



THE WORD

Editor: Stuart Baker: stjohnbirkdaletheword@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. 253

NEW YEAR EDITION

JANUARY 2024

ST. JOHN'S PARISH CHURCH

God Centred, Relationship Driven and Life Transforming



In 2024 St John's will start a new chapter in its life of ministry to the people of our parish in conjunction with the other Birkdale parishes. We look forward to welcoming, in due course, Rev. Jennie Hardy and we hope that she will soon get to know our congregation and parishioners and will be inspired by the direction which God has called her to take.

The Editor and Christine wish all of our readers, wherever they may be, a very happy New Year and we hope to see you at our Sunday worship as often as you are able to attend.

Help wanted

The spectacular festival of Christmas Trees will end on **4th January**. The trees will be undressed and taken down and the church will need to be cleaned.

This is quite a time-consuming job. The trees will have shed a lot of needles. It would be greatly appreciated if our readers could spare a couple of hours at 9.00am on 4th January to help with tidying up and putting all the movable pieces of furniture back in their correct places. It does not require any great skill or strength: just your willingness to join in.

However, we shall also need to move the boards on which the trees are standing, and this is quite heavy work, so we make a plea for some strong parishioners (of either gender!) to come and assist with this.

Tea, coffee and biscuits will be provided.

A New Year's Resolution

To begin with oneself, but not to end with oneself; to start from oneself, but not to aim at oneself; to comprehend oneself, but not to be preoccupied with oneself.

**FOR ALL ENQUIRIES TO OR ABOUT ST. JOHN'S CHURCH PLEASE CONTACT US
BY EMAIL info@stjohnsbirkdale.co.uk OR PHONE: 07732 691542**

WHO'S WHO AT ST. JOHN'S

Priest (retired):	Rev. Roy Doran (572387)	Church of England	
Reader:	Mrs. Christine Baker (560518)	Children's Society:	Mrs. Sylvia Kent (564071)
Churchwardens:	Clive Morris (564206) Tim Wright (553977)	Mothers' Union:	Mrs. Linda Caton (564737)
Wardens' Assistant::	Miss Lucy Wright (553977)	Girl Guides	Mrs. Janette Law (565951)
PCC Treasurer:	Mrs. Sylvia Kent (564071)	St. John's Brownies:	Mrs. Helen Jones and
PCC Secretary:	Mrs. Sally Wright (553977)	Brownie Guiders:	Mrs. Lesley Scott
Parish Hall Secretary:	Mrs. Jean Morris (564206)	St. John's Rainbows:	Mrs. Lesley Scott
Electoral Roll Officer:	Stuart Harris (563789)	Church Flowers:	Mrs. Cath Whiteside (568874)
Deanery Synod Reps:	Clive Morris (564206) Tim Wright (553977) Stuart Baker (560518)	Magazine Editor:	Stuart Baker (560518)
Safeguarding & Recruitment:	Mrs. Abbie Holden (07961003359)	Magazine Printer:	Mrs. Christine Baker (560518)
		Notice boards, I.T, Website developer, Publicity designer:	Mrs. Sally Wright (553977)
		Buildings Inspector:	David Halsall

THE WORD in 2024

This is a reminder that annual subscriptions for **THE WORD** are now due. We thank the many of our readers who have already subscribed by cash or cheque or by online bank transfers, but some have not yet done so.

Payment can be made by cash (to Stuart Baker or to Sylvia Kent); or by cheque payable to St John's Church Birkdale; or by online bank transfer to PCC of St John's Church Birkdale (sort code 60-20-11, a/c number 86882120).

If for any reason any of our readers do not wish to continue to subscribe, please contact the editor (Stuart) and let him know. We shall be sorry to lose you.

Please remember that this is **your** magazine. We try to make **THE WORD** informative, up to date, thought-provoking, spiritual (in parts) and agreeably humorous (in other parts). The views which are expressed in articles submitted by our readers are the views of the authors and are not to be regarded as the views of the PCC or the editor. If you would like to contribute any material for inclusion please send it to the editor.

Protecting the Environment: The Church of England leads the way



...the good news is - I've found a way of heating the church on unwanted chip-fat!...

Thursday Evening Prayers on 4th and 18th January on zoom.

The meetings start at 7.30pm and last half an hour.

If there is anything which readers would like to be included in the prayers please contact Roy Doran, Christine Baker, Clive Morris, or Sally, Tim or Lucy Wright.

The number of those joining these prayer meetings has gradually increased. Do join us if you can. See page 31 for details about logging in on zoom by computer or by telephone.



St John's Church Birkdale

BIBLE STUDY GROUP

2nd & 4th
Wednesdays
2-4pm

St John's small hall

Growth Groups

2nd & 4th Wednesdays, 7.30pm
@ 32 Hartley Crescent

*Finding out more
together*



WE'D LOVE YOU TO JOIN US

*We believe in
the power of
prayer*

PRAYER TIME @ ST JOHN'S

Led by the leadership team

**1st and 3rd Thursdays
7.30pm**

SEE WEBSITE FOR ZOOM DETAILS



FRIDAY

Coffee, Cake & Chat

ST JOHN'S CHURCH, ST JOHN'S RD, BIRKDALE PR8 4JP

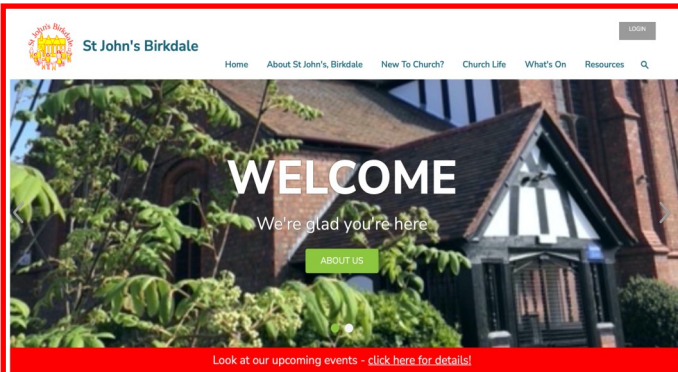
ST JOHN'S CHURCH BIRKDALE

MONTHLY
2ND FRIDAYS
10.30AM

**NEXT MEETING:
12TH JANUARY**



WHAT'S ON AT ST. JOHN'S



Visit our 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**



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

12 January

9 February

15 March

12 April

10 May

The film titles will be displayed on the church noticeboards.

If you wish to come, please sign the list in church or contact Christine on 01704-560518

£5 to include tea, coffee and homemade cakes

ST JOHN'S INVITE YOU TO JOIN US IN OUR

SOCIAL EVENTS

If you'd like further details or to book a place please contact Christine 07821 982477 or Sally 07800 550097



Friday 26 January @ 7pm

Friday 23 February @ 7pm

Date to be confirmed

Friday 19 April @ 7pm

Friday 17 May @ 6.30pm

Date to be confirmed

Saturday 20 July @ 2pm

Friday 20 September @ 7pm

Friday 18 October @ 7pm

Saturday 16 November @ 7pm

Friday 6 December 6-9pm

Saturday 7 December 10-3pm

Burns Night Supper

Late, Late Pancake Party

Andy Dean's Quiz Night

Italian Food Night

Car Treasure Hunt

Summer Fair & Afternoon Tea

Strawberry Tea

Harvest Supper

Music 'in the' Hall

Barn Dance and Bangers

Christmas Tree Festival and Christmas Fair

YOUNG ADULT SOCIALS

2023 - 2024

Sunday 5th November

River of Light @ Albert Dock

Friday 8th December

Christmas Games Night @ Lucy's

Saturday 20th January

Pantomine Rapunzel

February TBC

Pancake Party @ Lucy's

Saturday 23rd March

Pottery Painting and Cafe

Sunday 14th April

Pinewoods Walk and Picnic

St John's Church, Birkdale

Worship
on the
First
Sunday
of Epiphany



**SUNDAY 7th JANUARY
HOLY COMMUNION**

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

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

Collect for the First Sunday of Epiphany

Eternal Father, who at the baptism of Jesus revealed him to be your Son, anointing him with the Holy Spirit: grant to us, who are born again by water and the Spirit, that we may be faithful to our calling as your adopted children; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

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

**Jesus -
The Miracle Worker**

The Reading: Mark ch4, vv35-41

35 On the evening of that same day Jesus said to his disciples, "Let us go across to the other side of the lake."

36 So they left the crowd; the disciples got into the boat in which Jesus was already sitting, and they took him with them. Other boats were there too.

37 Suddenly a strong wind blew up, and the waves began to spill over into the boat, so that it was about to fill with water.

38 Jesus was in the back of the boat, sleeping with his head on a pillow. The disciples woke him up and said, "Teacher, don't you care that we are about to die?"

39 Jesus stood up and commanded the wind, "Be quiet!" and he said to the waves, "Be still!" The wind died down, and there was a great calm.

40 Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Why are you frightened? Do you still have no faith?"

41 But they were terribly afraid and began to say to one another, "Who is this man? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

Christians kidnapped in Nigeria: please remember them in prayer

Last year a report by UK parliamentarians heard that almost 90 per cent of all the Christians kidnapped worldwide are abducted in Nigeria. According to the charity, Aid to the Church in Need, about 5,200 Christians were kidnapped in Nigeria between January 2021 and June 2022. And last year another 23 clergy and church workers were abducted, and several murdered. Lagos-based research group SBMI Intel put the death toll among clergy even higher. They report that 39 Catholic priests were killed in 2022. Protestants have also been targeted.



Late last year it was reported that kidnappers killed a pastor after receiving a 1m naira ransom payment from his church. *Morning Star News* reported that the Rev David Musa, of ECWA church in Lokoja County, was killed after being held for three days. He was shot dead after the agreed ransom had been paid.

Worship on the
Second Sunday of
Epiphany

SUNDAY 14th JANUARY
10.30am service IN CHURCH
and via zoom & phone.

Collect for the Second Sunday of Epiphany

Almighty God, in Christ you make all things new: transform the poverty of our nature by the riches of your grace, and in the renewal of our lives make known your heavenly glory; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

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

**Jesus—
The Miracle Worker**

The Reading: Mark ch2, vv1-12

1 A few days later Jesus went back to Capernaum, and the news spread that he was at home.
2 So many people came together that there was no room left, not even out in front of the door. Jesus was preaching the message to them
3 when four men arrived, carrying a paralyzed man to Jesus.
4 Because of the crowd, however, they could not get the man to him. So they made a hole in the roof right above the place where Jesus was. When they had made an opening, they let the man down, lying on his mat.
5 Seeing how much faith they had, Jesus said to the paralyzed man, "My son, your sins are forgiven."
6 Some teachers of the Law who were sitting there thought to themselves,
7 "How does he dare talk like this? This is blasphemy! God is the only one who can forgive sins!"
8 At once Jesus knew what they were thinking, so he said to them, "Why do you think such things?
9 Is it easier to say to this paralyzed man, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, pick up your mat, and walk'?
10 I will prove to you, then, that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins." So he said to the paralyzed man,
11 "I tell you, get up, pick up your mat, and go home!"
12 While they all watched, the man got up, picked up his mat, and hurried away. They were all completely amazed and praised God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this!"



**Midweek Book of Common
Prayer Holy Communion**

WEDNESDAY
17th JANUARY
10.30am service
IN CHURCH

Worship on the Third
Sunday of Epiphany

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

Collect for the Third Sunday of Epiphany

God of all mercy, your Son proclaimed good news to the poor, release to the captives, and freedom to the oppressed: anoint us with your Holy Spirit and set all your people free to praise you in Christ our Lord.

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

**Jesus -
The Amazing Teacher**

The Reading: Luke ch8, vv5-15

5 "Once there was a man who went out to sow grain. As he scattered the seed in the field, some of it fell along the path, where it was stepped on, and the birds ate it up.

6 Some of it fell on rocky ground, and when the plants sprouted, they dried up because the soil had no moisture.

7 Some of the seed fell among thorn bushes, which grew up with the plants and choked them.

8 And some seeds fell in good soil; the plants grew and bore grain, one hundred grains each."

And Jesus concluded, "Listen, then, if you have ears!"

9 His disciples asked Jesus what this parable meant,

10 and he answered, "The knowledge of the secrets of the Kingdom of God has been given to you, but to the rest it comes by means of parables, so that they may look but not see, and listen but not understand.

11 "This is what the parable means: the seed is the word of God.

12 The seeds that fell along the path stand for those who hear; but the Devil comes and takes the message away from their hearts in order to keep them from believing and being saved.

13 The seeds that fell on rocky ground stand for those who hear the message and receive it gladly. But it does not sink deep into them; they believe only for a while but when the time of testing comes, they fall away.

14 The seeds that fell among thorn bushes stand for those who hear; but the worries and riches and pleasures of this life crowd in and choke them, and their fruit never ripens.

15 The seeds that fell in good soil stand for those who hear the message and retain it in a good and obedient heart, and they persist until they bear fruit.

Worship on the Fourth
Sunday of Epiphany

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

Collect for the Fourth Sunday of Epiphany

God our creator, who in the beginning commanded the light to shine out of darkness: we pray that the light of the glorious gospel of Christ may dispel the darkness of ignorance and unbelief, shine into the hearts of all your people, and reveal the knowledge of your glory in the face of Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

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

**Jesus -
The Amazing Teacher**

The Reading: Luke ch14, vv15-24

15 When one of the guests sitting at the table heard this, he said to Jesus, "How happy are those who will sit down at the feast in the Kingdom of God!"

16 Jesus said to him, "There was once a man who was giving a great feast to which he invited many people.

17 When it was time for the feast, he sent his servant to tell his guests, 'Come, everything is ready!'

18 But they all began, one after another, to make excuses. The first one told the servant, 'I have bought a field and must go and look at it; please accept my apologies.'

19 Another one said, 'I have bought five pairs of oxen and am on my way to try them out; please accept my apologies.'

20 Another one said, 'I have just married, and for that reason I cannot come.'

21 The servant went back and told all this to his master. The master was furious and said to his servant, 'Hurry out to the streets and alleys of the town, and bring back the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame.'

22 Soon the servant said, 'Your order has been carried out, sir, but there is room for more.'

23 So the master said to the servant, 'Go out to the country roads and lanes and make people come in, so that my house will be full.'

24 I tell you all that none of those who were invited will taste my dinner!"

Notes for your Diary

St John's Church, Birkdale

BURNS NIGHT

Themed Supper



Food and Entertainment



Bring your
own drinks

FRIDAY 26 JANUARY
IN THE HALL @ 7PM
TICKETS £10

Please let us know of food allergies when booking

GREAT CHIEFTAIN O' THE PUDDING RACE!

Now that Christmas is but a distant memory and you are trying to fulfil or forget your New Year Resolutions come and join us once again on a "broad, bricht, moonlit nicht" when we shall be thrilled by the skirl of the pipes on the arrival of the Haggis and enjoy some homemade entertainment in celebration of The Bard of Scotland.

The fun will commence at 7pm. The supper will be Haggis with neaps (mashed turnip) and tatties (mashed potato) followed by Cranachan (a delicious Scottish dessert made with cream, raspberries and a hint of whisky). Gluten free available on request.

Alternative to Haggis: Roast Chicken (speak to Christine Baker or Sally Wright when booking: they **MUST** be given advance warning if you want this alternative).

Themed clothing is **NOT** obligatory but it will add to the festivity if you can wear anything which conveys at least a suggestion of Scotland. A prize will be given to the wearer of the most interesting item of clothing or headgear.

Tickets are available from Christine and Sally. Book early to avoid disappointment!

Only 10 days late... Hold the date

St John's Late, Late Pancake Party will be on Friday 23rd February.

By all means, give up chocolate and smoking for Lent, but consider making an exception for pancakes. Do come and join us for this very friendly annual event. Tickets will be available in the New Year.



CHRISTMAS MARKET ROUND UP AND ROGUES' GALLERY

Sylvia Kent writes:

It would be very remiss of me to leave 2023 behind without expressing my very grateful thanks and appreciation to EVERYONE who helped in any way, in either preparing and decorating the halls and church ready for the Christmas Festival, or by all the hard work and taking part in making the event such a success and raising nearly £2,400.00. But of course, none of this would have been possible without all of you who came along and supported the many stalls. It was a wonderful atmosphere which was enjoyed by everybody, and a welcome addition to see some new stalls as well as our usual favourites!



Each year I do not fail to acknowledge and thank all the time, effort and dedication of the Team which takes place throughout the year. Without them we could not achieve such a fantastic result and so I pass on my sincere thanks once again to them all.

All that now remains is for me to wish you all a happy and peaceful New Year as we look forward to exciting plans for 2024.



Ed. If you missed the event but wish to make a contribution it is not too late to do so! Sylvia Kent will be delighted to receive any "last minute" donations. We thank Sylvia for organising the very successful Market, and Judith Foster for making all the arrangements for the Christmas Tree Festival.

St John's Christingle Service on 10th December

On a chilly and wet Sunday evening on 10th December it was wonderful that more than 70 adults and children came to our Christingle Service. After making their Christingles they formed a line around the perimeter of the nave and held their lighted candles in the darkness of the church when the electric lights were switched off.

Christingles were first used in 1747 in Germany. A bishop called Johannes de Watteville was taking a service during Advent and he gave all the children who came a candle with a red ribbon around it. He wanted to give them a simple sign that reminded them of the happiness that can come from Jesus. In 1968, Christingles were used in a church service to raise money for a charity called The Children's Society. Those Christingles were made using oranges, sweets and sticks as well as the ribbon and candle which the bishop had used before.



A Christingle begins with an orange, which is used to represent the whole world. A red ribbon is placed around the outside of the orange. This is a symbol of Jesus' love and how he gave his life to save humankind. Four sticks are stuck into the orange to represent the four seasons: winter, spring, summer and autumn. The sweets or pieces of fruit on the end of the sticks represent the fruits of the earth and the gifts people are given by God. The candle is a symbol of Jesus as the Light of the World, and the Christian belief that he brought light to the world with the love he shared with everyone, regardless of who they were.



Concentrating hard on making Christingles

See page 12 for an article about how *The Light of The World* is illustrated in one of our church windows.



Shining a Light

From the Archives: Windows in Our Church

This month we shall look at the windows in tribute to motherhood.



In the north wall of our church there are four stained glass windows. Two of them were given by a member of the congregation of the church in 1938 as a memorial of gratitude "for all who have worthily filled the vocation of motherhood." So said the Vicar, Rev. Edwin Owen Hughes, at the Annual Parochial Meeting on 26th January 1938, as reported in the Southport Visiter the next day.

These windows were appropriately installed near what was then the Children's Corner in the church and were dedicated in March of that year on the morning of Mothering Sunday by the Rev. Canon Bezzant of Liverpool Cathedral.



The windows were made in 1937 by Abbott & Company (Lancaster) Limited of St John's Studio, Lancaster*. The company was established 1860 by the plumber and glazier William Abbott (died 1904). Nothing of their stained glass is known before 1900. The business continued under his sons and grandsons, and their chief designer was I.E. Singleton, who was still at the firm in the 1950s. The early work of the firm suggests the influence of the Arts & Crafts Movement. By the 1950s about half of all their work was for Nonconformist, and mainly Methodist, churches. **(Acknowledgement for the research by Peter Jones)*

The window on the left (above) is a representation of the famous painting "The Light of The World" by the pre-Raphaelite artist William Holman Hunt. It depicts Jesus preparing to knock on an overgrown and long-unopened door, illustrating Revelation Ch.3 v.20, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice and open the door I will come in to him and will sup with him and he with Me." The door has no external handle and can therefore only be opened from the inside. The door, like our hearts, must be opened to Jesus from within. The window on the right (above) illustrates the story of Mary washing the feet of Jesus.

What we can learn from history: The Southport Visiter also reported that at the Annual Meeting In January 1938 the Electoral Roll had increased by 20 from the previous year bringing the new total electorate to 584, a number which would now be astonishing. St John's has never been capable of accommodating more than about 300 worshippers, so it must have been the case that many of those who were on the Electoral Roll were regularly conspicuously absent from the pews. Indeed, at the Annual Meeting in January 1934 one of the Wardens, Mr F. Hinds, said that the only thing he had against the church was that there were "too many regular irregular attenders and that another 50 people present at each service would put heart into the vicar and wardens."

Newspaper reports at about that time reveal that despite the large number of people on the Roll the church was always in need of funds and the PCC decided in 1934 to hold annual Rummage Sales to raise money for church maintenance. This demonstrates that **a church's sustainability depends not only on the numbers who can be persuaded to be on the Electoral Roll but more importantly the commitment of those people to making and maintaining a place of worship as the centre of ministry within the parish and their regular attendance to worship together.** Our numbers are much smaller now, but most on our Electoral Roll are regular worshippers at our church and support it. *Stuart Baker*

A New Year Promise to our readers – from the Editor of **THE WORD**

Some of you have noticed a few typos in the magazine now and then. To improve this, for 2024 I am using a new set of rules for editing. They are as follows:

1. Verbs HAS to agree with their subjects.
2. Prepositions are not words to end sentences with.
3. And don't start a sentence with a conjunction.
4. It is wrong to ever split an infinitive.
5. Avoid cliches like the plague. (They're old hat.)
6. Also, always avoid annoying alliteration.
7. Be more or less specific.
8. Parenthetical remarks (however relevant) are (usually) unnecessary.
9. Also too, never, ever use repetitive redundancies.
10. No sentence fragments.
11. Contractions aren't necessary and shouldn't be used.
12. Foreign words and phrases are not *apropos*.
13. Do not be redundant; do not use more words than necessary; it's highly superfluous.
14. One should NEVER generalise.
15. Comparisons are as bad as cliches.
16. Eschew ampersands & abbreviations, etc.
17. One-word sentences? Eliminate.
18. Analogies in writing are like feathers on a snake.
19. The passive voice is to be ignored.
20. Eliminate commas, that are, not necessary.
21. Never use a big word when a diminutive one would suffice.
22. Use words correctly, irregardless of how others use them.
23. Understatement is always the absolute best way to put forth earth shaking ideas.
24. Eliminate quotations. As Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "I hate quotations. Tell me what you know."
25. If you've heard it once, you've heard it a thousand times: Resist hyperbole; not one writer in a million can use it correctly.
26. Puns are for children, not groan readers.
27. Even IF a mixed metaphor sings, it should be derailed.
28. Who needs rhetorical questions?
29. Exaggeration is a billion times worse than understatement.

And the last one...?

More Magazine Mistakes... but (almost) never in **THE WORD!**

We are delighted to announce that the youth group has raised almost £500 for drug abuse.

Correction: The following typo appeared in our last magazine: 'Lunch will be gin at 12:15.' Please correct to read '12 noon.'

Any church member over 18 is welcome to join our new lay ministry programme. It requires minimal training and time: just six weekly classes of about 200 hours each Tuesday night.

Remember the church jumble sale. We have a gents three-speed bicycle, and also two ladies for sale, in good running order.

Please place your donation in the envelope, along with the deceased person you want remembered.

This afternoon there will be a meeting in the north and south ends of the church. Children will be baptized at both ends.

Come to our church lunch on Sunday at 12.30pm. Prayer and medication to follow.

The rosebud on the altar this morning is to announce the birth of David Belzer; the sin of Rev. and Mrs. Julius Belzer.



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

On How To Run Your Diary For 2024

The Rectory,
St James the Least of All

My dear Nephew Darren,

So, you have just attended a course on 'Diary Management', to get you prepared for another year. If you had visited me, I could have told you all you need to know in half the time. Allow me to provide you with useful information which was probably not provided in your conference hand-outs.

First, buy the smallest diary you can find. Large blank pages only encourage you to fill them with too many appointments; the smaller the page, the easier it can be made to appear that your days are fully booked.

Second, make sure that it is of a size that will conveniently fit into any pocket. When dates are being arranged for subsequent meetings, you can theatrically start going through jacket, trouser and overcoat pockets. By the time you discover it was in your briefcase all along, all the dates will have been fixed and no one will notice you never got any of them.

Third, adopt your own private code for bookings. This means that any parishioner looking over your shoulder and seeing '1.30pm PLS' or '7.30pm WTD' will assume you are attending important church meetings. The fact that they mean 'Post Lunch Sleep' and 'Walk The Dog' will be known to you alone – although do have alternative possibilities for your acronyms should you ever be challenged. My congregation know I am assiduous in attending the 'Pauline Letters Seminars' and my membership of the 'World Theology Directorate' is of many years standing.

Fourth, record everything in pencil so that once you return home, you can rub most of it out and can then deny you knew anything about those meetings you were supposed to attend – and to prove it, you can show the blank page in your diary.

Fifth, put someone else's address inside your diary. Should you ever have to resort to the ultimate act and need to lose it, you do not want some Good Samaritan returning it to you from the churchyard compost heap.

So, you see, your day of flip charts and group discussions were quite wasted – and I would gladly have presented my course for half their price.

Your loving uncle,
Eustace



News from our Mission Partners in Brazil

Marcio Ciechanovicz and Noemi Celeti



Before we get further into our letter, we have some news to share. As we look towards the end of 2023, we want to thank you wholeheartedly for supporting us – your prayers and gifts are incredibly important in helping us to serve here.

Over the past few months we have been working in the southern part of the ecological park, in front of a neighbourhood known as Tancredo. We have been present to play, do activities, tell Bible stories and share food with the kids who are often left on their own. We've started meeting their families and have felt a burden to remain in this area. Drug use is rampant and happens in broad daylight as the park is often a place of trafficking. Some of the children who play with us have parents who are users themselves. Many of the families are broken, with a parent in jail, mums raising children alone, children who have to live with other relatives, and children suffering from neglect.

Our hearts have felt so heavy as some of the children have opened up to our team members. One girl said to us, "Please don't go, why can't you stay here more? I don't want to go home. There's nothing to do there." Another pair, a brother and sister, walked up to a member of our team and said, "Please can we go away with you in your car? We've decided that you can be our new mother!"

As we practise being a presence in the park, we serve cake and coffee for the passers-by and some of them stop and open up about their journey of homelessness or addiction. The children's families have started coming down to the park and participating in the activities. We had loads of fun celebrating Children's Day in October and seeing parents joining in the sack races and games. Some of them have said to us, "This part of the park is forgotten, nobody cares for us. What the Du Park project is doing for our kids is really important."

We long to see change, to see a safer park and to see people free of addiction. Please pray with us that we can grow in our relationships with these families. The team plans to carry out an appreciative inquiry to discover the assets within the neighbourhood and help them understand what they can do to take responsibility for change. How exciting to take an active part in facilitating this community development process! Most of these families don't go to church. A few do, but have a hard time understanding how to apply what the pastor says on a Sunday to their day-to-day lives. We hope to be church to this group and that as we experience God's presence together in the park, and learn more about the good news, that this will bring transformation to this community.

We're also in the process of brainstorming and preparing a project for the boat structure that sits right in the middle of the park (500 metres from the Tancredo neighbourhood). There is a huge number of teenagers and young adults who like to hang out there, drink and smoke weed. We would love to be able to use the boat to create a safe space where they can chat about different topics, talk about their mental health, explore spirituality and where we can encourage them to be agents of change in their communities. We pray that God will use all of us to be agents of his peace and to take his presence wherever we go in this season. We feel so blessed to have you as part of our Du Park team, encouraging and supporting us! We wish you a season filled with God's gracious favour, his enduring love and perfect peace! Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Wise Men and St Paul meet Jesus

The Wise Men and St Paul were both on trips when they first encountered Jesus, but how different those trips were! The Wise Men, whom we remember on Epiphany (6th Jan) were seeking the One for whom the Star shone, and came to Bethlehem to worship him. St Paul, whose conversion we remember this month (26th Jan), was on his way to Damascus, seeking to kill those who worshipped Jesus. When the Wise Men encountered the Baby Jesus, they worshipped Him and gave Him gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. When St Paul, the proud, fanatical Pharisee, encountered Jesus, he fell blinded on the road, and then worshipped Him by giving Him the rest of his life. St Paul endured years of suffering and hardships in his work as the great apostle to the Gentiles. His mighty faith in Christ has kindled similar belief in many hundreds of millions of people down the centuries.

Wise
Men
Trips
Paul
Encounter

Jesus
Different
Epiphany
Star
Shone

Bethlehem
Conversion
Seeking
Kill
Baby

Gifts
Gold
Proud
Blinded
Road

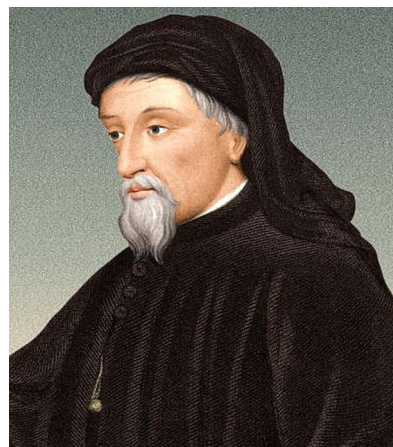
Suffering
Apostle

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

As the New Year begins.... Turn your love

... Turn your love to Him, who in His love
Upon a cross, our souls to save today,
First died, then rose, and sits in heaven above;
And now will fail no-one, I dare to say,
That will His holy heart upon Him lay!
And since He best to love is, and most meek,
Why should we feigned love go to seek?

By Geoffrey Chaucer (1343 - 1400)



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REVIVE INTERNATIONAL

RESTORING LIVES, RENEWING HOPE

St John's has been supporting Revive International for many years in their work in Olinda, Brazil, looking after abused, neglected and abandoned children. Their work in finding fostering placements and people who will become adopters for these very disadvantaged children has continued and expanded, and we have received messages telling us about the project:

"Just a quick one from me (Andy Roberts) to update you on a few things at Revive and to wish you a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Firstly, thank you all so much for your donations this past year. These have helped keep the second home open for a few extra months so that the team could complete a smooth transition to the fostering service. Over the past year or so, 25 babies or under 5s have passed through the second house. All of them are now back with loving families either through adoption or family reintegration.

I'll remember little baby 'H' who came to Revive as an abandoned baby. She had a tough time in those first few weeks of life including actually stopping breathing a few times which led to a number of weeks in hospital. A parent's worst nightmare. The Revive team never left her side during those weeks. Thankfully, she got better and, a few weeks later on, was adopted and went to live with her forever family. Her adopted family are forever grateful to the Revive team for saving her life in those first few weeks.

This month, the second home finally closed its doors as the final child left to be reintegrated. It's a real moment of celebration as Revive follows God's lead to 'place the lonely into families' (Psalm 68) and transition to family-based care. Revive will still work with babies and under 5s - they will now be placed with the foster families signed up to our service (the first ever in the city). We're grateful for the two foster families we currently have and pray for even more to come through our training courses.

The work with the teenagers in the other house, the fostering service and the community development work via the local church all still continue! So, please do pray for Elise and the team and do consider giving monthly to support Revive's work. You can do that online here. **Please do pray for more financial support so that we can continue all our work in Brazil.**"

With love, Andy and the team.

"Till now the LORD has helped us" say Elise Canuto and Claudemir Nativo

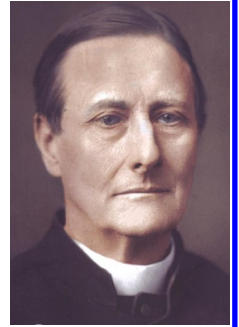
So far, the Lord has helped us; this is our feeling for 2023. Gratitude to God for being by our side in these almost 10 years, looking after children and adolescents. This year, we received 9 new children and took care of a total of 26. We concluded a 3-year cycle looking after early childhood at House 2 while transitioning to foster care. The outreach projects in the community reached 25 families who were part of our community market, and 30 children and adolescents participated in Jiu Jitsu classes.

To those who collaborated with our work, whether through prayers or donations, whether with voluntary time or paid time, our heartfelt thanks to all of you. Reaviva is a mission for many who are part of it, and that is what drives us to always play our best role here daily. May 2024 see more children and adolescents protected, not only by Reaviva but by all of us. Once again, thank you very much. Happy new year! May God bless us.

“Onward, Christian Soldiers” and its author

One of the best known traditional hymns is “Onward, Christian Soldiers”. It was written by The Reverend Sabine Baring-Gould and is now sung to a tune which was composed by Sir Arthur Sullivan.

Baring-Gould was born in Devon into a well-to-do family. His father was the Squire of Lewtrenchard, a title which had first been granted to one of his ancestors, John Gold, for his role in the Siege of Damietta in the Third Crusade in 1217. As a boy, Baring-Gould and his family made lengthy travels in Europe and he became fluent in five languages. After studying at Clare College, Cambridge he became a teacher and displayed some eccentricities such as painting the window jambs with scenes from ‘Faerie Queen’ and ‘The Canterbury Tales’, allowing his Icelandic pony named *Bottlebrush* to graze on the school lawns, and teaching in class with a pet bat on his shoulder.



He was ordained in 1864 at the age of 30 and was placed in the parish of St Peter’s in Horbury Bridge, near Wakefield. There he encountered a mill girl, Grace Taylor, with whom he fell in love despite her being only 14. After they married a few years later they had 15 children. A story is told, although it may be apocryphal, that at a children’s party a small child bumped into Baring-Gould’s leg and he enquired of her “and whose little girl are you?” to which the child tearfully replied “why, daddy, I am yours!”

In the area surrounding Horbury Bridge there was a popular annual event marking the founding of local church schools. Marchers from the surrounding villages met at St. Peter’s at 1:30pm every Whit Tuesday. In 1865, the vicar at St. Peter’s church decided that the Horbury Bridge Mission scholars should join them. Baring-Gould was asked to conduct them to St. Peter’s and the route from Horbury Bridge was up Quarry Hill and beyond for over a mile. Fearful the little ones would straggle all over the place when climbing Quarry Hill, Baring-Gould decided that singing a hymn would help make their long journey that much easier for the children. This is allegedly Baring-Gould’s own account:

“The hymn ‘Onward, Christian Soldiers’ was written on Whitsun Eve, 1865. I had resolved that the Brig children should come up to the parish church on Whitsun Tuesday. Mr. Fred Knowles came to me at the vicarage and asked what they should sing on the day of the long walk. We discussed one thing and then another, then I said ‘I’ll write a processional.’ Mr. Knowles replied ‘You must be sharp about it, as this is Saturday and there will shortly be no printing done.’ So, I sat down and wrote the hymn. It was printed, practised on the Sunday afternoon, and it was sung to the tune of Haydn on the Tuesday.”

At first, *Onward, Christian Soldiers* used the tune “St Alban”, taken from the slow movement of Haydn’s Symphony 53 but in 1871 Sir Arthur Sullivan’s tune “St Gertrude” seemed made for it and from then the hymn has been sung to that tune. The Salvation Army adopted the hymn as its favoured processional.

Baring-Gould was a prolific writer on diverse topics. Readers of **THE WORD** may recall that he wrote the biography of Rev. Robert Hawker, “the Mermaid of Morwenstow.” Another of his works was ‘The Book of Were-Wolves’ which was a topic of particular interest to him. In 1872 he inherited the Manor of Lewtrenchard and, as patron of the parish, he appointed himself as the Vicar where he remained until his death. During the last 40 years of his life he asked local farm workers to sing folk songs to him which enabled him to assemble for posterity the largest collection of English folk songs.

He died 100 years ago, on 2nd January 1924 at the age of 90.

Sources and inspiration:

Stephen Wilson (https://www.ossett.net/beyond/Sabine_Baring_Gould.html)

The Sabine Baring-Gould Appreciation Society

Fergus Butler-Gallie (‘A Field Guide to the English Clergy’.)

Having a religious faith makes you happier

To many people in the secular world that headline may be seen as controversial or plainly wrong, but a new study has concluded that people who have a religious faith are generally happier and more resilient than atheists and other non-religious people.

Keep the Faith: Mental health in the UK, has been recently published by the Institute for the Impact of Faith in Life (IIFL). The think tank was set up to study the part that religious faith plays in the UK. It was the first to focus exclusively on the link between people's faith and their mental health in the UK.

The survey included Christians, Buddhists, Sikhs, Muslims and Hindus, with nearly 70 per cent of them reporting a good psychological well-being, as compared with only 49 per cent of atheists.

As for happiness, just nine per cent of people with a faith said they were unhappy, as compared with nearly a quarter of atheists.

It was also found that believers feel they have more self-control, more life satisfaction, and more optimism about their future. Only nine percent of believers were pessimistic, as opposed to 30 percent of non-believers.

But it seems that practising your faith is important. Even among believers, those who regularly attend religious services are far more likely to report positive psychological wellbeing, when compared to those who rarely or never attend such services.

Overall, the IIFL has concluded that the rapid secularisation of the UK has left many people with lowered resilience and lowered wellbeing.

As the author of the study, Dr Rakib Ehsan, says: "while the fast-paced secularisation of the British has been cited as a form of social progress, this appears not to be the case from the perspective of mental health."

Vestry cupboard that hid "precious" Welsh Bible

A Bible printed in 1620, one of the very first to be produced in Welsh, has been discovered by chance in a vestry cupboard in St Martin and St Enfail's Church in Merthyr, near Carmarthen.

Mari James, Library Development Officer at St David's Cathedral, described the 400-year-old Bible as "quite a treasure" and "a precious part of Wales' history of Christian worship".

A former Merthyr churchwarden, Huw Evans, found the Bible forgotten and unrecognised among candles, communion wine and linen in the back of the cupboard.

Copies of the Bible, known as the Bishop Parry version, were distributed to all churches in Wales to comply with Queen Elizabeth I's instruction that everyone should be able to read the Scriptures in their own language. This was the main Reformation project in Wales, intended to consolidate Protestantism.

The volume was based on the 1588 translation by Bishop William Morgan. The Old Testament was translated directly from the original Hebrew, and the New Testament from Greek. Some of the work was carried out in St David's.

A Welsh Book of Common Prayer, dating from 1710 in the reign of Queen Anne, was also found languishing - in the same vestry cupboard.

Perhaps our next social event at St John's should be a Treasure Hunt in the church, to go through all our cupboards. You never know what we might find!

GOD in the Arts

The Revd Michael Burgess begins a year-long series looking at great works of Christian music.

'Glorious the song when God's the theme'

Those words of the 18th century poet Christopher Smart remind us how faith and music have always gone hand in hand, faith inspiring the music and music expressing the faith. In this series we shall consider 12 pieces of music inspired by the Christian faith, beginning from its roots in the Old Testament.

Among the earliest references to music in the Old Testament is the song of Moses and the Israelites, thanking God for Israel's deliverance in Exodus. There is also the music of the shofar (right), the ram's horn, proclaiming God's Jubilee in Leviticus.



Hebrew music came into its own when performed in the temple. A small choir, using mostly strings and a harp, would sing from the psalms, that incredible collection of 150 hymns of praise to God. All human life is found in the psalter, and inevitably they passed into Christian worship, through the monastic daily

office of prayer and praise.

Possibly Psalm 23, 'The Lord is my shepherd,' is the most loved of the Psalms. St Francis of Assisi sang it on his way to visit the sultan. Most of us know the tune as 'Crimond', while Howard Goodall's setting became the theme music for 'The Vicar of Dibley.'

Leonard Bernstein's setting of Psalm 23, the 'Chichester Psalms,' set six psalms in their original Hebrew for solo voice, choir and orchestra. The middle movement begins with a boy soprano, or countertenor, singing a beautiful melody to the opening words of Psalm 23. Bernstein's melody has a bluesy, Jewish feel, and is accompanied by a harp, as we remember David playing the lyre.

Suddenly the men's voices interrupt the soloist's song of trust with the words of Psalm 2, 'Why do the nations so furiously rage together?' But their outburst cannot halt the serene outpouring of the soloist which sounds out clear and strong amid the threat of war and division.

The movement leaves us with the melody of 'Adonai ro-i' in our heads and hearts, assuring us that, because the Lord is our shepherd, we need not fear, even in the darkest valley. Even when the world hurls the threats of Psalm 2 at us, God's goodness and mercy will follow us all the days of our life.

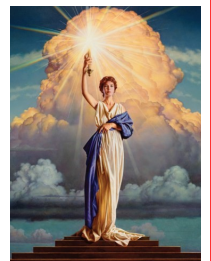
Columbia Picture celebrates its Centenary

Unless you grew up on Mars, Columbia Pictures has played some part in your life. Who doesn't recognise that opening 'logo' to a film you want to watch - the female personification of the United States? This huge American film studio and production company celebrates its 100th birthday on 10th January 2024.

Columbia was founded in 1918 by two brothers, Jack and Harry Cohn, and their business partner Joe Brandt. At first a minor player in Hollywood, by the late 1920s Columbia had begun to grow. It helped to have the director Frank Capra on board, and to be producing the Three Stooges, which made Columbia one of the primary homes for 'screwball comedy'. Columbia also distributed Disney's Silly Symphony film series, as well as the Mickey Mouse cartoon series.

Big names soon came along, including Cary Grant in the 1930s, and Rita Hayworth in the 1940s and 50s. Others followed, including William Holden and Glenn Ford.

No wonder that Columbia was one of the so-called 'Little Three' among the eight major film studios of Hollywood's Golden Age. Today, it is the world's third largest major film studio, and a subsidiary of the multinational conglomerate Sony.



W CROSS R D

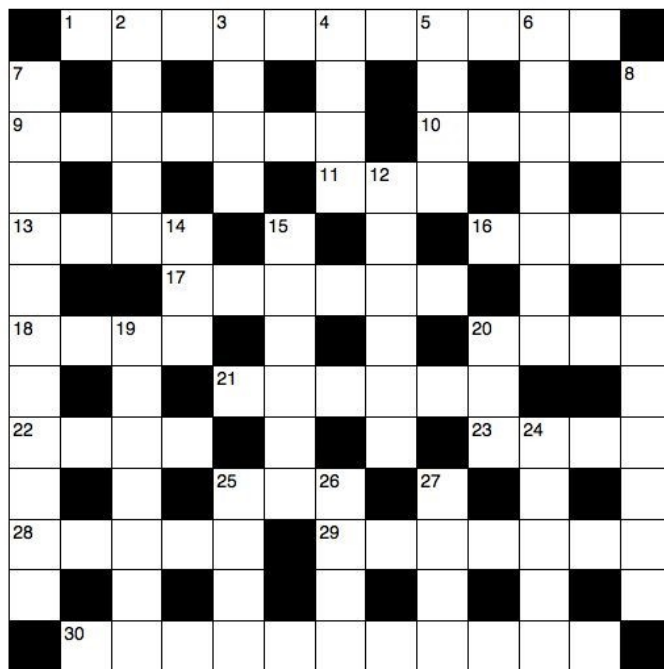
Solution on page 26

ACROSS

- 1 Paul said the wrath of God 'is being revealed from heaven' against this (Romans 1:18) (11)
 9 Go smite (anag.) (7)
 10 'But — I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee' (Matthew 26:32) (5)
 11 'Take and —; this is my body' (Matthew 26:26) (3)
 13 Type (2 Thessalonians 2:10) (4)
 16 'Woe to those who — iniquity' (Micah 2:1) (4)
 17 'How shall we — if we ignore such a great salvation?' (Hebrews 2:3) (6)
 18 Opposite of evens (4)
 20 Previously cited (Latin) (4)
 21 'There is surely — — of God in this place, and they will kill me because of my wife' (Genesis 20:11) (2,4)
 22 The Thessalonians were warned to keep away from every brother who was this (2 Thessalonians 3:6) (4)
 23 Beat (anag.) (4)
 25 To trouble or afflict (Job 16:3) (3)
 28 Part of a roof (1 Kings 7:9) (5)
 29 Attain (Job 5:12) (7)
 30 Insect noted for its gymnastic ability (Psalm 78:46) (11)

DOWN

- 2 Smell (John 11:39) (5)
 3 Lion's home (Jeremiah 25:38) (4)
 4 'Jesus Christ is the — yesterday and today and for ever' (Hebrews 13:8) (4)
 5 Tidy (4)
 6 Made their home (Genesis 47:27) (7)



- 7 Their task was to carry the curtains of the tabernacle (Numbers 4:25–26) (11)
 8 Timothy's was called Lois (2 Timothy 1:5) (11)
 12 The Lover likened the fragrance of the Beloved's breath to these (Song of Songs 7:8) (6)
 14 Times Educational Supplement (1,1,1)
 15 Eight-tentacled sea creatures (6)
 19 'And lead us not into temptation, but — us from the evil one' (Matthew 6:13) (7)
 20 D.L. Moody's legendary song leader, — D. Sankey (3)
 24 Rarely used musical note (5)
 25 'Your will be done on earth — it — in heaven' (Matthew 6:10) (2,2)
 26 and 27 'The Lord Almighty will — them with a —, as when he struck down Midian at the rock of Oreb' (Isaiah 10:26) (4,4)
 27 See 26 Down

Parish Register

Blessing: 20th December Doug and Natalie Lunn

In our Book of Remembrance in January

- 1st John Smith, 1964
 5th Lilian Burdon, 2010
 8th George Yarwood, 1985
 10th John Higgins, 1983
 11th Peter Arnold, 2017
 13th Eliza Hind, 1970
 14th Edward Livesley, 1984
 16th Harold Hamer, 2009
 21st Henry McCann, 1959
 Susan Hellewell, 1977

- 24th Mary Gee, 2000
 25th Craig Smith, 2015
 27th Laura Marsh, 1994
 Betty Gordon, 2009
 28th Audrey Draper, 2002
 Jean Jones, 2018

If any of our readers wish to have the name of a deceased relative inscribed in the Book of Remembrance please contact Stuart Baker (01704 560518)

An Introduction to the Book of The Bible

For the next two years we will publish a new series of articles by Canon Paul Hardingham who aims to provide an overview of the Bible. This month he considers the first book, **Genesis**.

As the title suggests, Genesis is primarily about beginnings. In chapters 1-11, it records the creation of the heavens and the earth and human beings; marriage and family; sin's effect on society and the world. The following chapters record God's dealings with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph, and their families. In this story of the Patriarchs we see God establishing a people called to bless the world, as He blesses them.

The book of Genesis is key to understanding the whole Bible. It is supremely about relationships; the relationships between God and the created order, God and human beings, and between human beings themselves.

Fundamentally man has been created in the image of God, so that he can relate to God in a personal way: *'God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them'* (1:27).

However, Genesis plots how this relationship was broken by sin, when Adam and Eve disobeyed God, resulting in the fall of human beings and the created order. By creating people with free will, God risked the possibility that they might reject Him. This is inherent in His love for human beings.

In Genesis, God enters into covenants with the world (the rainbow following the flood) and with Abraham and his descendents (circumcision), pledging His love and faithfulness to them and calling them to respond to Him in faith. It reminds us that God is fundamental to living. Without a sense of the centrality of God's place in our lives, we can never get our lives right.

WHAT IF...? The story so far

A short reminder of what we read in Dennis Davis's history columns in 2023:

The 16th century saw the beginning of the Reformation of the Christian church. In Britain and in Europe it led to decades of religious wars, terror, persecution, murder, rebellion, turmoil, heroism and sacrifice in the cause of political and religious freedom. Dennis has been researching what happened in northern Europe, particularly in the Netherlands which was then under the rule of Philip II who became the King of Spain in 1528. His reign overlapped those of Henry VIII, Mary I and Elizabeth I of England.

King Philip II was a devout Catholic and a determined opponent of the reformists. He imposed a brutal regime in the Netherlands, persecuting those whom he deemed to be "heretics" and using torture and dreadful methods of execution as a means of chastising and suppressing those who strayed from the Catholic church. In 1560 he instigated the Spanish Inquisition which was originally aimed at causing Jews and Moors to convert to Catholicism, but it soon extended to heretics in the Netherlands where the Spanish kept an occupying army. This led to rebellions which were savagely put down by soldiers and mercenaries led by the Duke of Alva.

King Philip had been married to Mary I of England who was a Catholic and who had herself persecuted Reformists and earned for herself the sobriquet "Bloody Mary." After her death in 1558 King Philip asked our Queen Elizabeth I to marry him but she declined. If she had married him it is entirely possible that England would have suffered the same fate as the Netherlands. We are indeed fortunate that no marriage took place between Philip II and Elizabeth I and that this country was spared some of the bloodshed, treachery and turmoil that prevailed elsewhere in Europe under 16th century Spanish rule (although there was plenty of it in England for the next hundred years).

After a Christmas break we now publish further extracts from Dennis's research and we may continue to reflect: **What If**

WHAT IF...?

By Dennis Davis

Dennis continues his research into the religious wars, terror, persecution, murder, rebellion and turmoil after the Reformation. It is his aim to show what was done in the past for the religious freedom we have today. What if this had never happened? Our world would be a different place today.

The Duke Quarrels With Queen Elizabeth.

Spanish ships taking supplies to the Duke were chased by privateers and put into English ports and were afraid to leave as the privateers were waiting to pounce. In 1568 Elizabeth impounded them and seized their cargo and Specie to the value of 800,000 dollars saying she was keeping them for the King of Spain and that the money did not belong to the King of Spain in the first place. Alva was short of money at this time also and was furious about it. In his wrath he ordered that every Englishman be arrested and the seizure of every article of that nation. The Queen retaliated by applying the same regulations on the Netherlanders living in England.

The Duke continued unabated in his persecutions. He issued an order that only Catholic midwives be placed in each district and they were to report within twenty-four hours any birth so that the they could all be given a Catholic baptism.

An Anabaptist called Dirk Willemzoom fled to escape capture by crossing a frozen lake. His pursuer was not so lucky for the ice broke. Dirk stopped and went back and pulled him out. His reward was to be arrested, tortured and executed. About this time the Duke of Alva received a sword and jewelled hat from the Pope as a present with an accompanying letter which told him to remember that when he put the hat on his head he is guarded with it as with a shield of righteousness and with the shield of God's help indicating that a heavenly crown was ready for those who supported Holy Mother Church and the Roman Catholic faith.

The Duke's shortage of money and his confiscations were not producing as much as he had hoped so he raised taxes on all property by 1% to be paid immediately. All sales and transfers of

real estate were taxed at 5%, and every article of merchandise or personal property was taxed by 10%. This taxation struck all in perpetuity. The people of Utrecht refused to pay and offered a sum of money instead, which the Duke refused. Instead, he billeted a regiment of insubordinate soldiers. These unpaid, insolent men were placed in every house in an attempt to get them to pay the tax. They still refused despite the brutality of these soldiers. The city was found guilty of high treason and deprived of all charters, laws, privileges, freedom and customs, but the sentence was suspended to allow a response; months of pleadings took place. An appeal made to the King was denied but the envoys were allowed to leave whereas in the past they would have lost their heads. This was to drag on for many years when Utrecht agreed to pay two million yearly for two years.

The Duke had continued to lay waste to the countryside to prevent the Prince of Orange's newly raised army from foraging. Being unable to forage led to another defeat at which Count Hoogstraten was captured and executed. The French Huguenots who had supported the Prince now asked him to leave the Netherlands and help them in their cause but he was unable to persuade his troops to do so. The Duke of Alva was losing his favour. Being undermined in Madrid and in bad health he wished to be removed from his post. It was seen by many that he had overshot the mark and the King was considering his replacement.

The Habsburg Emperor Maximilian requested both sides to lay down their arms, but Prince William did not trust the Duke who was now the Regent and he refused to comply; King Philip put the blame on the Prince and told the Emperor that he had not used rigor but clemency and gentleness and complained that he was amazed at the German aid being given to the Prince. The King was becoming worried about the depopulation of the Netherlands, and depleted revenues.

An amnesty was proposed but when it came out only the most sincere and zealous Catholics had any chance of receiving pardon. It had been described as a benign measure from so merciful a King.

To be continued

Local History

We are grateful again to **Henry James** for kindly permitting us to publish in **THE WORD** another interesting article which he has written on local history. This appeared in a recent issue of "Birkdale Buzz."

Southport's Lord's Street Station

Did you know that Southport once had another railway terminus on Lord Street?



In fact, the railway station building with its distinctive clock tower can still be seen today at the southern end of Lord Street. For almost 10 years the Grade II listed building has been a Travelodge Hotel. In the 1990s it was refurbished by Safeway stores and before that it was home to Ribble buses for many years.

However, between 1884 and 1952 the building was used as a railway station. When it opened on 1 September it was the northern terminus of the Southport & Cheshire Lines Extension Railway (SCLER). The line was built to link the independent Cheshire Lines Committee railway at Aintree with Southport. It took two Acts of Parliament, one in 1881 and the other in 1882, to allow the line to go to Birkdale and then on to Southport Lord Street.

The main Lord Street building included a booking hall, toilets and a place to buy refreshments. The cavernous train shed behind (now Morrison's store and carpark) contained four platforms. Records show that during the week in September 1895 at Southport Lord Street railway station there were 17 arrivals and 17 departures, while on a Sunday there were three arrivals and departures.

Train lines leaving the SCLER station first went towards the sea under the roundabout at the end of Rotten Row and then headed south for a mile to the Birkdale Palace railway station which opened in September 1884 and closed in July 1952. It was situated next to the now demolished Birkdale Palace Hotel and was located between Palace Road and Weld Road. From there the track ran along what is now the Coastal Road to Seaside station in Ainsdale, opened in 1901 and renamed as Ainsdale Beach station in 1912. The next station along the line was Woodvale railway station, which opened in September 1884.

There were other stops along the line, including Mossbridge, which is now part of the Trans-Pennine Trail. The line was independent until nationalisation came in 1948 but the SCLER routes were slower than the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway's services to Manchester and Liverpool and the last SCLER passengers travelled on the line in January 1952.

God in the Sciences

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

A Scientist's Letter to Christians: Have power, love and self-control

It has now been four years since the pandemic began to seep into Western consciousness. Dr Francis Collins, a leader in medical research in the US, spoke early in the pandemic about his faith and his hope in God to help us through that time. He expressed the grief that so many were experiencing, and described an intensity of scientific work he had never experienced before. He also shared his conviction that he was in exactly the right place back in 2020 - serving God with science. Throughout the pandemic, he held on tight to the words of Paul in 2 Timothy 1:7, 'for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.'

Power

In 2 Timothy the apostle Paul encourages his friend to 'fan into flame the gift of God' that is in him. I am thankful that scientists like Francis used their own particular talents to understand this virus, and to help prevent or treat infection. The things they discovered are not just useful, but at times also display the beauty and wonder of God's creation.

Love

Scientists shows their love for God, for people and for the rest of creation through their work in the lab. One scientist described his experiences to me: "I study God's fingerprints in His creation to learn more of Him and the world He placed us in and to learn how we should take care of it and each other...I pray for inspiration and insight into how His creation works...and that He provides the opportunities to give the glory to Him."

Self-Control

It is largely our own and others' selfish actions that can turn one animal's friendly virus into our own species' personal nightmare. Thankfully Jesus' suffering, death and resurrection are the solution to evil. Our ultimate and certain hope is that one day all Creation will be renewed. We can also have hope that God is with us in our suffering. When we respond in positive ways to painful events, that is evidence that Jesus is alive and working in our lives.



Science will not solve all our problems, but with God's help and wisdom we can use the tools of science to serve Him and love others.

CROSSWORD SOLUTION

ACROSS: 1, Godlessness. 9, Egotism. 10, After. 11, Eat. 13, Sort. 16, Plan. 17, Escape. 18, Odds. 20, Idem. 21, No fear. 22, Idle. 23, Abet. 25, Ail. 28, Eaves. 29, Achieve. 30, Grasshopper.

DOWN: 2, Odour. 3, Lair. 4, Same. 5, Neat. 6, Settled. 7, Gershonites. 8, Grandmother. 12, Apples. 14, TES. 15, Octopi. 19, Deliver. 20, Ira. 24, Breve. 25, As is. 26, Lash. 27, Whip.

NAVIGATING RELATIONSHIPS

by J.M.Shakespeare

It has been suggested that our Relationships may be categorised under three headings, which are family, duty and emotional. The facts are, that probably in most cases these categories, will in fact overflow into each other.

Betrayal, is I believe a particular action, that puts at risk any Relationship, even within a family. The trust which is broken when betrayal occurs, can cut deeply, and needs some sincere repair. In the case of emotions in Relationships, it is often a case of mistaken interpretations of deeds or actions.

I recall the old proverb, "It's not so much about what you eat, it's what's eating you that's important".

Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778), rejected the Hobbesian Doctrine, that man had an innately wicked nature. He believed that God makes all things good, then Man meddles with them and they become evil. He believed in the noble savage, and the innocence of children.

From historical fact and experience of children, I personally find Rousseau to be incredibly naïve in his view of native and childhood forms of Relationships. He was a strong supporter of democratic ideals, a supporter of freedom as practical participation in politics, and legislation for everyone. His concerns were that individuals should live in conformity, under an externally imposed code.

However in accordance with his philosophy, he saw true religious faith, as more an affair of the heart than of the head.

In the Bible, Mark (Ch 3 verses 33-35), records the following with regard to Relationships, " And he replied, who are my mother and my brothers. And looking at those sat around him, he said, there are my mother and my brothers. Whoever does the will of God, is my brother, sister and mother".

Through the medium of poetry such as, "Love and Friendship", by Emily Bronte (1818-1848), we can explore Relationships. To quote the first verse of the poem, " Love is like the wild rose-briar, Friendship like the holly tree. The holly is dark when the rose-briar blooms, but which will bloom most constantly".

Sometimes when we are alone, we all tend to reflect on what makes our Relationships. The following is an extract from a work of Rev. S Hughes (1928-2006), " If an eagle's wings are set at a downward tilt, when a storm strikes it will be dashed to the ground, but if the wings are tilted upward, it will rise, making the storm bear it up beyond it's fury. The tilt of the wings decides its life or death.

When things are falling apart and nothing seems to be going right, we need to tilt our wings heavenwards. If we can do this instead of being dashed to the ground in bitterness and confusion, we will soar heavenwards to God, and come out into quiet peace and greater usefulness".

As an erudite academic told me many years ago, as I was starting my working life. If we don't have the Relationships with others we would like, we must learn to like and work on the Relationship we do have.



The matches were damp, but Clive was a Scout

Responding to the Israel – Gaza War

THE WORD is not a political magazine and the editor does not enter into potentially controversial territory by supporting or condemning any of the participants in this dreadful conflict. But we recognise that there has been and continues to be an immense and tragic human cost resulting from the armed hostilities.

While the warfare continues there are millions of people in Gaza who are without shelter, clean water, adequate food, and the comfort of their homes and families. And there are many thousands of Israeli people who grieve the loss of their relatives and friends who were slaughtered on 7th October.

We are offering a list of some Christian UK agencies who are working in either Israel or Gaza, and who have launched Appeals for help if our readers wish to respond with compassion to the many people in need.

Each 'Appeal' below has been adapted from the website of the agency concerned, and so it will reflect their particular concern and emphasis at this time. **We have listed the agencies in strict alphabetical order.**

Bible Society

Urgent appeal for the Bible Lands

Our Bible Society teams are serving in both the Israeli and Palestinian communities. They are distributing everything from Bibles to food to blankets to hygiene items, but they need your support. If you would like to help, please go to biblesociety.org.uk

Christian Aid

Urgent appeal for the people of Gaza

In Gaza, our medical partner is providing mobile medical and psychological care. In southern Gaza, our partner is responding to the recently displaced, providing them with mattresses, medicines, and emergency food items. Your donations can make a huge difference. Please go to: <https://give.christianaid.org.uk>

Embrace the Middle East

Help the people of Gaza

If you can help support Embrace's Christian partners as they work to help people caught up in this crisis, please go to: <https://embraceme.org/gazacrisis> .

World Vision

Middle East Emergency Appeal

We're already working in the West Bank, supporting the thousands of vulnerable children, families and communities impacted by this crisis. Your donation will be channelled into the areas of greatest need that World Vision and its partners can access.

Please go to: <https://www.worldvision.org.uk/emergencies/middle-east-appeal/#donate>

And in Ukraine

The need continues ... please help

Leave your donations in the church porch any Sunday between 9.45-11.45am and we will get them to the local drop off point.

Don't take donations directly to the warehouse.

Please note we can only accept the smaller items from the list



Thank You

Practical Aid Priorities List

Food: Pasta, rice, tinned meat, tinned fish, tinned veg, flour, cooking oil, salt, biscuits (with 1 year's best before date).

Medical: First aid kits, plasters, bandages, dressings, gauze, surgical gloves, antiseptic creams, paracetamol, ibuprofen, Calpol etc.

Toiletries: Soap, toothpaste, toothbrushes, flannels, shampoo, sanitary towels, nappies, incontinence pads.

Clothing and Footwear: for all ages.

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

the elderberries gardening club

The group meet from 10.30am-noon on the **second Wednesday of every month** at **St. John's Church** on St. 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).

Warm Space

Struggling with the cost of living? Feeling lonely?
Looking for a quiet, safe place to gather your thoughts?
Or, just need a friendly chat over a hot drink?


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10am - 4pm

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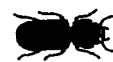
Sefton Warm Spaces
a space for community and warmth in Sefton
in partnership with  Sefton C.C.

WORD SEARCH solution

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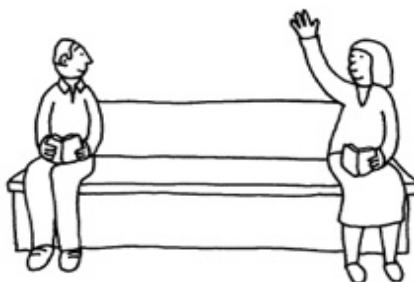
www.jalveypestcontrol.co.uk

NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

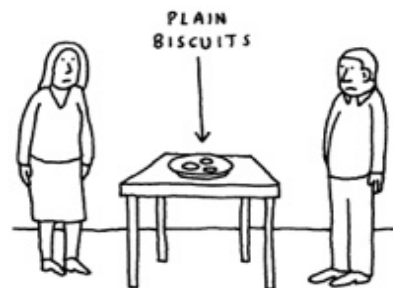
HOW THE CHURCH CAN HELP



EXERCISE



MEETING NEW PEOPLE



HEALTHY EATING



GETTING ORGANISED

AT THE PCC WE'LL DISCUSS THE APCM, CW VS THE BCP, THE LLM'S CRB, AND THE OLM'S BAP. OH, AND THERE ARE LETTERS FROM THE DAC, THE DDO, THE HOB AND THE ABC



LEARNING A NEW LANGUAGE



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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 **twice-monthly 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 **twice-monthly 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 (564206) or Sally (553977) or

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.

Was it really that long ago?...

75 years ago, on 10th January 1949 RCA launched the 7-inch 45-rpm vinyl record, commonly known as the single. Five years later, on 12th Jan 1959 the Motown record label was founded in Detroit, Michigan by Berry Gordy.

60 years ago, on 11th January 1964 the US Surgeon General published a report which concluded that cigarette smoking caused lung cancer and chronic bronchitis. This was the first official US government report on the health issues of smoking.

50 years ago, from 1st January to 6th March, 1974, a three-day working week was introduced in the UK, in order to conserve coal supplies.

40 years ago, on 22nd January 1984 the first Apple Mackintosh computer went on sale.

25 years ago, on 1st January 1999 the euro officially became the new currency in 11 European countries.

15 years ago, on 20th January 2009 Barack Obama was inaugurated as the 44th President of the USA.

Church Hall Users (Note: with the exception of the Friday Film Nights the activities listed below are NOT run by St John's Church. They are run by independent groups who use our hall). Contact details are provided in case readers wish to enquire about or join these groups.

Monday

7.00pm to 8.00pm Zumba@Fitness

A fun and friendly class and a great workout.

No dance experience needed. All ages and all fitness levels welcome

Contact: Kay Bennett on 07716312909

Tuesday

4.30pm – 5.30pm Kiwi Sports Coaching

Tag Rugby class for boys and girls aged 5-7

School holiday classes sometimes available

Contact: shanehuttonnz@gmail.com

7.30pm – 9.00pm Connected Voices Choir

We are a non-audition choir for adults, singing a range of uplifting music – from pop and rock to soul and funk. We are open to anyone who loves singing, whether they think they can sing or not!

Contact: info@connectedvoices.co.uk or for more information visit the website

www.connectedvoices.co.uk

Wednesday

Morning, monthly class. **All Aglow Weaning Workshop**

Start your baby on solid food with confidence with an interactive, relaxed and informal class. Suitable for babies 4-10 months.

Contact: Jennifer@allaglow.co.uk

10.30 – 12 noon

2nd Wednesday of the month only. **Elderberries Gardening Club**

A social gardening club, where speakers are invited to talk on various topics, and visits and social events throughout the year.

Contact: Shelley Lewis Lavender on 01704 560690 or via email:

elderberriesgardening@gmail.com

7pm – 8pm Functional Yoga

Exploring joint mobilisation, functional movement and relaxation - suitable for beginners.

Contact Lindsay: 07747038613 or email lindsay@wobblytreeyoga.com

Thursday

6.00-9.00pm: St John's Rainbows (6.00-7.00pm) St John's Brownies (6.00-7.15pm) and Girl Guides (7.15-9.00pm).

Contact: Janette Law 01704 565951

Friday

6.30-9.30pm Once per month **St John's Film Nights**

A chance to see some great modern films. Tea, coffee and homemade cake available.

Contact: Christine Baker 01704 560518

When you stare at a word for too long

Have you ever stared at a single word for so long that, suddenly, it looks very odd, and loses its meaning?

It is a phenomenon known as 'Jamais Vu', and you can experience it if you try scribbling a single word around 30 times, or for about a minute. Suddenly, it will look very peculiar.

Researchers at the University of St Andrews asked people to write out words, over and over again. About two thirds of them reported 'Jamais Vu', meaning 'never seen'.

One psychologist explained: "There is something about repeatedly encountering the same word that causes your awareness of that word being a proper word to remain unchanged, whilst your subjective experience of encountering that word starts to go a little 'off'."

'Jamais Vu' is often called a 'dissociative experience' – where aspects of conscience experience, that normally work seamlessly together, break down.

*Ed. Looking at a word for too long might have this effect. But reading **THE WORD** from cover to cover more than once will definitely not!*

★HAPPY★
BIRTHDAY!

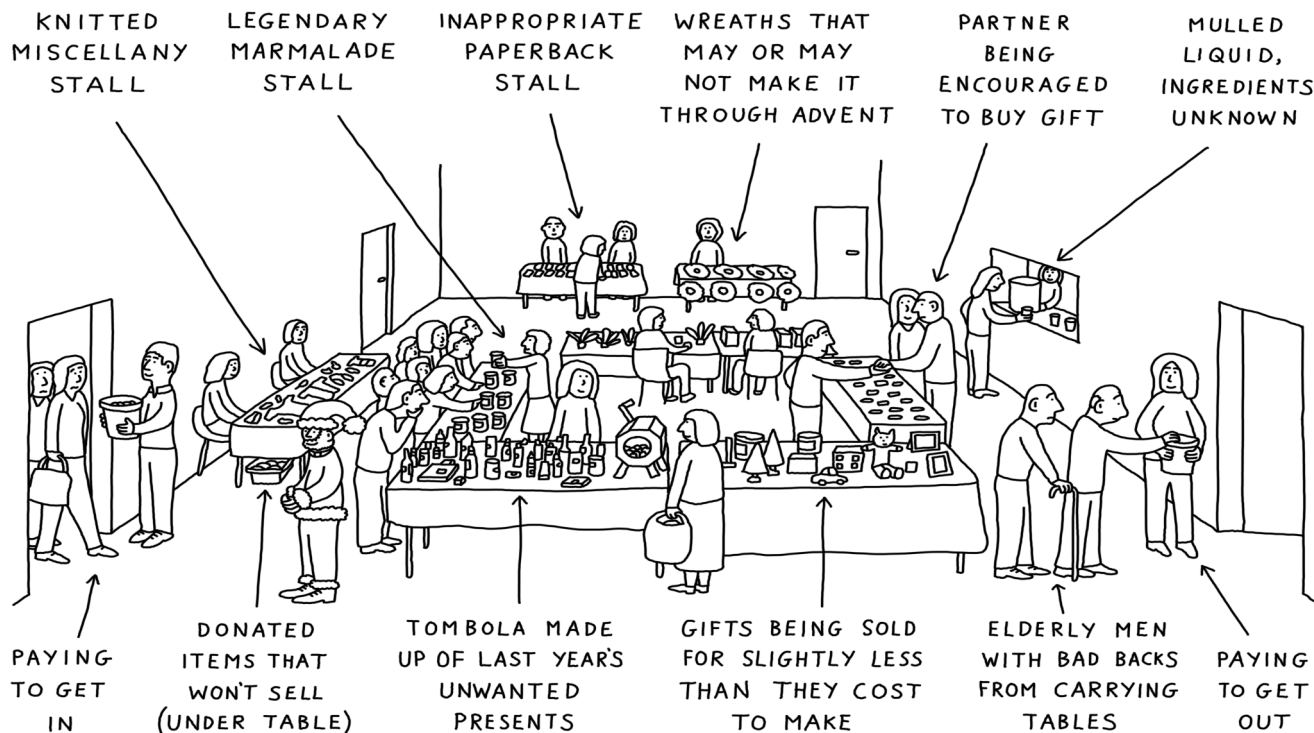
Sally Wright on 2nd January
 Joshua Sullivan on 12th January
 Sue Madani on 15th January
 Eileen Harrison on 19th January
 Tina Kent on 20th January
 Michelle Sullivan on 23rd January
 Sue Doran on 29th January

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

The Last Laughs

THE CHRISTMAS MARKET

But it's not anything like ours at St John's!



A Song of the Weather

January brings the snow,
 Makes your feet and fingers glow.
 February's ice and sleet,
 Freeze the toes right off your feet.
 Welcome March with wintry wind,
 Would thou wert not so unkind.
 April brings the sweet Spring showers
 On and on for hours and hours.
 Farmers fear unkindly May,
 Frost by night and hail by day.
 June just rains and never stops,
 Thirty days and spoils the crops.

by Michael Flanders and Donald Swann

In July the sun is hot,
 Is it shining? No, it's not.
 August cold and dank and wet,
 Brings more rain than any yet.
 Bleak September's mist and mud
 Is enough to chill the blood.
 Then October adds a gale,
 Wind and slush and rain and hail.
 Dark November brings the fog,
 Should not do it to a dog.
 Freezing, wet, December then
 Blessed January again.....



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