ecumenical council in Nicaea (AD 325) to clarify the core beliefs for all Christians.

**IN ONE GOD:** We believe in a God who is both one and Trinity: 'Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one' (Deuteronomy 6:4). He is the Old Testament God, who we know through the life and work of Jesus and the Holy Spirit. We are to worship Him alone and not people or things.

**THE FATHER, THE ALMIGHTY:** God is both the almighty Creator and loving Father: 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name' (Matt 6:9). Although the Father of all that exists, He is specifically Father to those who His children through their faith in Jesus.

**MAKER OF HEAVEN AND EARTH:** God comes before anything that was created, and Creation is His alone: 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty' (Genesis 1:1,2). The implication is that He created 'ex nihilo' ie out of nothing. He is one God who is unchangeable, lacking in nothing and the source of all that exists.

**OF ALL THAT IS, SEEN AND UNSEEN:** God did not just create the physical universe, but also the spiritual powers: 'For in Him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through Him and for Him.' (Colossians 1:16). Reality is more than what we can see, smell, taste, touch or measure.

The Creed establishes the 'big picture' of who God is and challenges our commitment to Him.

### HOW DO THESE OPENING WORDS OF THE NICENE CREED SPEAK TO US TODAY?



## WHAT DOES THE **NICENE CREED** AFFIRM ABOUT THE PERSON OF **JESUS CHRIST**?

*'We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God'*: Jesus is presented as the unique Son of God. This reflects the big debate at the time, which was to counter the teachings of Arius, who taught that Jesus was the first and greatest of God's creatures, but not the same as God the Father.

Today we can be more concerned about Jesus' authority as a moral teacher, neglecting that Jesus the man is also truly God. *'We have seen His glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father'* (John 1:14).

*'eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father'*: These words affirm the divinity of Jesus. The phrase *'begotten not made'* is crucial in understanding Jesus as the unique Son of the Father, who existed eternally of the same divine nature as the Father.

*'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning'* (John 1:1,2). It is a powerful reminder that our belief revolves around trusting a person, not simply in a set of beliefs and moral teaching.

*'through Him all things were made'*: The Creed affirms that Jesus the Son cannot be made, because through Him all things were made and only God can create from nothing.

*'Through Him all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made.'* (John 1:3). This implies that our world was made good, with a purpose in which we can share.

Also, Jesus has the last word in promising to bring everything in heaven and on earth together at the end of time under His Lordship (Ephesians 1:10). This makes a real difference to how we see and treat God's Creation and those created in God's image.

### **THE NICENE CREED**

We believe in one God, the Father, the almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father. Through Him all things were made.

For us men and for our salvation  
He came down from heaven;  
by the power of the Holy Spirit  
He became incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and was made man.

For our sake He was crucified under Pontius Pilate;  
He suffered death and was buried.

On the third day He rose again  
in accordance with the scriptures;  
He ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory  
to judge the living and the dead,  
and His kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.  
With the Father and the Son He is worshipped and glorified.  
He has spoken through the Prophets.

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

Amen.

**IN RESPONSE TO THIS, CAN WE SAY THAT  
JESUS IS LORD OF EVERY AREA OF OUR LIFE?**

## BARNABAS – A VERY LIKEABLE DISCIPLE

Canon Paul Hardingham considers the difference one person can make.

This month we remember St Barnabas, whose real name was Joseph, a wealthy Levite from Cyprus. However, he was better known by his nickname, which means ‘*Son of Encouragement*’ (Acts 4:36). Throughout Acts we see him encouraging others in different ways.

Barnabas was an example of *generous giving* (Acts 4:36-7), when he sold property and offered the money to the church for those in need. In the midst of an already caring and sharing community, he was singled out as a symbol of generosity. Are we known as somebody who is generous to those in need around us?

Barnabas later *encouraged a new Christian* in the person of Paul (Acts 9:27). After Paul’s conversion and knowing his reputation, Barnabas came alongside him and brought him into the fellowship of the church. Are we ready to help those who are new in the faith to find a place in our church?

Finally, Barnabas was sent to the church in Antioch where he ‘*saw the evidence of the grace of God*’ (Acts 11:23). It was a church which brought Jewish and Gentile believers together for the first time. Like Barnabas, do we rejoice when we see God doing new things in people’s lives? Are we also willing to embrace these things and facilitate change?

Encouragement is one of the spiritual gifts in the New Testament (Romans 12:8). It can be greatly undervalued, but it is crucial in growing the church. Like Barnabas, will we nurture gifting; strengthen the doubters and those tempted to give up; show generosity to God’s people and beyond the church; alongside strengthening people to move beyond their own comfort zones to help those in need?

Let’s be prepared to ask the following questions: ‘*Are there people alongside us who will encourage us?*’ and ‘*How can we be encouragers to others?*’



Barnabas curing the sick by Paolo Veronese, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Rouen, c. 1566

## MARY MAGDALENE

*Canon Paul Hardingham considers the difference Jesus can make in our lives.*

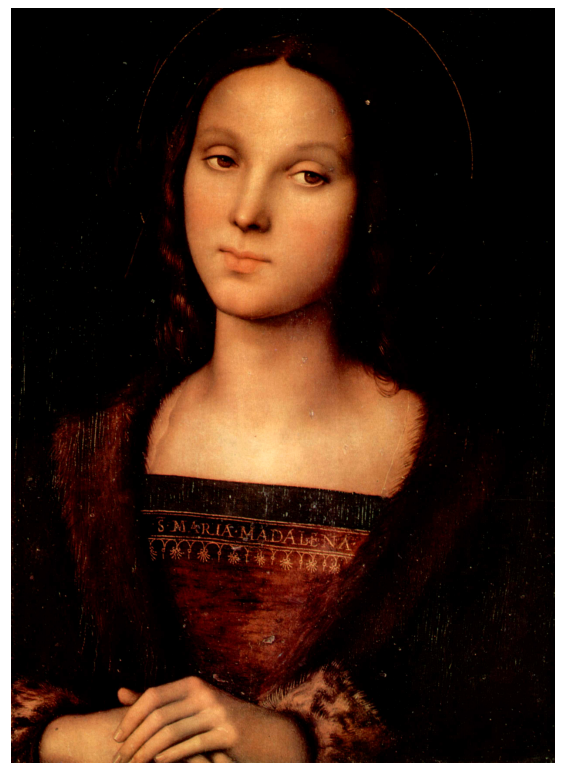
Six Marys are mentioned in the New Testament, including Mary Magdalene, who is remembered this month in the church's calendar (22<sup>nd</sup> July). What can we learn from Mary's story?

### **WE DON'T HAVE TO BE DEFINED BY OUR PAST:**

When Jesus encountered Mary, He cast seven demons out of her (Luke 8:2). As a result, her life was transformed, and she became a follower of Jesus. Her life as a disciple was no longer defined by the person she had been before. Like Mary, we don't have to let our past without Christ dictate how we see ourselves today.

### **MAKE JESUS THE CENTRE OF OUR WORLD:**

Along with some of the women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases (Luke 8:1-3), Mary followed Jesus and His disciples and supported them in ministry. She was there at the cross (Matthew 27:55-56) and one of the first to the tomb on the Sunday (Matthew 28:1; Mark 16:1 and John 20:1-18). Like Mary, we are called to serve Jesus as dedicated disciples.



Mary Magdalene, Perugino, c.1500

### **JESUS USES THE WEAKEST PEOPLE FOR HIS PURPOSES:**

Mary is a great example of Paul's words: 'But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong.' (1 Corinthians 1:27). At a time when women were regarded as second-class citizens with no real autonomy, Jesus had a special compassion and care for women. Alongside Mary, the women's witness to the resurrection was taken seriously. We shouldn't be quick to dismiss the things that don't agree with our expectations, as Jesus doesn't always do what we expect! He delights in working out His plans through unlikely people and in surprising ways. He did this through Mary, and if we allow Him, He can do it through us!



## GOD IN THE SCIENCES

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

### **WONDER AND WORSHIP: REFLECTIONS IN A SCOTTISH RAINFOREST**

It can be easier to notice things away from home, when we are relaxed and surrounded by unfamiliar sights in an exotic location. But sometimes the same wonders are there in our own back yard. GK Chesterton was a great advocate of intensive observation, and he invited his readers to take a fresh look at things that might be taken for granted. The rewards for this mental adjustment are great, and can feed into our worship in new ways.

I first learned to appreciate old growth forests on the West coast of Canada: the centuries-old tangle of logs and underbrush, and thick layers of moss and lichen, that provide rich resources for countless organisms. Several years later, in Scotland, I stumbled over a few acres of birch and hazel, lush with moss and ferns, and humming with insect and bird life. Fallen logs lay everywhere, vegetation grew up the trees, creepers hung down, and sunlight slanted through clearings.

I later discovered that this patch of woodland is one of the few remaining areas of old growth Atlantic rainforest, so I visited one sunny morning when I had more time to linger. The wood is home to 140 species of lichen and 100 of moss, so I found myself looking very closely at tree trunks and boulders. Each lichen is a unique relationship between a fungus and a particular collection of single-celled algae – an example of the collaboration that is so essential to every ecosystem.



## LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON

*Editor: Fathers' Day is the third Sunday in June...*

'Dead Ringer' is the odd phrase we use when referring to someone who looks like somebody else. Sometimes, instead, we say 'spitting image' when we see a likeness or similarity between one person and another.

This month includes Fathers' Day (15th June) and is an occasion when dads are particularly remembered by their children. As far as the boys are concerned, how many have heard someone say 'Oh, you really look like your father'?

One day, Jesus was talking to His disciples and said, "Whoever has seen Me has seen the Father" (Jn 14:9) What an amazing statement! Jesus was saying that He was the dead ringer or spitting image of God! At another time Jesus said, "I am in the Father and the Father is in Me." (Jn 14.10) These words must have shocked His hearers, for He was saying that He was equal with God. No one had said anything like this before, but certainly His miracles were proof that He was different. No-one else could do what He was doing. Some people wondered—could He really be who He said He was?

So Jesus attempted to make His position clear and said, "If you knew Me you would know the Father also." (Jn 8:19) The people were being urged to know Jesus more. They had to look, listen and believe. Were His deeds of God or not? They had to decide!

Today, we all stand in a similar position. Who is Jesus? Do we look at Him and say 'Yes, this is God in the flesh' or 'No, He was just a good person — but also perhaps, deluded or crazy?'

Thomas, the disciple with the nickname 'doubter', exclaimed: "My Lord and *my God*" (Jn 20:28). Thomas was convinced that he was in the presence of God, in human form. And when the Apostle Paul wrote to the church at Colossae he said clearly: 'It was by God's own decision that the Son has in Himself the full nature of God' (*Colossians 1:19*). Like Father, like Son!



Whoever has seen Me  
has seen the Father



## BEHIND THE HYMN

### ETERNAL FATHER, STRONG TO SAVE

The author of these words, William Whiting, was an Anglican clergyman in Winchester, which is hardly a seaside town. Yet Whiting had not only grown up by the sea, but had nearly died in it. As a young man he had been on a ship that got caught in a violent storm, and afterwards he felt certain it was only God who had saved the ship from sinking that night.

Some years later, as headmaster of the Winchester College Choristers' School, Whiting was approached by a student in distress. The student was due to sail to the USA and was simply terrified at the thought of 3,000 miles of ocean. To try and reassure the student, Whiting decided to share his experience. And so, he wrote this poem, basing the description of the power and fury of the sea on Psalm 107.

It is not known if it helped the nervous student or not, but within a year the poem had become a hymn, and soon sailed into the influential first edition of Hymns Ancient and Modern of 1861.

Another Anglican clergyman, John B Dykes, wrote the music for it. He was already a successful composer, with 300 hymns to his name. Dykes named this tune 'Melita', after an old name for Malta, where St Paul was once shipwrecked. Whiting released two more versions of the lyrics, in 1869 and in 1874.

During the rest of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the hymn became a favourite with the Royal Navy and the United States Navy. Other Services adapted it, including the Royal Marines, the Royal Air Force, the British Army, and the United States Coast Guard. Above all, it became known as the Royal Navy Hymn.

Well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it was the favourite hymn of President served as Secretary of the Navy during the Second World War. In 1963 Eternal Father was played by the Navy Band, as President John F. Kennedy's body was carried up the steps of the U.S. Capitol to lie in state. (Kennedy had been a PT boat commander in World War II.)

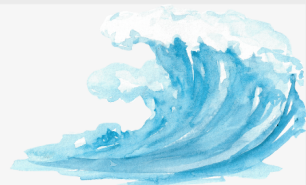
Eternal Father, strong to save,  
Whose arm hath bound the restless wave,  
Who bidd'st the mighty ocean deep  
Its own appointed limits keep;  
Oh, hear us when we cry to Thee,  
For those in peril on the sea!

O Christ! Whose voice the waters heard  
And hushed their raging at Thy word,  
Who walked'st on the foaming deep,  
And calm amidst its rage didst sleep;  
Oh, hear us when we cry to Thee,  
For those in peril on the sea!

Most Holy Spirit! Who didst brood  
Upon the chaos dark and rude,  
And bid its angry tumult cease,  
And give, for wild confusion, peace;  
Oh, hear us when we cry to Thee,  
For those in peril on the sea!

O Trinity of love and power!  
Our brethren shield in danger's hour;  
From rock and tempest, fire and foe,  
Protect them wheresoe'er they go;  
Thus evermore shall rise to Thee  
Glad hymns of praise from land and sea.

Oh, hear us when we cry to Thee,  
For those in peril on the sea!





# LOOKING AT **YOU**

## THE **EXAMEN**

By Elaine Shanks

The Examen is an ancient practice that helps us to see God at work in our lives. It is a way of using prayerful reflection on events of the day. The Examen gives us the chance to recognise God's presence and to discern the direction He wants us to go in.

It was described by Ignatius Loyola in his work "Spiritual Exercises" back in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Inigo Lopez as he was known back then had an interesting faith journey. He was distracted by liaisons with women in his youth then joined the army which led to him being injured by a cannon ball. His disability restricted his life giving him an opportunity to read and daydream. Like many of us who find our lives curtailed and pushed onto a new path Inigo spent many hours in contemplation and his passion for imaginative prayer was born.

The Examen was described as a gift coming directly from God. God wanted it to be shared as widely as possible. St Ignatius ruled that Jesuits should practice the Examen twice daily – at noon and at the end of their day.

The Examen today typically involves these steps:

1. Relish - give thanks
2. Request – ask the Holy Spirit to lead you
3. Review – review your day
4. Repent – ask for forgiveness for any mistakes
5. Resolve – look ahead at how to live well tomorrow



Ignatius Loyola

The Examen is a good way to see where God is at work in our lives and how we need to grow and develop. It encourages us to have a mindful review of our day as an opportunity to connect with God and find meaning in our everyday experiences.

The following is the process I follow for the Daily Examen which I pray at the end of the day :  
Quiet yourself and feel the presence of God. Recall the last 24 hours – what you did, where you went, who you saw. Ask God for clarity if your day seems muddled or uncertain.

Pray a prayer of gratitude. Thank God for all of the things you receive every day, even those you take for granted. Note the joy and pleasures in your day however small. God is in the details and mundane.

Next you can review that same time period on a deeper level.  
Ask the Holy Spirit where God was at work during your day.  
Examine your thoughts and moods during the day.  
What influenced your day? What stood out for you?  
Were you bored? Elated? Angry? Excited?

You may need to ask God for forgiveness for how you were during that day. Do you feel you could do better? God will likely show you where you fell short. These negative emotions can be a sign God wants us to consider a different path – one which brings positive emotions and joy.

Choose a feature of the day and pray from it. Ask the Holy Spirit to direct you to an important part of your day. It may be a significant event or something small. Examine it. Pray about it.

Consider the day ahead and resolve to do better in the things which will happen in your life. Ask God what he wants you to do and how he wants you to do it.

Examine your emotions as you consider the day ahead. Allow these feelings to turn to prayer. Seek God's guidance and help and understanding.

End the Daily Examen with a conversation with Jesus. Ask for forgiveness for your sins. Ask for protection. Ask for his wisdom. Do all of this with gratitude. Recognise God's presence and work in your life.

The Examen is a good way to see where God is at work in our lives and how we need to grow and develop. It encourages us to have a mindful review of our day as an opportunity to connect with God and find meaning in our everyday experiences.



## **PRAYING WITH THE PRAYERS OF THE BIBLE**

### **PRAYING WITH PENITENTIAL TEARS**

Psalm 51:2; 'Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.'

Psalm 51 is the most personal, the most passionate and the most profound prayer for forgiveness found anywhere in the Bible.

Without any introduction, explanation or excuse, the Psalmist cries out, 'Have mercy on me, O God.' Jewish and Christian scholars have almost been unanimous in seeing this Psalm as David's personal prayer for pardon, following his sin of adultery with Bathsheba and then scheming to have her husband Uriah killed (2 Samuel 11).

As we go through the Psalm, its various stages take us from deep contrition to joyful testimony. First, the confession; vv. 1-4. As David bares his soul to God, there is no blaming other people, no excuses made, no pleading special circumstances.

'Have mercy on me, O God.' Notice the personal pronouns. 'My transgressions,' twice (vv. 1 and 3); 'my iniquity;' 'my sin,' twice (vv. 2 and 3). And David knows that while he has sinned against his own family and against the murdered Uriah, all sin is ultimately against God. 'Against Thee, thee only, have I sinned' (v. 4).

Second, the condition; vv. 5-6. While David alone is responsible for the sins he has committed, he recognises that he is part of fallen, sinful humanity. Both Judaism and Christianity have a doctrine of original sin. So deep and all pervasive is the condition of fallen humanity that he speaks of being 'conceived' in sin and 'brought forth' in iniquity (v. 5).

Although some commentators have tried to dismiss this teaching here by saying that David was conceived out of wedlock, its implications are far more profound. In v. 6 he speaks about 'the inward being' and 'my secret heart.' David knows only too well that behind the sins he has committed lies a human heart prone to sin, attracted by sin and enticed to sin.

Third, the cleansing; vv. 7-12. With this deep, penitential confession of his transgressions, his iniquity and his sin, David now cries out for the only remedy – God's power to conquer human sin. The prayer began with a plea for mercy (v. 1) and then followed the repeated petitions for the 'blotting out,' the 'washing' and the 'cleansing' from sin. Now the plea is for something deeper still; 'Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean; wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.' (v. 7).

But David wants still more, and so we have the prayer in v. 10; 'Create in me a clean heart.' And still David prays, 'Cast me not away from Your presence and take not Your Holy Spirit from me.'

Resulting from this sincere confession and heart-felt prayer for forgiveness and cleansing, comes the assurance of God's gracious answer. When David is spiritually restored, he will teach others the way of God's salvation (v. 13) and praise God for his own deliverance (v. 14).

So Psalm 51 promises forgiveness, cleansing, restoration and a place to serve God when we, in true penitence, make the same unqualified confessions of our sins.

## REFLECTIONS FROM THE PEWS

With June Davis

The Church in Sub-Saharan Africa is on the run, with 16.2million Christians forced to flee their homes because of violence and conflict. We are invited to get sponsors to run, walk, cycle or whatever you can do to raise vital funds for our persecuted family in Sub-Saharan Africa.

For more information please visit:

[www.opendoorsuk.org/act/fundraise/church-on-the-run/](http://www.opendoorsuk.org/act/fundraise/church-on-the-run/)



**Lord**, thank you for the opportunity to stand with our brothers and sisters in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Please use Church on the run fund raising events to raise awareness, prayer and support for our African church family and show them that they are not alone. We ask for protection and equipping for every event, and that every fund raiser would have the opportunity to show the light of Christ to their communities. We pray that this will help stop the violence and start healing for our persecuted brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**Amen**

A Christian couple from Vietnam were forced to flee their home. They were woken by shouts in the middle of the night. Long and his wife Ha were terrified. A mob, with the village elder shouted "Go! Leave the village right now or we will destroy your house!" Because of their Christian faith they were being targeted.

In Vietnam following Jesus was believed to enrage the spirits. When Long and Ha refused to leave the mob tore down their house around them. They had to run for their lives. Open doors partners are helping them persevere in their faith.

### **Heavenly Father**

We pray for Long and Ha, that they may be encouraged to persevere in their faith. That the gospel will spread in their community that many would come to follow Christ.

Father will you bless open doors and their partners as they seek how best to serve Long and Ha and other displaced believers facing similar ordeals

**Amen**

## REFLECTIONS FROM **THE PEWS**

*With June Davis*

President Woodrow Wilson said "we should not only use all the brains we have, but all that we can borrow !"

John the Apostle tells us that Diotrefes, a leader in the church, loved to have the pre-eminence! He wanted to blow out everyone else's light in order to let his own light shine.

So, John writes: When I come, I will report some of the things he is doing and the evil accusations he is making against us. Not only does he refuse to welcome teachers of the word but tells others not to help them. If they do help, he puts them out of the Church. Don't let this bad example influence you. Follow only what is good. For you are God's children, those who do evil prove they do not know God. (3 John vs 10-11)

### **GO AHEAD I AM WITH YOU HEART AND SOUL (1 SAMUEL 14-7)**

When your dream is from God it will always be greater than our expectations or gifts. Which means we have to reach out to others. Two men Jonathan and his armour bearer, wiped out an entire Philistine garrison, "How?" Jonathan said to his armour-bearer, " Come let us go over to those uncircumcised men. Perhaps the Lord will act on our behalf."

Nothing can stop the Lord from saving, whether by many or by few. " Go ahead: I am with you heart and soul" Jonathan the leader needed the support of his armour-bearer and he needed the courage and leadership of Jonathan. Together they accomplished amazing things for God.





## REFLECTIONS FROM THE PEWS

With Mark Rostrom

### A WARM WELCOME?

I think that every church I have ever been in considers themselves to be a welcoming one. 'Of course,' they would say, 'not every church is welcoming, but for us, it is one of our strengths.' The question is, how do you measure such things? Presumably the only people asked for their opinions are those who have already become a part of the church, and even then, I think the results might be mixed. How would you obtain the opinions of those who have walked in the doors and walked out again at the first decent opportunity? What do we even mean by being welcoming? Is it a smile as people come in and checking that any new people are okay, or is it something a bit more than 'professional welcomers' at the door?

The first spanner to be thrown into the welcoming policy works is, to quote an ironic crowd chorus from *The Life of Brian*, 'WE'RE ALL INDIVIDUALS!' Not everybody wants to be treated the same way and so that means what they find welcoming, comforting and reassuring is going to be different. Some people might be hurt or offended if nobody spoke to them. Others might find immediate interaction intimidating and would prefer to sit on their own, taking everything in by themselves. To some people, the opening hymn or song is something of a relief – a chance to lose oneself in a communal activity where no one is singled out. For another person, the idea of attempting to hold a note is excruciating in the extreme and they would do anything to avoid having this perceived deficit within themselves shown up in any way.

And that's just the people who know what they want and what they're thinking. How many of us approach these situations with contradictory feelings? We want to be able to talk with people and make relationships but are terrified of the initial interaction. We are simultaneously offended and slightly relieved that no one has tried to introduce themselves. So unfortunately, we have to ditch the idea of what a welcoming church 'looks like.' There is no one size fits all policy that will work for everyone on that first occasion when a new person walks into the building.





But I think it goes deeper than that. Deeper than the way we initially interact with a new person. Because a welcome is not just about what happens on that first week. Indeed, a clumsy interaction which leaves both parties feeling embarrassed could potentially be laughed at retrospectively a few weeks or months down the line. But to feel welcomed is to feel that one can belong, and O my, that is something the church can really get its knickers in a twist about.

Many years ago, I heard someone say that the church is the only organisation in the world that exists entirely for the benefit of non-members. That's quite a big statement to make. It rips up the very idea of new people coming into 'our' church. Whose church is it? Well, ultimately God's, of course. So what does He have to say about it?

The first Christians that we read about in the Acts of the Apostles were Jews. Jesus was a Jew who acknowledged the primacy of God's chosen people in the working out of His plan up until that point. But He was also clear that the time was coming when the plan was going to open out to include 'others', the outsiders, namely the Gentiles. How did this happen? Well, it all begins with a lovely story in Acts 10. God sends Peter repeated visions regarding the eating of unclean food before he is invited to go and meet Cornelius and his close friends and family. He is inspired to proclaim that 'God does not show favouritism but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right.' The Holy Spirit then makes an appearance signalling divine approval and everyone's happy. So was that it? Were the Gentiles now equal and valid members of God's church?



The practicalities of this revelation appear to have been rather harder to deal with and even Peter himself appears to backtrack a little a short while later. And to exacerbate the situation, there's now a formerly zealous Jew called Paul running round most of the known world, converting people left, right and centre, with little or no regard for how all these people are going to fit into the new 'church'.



The Council of Jerusalem in Acts 15 is the occasion when these two forces collide, with a solution being required to keep everyone happy. The Pharisee party takes up the 'they need to be just like us' stance. Peter reiterates his own experience of God accepting the Gentiles as they are and then James comes up with what is probably seen as a very generous compromise. *All* they have to do is 'abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals and from blood.' It probably did the trick in preventing something of a schism, but Paul – if the evidence of some of his letters is anything to go by - was probably not overly impressed with the judgement. The interesting thing is that, while a lot of Paul's documented opinions are still used - literally or as guidance - in the church today, these stipulations for the early Gentile converts bear little resemblance to Christianity as we know it. Looking back now, it would appear that these rules were kept in place for the benefit, security and ease of those who had been founding members of the church, rather than because this was the will of Christ. As the church progressed and spread, the need for these stipulations fell away.

Because here's the thing. When you invite someone into the church they will change it. Just like adding a tiny amount of dye to a glass of clear water, the change will be as inevitable as it is profound. Because why else would God have allowed them in in the first place, were it not for the fact that He had plans for them to use their individual gifts in extraordinary and *different* ways? So it's good to be clear at the outset that we are not inviting someone into 'our' church so that they will conform to everything we do and change nothing. We are inviting them in anticipating that they will be the means by which Jesus breathes life into His church, stirring it up to greater and greater things. I'm not saying this isn't uncomfortable. It can be scary and sometimes just plain annoying. But I think it is inevitable if we want the church to live out the message of its founder.

So the message is not only to let everyone in, but to let everyone in as they are, to be who they are knowing that they are accepted and appreciated as such. But what if you don't agree with them? What if they don't seem like 'proper' Christians? Should we be quite so accepting of them then? Again, I think we have to remember whose church it is, both in terms of changing people, rebuking people and, ultimately, excluding them.

Come As You Are



When Jesus met Zaccheaus in Luke 19, he invited himself for a meal. Zaccheaus is profoundly affected by this experience and has a change of heart about all the things he had been doing as a matter of course throughout his life. By inviting people to church we should be inviting people to get closer to Jesus, knowing that if they do so, they can't possibly stay the same. And this is far more likely to reap rewards than telling them what they need to do – more probably, the things they should stop doing – in order to get to know God.

And then there is the parable of the wedding banquet in Matthew 22, where the king – his initial guests having refused him – orders his servants to gather in 'the bad as well as the good' to fill the hall. And then the king finds and deals – extremely harshly, it must be said – with a man not wearing wedding clothes. What exactly these wedding clothes, or the lack of them, symbolise is very much up for debate. But the one thing we can observe is that it is the king – Jesus – who identifies the issue and makes the judgement. The servants of the king – presumably us – have the job of bringing everyone in, not keeping anyone away or being responsible for throwing anybody out.

There is a common theme here. Bring people to Jesus and stuff will happen. We don't know what that stuff will be, what form it will take or which direction it will go in. But we know that Jesus sees and knows people infinitely deeper than we do and that we can trust in his love and judgement. What we shouldn't be are the gatekeepers that stop people from getting close enough to Jesus for the weird, wonderful and yes, often uncomfortable stuff to happen.

I wonder if the reason we like to keep things the same, keep things in order, is not because we want to preserve God's church within some vague notion of purity; it's because we are scared of letting the barriers between us and Jesus fall. We all have the things that we don't like to admit to, that we don't want exposed and that we certainly don't want to come within touching distance of our Lord and Saviour. And if we were to let the church be disrupted, shaken up by the presence of new people doing things in new – uncouth and unkempt – ways, then rather than having the order and regulations of the church as our security, we might be left with nothing but the searching and intimidating love of Christ. And that's a very scary prospect indeed.







# THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

## Mental Health Resources

[www.churchofengland.org/resources/mental-health-resources](http://www.churchofengland.org/resources/mental-health-resources)

**GOING THROUGH  
A STORM  
OR JUST BEEN  
THROUGH ONE?**

ANDYSMANCLUB  
are talking  
groups for men to  
**HELP YOU** through  
those storms.

**FIND OUT  
MORE** [info@andysmanclub.co.uk](mailto:info@andysmanclub.co.uk)  
[www.andysmanclub.co.uk](http://www.andysmanclub.co.uk) #ITSOKAYTOTALK



**wwin**  
Specialist Domestic Abuse Service

0800 066 5555

[www.wwin.org.uk](http://www.wwin.org.uk)

**Feeling low?**

**Anxious?**

**Struggling to cope?**

**Text  
SHOUT  
to 85258**  
for free,  
confidential  
support, 24/7

 **Sunderland  
mind**

0191 565 7218

[www.sunderlandmind.co.uk](http://www.sunderlandmind.co.uk)

**TALK TO US**  
If things are getting to you

Talk to us any time you like, in your own  
way – about whatever's getting to you.



**116 123**

**FREE**

This number is FREE to call

SMS **087 26090 90**



[jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)



[samaritans.org](http://samaritans.org)

**SAMARITANS**

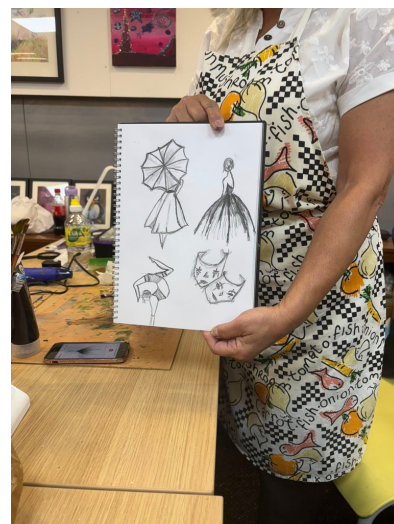
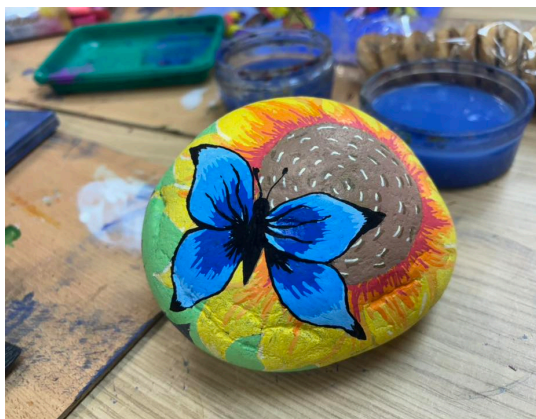
A registered charity

## **REGENERATION NORTH EAST**

30 Ryhope Street South, Sunderland, United Kingdom, SR2 0RW

07598 008 178 - [contact@regenerationne.org.uk](mailto:contact@regenerationne.org.uk)

[www.regenerationne.org.uk/](http://www.regenerationne.org.uk/)



## **ACTIVITIES AT REGENERATION NORTH EAST**

Mondays: Happy Hookers crochet group. 1:00pm – 3:00pm.

Wednesdays: Arts and Crafts Workshop 10:00am – 4:00pm.

Fridays: Sensory Reduced Sessions 10:30am - 12:30pm. And 2:00pm – 4:00pm

*A small fee applies, a free place for carers on Fridays*



## **RYHOPE COMMUNITY CENTRE**

Black Road, Ryhope, Sunderland.SR2 0RX

**TELEPHONE:** 0191 5239371 **EMAIL:** ryhopeca@aol.com

**FACEBOOK:** www.facebook.com/RyhopeCommunityCentre

The centre hosts over 30 leisure/activity sessions each week in addition to training/learning and leisure opportunities that take place periodically.



Active Forever (over 50's)  
Cricket Practice (ages 4 - 11)  
Feng Shu/Kung Fu  
JC Kickboxing  
Mission 2 Mobility  
Kawauso Karate  
Keep Fit (over 50's)  
Mission2Mobility  
Pilates -  
Slimming World  
T'ai Chi

Ryhope Heritage Society  
Ryhope Reminiscence  
Group  
Lunch Club  
Ryhope Sea Angling Club

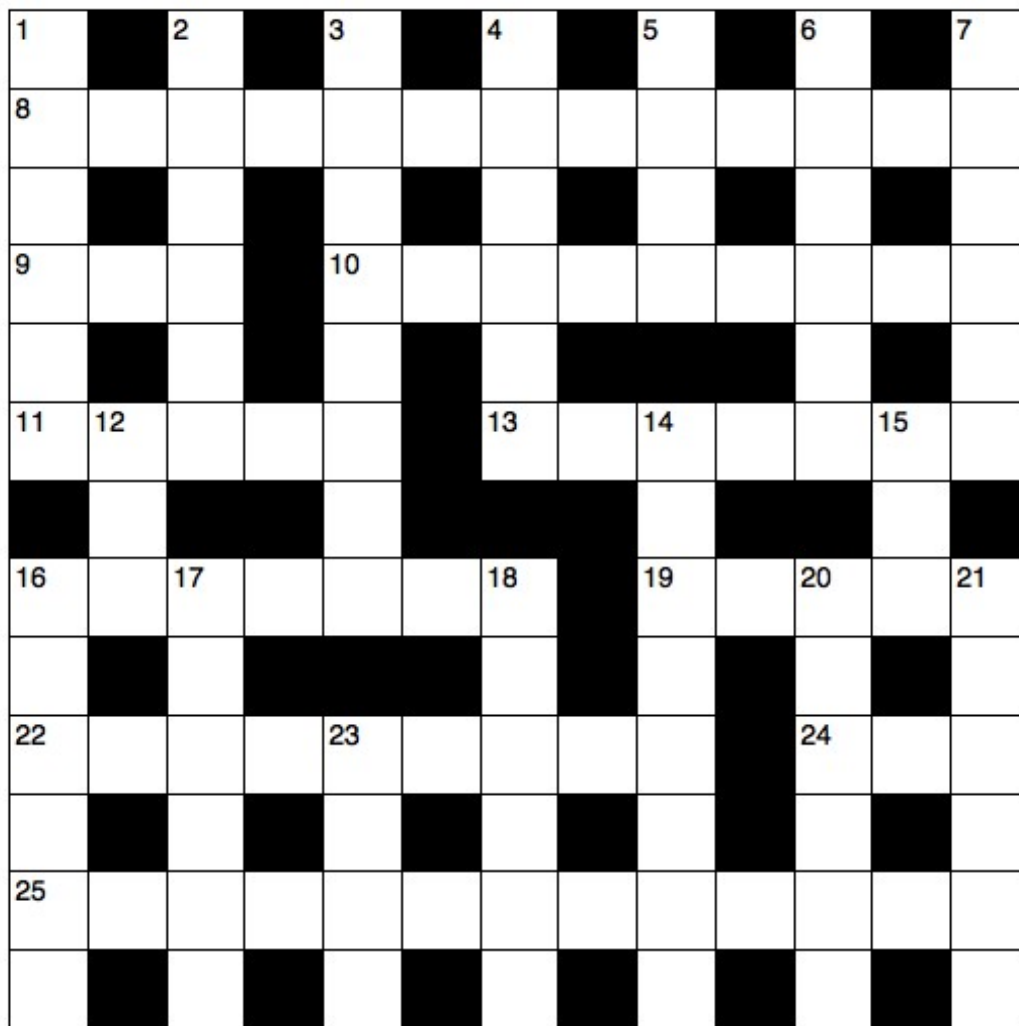
Baby Movers  
Little Movers -  
Exercise & Play for Babies  
Exercise & Play for Toddlers  
Toddler Group  
Baby & Toddler Groups  
Art Club  
Crafty Corner/Knit and Natter  
Rainbows  
Brownies

### **FACILITIES AVAILABLE TO HIRE:**

Two large halls with seating capacities of 180 and 200 both have their own kitchen and toilet facilities. Multi-purpose room meetings, group work activities etc., for up to 30 Two interview/counselling rooms or long-term office lets.



# CROSSWORD

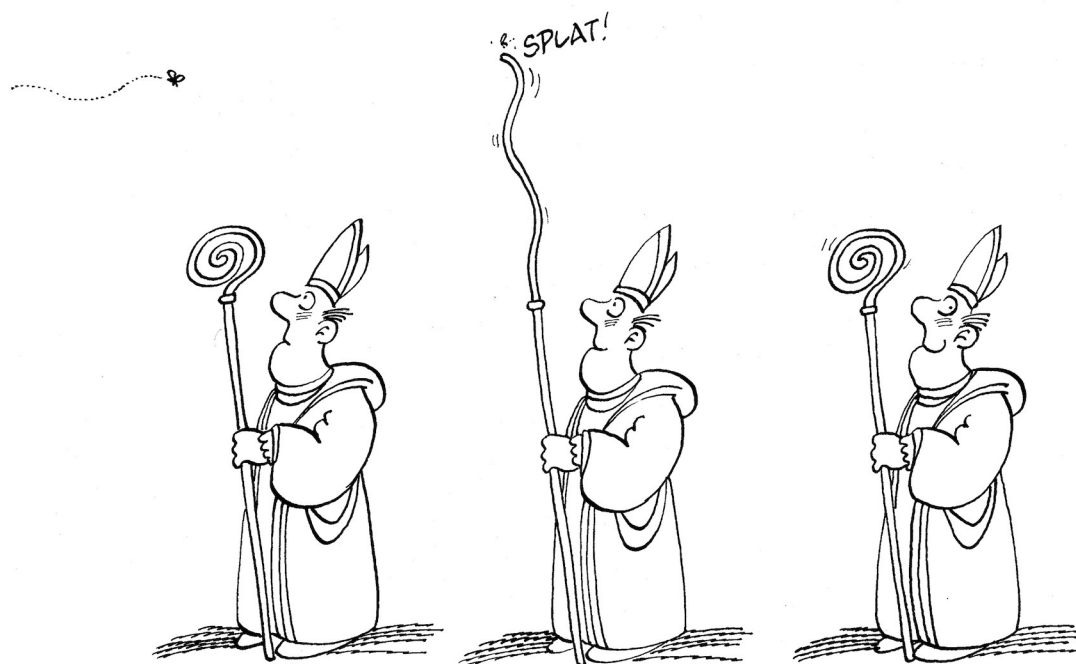


## ACROSS

- 8** Laban complained he had not been allowed to kiss them when Jacob fled with his family (Genesis 31:28) (13)  
9In favour of (3)
- 10** 'The child's father and mother — at what was said about him' (Luke 2:33) (9)
- 11** Swagger (Psalm 12:8) (5)
- 13** 'Terrors — him on every side and dog his every step' (Job 18:11) (7)
- 16** Bay bits (anag.) (7)
- 19** Preach, address an audience, speak in public (5)
- 22** Holy Communion (9)
- 24** 'On their way to — out the land, Joshua instructed them, "Go and make a survey of the land"' (Joshua 18:8) (3)
- 25** Joseph advised Pharaoh to appoint these to administer his grain storage plan (Genesis 41:34) (13)

## DOWN

- 1** 'Assyria's pride will be brought down and — sceptre will pass away' (Zechariah 10:11) (6)
- 2** 'And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in — with God and men' (Luke 2:52) (6)
- 3** The descendants of Esau (Genesis 36:9) (8)
- 4** The components of the crown that Jesus was made to wear before his crucifixion (John 19:2) (6)
- 5** Colour of cloth which was to cover holy objects in the tabernacle when moving camp (Numbers 4:6–12) (4)
- 6** One of the gold articles plundered from the Midianites offered to the Lord by the Israelite army 'to make atonement' (Numbers 31:50) (6)
- 7** 'The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set — — ' (Jeremiah 31:29) (2,4)
- 12** Ate (anag.) (3)
- 14** 'We ourselves... groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our — as sons' (Romans 8:23) (8)
- 15** Abram's nephew (Genesis 14:12) (3)
- 16** Rupture (Job 30:14) (6)
- 17** 'Yet to all who received him... he gave the right to — children of God' (John 1:12) (6)
- 18** 'I... asked him the true meaning of all — . — he told me and gave me the interpretation of these things' (Daniel 7:16) (4,2)
- 20** Military units (Exodus 14:20) (6)
- 21** 'Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to — her to public disgrace' (Matthew 1:19) (6)
- 23** Diva (anag.) (4)



## SUDOKU ONE

		5	9		1		8	
2		9	7					
	6			2	5			
		4						
	5		6	3	4		1	
						5		
			5	1			4	
					2	6		7
	2		4		3	9		

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### BASIC SUDOKU RULES

You can use only numbers from 1 to 9.

Each 3×3 block can only contain numbers from 1 to 9.

Each vertical column can only contain numbers from 1 to 9.

Each horizontal row can only contain numbers from 1 to 9.

Each number in the 3×3 block, vertical column or horizontal row can be used only once.

The game is over when the whole Sudoku grid is correctly filled with numbers.

## SUDOKU **Two**

						3		
4					9			1
7			2				5	
				2		8	4	
	4		3		6		1	
	7	6		5				
	6				7			3
3			5					2
		5						

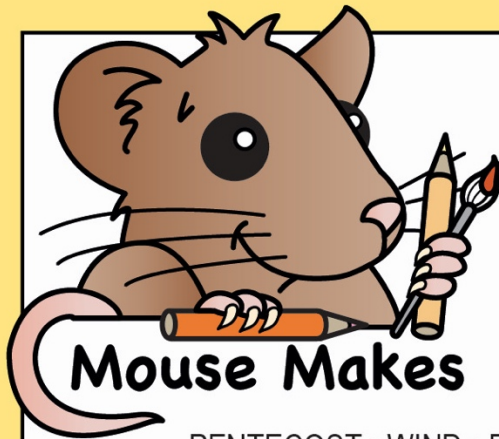
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### ROBIN'S **RIB** TICKLERS!



I had a ploughman's lunch the other day.  
He wasn't very happy about it. - *Tommy Cooper*

Seen in a parish magazine: 'Next Sunday the choir  
will give a recital, after which the church will be  
closed for repairs.'



## Mouse Makes

PENTECOST • WIND • FIRE  
 HOLY • SPIRIT • TONGUES • RESTED  
 JERUSALEM • JEWS • GALILEANS  
 HEAR • LANGUAGE • ARAMAIC • GREEK  
 HEBREW • PARTHIANS • MEDES  
 ELAMITES • MESOPOTAMIA  
 JUDEA • CAPPADOCIA • PONTUS  
 ASIA • PHRYGIA • PAMPHYLIA  
 EGYPT • LIBYA • CYRENE  
 ROME • CRETANS  
 ARABIANS • GOD



READ  
 Acts  
 2:1-41

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It was fifty days since **Passover**, and Jews from many countries had come to **Jerusalem** to celebrate Passover. As the **Apostles** were gathered together the **Holy Spirit** came upon them and they began to speak in other **languages** as the Spirit enabled them.

The crowd that were listening were amazed as they heard about God in their own language.

*How many people heard, believed and were baptised that day?*

**DID YOU KNOW?**

The Bible or parts of the Bible have now been translated into over 3,000 different languages since it was first written in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek.



# Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in  
Mt 2:1-12, Mk 9:1-8, Lk 5:17-26

The Pharisees had come to Jesus' home in Capernaum to make sure he wasn't breaking any of their religious rules...

So many came to hear Jesus speak that they filled his house... and the streets outside.



Four men brought their paralysed friend to Jesus for healing



But the crowd wouldn't let them get close



so they climbed up to the roof and took off some tiles.

They lowered their friend down, right in front of Jesus

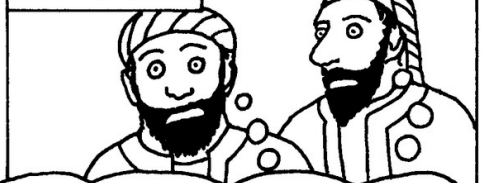


Jesus was so impressed by their faith, he said to the paralysed man



Your sins are forgiven.

The Pharisees were shocked!



Only God can forgive sins...so this fellow is insulting God!

But Jesus knew what they were thinking.



Why are you thinking such wrong thoughts?

Is it easier to say 'Your sins are forgiven' or 'Get up, take your mat, and walk'?



But I want you to know that I do have the authority to forgive sins...

Get up, take your mat and go home!



He got up, picked up his mat and walked home, praising God



The crowd was amazed...



We have never seen anything like this!



# SOLUTIONS

## CROSSWORD

### ACROSS:

8, Grandchildren. 9, Pro. 10, Marvelled. 11, Strut. 13, Startle. 16, Babysit. 19, Orate. 22, Eucharist. 24, Map. 25, Commissioners.

### DOWN:

1, Egypt's. 2, Favour. 3, Edomites. 4, Thorns. 5, Blue. 6, Armlet. 7, On edge. 12, Tea. 14, Adoption. 15, Lot. 16, Breach. 17, Become. 18, This So. 20, Armies. 21, Expose. 23, Avid.

## SUDOKU ONE

4	7	5	9	6	1	2	8	3
2	3	9	7	4	8	1	6	5
1	6	8	3	2	5	4	7	9
7	8	4	1	5	9	3	2	6
9	5	2	6	3	4	7	1	8
6	1	3	2	8	7	5	9	4
3	9	7	5	1	6	8	4	2
5	4	1	8	9	2	6	3	7
8	2	6	4	7	3	9	5	1

## SUDOKU TWO

6	2	8	1	4	5	3	9	7
4	5	3	8	7	9	6	2	1
7	9	1	2	6	3	4	5	8
5	3	9	7	2	1	8	4	6
8	4	2	3	9	6	7	1	5
1	7	6	4	5	8	2	3	9
2	6	4	9	1	7	5	8	3
3	1	7	5	8	4	9	6	2
9	8	5	6	3	2	1	7	4

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND THANKS

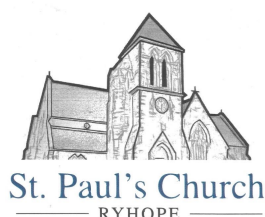
News and additional content from ParishPump.com.  
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Mr Robin used with permission from Autumn Shanks

**THE NEXT ISSUE OF RYHOPE VIEWS WILL BE IN AUGUST**

This magazine wouldn't be possible without the support of our contributors. If you'd like to share something with us, please do get in touch with either Joanne Nolan, or Reverend David. We'd be very happy to talk with you.

[ryhopeview@outlook.com](mailto:ryhopeview@outlook.com)

**THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR READERS,  
AND ALL WHO SUPPORT OUR CHURCH,  
OUR SHOP AND THE COMMUNITY OF RYHOPE.**



# St Paul's S.H.O.P.

Supporting & Helping  
Our Parish



24 Ryhope Street South  
Ryhope  
Opposite the  
community centre



We offer a wide range  
of preloved items:  
Clothing, Toys, Linen, Baby  
Items, Bric-a-Brac, and  
electrical goods (PAT tested)



St Paul's S.H.O.P. has served Ryhope for more  
than ten years and is run entirely by  
volunteers. All proceeds go towards the  
running costs of the shop.

Help us to keep serving our community by  
dropping in and picking up a bargain!

### Opening Times

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday: 10:00 – 16:00

Wednesday: 10:00-13:00

Closed:

Weekends & Bank Holidays

# National Safeguarding Standards

## Our Parish is committed to the Five Standards

### 1 Culture, Leadership and Capacity

Church bodies have safe and healthy cultures, effective leadership, resourcing and scrutiny arrangements necessary to deliver high quality safeguarding practices and outcomes.

### 2 Prevention

Church bodies have in place a planned range of measures which together are effective in preventing abuse in their context.

### 3 Recognising, Assessing and Managing Risk

Risk assessments, safety plans and associated processes are of a high quality and result in positive outcomes. The assessment and management of risk is underpinned by effective partnership working.

### 4 Victims and Survivors

Victims and survivors experience the timeliness and quality of Church bodies' responses to disclosures, and their subsequent support, as positively meeting their needs, including their search for justice and helping their healing process.

### 5 Learning, Supervision and Support

All those engaged in safeguarding related activity in Church bodies receive the type and level of learning, professional development, support and supervision necessary to respond to safeguarding situations, victims and survivors, and respondents, effectively.

#### WHAT ARE THE STANDARDS?

- Broad statements of what the Church of England wants to achieve in its safeguarding work.
- Each one has several 'What Good Looks Like' Indicators, to identify strengths as well as areas for development.
- They are constructive development of good safeguarding practice, **NOT** a compliance-based exercise.
- The Standards and their indicators have been developed over a three-year period, working with dioceses, cathedrals, parishes and victims and survivors.
- They were approved nationally in 2023.
- A series of online tools and resources have been developed – [churchofengland.org/safeguarding-standards](https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding-standards)



#### Contact for Parish Safeguarding Officer

Name: Elaine Shanks  
Email: [elaine.shanks@icloud.com](mailto:elaine.shanks@icloud.com)

(Parish Version)



**INDEPENDENT SUPPORT SERVICE**  
Safe Spaces Telephone 0300 303 1050

 **THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND**  
[www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding](https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding)

## THE REV & THE ROBIN



## Connect with St Paul's Church



**Whatsapp**



**Reflections, prayers  
& spiritual discussions**



**Linktree**



**All of our web links  
in one place**