



THE WORD

Editor: Stuart Baker: stjohnbirkdale@gmail.com



**THE PARISH MAGAZINE OF
ST. JOHN'S CHURCH
ST. JOHN'S ROAD, BIRKDALE. PR8 4JP
Charity Number 1128171**

St. John, Chapter 1, verses 1 and 14:

***"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...
The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us."***

ISSUE No. 236

AUGUST 2022

OUR CHURCH

God Centred, Relationship Driven and Life Transforming



Reminder!

On Sunday 31st July there will be no service at St John's. We are trying to build more links between St John's and St James' and St Peter's, and our PCC decided that for the remainder of this year if there is a fifth Sunday in a month the three churches will worship together on that day. On 31st July we shall worship together at **St Peter's Church**. Please join us if you can. The service will commence at 10.45am.



Meeting with the Archdeacon

On Thursday 28th July members of our PCC, our Parish Representatives and our Patrons met Archdeacon Pete Spiers and the Lay Chair of the Deanery Synod to discuss our Parish Profile before we advertise the role of the Vicar of St John's who will also be an Assistant Curate in the parishes of St James' and St Peter's.

It was a very cordial and productive meeting. The Archdeacon was very complimentary about the content and presentation of our Parish Profile and he made only a few suggestions as to how the text could be amended. He congratulated the PCC on the work which they have all carried out in agreeing the Profile.

After the Profile has been put into its final version and submitted to the Archdeacon he will then prepare a Role Description which can be advertised nationally.

THE WORD will keep you informed about how this is progressing. You will read it first in **THE WORD!**

**FOR ALL ENQUIRIES TO OR ABOUT ST. JOHN'S CHURCH PLEASE CONTACT US BY EMAIL:
Email: info@stjohnsbirkdale.co.uk**



Visit our new website

stjohnsbirkdale.co.uk

- Find out about what's going on at St John's
- Check out the calendar for upcoming events
- Listen to the weekly talks
- Find out about booking the hall
- Free on-line bible
- Show it to your friends and family

**God centred, Relationship driven,
Life transforming**

WHO'S WHO AT ST. JOHN'S

Priest (retired)	Rev. Roy Doran	Church of England	
Reader:	Mrs. Christine Baker	Children's Society:	Mrs. Sylvia Kent
Churchwardens:	Stuart Baker Clive Morris	Mothers' Union:	Mrs. Linda Caton
Deputy Warden:	Tim Wright	Girl Guides	Mrs. Janette Law
Wardens' Assistant:	Miss Lucy Wright	St. John's Brownies:	Mrs. Helen Jones and Mrs. Lesley Scott
Treasurer:	Mrs. Sylvia Kent	Brownie Guiders:	Mrs. Lesley Scott
PCC Secretary:	Alex Vernon	St. John's Rainbows:	Mrs. Lesley Scott
Parish Hall Secretary:	Mrs. Jean Morris	Church Flowers:	Mrs. Cath Whiteside
Electoral Roll Officer:	Stuart Harris	Magazine Editor:	Stuart Baker
Safeguarding:	Stuart Baker and Ms. Michelle Baldeh	Magazine Secretary:	Mrs. Yvonne Dyson
		Notice boards, I.T, Website, bunting arranger and kneeler and tieback repairs:	Mrs. Sally Wright

We record with sadness the death of a former member of our congregation and of our choir, **Jo Thompson**, who died on 19th July 2022. Her funeral will be at 11.15a.m. on Thursday August 11th at St Mark's Church, Scarisbrick and will be immediately followed by cremation at West Lancashire Crematorium.



Thursday Evening Prayers

The next prayer meetings by **zoom** and telephone will be at 7.30pm on 4th August and 18th August.

If there is anything which you would like to pray about with others contact Sally, Tim or Lucy Wright, or Christine, Clive or Roy.

Working from Rest by Canon Paul Hardingham

August sees many of us taking holidays to get some well-earned rest from working. But what is the biblical relationship between rest and work? The Bible shows us that **we are to work from rest, not rest from work**. How is this working out in our current experience?

When God created human beings on the 6th day, the next full day was a day of rest before the work began: 'Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it He rested from all the work of creating that He had done.' (Genesis 2:3). Sunday is a day of rest at the beginning of the week.

Jesus lived out this rhythm of rest and work in His own ministry: 'Very early in the morning, Jesus got up and went off to a solitary place, where He prayed' He then told His disciples: 'Let us go somewhere else so that I can preach there also. That is why I have come.' (Mark 1:35-38).

Here is a rhythm for our own lives: 'I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in Me and I in you, you will bear much fruit' (John 15:5). Our work/fruitfulness arises out of the time we abide/rest in Jesus. He will then show us what aspects of our lives need pruning: 'while every branch that does bear fruit He prunes so that it will be even more fruitful.' (2).

Let's use this month to reflect on how this pattern is working in our lives:

Are we spending enough time 'abiding' in Jesus?

Are we putting our energies into the right balance of rest and work?

Are there unproductive areas of our lives and churches that need pruning?

Remember God created us as human beings not just human doings!

Worship on the
Eighth Sunday after
Trinity

SUNDAY 7th AUGUST

**10.30am service IN CHURCH and via
zoom & phone**

**Worshippers in church may remain in church after
the first part of the service has concluded and
receive Communion.**

Collect for the Eighth Sunday after Trinity

O God, whose never-failing providence ordereth all things both in heaven and earth; we humbly beseech thee to put away from us all hurtful things, and to give us those things which be profitable for us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**The subject of
Roy's talk:**

The Importance of Faith

The Reading: Hebrews 11, verses 1-3, 8-16

- 1 Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.
- 2 This is what the ancients were commended for.
- 3 By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.

- 8 By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going.
- 9 By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise.
- 10 For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.
- 11 And by faith even Sarah, who was past childbearing age, was enabled to bear children because she considered him faithful who had made the promise.
- 12 And so from this one man, and he as good as dead, came descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sand on the seashore.
- 13 All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth.
- 14 People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own.
- 15 If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return.
- 16 Instead, they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.

Worship on the
Ninth Sunday
after Trinity

SUNDAY 14th AUGUST

**10.30am service IN CHURCH
and via zoom & phone.**

Collect for the Ninth Sunday after Trinity

Grant to us, Lord, we beseech thee, the spirit to think and do always such things as be rightful; that we, who cannot do any thing that is good without thee, may by thee be enabled to live according to thy will; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**The subject of
Sally's talk:**

Rahab's Faith

The Reading: Hebrews 11, verses 29-40

29 By faith the people passed through the Red Sea as on dry land; but when the Egyptians tried to do so, they were drowned.

30 By faith the walls of Jericho fell, after the army had marched around them for seven days.

31 By faith the prostitute Rahab, because she welcomed the spies, was not killed with those who were disobedient.

32 And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson and Jephthah, about David and Samuel and the prophets, who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions,

34 quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies.

35 Women received back their dead, raised to life again. There were others who were tortured, refusing to be released so that they might gain an even better resurrection.

36 Some faced jeers and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment.

37 They were put to death by stoning; they were sawed in two; they were killed by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated—

38 the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, living in caves and in holes in the ground.

39 These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised,

40 since God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect.

Midweek Book of Common
Prayer Communion Service

WEDNESDAY 17th AUGUST
10.30am service IN CHURCH

Worship on the Tenth
Sunday after Trinity

SUNDAY 21st AUGUST
10.30am service IN CHURCH
and via zoom & phone

Collect for the Tenth Sunday after Trinity

Let thy merciful ears, O Lord, be open to the prayers of thy humble servants; and that they may obtain their petitions make them to ask such things as shall please thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**The subject of
Clive's talk:**

Build Back Better

The Reading: Isaiah 58 verses 9 to 14

¹The LORD says, "Shout as loud as you can! Tell my people Israel about their sins! ²They worship me every day, claiming that they are eager to know my ways and obey my laws. They say they want me to give them just laws and that they take pleasure in worshipping me."

³The people ask, "Why should we fast if the LORD never notices? Why should we go without food if he pays no attention?"

The LORD says to them, "The truth is that at the same time as you fast, you pursue your own interests and oppress your workers. ⁴Your fasting makes you violent, and you quarrel and fight. Do you think this kind of fasting will make me listen to your prayers? ⁵When you fast, you make yourselves suffer; you bow your heads low like a blade of grass, and spread out sackcloth and ashes to lie on. Is that what you call fasting? Do you think I will be pleased with that?"

⁶"The kind of fasting I want is this: remove the chains of oppression and the yoke of injustice, and let the oppressed go free. ⁷Share your food with the hungry and open your homes to the homeless poor. Give clothes to those who have nothing to wear, and do not refuse to help your own relatives.

⁸"Then my favour will shine on you like the morning sun, and your wounds will be quickly healed. I will always be with you to save you; my presence will protect you on every side. ⁹When you pray, I will answer you. When you call to me, I will respond.

"If you put an end to oppression, to every gesture of contempt, and to every evil word; ¹⁰if you give food to the hungry and satisfy those who are in need, then the darkness around you will turn to the brightness of noon. ¹¹And I will always guide you and satisfy you with good things. I will keep you strong and well. You will be like a garden that has plenty of water, like a spring of water that never runs dry. ¹²Your people will rebuild what has long been in ruins, building again on the old foundations. You will be known as the people who rebuilt the walls, who restored the ruined houses."

¹³The LORD says, "If you treat the Sabbath as sacred and do not pursue your own interests on that day; if you value my holy day and honour it by not travelling, working, or talking idly on that day, ¹⁴then you will find the joy that comes from serving me. I will make you honoured all over the world, and you will enjoy the land I gave to your ancestor, Jacob. I, the LORD, have spoken."

Worship on the
Eleventh Sunday after

SUNDAY 28th AUGUST
10.30am service IN CHURCH
and via zoom & phone.

Collect for the Eleventh Sunday after Trinity

O God, who declarest thy almighty power most chiefly in shewing mercy and pity: Mercifully grant unto us such a measure of thy grace, that we, running the way of thy commandments, may obtain thy gracious promises, and be made partakers of thy heavenly treasure; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**The subject of
Christine's talk:**

**Humility, Generosity and
Salvation**

The Reading: Luke 14, verses 1, 7-14

1 One Sabbath, when Jesus went to eat in the house of a prominent Pharisee, he was being carefully watched.

7 When he noticed how the guests picked the places of honour at the table, he told them this parable:

8 "When someone invites you to a wedding feast, do not take the place of honour, for a person more distinguished than you may have been invited.

9 If so, the host who invited both of you will come and say to you, 'Give this person your seat.' Then, humiliated, you will have to take the least important place.

10 But when you are invited, take the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he will say to you, 'Friend, move up to a better place.' Then you will be honoured in the presence of all the other guests.

11 For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted."

12 Then Jesus said to his host, "When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or sisters, your relatives, or your rich neighbours; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid.

13 But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind,

14 and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."

Dates for your Diary



St John's Film Nights

We shall have a break in August, and then our next film to be shown will be on **Friday 30th September**. It will be the highly acclaimed "**Miss Potter**" starring Reneé Zellweger, Ewan McGregor and Emily Watson. It is based on the life of children's author Beatrix Potter and it contains stories from her own life and animated sequences featuring characters from her stories. Critics' consensus: "A charming biopic that maintains its sweetness even in sadder moments."

Please let Christine know if you will attend. Tea, coffee, homemade cakes are provided. £5.

See page 5 for a full list of Film Nights.



Harvest Supper

Friday 23rd September

In our church hall.

Hungarian goulash will be served. But don't worry, it won't be overly spiced.



Thai Food Night

Friday 14th October

At Tim and Sally's home.

Lots of lovely flavours to enjoy.



40 Years with Ken Dodd: a talk by Lady Ann Dodd

Friday 18th November

At church. Come and hear an interesting talk by Lady Ann about her life with the Master of Mirth. You'll be tickled to bits!



Christmas Tree Festival and Market

Friday 2nd and Saturday 3rd December

Get into the Christmas spirit at the beginning of Advent.

Further details of all these events will appear in **THE WORD** later this year. But for now, please just put these dates in your diary!

**Making Donations to St John's
through online banking**

The church's bank details are:

**Account name: Parochial Church
Council of St John's Parish (Birkdale)**

Sort Code: 60-20-11

Account Number: 86882120



St John's Presents



FILM NIGHTS

Come and join us as we enjoy great
films and refreshments @ 6.30pm
film begins at 7pm

29 July – The book thief

30 September – Miss Potter

28 October – Secretariat

25 November – Blind Side



NEW: St John's Young Adults

St John's socials

April Wednesday 20th. 7pm
Pub Quiz night. The Park pub

May Sunday 22nd. 3pm
Afternoon tea. Lucy's house

June Friday 24th. 6pm
Beach rounders and food

July Saturday 9th July. time tbc
Day trip to the Lakes!

Aug Friday 12th. 7pm
BBQ. Lucy's house

Sept Friday 16th. 7pm
Gin tasting and pizza night

St John's Young Adults

The young adults took a trip to the lakes on Saturday 9th July.

14 keen walkers took on Gummers How followed by a much needed rest and picnic at Fell Foot.



In true Birkdale style we played some croquet amongst some other activities, of course including a much needed ice cream!

We finished the day with a lovely pub tea at The Masons Arms, Strawberry bank and a great day was had by all!



Their next social will be on

Friday, 12th August @ 7pm

when they are having a BBQ at the Wright household!

If you are a young adult or know someone who may be interested please contact Lucy Wright for details! Watch this space for more of their adventures....

Strawberry Tea

On Saturday 16th July 47 parishioners and friends met for a summer strawberry tea in Christine and Stuart's back garden. We were blessed with lovely weather. The wind dropped, the sun shone, the rain stayed away, and it was a glorious summer afternoon. The Lord's name be praised!!



But it was not all eating and chatting. Oh no! There were games on the lawn. And what a competitive streak was shown by the athletes who took part.

Phyllis Stuart was the runaway winner of the Quoits challenge, and (after several attempts!) Alex Vernon scored the highest total on the bowling. Congratulations to both of them.



Tim and the statue for which he was the sculptor's model!



Sally tries her hand at Quoits. Howie waits his turn. Was that a quoit or a curtain tie-back, Sally?



Having already won at Quoits, Phyllis tries her hand at the bowling. Alex looks on anxiously.



Growth Groups

Beginning September

2nd & 4th Thursdays, 7.30pm

*Finding out more
together*

WE'D LOVE YOU TO JOIN US

Growth Groups

Do you want to find out more about what you have heard on a Sunday? Would you like to look deeper into the Bible and discuss with others and grow as a Christian?

Growth Groups will focus on how we can apply what we have learnt on a Sunday into the rest of our lives. Through small groups we will grow closer together and be able to support each other through the mountain tops and valleys of life.

Beginning in September, the first two groups to start will meet in our home on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays @ 7.30pm. The Young Adults group will be led by Lucy and Alex and another group for any age will be led by Tim and Sally.

It will be an informal time to listen, discuss and grow together as a church and as individuals. There will be time together to look at what has been talked about in church the previous Sundays plus time to chat to each other over tea and cakes.

At St John's we are aiming to be a God centred, relationship driven and life transforming church in Birkdale. We strive to be a Church where people feel at home, know they matter, grow in their faith and where they feel confident to invite others.

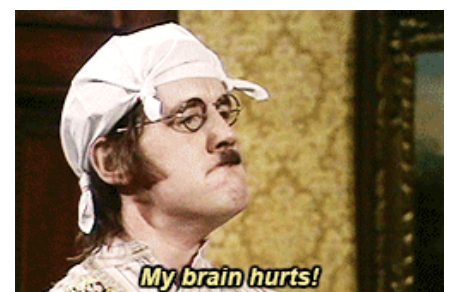
If you want to know more or have any questions just catch one of us on a Sunday.

Please consider whether you could join us to grow together in our faith, we would love to see you at the first one, Wednesday 14 September, 7.30pm.

Tim and Sally

Brain Teasers (supplied by Judith Foster)

1. What five letter word becomes shorter when you add two letters to it?
2. A sundial has the fewest moving parts of any timepiece. Which has the most?
3. A man pushes his car to a hotel and tells the owner he's bankrupt. Why?
4. In 1990 a person was 15 years old. In 1995 he was 10 years old. How did that happen?



1. Short. 2. An hourglass. Think of all those grains of sand! 3. He is playing monopoly. 4. He was born in 2005 BC.

Answers



The Rev Dr Gary Bowness continues his tongue-in-cheek letters from 'Uncle Eustace'

On the best way to visit the homes in our parish

The Rectory,
St James the Least of All

My dear Nephew Darren,

Your offer to bring in your team of church members, in order to make a house call on every home in our parish, was most generous. I do understand why you would need us to accommodate your team of 25 visitors, and then hold a residential training weekend for our own members of the team. I accept that we would have to produce a visiting pack listing all our church organisations, giving contact names and numbers and a short resume of what each group did, along with our mission statement and safeguarding policy. I also understand your suggestion that we include a supplement outlining our stewardship scheme.

Your plan that we should then hold an opening Service to which all the newcomers would be invited, and to which we might fly in a world-renowned speaker for the occasion, is understandable. And then of course we would need your help to set up a finance committee with budgets and organised fund raising. But what you seem to have missed is that our entire parish consists of something like 70 homes. They would not feel visited, but invaded.

Instead, I feel it would be best if we attempt something a little more low-key: an invitation to sherry after Matins, perhaps, where we could find out which of them plays golf and who may like to join the Bridge Club. Gradually, as the sherry flowed, we would also seek to discover who would be prepared to go on the brass cleaning, flower arranging and grass cutting rotas, which are the traditionally recognised signs of committed Christians, at least in this parish.

Inevitably, this means that none of our church members will be joining your team as you visit the residents of the new tower block in your parish. Most of our congregation abandoned attempting stairs some years ago and their polite enquiries about which Hunt the residents belong to, and where they stable their horses, may lead to a rather stilted conversation.

You are, of course, all prepared to welcome your new residents with enthusiasm, excitement, and frenetic activity; our policy of polite indifference and brief conversations about the weather should soon help ours to settle in in no time.

Your loving uncle,

Eustace

ST JOHN'S INVITE YOU
TO JOIN US IN OUR

SOCIAL EVENTS



Saturday 18 June 2-4pm

Saturday 16 July 2-4pm

Friday 23 September @ 7pm

Friday 14 October @ 7pm

Friday 18 November @ 7pm

Friday 2 December @ 6pm

Saturday 3 December 10-3

Jubilee Summer Fair


Strawberry Tea

Harvest Supper

Thai Food Night

**An evening with Lady Dodd -
40 Years with Ken Dodd**

**Christmas Tree Festival &
Market at St John's**



ST JOHN'S CHURCH BIRKDALE

HARVEST SUPPER

*Friday 23 September
@ 7pm in the hall*

**COME AND JOIN US FOR
HUNGARIAN GOULASH
AND A DESSERT
BRING YOUR OWN DRINKS**

TICKETS £8 FROM CHRISTINE OR SALLY


Please let us know of any food allergies when booking

St John's & Overseas Mission


How we are helping with our mission giving

REVIVE INTERNATIONAL
RESTORING LIVES, RENEWING HOPE

We have been making an annual donation to Revive International for several years to help them support abused and abandoned children, mainly girls, in Olinda in Brazil. Our Mission Partner there until last year was Andy Roberts. He now works for CMS in the UK but the work in Olinda continues. Revive's work in Brazil has grown significantly over the past 12 months with both houses running close to capacity and the newly formed fostering team training up their first foster families to begin the first ever fostering service in the city. The partnership with Living Waters Church has blossomed which has led to numerous activities happening throughout the week including discipleship through sports and martial arts classes for the youth, dance classes, and even a community market. There is great potential to expand this work to reach more families with the good news of Jesus and work to prevent children falling into abusive situations requiring their entry into the care system.



WE WOULD LIKE YOU TO MEET OUR MISSION PARTNERS
MARCIO AND NOEMI



The call in action

<p>Name: Marcio and Noemi Ciechanovicz</p>	<p>St John's PCC decided at a recent meeting that we will continue to support CMS by requesting that our annual donation to their funds shall be used to assist the work of Marcio and Noemi who are based in Sao Paulo, Brazil.</p> <p>The PCC recognised the important link between what Marcio and Noemi feel called to do (to make disciples of young adults) and the need to spread the Gospel in this country to young adults. Unless a new generation of people learns about Jesus there is a bleak long term future for Christianity both in Birkdale and throughout the UK.</p> <p>Marcio and Noemi will be visiting Southport in September and will join us at our 10.30am Harvest Festival service on Sunday 24th September.</p> <p>Readers of THE WORD are invited to attend at church on that day. Whilst we are always pleased to see that our services are being shared via zoom by those who live far away it would be great if we could have a large congregation in church on that day to meet Marcio and Noemi and to hear about their work.</p>
<p>Location: Sao Paulo, Brazil</p>	
<p>Our call: To make disciples among young adults beyond the reach of traditional church and help build healthier communities</p>	
<p>Our role: To cultivate a strong presence in the community, connect with people and share the gospel in new ways as well as ministering to people's physical needs</p>	

WHY SUPPORT

MARCIO AND NOEMI

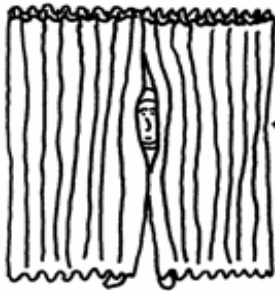
One of Church Mission Society's greatest strengths is our people. We believe all of God's people are called to God's mission. Some are called to be a faithful witness to Jesus where they are and some, like Marcio and Noemi, are called to share Jesus' love in word and deed overseas.

At Church Mission Society, we are excited by Marcio and Noemi's call and commitment to those beyond the reach of established church. People in Brazil are outwardly highly religious; 50 per cent define themselves as Catholic but only around five per cent are practising. 31 per cent are Evangelical, yet churches are dealing with massive challenges of nominalism, lack of Bible knowledge, and widespread prosperity theology. A further 10 per cent and counting define themselves as non-religious, many of whom have an aversion to traditional church, making them very difficult to reach with the gospel. Marcio and Noemi are ready to minister to and connect with people outside church, engaging with them in new and creative ways, sharing the gospel and making disciples as well as investing time in people's physical health. They are planning to do this through:

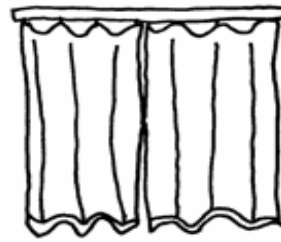
- ◆ applying CMS pioneer principles: seeing, imagining and dreaming while responding to the Holy Spirit in a new context and paving the way for others to do the same;
- ◆ connecting with people outside the church, developing outreach based on genuine relationships, with cultural relevance and meaningful spirituality adapted to the context;
- ◆ building community and sharing biblical spiritual practices from different Christian traditions to involve those that avoid church but are open to spirituality;
- ◆ helping to improve community health using Noemi's background as a nutritionist, possibly through classes, support groups and so on;
- ◆ partnering with the Brazilian Independent Presbyterian Church in the Du Park Project, in Indaiatuba's nature reserve;
- ◆ networking with other local church and community leaders with a similar vision, to encourage the practice of pioneer principles and

CURTAINS

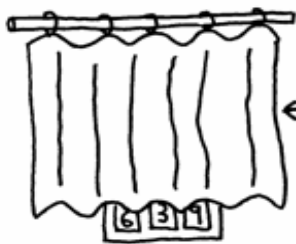
THESE ARE USED AS FOLLOWS



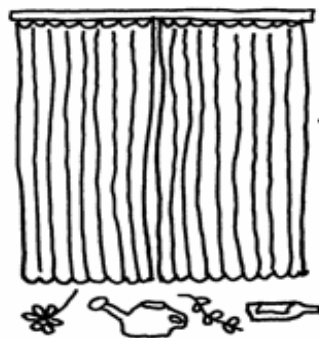
OVER THE VESTRY DOOR TO PRESERVE THE MODESTY OF THE CLERGY



OVER ITEMS TOO HOLY TO BE MENTIONED IN THIS CARTOON



OVER THE HYMN BOARD TO ADD A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF SUSPENSE



OVER THE AREA WHERE THE FLOWER LADIES KEEP THEIR BITS AND BOBS

CartoonChurch.com

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R A Austin, H M Roberts, D W Shove & M J Cope is an appointed representative of The National Farmers Union Mutual Insurance Society Limited (No. 111982). And an introducer to NFU Mutual Select Investments Limited, a member of the NFU Mutual group of companies.

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Take a Chance by John M. Shakespeare

It is sometimes said that the only certainty in life is death, but hopefully we will have a good spell of living before we go to meet our maker. I would like to take a look at what our Chances are in getting satisfaction out of the life we live.

The American entertainer Oprah Winfrey (b 1954) says about the future we all face "Luck is preparation in making opportunity". I wonder what Harry and Meghan made of that! The notion that luck has a major part to play in the Chances we take, I believe can be taken as a given.

To quote from Ecclesiastes (Ch 11 verses 1-2) "Send out your bread upon the water, for after many days you will get it back. Divide your means seven ways or even eight, for you do not know what disaster may happen on earth". I believe that this message is all about being ready to go and do good turns, the Chance being that you will be of assistance to someone without expecting any reward. Very often we take Chances for selfish motives without considering the possible consequence. This quote says take the Chance to do good deeds now since we do not know what tomorrow will bring.

Theories of Probability are largely based on experience and the use of mathematics to forecast the frequency and therefore the Chances that the required or sought after result will occur. The Law of Averages is often cited as the gambler's fallacious thinking! However in a series of random events, there is no guarantee that any number will occur with a forecast probability to order.

I see as a rather cryptic comment on Chance, made in the play "Julius Caesar", by William Shakespeare (1564-1616), "There is a tide in the affairs of men, which taken at the flood leads to fortune". This is a speech by Brutus when talking to Cassius. It seems to me that Brutus means to say that the key to success is all in the timing. Chance is therefore recognising when the motivation for acting i.e. the tidal flow is right, in order to seize the opportunity for action.

The Laws of nature illustrate the Chances taken in our day to day activities. The plethora of environmentalists seen on our television programmes continue to astound me with their findings. The Chances of survival in today's world of nature, where climate change is being cited to explain so many occurrences, leads to the real possibilities of the extinction of some species. Nature plays a part in our lives, where Life Insurance is based on your Chances of surviving to old age, linked to one's genes and inherited health factors.

I quote "To a Mouse", by the Scottish poet Robert Burns (1759-1796) "But Mousie, thou art no thy-lane In proving foresight may be vain, The best laid schemes of mice an' men Gang oft a-gley An' lea'e us naught but grief an' pain For promised joy!

He tells of how by Chance, while ploughing in a field he did upturn a mouse's nest to his dismay!

I finish with the proverb in relation to our life's Chances, "Life would be too smooth, if it had no rubs in it". So it is up to us to make the most out of the life we are living.

W CROSS R D

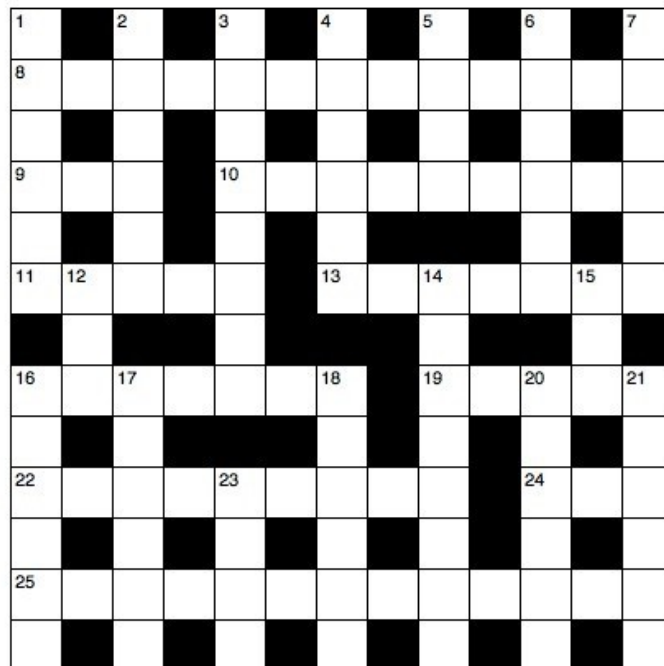
Solution on page 24

Across

- 8 One of the titles given to the Messiah in Isaiah's prediction (Isaiah 9:6) (6,2,5)
 9 International Nepal Fellowship (1,1,1)
 10 Single (1 Corinthians 7:27) (9)
 11 Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's seminal book about Soviet prison camps, *The — Archipelago* (5)
 13 Treachery (2 Kings 11:14) (7)
 16 Of India (anag.) (2,3,2)
 19 'God has put us apostles on display at the end of the procession, like men condemned to die in the —' (1 Corinthians 4:9) (5)
 22 Follower of a theological system characterized by a strong belief in predestination (9)
 24 'Put these old rags and worn-out clothes under your arms to— the ropes' (Jeremiah 38:12) (3)
 25 They brought together all the elders of the Israelites in Egypt (Exodus 4:29) (5,3,5)

Down

- 1 The season when kings 'go off to war' (2 Samuel 11:1) (6)
 2 Simon Peter's response to Jesus by the Sea of Galilee: 'Go away from me, Lord; I am a — man' (Luke 5:8) (6)
 3 Beaten with whips (1 Kings 12:11) (8)
 4 'You shall not — adultery' (Exodus 20:14) (6)
 5 Encourage (Hebrews 10:24) (4)
 6 Service of morning prayer in the Church of England (6)
 7 'Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for you, and — him in your heart by faith with thanksgiving' (4,2)



- 12 Run (anag.) (3)
 14 Member of 17th-century party that denied the right of autonomy to the Church (8)
 15 'We will triumph with our tongues; we—our lips' (Psalm 12:4) (3)
 16 Earnings (1 Corinthians 16:2) (6)
 17 'I rejoice greatly in the Lord that—you have renewed your concern for me' (Philippians 4:10) (2,4)
 18 How Paul described Philemon (Philemon 1) (6)
 20 Multiple territories under the rule of a single state (Daniel 11:4) (6)
 21 'You have been unfaithful; you have married foreign women,—to Israel's guilt' (Ezra 10:10) (6)
 23 This month (abbrev.) (4)

In our Book of Remembrance in August

- 2nd Elizabeth Jackson, 1960
 3rd Albert Wright, 1972
 4th Ernest Wright, 1966
 Robert Randles, 1999
 7th Betty Duffield, 2013
 8th Joan Tait, 1993
 9th Louisa Short, 2002
 10th May Evans, 1996
 11th Thomas Macfarlin, 1980
 Anne Hall, 1997

- 13th Cecele Welch, 2010
 15th Elizabeth Livesley, 1979
 Henry Baker, 2007
 17th James Foster, 1985
 19th Joan Horrocks, 1990
 24th Agnes Thomas, 1990
 26th Richard Livesley, 1967
 27th Eunice Wall, 1987

If any of our readers wish to have the name of a deceased relative inscribed in the Book of Remembrance please contact Stuart Baker.

Miscellaneous observations on daily life

A sharp tongue is the only edged tool that grows keener with constant use.
 – Washington Irving
 An optimist sees only the initial payment; the pessimist sees the future instalments and the upkeep. – Anon
 The condition upon which God hath given liberty to man is eternal vigilance. – John Philpot Curran

John the Baptist

This month, on the 29th, we remember John the Baptist. By all accounts, he had a rough life. He grew up in obscurity, lived in the desert on a diet of bugs. He wore itchy camel hair. He worked in the heat of the sun, constantly challenging people, and wading in and out of muddy Jordan waters to baptise many. Then he was arrested and kept in a reeking, infested dungeon until one day they cut his head off. Not much comfort in that life. Yet the Bible tells us that of all the people in history, no one has ever been born who was as great as he was. Why? Because of the unique calling God gave him, which was to prepare the way for the coming ministry of his Son, Jesus. Jesus did not have an easy life, either.

John
Baptist
Rough
Obscurity
Desert
Bugs
Camel
Heat
Sun
Challenge
Muddy
Jordan
Arrested
Dungeon
Head
Cut
History
Great
Unique
prepare

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

ACROSS: 8, Prince of Peace. 9, INF. 10, Unmarried. 11, Gulag. 13, Treason. 16, In aid of. 19, Arena. 22, Calvinist. 24, Pad. 25, Moses and Aaron.

DOWN: 1, Spring. 2, Sinful. 3, Scourged. 4, Commit. 5, Spur. 6, Matins. 7, Feed on. 12, Urn. 14, Erastian. 15, Own. 16, Income. 17, At last. 18, Friend. 20, Empire. 21, Adding. 23, Inst.

GOD in the Arts

The Revd Michael Burgess continues his series on God in the Arts with a look at 'The Transfiguration' by Fra Angelico. It is found in the Dominican convent of San Marco in Florence.

We behold the glory

TQ – Tingle Quotient – is the name given to those things that can produce a tingle down the spine or a frisson of excitement. It could be a piece of music or the sight of an evening sunset at sea or a newborn babe. We look, we hear, and what we look at or hear evokes a sense of wonder and amazement that has an almost physical effect on us. Something sublime unfolds before us producing delight and awe: a hint of glory that leads us to wonder and even to worship.

The monk who lived in cell no 6 at the Dominican convent of San Marco in Florence must have felt that when he entered his room and saw for the first time the fresco of the Transfiguration that Fra Angelico had painted. I am sure the sight would have stopped him in his tracks, just as Peter, James and John were stopped in their tracks as they beheld their Lord transfigured before them on the mount.



From 1436 Fra Angelico painted a whole series of frescoes for the convent from the High Altar to the Chapter House to the cells of the monks. Here in cell no 6 there is a restrained simplicity and directness about the Transfiguration. One of the three disciples looks out towards us, while the other two are caught up in wonder and awe as they look on Jesus with the faces of Moses and Elijah on either side.

Here Fra Angelico is not seeking to impress a wealthy patron: he is providing a focus for devotion and prayer for the monks of his community. The scene speaks to us of that sense of awe and reverence. On 6th August we celebrate the feast of the Transfiguration. The Gospel accounts relate that special moment of revelation to the inner group of disciples. The glory shown to them evoked a sense of wonder and marvel, but also a sense of loss. For the glory proved elusive and just out of human reach. The moment of revelation passed, and the disciples had to go down the mount again to meet the crying needs of the world, all but forgotten when they were with their Lord on the mountain top.

The monk in his cell would ponder the glory of Fra Angelico's fresco, knowing that he would be called from his cell to take up his monastic duties. But the painting would go with him to sustain and nurture his life. It is the same with us: we have moments of glory. But they pass, and we must return to our daily lives. As we look on this month's painting, we sense that glory and wonder which can sustain us through life. As Thomas Jones says in his poem on this episode:

*Like a pearl we hold
Close to our hearts
what we have heard and seen.*

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.

Keeping Calm In The Storm

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

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



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

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

Knowing some science can help us to trust God. A Being who created the whole universe, sustaining the wonderfully creative processes that produced diverse life on earth, must be both extremely powerful and extremely wise. The God who can both calm the waves and walk on them must be in complete control of the things He made. When this knowledge goes hand in hand with experience of God's intimate love for us and care for us in every situation that we find ourselves in, I am reassured that He's got things in hand. I will always need help from others to pray faithfully in stormy situations, but hopefully I've seen enough now not to panic for too long.

Time (and my closest friends) will tell!

Ukrainian soldiers treat Bible like 'a life-saver'

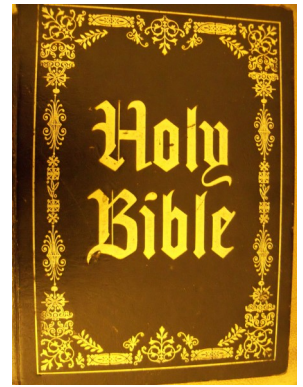
Since the war broke out more than six months ago, Bible Society has been making the Bible available to soldiers as well as civilians in Ukraine.

Recently, Serhii, the commander of a military unit, told Bible Society colleagues in Ukraine how vital the Bible is to his troops. He said, "It is very important for soldiers to have the Bible. Things are very tough at times and many soldiers are praying to God.

"They may have never attended a church before. They may not have believed in God before. But now they are turning to Him. Many of them treat the Bible as a life-saver.

"I have a friend, an officer. He also received a Bible from our chaplain. Sometimes he faces situations that seem to be desperate. He turns to the Bible....and he says, 'You wouldn't believe it. Every time I find an answer. The Bible has a way out! I do as the Bible says and everything works well.'"

Serhii added, "So, for those people who are facing enormous pressures on the frontlines, who experience hardship, both physical and moral, when they have this Bible in their pocket, when it gets very hard, a soldier can open it and find words that he needs to hear at that very moment. It is very important. Thank you!"



the elderberries gardening club.



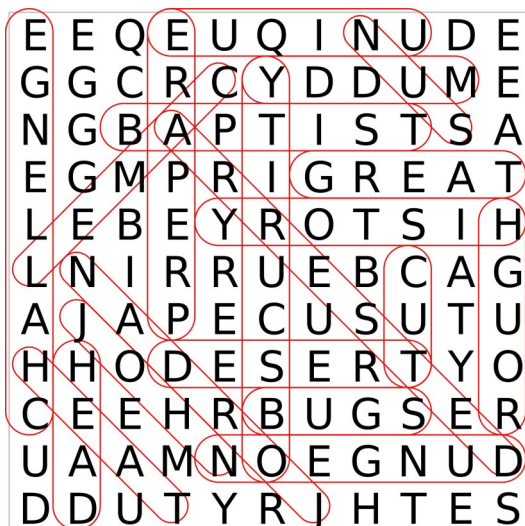
The group meet from 10.30am-noon on **the second Wednesday of every month** at Saint John's Church on Saint John's Road in Birkdale.

The club offers talks from guest speakers, trips to historical houses and gardens, and social events.

To find out more, email elderberriesgardening@gmail.com or call Shelley Lewis-Lavender on [01704 560690](tel:01704560690).

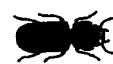
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“Owing to our failure to secure a holiday-relief organist the next hymn will also be sung to the tune *Chopsticks*.”

Joining the Sunday morning services and Thursday evening prayers by zoom or by telephone

To join the **weekly Sunday morning services** by **ZOOM**:
The Identification Number every Sunday will be: 827 7997 1592
The Password every Sunday will be: 860066

To join the **weekly Sunday morning services** by **TELEPHONE**:
The telephone number you must ring is: 0131 460 1196
The Meeting Identification Number every Sunday will be: 827 7997 1592
When prompted to do so, enter that number and then press HASH (#)
The Password every Sunday will be: 860066.
When prompted to do so, enter that number and then press HASH (#)

To join the **fortnightly Thursday evening prayers** at 7.30pm by **ZOOM**:
The Identification Number every Thursday will be: 879 8059 1143
The Password every Thursday will be: 966358

To join the **fortnightly Thursday evening prayers** at 7.30pm by **TELEPHONE**:
The telephone number you must ring is: 0131 460 1196
The Meeting Identification Number every Thursday will be: 879 8059 1143.
When prompted to do so, enter that number and then press HASH (#)
The Password every Thursday will be 966358.
When prompted to do so, enter that number and then press HASH (#)

BUT PLEASE CHECK YOUR CALL PACKAGE CHARGES WITH YOUR PROVIDER
IF YOU NEED ANY HELP: Please contact Clive or Sally or Lucy for any further details you require.

Hearing the Word by telephone

If you would like to hear a recording of the Sunday morning talks telephone **0151-329-2184** at any hour of the day or night.
The calls are **free**. Each talk lasts about 15 minutes and is available for a week.
Each recording becomes available during the afternoon of the Sunday on which it is given.

Prayer for August

Dear Heavenly Father,
In this month of August, thank you for your presence. Whether we're at home or on holiday, in one place or travelling, working or resting, happy or sad, young, middle-aged or elderly, you are with us.

As we journey through the different stages of this life on earth, help us to know that wonderful assurance of your presence, by putting our trust in Jesus now.

No matter what ups and downs come our way, we will never be alone. You are with us, sharing it all day by day - and leading us home.

Thank you, Lord of all our journeys, In Jesus' name. Amen.

By Daphne Kitching



★HAPPY★ To
BIRTHDAY!

Deleted. Not relevant for publication to the wider public



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

The Last Laughs

Wit and wisdom of Tutu

Six months after the death of Desmond Tutu, Graham Kings tells a story the former Archbishop of Cape Town liked to use to illustrate the problems at home. Politicians from South Africa and Zambia were discussing their governments and the Zambian boasted about his wonderful ministry of naval affairs. "But you have no navy," the South African replied. "Zambia is landlocked. How can you have a ministry of naval affairs?" The Zambian smiled and said: "In South Africa you have a ministry of justice, don't you?"

So far so good

So far today, God, I've done all right. I haven't gossiped, haven't lost my temper, haven't been greedy, grumpy, nasty, selfish, or over-indulgent. I'm really glad about that. But in a few minutes, God, I'm going to get out of bed, and from then on I'm going to need Your help. Amen

For Whom the Bell Tolled



Hard to believe, but there is an annual Ernest Hemingway Lookalike Contest at Sloppy Joe's Bar in Key West, Florida. This picture shows the 2022 winner being congratulated by previous holders of the trophy.

It just shows the Importance of Being Ernest!

When Charlie Chaplin entered a Charlie Chaplin look-alike contest in 1920 he should have polled pretty high. A young Bob Hope had won a Charlie Chaplin contest in Cleveland, Ohio. Chaplin looked more like Chaplin than Hope ever did. But the judges at the competition at the Liberty Theatre in Bellingham, Washington, were a tough crowd to please. Miss Mary Pickford recounted that "Charlie Chaplin was one day at a fair in the United States, where a principal attraction was a competition as to who could best imitate the Charlie Chaplin walk. The real Charlie Chaplin thought there might be a chance for him so he entered for the performance, minus his celebrated moustache and his boots. He was a frightful failure and came in twentieth."