

St. George's Montezbury

Magazine 50p



August 2026



Deanery of Pontesbury
Rural Dean: **The Revd Greg Smith**

DEANERY : Thought for the Month

Dear friends,

Is your faith ordinary or extraordinary? Well...the right answer is both. Responding to the call to follow Christ makes an amazing difference to our lives. It brings joys and challenges. His call takes us on a journey we could never have expected. Christ brings us into fellowship with a wide variety of people, takes us to new places, and equips us for tasks we would not have chosen or felt able to do. Like the miracle of water into wine, and the feeding of the 5000, Christ takes up the ordinary elements of our lives and makes something extraordinary. We are caught up afresh in this miracle of transformation every time we celebrate the Eucharist.

As the Hereford Diocese marks 1350 years, we celebrate the extraordinary power of Christ to convert, equip and sustain his people in mission in this part of the world. But the ordinary stuff counts as well. Every time I officiate at a wedding I point out the chancel arch under which the couple stand. It points to God, but has its foundations deep in the ground. Our lives need to be inspired by God and rooted in reality. There is a wisdom which comes from heaven, writes James in his letter (3:17), but it is made real in everyday living. I have been helped a lot over the years by the Everyday Faith material produced by the Church of England Everyday Faith. It is available as a free app with daily bitesize bible verses, teaching, prayers and actions (and often an image to meditate on and music to still the soul). It is more than a BLT (Blessed Little Thought), it is down-to-earth practical wisdom for the whole of life.

Our faith is at its best when it is rooted in the everyday things we do, not merely reserved for Sundays or special occasions. Our daily journeys can be a kind of pilgrimage, through places which prompt prayers, and landmarks which remind us of God's presence. Our daily tasks can be acts of devotion (try learning George Herbert's hymn 'Teach me, my God and King'). Our

relationships at home, work, church and school, take us further into God's grace as we give and receive love and friendship. I am inspired by the rich tapestry of faith that exists on our doorstep – labyrinths, holy wells, ruined abbeys, preaching crosses, hermitages, and the farms connected to religious foundations.

Jesus models how the extraordinary and the ordinary meet. In him we find the crossroads of life in all its fullness.

The Revd Stephen Griffiths



Prayer for August 2026 By *Daphne Kitching*

Dear Father,

In this summer month of August, help us to be aware of Your presence.

If we are away on holiday,

If we can't have a holiday,

On our journeys,

In our homes,

With our families or friends,

When we're alone,

When life is sweet,

When it's like an obstacle course,

At all times and in all circumstances, help us to know that You are in it with us, sharing our ups and downs, offering Your love and peace and hope when we connect with You through putting our trust in Your Son, Jesus.

Thank You Lord,

In His name,

Amen.

The TEN YOUNG WOMEN



JESUS OFTEN TOLD STORIES WITH HIDDEN MEANINGS - WE CALL THEM "PARABLES".



JESUS ONCE SPOKE ABOUT TEN YOUNG WOMEN



THEY HAD BEEN INVITED TO A WEDDING - AND THEY WERE WAITING FOR THE BRIDGROOM.



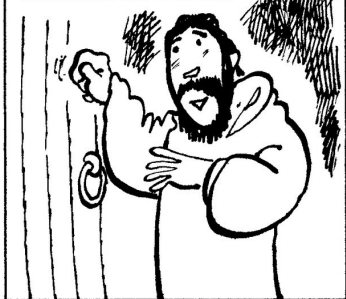
EACH ONE HAD AN OIL LAMP.



BUT ONLY FIVE OF THEM HAD BROUGHT ALONG SOME SPARE OIL.



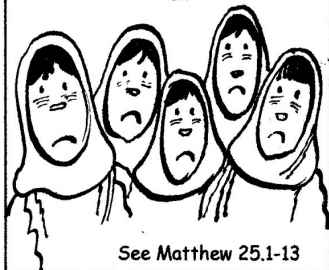
LATE AT NIGHT THE BRIDGROOM ARRIVED



FIVE YOUNG WOMEN COULD LIGHT HIS WAY.



THE OTHER FIVE FELT VERY FOOLISH - THEIR LAMPS HAD RUN OUT OF OIL!!



See Matthew 25:1-13

Readings and Services for this MONTH

Here are the Sunday Service details for August 2026.
The readings are included: if you are unable to join the service in church, you may like to use these at home.

Date	Service	Readings
2 nd August 9 th Sunday after Trinity	Holy Communion 10.30am	Isaiah 55. 1-5 Romans 9. 1-5 Matthew 14. 13-21
9 th August 10 th Sunday after Trinity	Morning Worship without Communion. Children`s Church 10.30am	1 Kings 19. 9-18 Romans 10. 5-15 Matthew 14. 22-33
16 th August 11 th Sunday after Trinity	Holy Communion and Children`s Church. 10.30am	Psalms 67 Romans 11. 1-2a,29-32 Matthew 15. 21-28
23 rd August 12 th Sunday after Trinity	All Age family Worship 10.30am	Isaiah 51. 1-6 Romans 12. 1-8 Matthew 16. 13-20
30 th August 13 th Sunday after Trinity Group service Shelve	Holy Communion 10.30am (Fran Brealey`s farewell)	Jeremiah 15.15-21 Romans 12. 9-end Matthew 16. 21-end

Clergy News:

Richard's Farewell—Richard's installation as Rector of the Chirbury Hills Benefice and as Rural Chaplain, will take place on Monday October 5th at Chirbury Church. Everyone will be welcome to attend.

... and Ian Williams' welcome—We are delighted to have Revd Ian Williams as part of our team. The primary focus of Ian's ministry will be at Hope/Shelve. His contact details will be supplied shortly, but please note that Ian's day off will be Mondays.

Looking at GOD

Canon Paul Hardingham considers

Summer Holidays

The story is told of porters who were hired to carry a group's possessions on a jungle safari. The pace increased until the head porter called a halt: 'We've come so far, so fast we need to take a break and allow our souls to catch up with our bodies!'

How often do we feel like this? August is a month when many of us take time off. Jesus and His disciples often made 'strategic withdrawals' from the crowds: 'because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, Jesus said to them, "Come with Me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest".' (Mark 6: 31,32).

Jesus saw how tired and stressed His disciples were and wanted to give them a break in their busy lives. He loved them and cared about their wellbeing. He longs to do the same with us, so that we can restore the balance of work, rest and play in our lives. Going on holiday gives us the opportunity to take time off, to let go the burdens that we carry every day and receive again His rest for our souls: 'Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.' (Matthew 11:28).

The story is told of the aged Apostle John playing with doves. A passing hunter expressed surprise at what a man as pious as John was doing. John pointed to the bow in the hunter's hand and asked him why he carried it with a loosened string. The hunter replied, 'it loses its strength unless it is given the chance to unbend'. John replied, 'why are you surprised that a servant of Christ should not relax to keep himself stronger for his work?'

QUOTE:

If at first you DO succeed, try not to look astonished. - Anon

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

Deborah: Woman of Faith and Courage

Some people are good working behind the scenes. They don't make a fuss or want to grab your attention. Instead, they quietly do a job which always gets done, and it is only when they are missing for some reason do we realise the important work that they do!

Deborah was a bit like that. Her name may not be familiar to us, but her story is recorded in the Old Testament Book of Judges. She lived many years after Joshua had taken the former Egyptian captives into the Promised Land. After Joshua's death the Israelites disregarded God's laws. They intermarried with the heathen nations around them, practised all kinds of wickedness and worshipped at pagan shrines.

So, God responded by punishing His people. He allowed them to fall into the hands of their enemies which resulted in a period of oppression during which the Israelites pleaded to God for mercy. God answered their cries with a judge to deliver them, and Deborah appeared.

A judge in those days was a compelling figure who rallied the nation at times of defeat and called them back to God's laws and standards. These judges delivered the people from danger and out of sin and rebellion. Into this male dominated society God gave them Deborah, a kind of mother figure. As far as spiritual things were concerned, they were like children and needed mothering!

God revealed to Deborah His plan to save Israel from their enemy. She rallied Barak, to muster the tribes of Israel and lead them into battle against the Canaanites. In an act of great faith, Barak agreed to do this, and Israel entered a period of peace which lasted 40 years.

The Book of Judges demonstrates God's grace in using unlikely people for His work. At a time when women were regarded of low status and expected to be silent, Deborah responded to God's call and became an unlikely hero. Deborah's great achievement was to inspire faith in others. Do we know a Deborah? Someone who encourages and supports us or helps another Christian in some vital way?

Deborah was decisive, determined and dauntless in bringing deliverance to her people. Once God had spoken to Deborah, she knew Israel would be victorious. We need the faith of Deborah. She believed that God was on her side, and that He would not fail her. So must we.





Canon Paul Hardingham continues his look at the books of the Bible:

What's the Big Idea? - An Introduction to the Books of the Bible: 2 Thessalonians

Paul wrote 2 Thessalonians from Corinth, after Silas and Timothy had returned from delivering 1 Thessalonians, in AD 51/52. His purpose in writing this letter was largely the same as the first, as the situation in the church remained largely unchanged. He writes to encourage new believers facing persecution (1:4-10), to correct a misunderstanding concerning the Lord's return (2:1-12) and to deal with the problems caused by some who refused to earn their own living (2:13-3:15).

The theme of the second coming of Jesus dominates 2 Thessalonians as with his first letter. When Jesus comes, He will defeat the '*man of lawlessness*' (2:8) and bring justice to oppressed Christians and judge their persecutors and unbelievers (1:5-10; 2:9-15). Paul was challenging the false belief that '*the day of the Lord has come*', leaving the Thessalonians shaken and frightened (2:1-2). As they were undergoing intense persecution, they thought that the second coming was imminent. Furthermore, the community contained believers who refused to work. They may have decided to stop working and await the second coming of Jesus. However, they may have been exploiting wealthier Christians' generosity in order to avoid work.

Paul's prayer for the Thessalonians is one that we can truly share in our own circumstances, as we also live in an uncertain world: '*With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may count you worthy of His calling, and that by His power He may fulfil every good purpose of yours and every act prompted by your faith. We pray this so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.*' (1:11&12)

A Breton fisherman's prayer

Protect me, dear Lord:
My boat is so small.
And your sea is so big.

Just Listen! says the Revd Roy Shaw, a retired but active priest
in the diocese of York.

Techno-dinosaur and curmudgeon that I am, I have clung to my old plug-in satnav for far too long. It has finally given up the ghost, and I have listened to the superior wisdom of Madame-my-wife, and started to use my smartphone, held in place via a holder on the car's dash, to navigate around areas I'm not familiar with.

Except of course, this morning, I thought I knew better than the info on the phone which advised an unusual route as I set off in the direction of my hydrotherapy session. (Techno-dinosaur, curmudgeon AND falling to bits- what a combination!). And ran into a long traffic queue at the new and extensive road works in the next village. Serves me right.

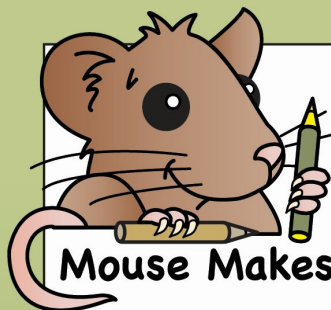
There's value in listening to someone who knows. The data on the phone had already taken into account the fact that the traffic queue would make me late, and had re-routed me away from the bottleneck. But curmudgeonly dinosaurs often think they know better- to their cost.

The art is, of course, in knowing who knows best. There are many false guides in this world, but it is the witness of Christians throughout time and throughout the world that listening to God- in prayer, or through His word- is a trusted way of navigating our way through today's world where many voices clamour for our attention, not all of which are trustworthy.

That great Welsh hymn 'Guide me O thou great Jehovah' is one of many which sings of our trust in God to guide us. It talks of being pilgrims through a land without waymarks, and it asks God to 'hold me with Thy powerful hand'. Here is Someone who knows and who is worth listening to. God Himself has said 'I will never leave you nor forsake you' (Hebrews 13:5; we can trust the One who will not leave us to guide us down good paths. It's a life-time's work to learn to trust in God, but we can improve, we can know the One who says 'My sheep know My voice' more clearly.

May God guide us on all our journeys, and be a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our path.





Mouse Makes

1. To which city did God send Jonah?

Jonah 1:1-2



2. Where did Paul travel to after seeing a vision?

Acts 16:9-10

MOAB

3. Which sea did Jesus walk beside before he went up on the mountain?

Matthew 15:29

5. Which town did Naomi and Ruth travel to after leaving Moab?

Ruth 1:22



6. Where did Paul and Barnabas go after being persecuted in Antioch?

Acts 13:51

4 across

After Paul was stoned, where did he travel to with Barnabas?

Acts 14:19-20

LYSTRA

4 down

Where was Saul travelling to when Jesus appeared to him?

Acts 9:3



EGYPT



JERUSALEM

7 across

Where did the Church in Jerusalem send Barnabas?

Acts 11:22

JOURNEYS

7 down

Where did Noah's ark come to rest after its journey?

Genesis 8:4

9. To which city did Philip travel to proclaim Christ?

Acts 8:5

10. To which river did people travel out to to be baptised?

Mark 1:5



11. After a five day journey where did Paul arrive?

Acts 20:6

GALILEE

12. Which sea did Moses walk through to get away from the Egyptians?

Exodus 15:4

8. To where did Mary and Joseph flee to get away from Herod?

Matthew 2:13



13. Where did Paul travel to after he left Athens?

Acts 18:1

JUDEA

Looking at CHURCH



THE DIOCESE OF HEREFORD

August 2026

Journeys



I wonder how many journeys you have planned in your lifetime: the daily trips and the longer adventures; the familiar routes we take almost on autopilot, and the journeys we plan carefully because of where we are going, or what we hope to do and see.

There are the journeys we make every day—to work, to school, or to see a neighbour. There are the journeys we make less often, but still regularly: visiting relatives, going to church, or attending commitments. And then there are the journeys we may make only once in a lifetime. Each journey has a purpose, a beginning and an end: to see a loved one, to celebrate, to earn a living, to shop for food, to visit the doctor, to take a holiday, or to explore somewhere new.

As a family, we recently spent hours planning the route and places to stay for a road trip through Italy—from Lake Como to Naples and back. We wanted to visit the places on our “we would really like to see” list, while also making time to rest, explore and enjoy being together. The planning resulted in a wonderful holiday: we saw amazing things, experienced busyness and rest, encountered a different culture, and came home refreshed—physically, emotionally and spiritually.

Throughout the Bible there is a great deal of journeying, and often in those physical journeys we see God at work in the lives of those who travel. We see the Israelites rescued by God and formed as his people; Elijah running away and discovering that God is with him; Paul shipwrecked yet protected so that he can speak to others about Jesus; and Jesus journeying to the cross, revealing God’s ultimate love through his words and actions along the way.

At the beginning of July, I was part of two joyful services as Bishop Richard ordained our new priests and deacons. As I sat through those services, I was reminded again of journeys—not physical journeys this time, but spiritual ones: the journeys we make with God as we respond to his call and leading.

As followers of Jesus, we are called by God into his service, a calling that takes many shapes and forms. Like our physical journeys, our spiritual journeys have a purpose. Paul speaks of doing whatever we do to the glory of God, and Jesus teach-

es that in all we do we reveal God to others—his light, his life and his love. So, as we head into a season of holiday journeys, I wonder whether we might use the opportunity of a physical journey to reflect on our spiritual one, from beginning to end.

The Venerable Sam Hustwayte
Archdeacon of Ludlow

Parable: The Strength of a Seed

by Dr Ruth M Bancewiczat at the Faraday Institute for Science and Religion in Cambridge.

At this time of year, we enjoy the fruits of our gardens, fields and hedgerows: vegetables ripen, crops are harvested, and berries begin to show bright among the leaves. Much of this growth started with a few seeds in spring: the miracle of life coming from small dead-looking things. There is a league table of long-lived seeds. The winners so far are from the narrow-leafed campion, buried by squirrels in the Siberian permafrost over 30,000 years ago. When those seeds finally germinated, they became healthy plants that flowered and produced seeds of their own.

The Bible contains many links between seeds and spiritual growth, and the parable of the sower is the most famous (in Matthew 13). A person may hear or experience something of God which has the potential to germinate into a life of following Him, resulting in the fruit of others coming to know God too. But things can happen that snatch that seed away, killing it before it has finished germinating, or choking its growth.

What about the knowledge of God that gets trampled, churned too deep in the mire of life to receive the warmth and light it needs to develop into faith? Buried seeds don't always die, but they can lie dormant, remaining alive but inactive until the earth is turned over. The possibility of that moment of connecting with something divine, scrap of knowledge, or snatch of conversation resulting in a changed life may seem infinitesimally small, but it's not zero. The seed may be incredibly tough, just waiting for a chance to grow.

The Gospel narrative plays on the fact that it took a long time for the disciples to understand the full implications of Jesus' teaching: a germination process that took many of them three or more years. They could have been discouraged, but Jesus was not. I don't think it's too much of stretch to draw out of the parable of the sower to include the observation that it can take a long time, sometimes decades, for people to work their way through the various barriers, sticking points, and phases of forgetfulness that may keep them from following through on their spiritual experience. When we finally receive – or are open to – the encouragement, challenge, or experience that helps our faith in Christ grow, we can experience the rich fruit of a transformed life.



Our Church and local COMMUNITY

**Welcome to
The Tea Break**



Cuppa, cake, and a chat

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 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 or on 01743 791069

All information given is given in confidence.



*There will be
NO monthly
Tea Service
in August*

Do we need a Foodbank in Rea Valley?

We have found that a very wide range of people need and use our local, community run charity. The main

challenge that individuals and families face is a fixed or low income, whether in work or on benefits, together with the increased cost of living. We have higher travel costs and it's harder to get to the cheaper supermarkets.

As a locally run group we are flexible in how we meet different needs, so people can come once, every week or when they need to. We don't have a set number of visits. We do need people to be referred by a professional, see below. People do not like asking for help and these agencies are better placed to know about their circumstances, which are often highly confidential.

Responding to different needs:

Emergencies—These may be people who have been discharged from hospital, or perhaps a baby has come early. We try to meet emergency needs, so do contact us directly or come along when the Foodbank is open.

Short-term needs—These may be people who have experienced a sudden change, for example, a relationship breakdown, or losing their job. Some people are relocated because they are victims of domestic abuse, or other crimes. Others have claimed benefits and need the Foodbank as a stop gap until these are received. Some have an unexpected cost or bill, such as for a broken appliance, and when on a fixed or low income, or even in work, this can cause debts.

Ongoing needs—There are those who use our Foodbank who have more than one difficulty that makes life harder to manage. Possibly illness and disabilities, or those with learning disabilities and mental health issues. People don't like to ask for help but they also struggle to deal with systems to get them the support which may be available. Our volunteers do regularly signpost people on to other services such as Citizens Advice and Shropshire Council's "Cost of Living Support" service.

Our users update us on changes to our service and are very appreciative of the help they have received. We do regularly review the service to all our users.

Get referred by your local clergy, GP practice, housing provider or other support agency or call for a chat with—

Rev. Greg Smith 07902 794653, email: reavalleyfoodbank@gmail.com.

See our website www.reavalleyfoodbank.co.uk Getting Help page.



The Rea Valley Transport Scheme, which is entirely free, is designed to get patients to the doctors, dentists, hospital, opticians and other wellbeing services. To request transport, please contact our scheme administrator

Emma, at reavalleytransportscheme.info@gmail.com or by calling **07468115939**. Emma works Monday-Friday 10-2.30 and 3.30-5. We do not operate an answering machine service, so please call back if you receive no answer. If possible, please give us a minimum of a week's notice of when and where your appointment is. Whilst we can never guarantee to be able to help, we have so far been able to respond positively to most requests.



This year, as a benefice, we will be walking for
Ride & Stride on **Saturday September 19th**.

We have planned a walk of approximately 8 miles amongst the churches in and to the south-east of Shrewsbury.

If you would like to join in, for all or part of the walk, please let Greg, Stephen Winwood or Sarah Edwards know.



"... and once you've done the flower arrangements, polished the pews, scrubbed the floor, shined the silver and taken a look at the problem with the boiler, we wondered, well, you have to laugh, but all six bellringers are on holiday at the same time and ..."

Looking at the CHURCH UK & Worldwide

Church is cool place to be

David Pickup, a solicitor, considers church buildings

About noon the following day, Peter went up on the roof to pray...(Acts 10 9).

This is a special passage for me, as it was the first one I read as part of Scripture Union reading notes at the age of 13. It fits in neatly with the theme of how people in Bible times kept cool.

Two thousand years ago, houses were built of traditional materials like stone and wattle. Windows were high up to help reduce smells from outside. Wooden lattice was used in wall openings and doorways usually faced south or east to increase light and warmth from the sun. In the hot months, people spent the evenings on their roof to enjoy the cooler air. This is where St Peter was when he had a vision of God's welcoming to all Jewish people also to all others.

Have you thought of opening your church up as a cool place? Like most things it needs to be planned carefully with ground rules, clarity and safety uppermost. Can people bring their own drinks? Are you offering prayer spaces as well? Who will run it? It may be an option as churches are usually cool and could offer drinks and company. Probably not a good idea on the roof!

Scripture Union launches podcast focused on children's and youth mission



**Scripture
Union**

How can the church best reach the younger generation with the message of Jesus? It is a challenge faced daily by thousands of children's and youth workers in churches across the UK.

Now, a brand-new podcast has been launched to help them answer that question.

The *Mission Sparks* podcast is released every other week on all major podcast platforms. Each episode will offer:

- * Fresh outreach ideas you can use immediately
- * Real stories from practitioners seeing lives changed
- * Practical tools for mission with children and young people
- * Creative approaches to engaging the next generation

SU says: “This isn’t theory. It’s mission in practice. Every episode is created by a team of experts who are actively involved in pioneering, supporting and developing mission across communities. These are voices who live and breathe mission every day.”

Dave Newton, National Director of Scripture Union, says: ‘Breaking beyond the walls of church to reach the next generation takes courage and imagination. Our hope is that this podcast, full of practical tools and encouragement, will be the *spark* you need to get started.’

Go to: su.org.uk/missionsparks

Musician puts New Testament into song



In what he believes could be a world first, a musician associated with the Rivers Team, in Sheffield, has put the entire New Testament into song, word for word. *The Sing Bible* has been a self-funded labour of love for Rob Bromehead, who wanted to “help people hear

Scripture in a new and memorable way”.

He says: “I started messing around with AI. I began with some memory verses and was blown away with how it worked with the words,” he said. “I felt it was a calling from God.”

The New Testament and the Psalms are available free on streaming platforms, including Spotify and Apple Music.

**** Do have a look!!!! Go to: thesingbible.com ****

Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in
Luke 7:1-10, Matthew 8:5-13

When the Romans invaded Israel, they used soldiers to keep order. For the centurion in Capernaum it was more than just a job...

The centurion had a young servant who was in great pain and dying.



When he heard that Jesus was near, he asked the town leaders to ask Jesus for help.

The leaders told Jesus..



This man deserves your help. He loves our people.

He has even built us a meeting place!



This could have been a tricky situation, for Jews never went into the houses of non-Jews.



But Jesus said..

I will go and heal the boy.



But the centurion knew that, as a Jew, Jesus could not go into the houses of non-Jews so as Jesus got near, he sent some friends to him.



He says he isn't worthy enough for you to come to his house.

But he says he understands authority and knows you have it. You only have to say so and his servant will be healed.



Jesus was amazed!



I have never met anyone in Israel with as much faith.

He said to the friends...



You may go now. What he has believed has happened.

When the friends got to the house they found the servant completely healed!



Bible Bite wordsearch...words from the story are hidden in the grid.

a	n	y	o	n	e	h	p	a	i	n	z	m
d	a	p	e	o	p	l	e	m	s	v	l	e
h	e	u	b	c	e	o	n	a	h	k	d	s
o	o	s	t	h	h	a	j	z	l	s	e	e
u	b	c	e	h	q	f	i	e	w	e	k	d
s	l	e	a	r	o	t	r	d	d	r	d	x
e	o	n	l	p	v	r	p	i	d	v	o	j
f	v	t	b	i	e	e	i	a	e	a	z	e
a	e	u	n	d	e	r	s	t	a	n	d	s
i	s	r	a	e	l	v	n	y	y	t	d	u
t	r	i	c	k	y	l	e	a	d	e	r	s
h	r	o	m	a	n	s	z	d	u	l	v	m
q	i	n	v	a	d	e	d	x	o	m	g	k



Romans
loves
pain
healed

Jesus
help
invaded
friends

faith
believed
centurion
authority

asked
leaders
people
anyone

understand
amazed
servant
tricky

house
deserves
Capernaum
Israel



QUOTES about life in general:

Luxury: something you don't really need and can't do without.

- Anon

The only thing worse than an alarm clock that goes off
is one that doesn't. - Anon

After silence, that which comes nearest to expressing the
inexpressible is music. - Aldous Huxley

Music: the speech of angels. - Thomas Carlyle

The world-wide COMMUNITY

All in the month of AUGUST

It was:

175 years ago, on 12th August 1851 that the American inventor Isaac Singer was granted a US Patent for his sewing machine. Since then, well over 100 million various models of Singer sewing machines have been sold worldwide.

Also 175 years ago, on 22nd August 1851 that the first America's Cup yacht race was held. That first event was a race around the Isle of Wight, won by the American schooner *America*. The trophy was then named in honour of the first year's winner. The race is the oldest still-operating international sporting competition in any event.

125 years ago, on 4th August 1901 that Louis Armstrong, American jazz trumpeter and singer, was born.

90 years ago, on 1st August 1936 that Yves Saint-Laurent, Algerian-born French fashion designer, was born. (Died 2008)

70 years ago, on 27th August 1956 that Britain's first nuclear power station, Calder Hall in Cumbria, began operating. It was the first nuclear power station in the world to generate power on an industrial scale and formed part of the Sellafield complex. Closed in 2003.

65 years ago, on 13th August 1961 that East Germany sealed the border between East and West Berlin with barbed wire to prevent an exodus of refugees to the West. Construction on the Berlin Wall began on 15th August. The border reopened in 1989.

60 years ago, on 4th and 5th August 1966 that US newspapers and radio stations quoted John Lennon as saying his Beatles band was "more popular than Jesus." He provoked widespread protests, and many radio stations refused to play Beatles' records. Lennon apologised on 12th August, at the start of the Beatles final tour of the USA.

40 years ago, on 9th August 1986 that the rock band Queen performed its final live concert at Knebworth Park before the death of singer Freddie Mercury. (Pneumonia, late 1991.)

And 40 years ago, on 31st August 1986 that Henry Moore, British sculptor, died. His monumental, semi-abstract bronze sculptures are displayed in public spaces around the world.

The infamous Berlin Wall

It was 65 years ago, on 13th August 1961 that East Germany first sealed the border between East and West Berlin with barbed wire. Construction on the Berlin Wall itself began two days later, on 15th August.

The Wall grew rapidly to become a 96-mile (155km) concrete barrier and became the physical embodiment of the Iron Curtain for the next 28 years. It was built to stop the 'brain drain' of East German skilled professionals. From 1949 to 1961, more than two million had fled the East.

The Wall entirely surrounded West Berlin, stranding it as an isolated island of capitalism within communist East Germany. It was actually two walls, separated by a heavily fortified 'death strip' 160 yards wide. It housed watchtowers, guard dog runs and anti-vehicle trenches.

The Wall was a surprise. East German residents woke up one morning to find barbed wire, armed guards and blocks on subways, streets and train lines. The East German border guards had the 'Order to Shoot' – the legal authority to kill anyone attempting to cross. About 140 people died this way.

Yet still thousands escaped. More than 5,000, in fact. They fled by tunnelling, hot air balloons, ziplines, and ramming armoured vehicles through border gates.

When in June of 1963 US President John F Kennedy visited the Wall, he made the famous declaration "*Ich bin ein Berliner*" (I am a Berliner) to demonstrate American solidarity with West Germany.

The Wall was unexpectedly opened on 9th November 1989, due to an awkward, unscripted announcement by an East German official, who mistakenly told a press conference that private travel to West Germany was permitted immediately.

Following demolition, large chunks of the Wall were sold. Today, original segments are exhibited in over 100 locations worldwide, including the Imperial War Museum in London.

When John Lennon said the Beatles were 'more popular than Jesus'



It was on 4th and 5th August 1966 that US newspapers and radio stations quoted John Lennon as saying his Beatles band was "more popular than Jesus." It provoked widespread protests across America.

The story had really begun some months earlier,

when Lennon's comment was originally published in the London Evening Standard in March, as part of an interview that he had given at his home in Weybridge. He had told the reporter: "Christianity will go. It will vanish and shrink. I needn't argue about that; I'm right and I will be proved right. We're more popular than Jesus now. I don't know which will go first, rock 'n' roll or Christianity. Jesus was all right, but His disciples were thick and ordinary. It's them twisting it that ruins it for me."

Lennon's views passed without much comment in London, but five months later, when his comment was reprinted in the American teen magazine *Datebook*, he sparked an enormous wave of fury across America, especially in the Bible Belt. Many radio stations refused to play Beatle's records, and protestors held public burnings of Beatles records.

Lennon apologised on 12th August, at the start of the Beatles final tour of the USA, saying that he had not meant to say that he was divine, but only that his band was now more popular than Jesus was. Such a claim did not soothe American sensibilities and throughout the tour, the band faced pickets and protests and even death threats.

By the end of the American tour, the controversy had driven the band to a big decision. There would be no more live tours, but only studio recordings. Just over three years later, in September 1969, John Lennon left the Beatles for solo work, and the following Spring, Paul McCartney followed him out. The Beatles had reached the end of the road.

12thAugust - the day a solar eclipse will darken the skies of Western Europe.

12th August will be the first total solar eclipse in mainland Europe since 1999. And many churches in the UK see it as a big opportunity for outreach.

On 12th August, the Moon will pass between the Earth and the Sun, blocking sunlight for over two minutes. Some areas like northern Spain, Greenland and Iceland will experience a total eclipse, but here in the UK there will still be a partial eclipse. Europe won't see a total eclipse again until 2090.

The Methodist Church says: "The eclipse will provide a great opportunity for churches. Holding community viewing events for the eclipse will allow churches to delight in the beauty of creation while engaging in gentle, relational faith-sharing.

"There are many ways to get involved – whether in a



church garden or at the top of a local hill, by hosting a family barbecue or a space for quiet reflection, it's a chance for science and faith dialogue or discussions about wellbeing.

“The key is to take this opportunity, a moment when people's openness to the divine might be elevated, to speak something of the love of Jesus – through actions and words – to the people we meet.

More info at: <https://www.methodist.org.uk/for-churches/evangelism-growth/practise-evangelism/day-of-outreach/>

Churches in Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) call for help to fight Ebola outbreak

As cases of Ebola in northeastern DRC continue to spread, the Bishop of Goma, the Rt Revd Martin Gordon, has joined other church leaders there in calling for urgent help.

The country is facing its 17th Ebola outbreak in 50 years. More than 1,100 people have been affected, with over 350 dead.

Bishop Martin, a Church Mission Society (CMS) mission partner, says that churches across DRC can play a critical role in response. “The church is on the front-line. Through our schools, clinics, and local congregations, we are at the heart of every village and community, and we are one of the few institutions still trusted to tell the truth.”

For it is widespread public mistrust of the authorities that has led many communities to doubt the very existence of Ebola. Restrictions surrounding burials have only intensified tensions, and already two Ebola treatment centres have been set on fire.

Meanwhile, church leaders are circulating pastoral guidance outlining Ebola symptoms and encouraging best practices for hygiene, physical contact and medical referrals. Plans are underway to equip churches and schools with temperature screening equipment.

But Bishop Martin stresses that financial support from outside is essential. “We need support to equip frontline churches and schools, and help communities respond effectively,” he said. “But above all, we ask people to pray for us - for effective treatment development and for churches to continue to be voices of hope.”

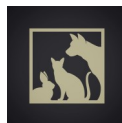
Andy Roberts, the CEO of Church Mission Society (CMS) says: “Bishop Martin and other church leaders have shown extraordinary courage. They are not fleeing the danger; they are moving toward it with love, practical help and hope.”

Would you like to help them in any way? Go to <https://churchmissionsociety.org>

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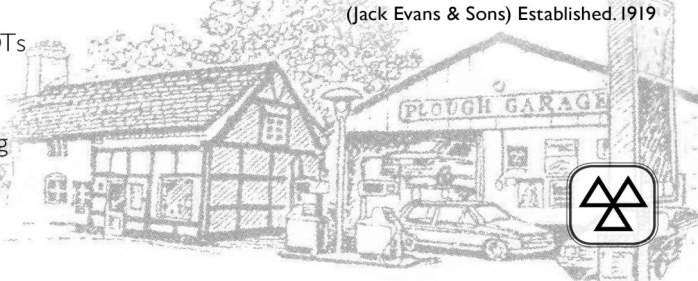
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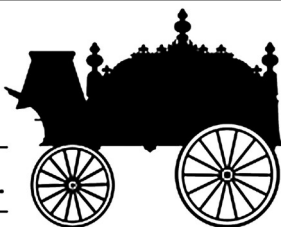
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