



THE WORD

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**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. 256

APRIL 2024

ST. JOHN'S PARISH CHURCH

God Centred, Relationship Driven and Life Transforming



IMPORTANT DATE FOR YOUR DIARIES

We are pleased to inform our readers that our new Vicar, Reverend Jennie Hardy, will be licensed by the Rt. Rev. John, Bishop of Liverpool, as the incumbent of our parish in a service at our church on **Wednesday 26th June 2024 at 7.00pm.**



We understand that a substantial amount of renovation works are being carried out in the vicarage and that these should be completed by not later than 31st May so that Jennie can move in to the house before the date of her licensing.

Further details will be announced in church when they are known and will be included in the May and June issues of **THE WORD.**



£10 challenge

We remind our readers that during the Spring this year St John's will give all of its congregation the chance to use their time and talents for the benefit of our church. On 28th April (the day of the APCM) the church will offer to give £10 to everyone who is willing to serve the Lord in this way. The challenge is to use that £10 and make it grow, by however much, in seven weeks by the date of the Summer Social on 15th June when the £10 must be returned with any profit from the use of it. See the notice on page 12.



NEW SERIES OF SUNDAY SERMONS

After concluding our recent series "Jesus, from the cradle to the Cross" our worship leaders will start a new topic in April: **"Resurrection Appearances."** As a taster for the relevance and importance of this topic turn to pages 2 and 20 for interesting articles on The Treasure of Easter and The Easter Glow. The series will start on 7th April when Christine will speak about what happened on The Road to Emmaus.

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

**DON'T FORGET:
CLOCKS GO FORWARD
TONIGHT AT 1.00am ON
SUNDAY 31ST MARCH**

"There's gold in them thar hills!"



This quotation from Mark Twain's 1892 novel *The American Claimant* proved to be true for retired cameraman and amateur detectorist Richard Brock who has recently found in Shropshire England's largest-ever gold nugget, worth an estimated £30,000.

Named "Hiro's Nugget", the fragment weighs 64.8g, much larger than the previous record holder in England which came in at 54g.

How the gold nugget came to be there is not known. The discovery was made on a site believed to have been an old track or a road with railway lines consisting of stone originally distributed from gold-rich Wales. Gold was also once mined in nearby Llanymynech Limeworks Heritage Area, near Oswestry in northwest Shropshire.

Mr Brock will no doubt be overjoyed by finding such treasure, but this is nothing when compared to the treasure of Easter which we can read about in the article (below) written by Canon Paul Hardingham.

The Treasure of Easter!

It's amazing what treasure can be unearthed with metal detectors! In this season of Easter, let's rediscover the greatest unburied treasure of the Resurrection.

The Apostle Peter reminds us that God *'has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade.'* (1 Peter 1: 3,4). What does he say about this treasure?

On the one hand, it is the *reason for hope*. Peter was writing to Christians in Asia Minor (modern day Turkey) who faced persecution under the Emperor Nero. In an uncertain world we know that Jesus suffered, but by His resurrection has secured eternal life for us. This inheritance not only guarantees life now, but also for eternity, as it *'is kept in heaven for you'* (4). Do we share this confidence? D.L. Moody, the 19th Century American evangelist, spoke of the time when people would read his obituary: *'Don't believe a word of it! At that moment I shall be more alive than I am now'*.

On the other hand, this treasure is a *source of joy*. This unburied treasure fills us *'with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.'* (8,9). We face all kinds of trials in our lives, but God uses them to refine our faith and character, *'These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith – of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire – may result in praise, glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed.'* (7).

We reflect this treasure by developing the Jesus' character and becoming more holy, obedient and loving.

'Christmas is the promise, and Easter is the proof!'

Seen in a West Country church:

Whenever I see a little church,
I always pay a visit.
So when at last I'm carried in,
The Lord won't ask 'Who is it?'

Who is he?

A musical concert was about to be performed in a prison. The Governor was talking to a titled lady guest, explaining that the orchestra was made up of murderers, embezzlers and other hardened criminals. The lady then pointed to a man in the corner, holding a trombone. "He looks a tough customer," she whispered. "Whatever has HE done?" The Governor paused and smiled. "Ah, actually, he is the chaplain."

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 Officer:	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
		Recruiter:	Stuart Baker (560518)



Random Act of Crochet Kindness

Please don't remove or damage me.

For I am here for all to see.

It takes many hours of work and graft

To create me in this happy craft.

From the Southport U3A

Crochet Group

At the

 **Birkdale
Community Hub & Library**
At the Station Master's House

Birkdale: we are so fortunate to live here!

There are so many towns and villages in our country which have suffered from a mixture of overpopulation, underpopulation, economic downturns, urban deprivation, and vandalism. Boarded-up shops are a common sight almost everywhere these days.

But Birkdale Village is still thriving as a community of excellent shops, restaurants and licensed premises. It has very good rail and bus services and the village is always busy. When walking along Liverpool Road you can feel a sense of community.

In a very small but thoughtful way this is demonstrated by the decoration of the pillar box outside our village post office. The Southport U3A Crochet Group have made a delightful Easter cover for the top of the pillar box which cannot do other than bring a smile to your face. There may be other villages where similar things are done by volunteers but this lovely seasonal addition to our pillar box must be equal to any others.

We thank the Crochet Group for their work.

PARISH REGISTERS

Burials and Cremations

22nd March Bryan Jackson, died on 13th February 2024 aged 62 years.

Thursday Evening Prayers on 3rd and 17th April 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

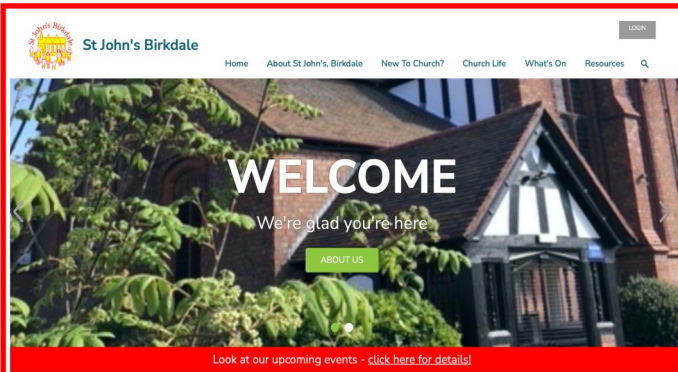
ST JOHN'S CHURCH, ST JOHN'S RD, BIRKDALE PR8 4JP

ST JOHN'S CHURCH BIRKDALE
MONTHLY
2ND FRIDAYS
10.30AM

**NEXT MEETING:
12TH APRIL**



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**

St John's Presents

FILM NIGHTS

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

- 12 January
- 9 February
- 15 March
- ★ 26 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 2024

Please contact Christine 07821 982477 or Sally 07800 550097



Friday 26 January @ 7pm	Burns Night Supper
Friday 23 February @ 7pm	Late, Late Pancake Party
Friday 22 March @ 7pm	Andy Dean's Quiz Night
Friday 19 April @ 7pm	Italian Food Night
Friday 17 May @ 6.30pm	Car Treasure Hunt
Saturday 15 June @ 11-2pm	Summer Fair & Afternoon Tea
Saturday 20 July @ 2pm	Strawberry Tea
Friday 20 September @ 7pm	Harvest Supper
Friday 18 October @ 7pm	Music 'in the' Hall
Saturday 16 November @ 7pm	Barn Dance and Bangers
Friday 6 December 6-9pm	Christmas Tree Festival and
Saturday 7 December 10-3pm	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
Second Sunday of
Easter

**SUNDAY 7th APRIL
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 Second Sunday of Easter

Almighty Father, you have given your only Son to die for our sins and to rise again for our justification: grant us so to put away the leaven of malice and wickedness that we may always serve you in pureness of living and truth; through the merits of your Son Jesus Christ 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:**

The road to Emmaus

The Reading: Luke ch.24 vv.13-35

13 Now behold, two of them were travelling that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was seven miles from Jerusalem.

14 And they talked together of all these things which had happened.

15 So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus Himself drew near and went with them.

16 But their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know Him.

17 And He said to them, "What kind of conversation is this that you have with one another as you walk and are sad?"

18 Then the one whose name was Cleopas answered and said to Him, "Are You the only stranger in Jerusalem, and have You not known the things which happened there in these days?"

19 And He said to them, "What things?" So they said to Him, "The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people,

20 and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and crucified Him.

21 But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, today is the third day since these things happened.

22 Yes, and certain women of our company, who arrived at the tomb early, astonished us.

23 When they did not find His body, they came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said He was alive.

24 And certain of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but Him they did not see."

25 Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!

26 Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?"

27 And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.

28 Then they drew near to the village where they were going, and He indicated that He would have gone farther.

29 But they constrained Him, saying, "Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent." And He went in to stay with them.

30 Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them.

31 Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight.

Worship on the Third
Sunday of Easter

SUNDAY 14th APRIL
10.30am service IN CHURCH

Collect for the Third Sunday of Easter

Almighty Father, who in your great mercy gladdened the disciples with the sight of the risen Lord: give us such knowledge of his presence with us, that we may be strengthened and sustained by his risen life and serve you continually in righteousness and truth; 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
Roy's Talk:**

**Jesus appears to the disciples
in the upper room**

The Reading: Luke ch.24 vv.36-48

36 Now as they said these things, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said to them, "Peace to you."

37 But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit.

38 And He said to them, "Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts?"

39 Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have."

40 When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet.

41 But while they still did not believe for joy, and marvelled, He said to them, "Have you any food here?"

42 So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and some honeycomb.

43 And He took it and ate in their presence.

44 Then He said to them, "These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me."

45 And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.

46 Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

48 And you are witnesses of these things.



Midweek Book of
Common Prayer Holy
Communion



WEDNESDAY
17th APRIL
10.30am service
IN CHURCH

Worship on the Fourth
Sunday of Easter

SUNDAY 21st APRIL

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

Collect for the Fourth Sunday of Easter

Almighty God, whose Son Jesus Christ is the resurrection and the life: raise us, who trust in him, from the death of sin to the life of righteousness, that we may seek those things which are above, where he reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

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

**Jesus appears to the disciples
when Thomas is with them**

The Reading: John ch.20 vv.26-29

26 And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace to you!"

27 Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing."

28 And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!"

29 Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

ST JOHN'S CHURCH BIRKDALE PR8 4JP





Memorial Service

Come and join us to remember
and celebrate the life of loved
ones - gone but never forgotten

Sunday 21 April @4pm

**St John's Church
Birkdale**

 @stjohnsbirkdale

 St John's Birkdale

www.stjohnsbirkdale.co.uk



Worship on the Fifth
Sunday of Easter

SUNDAY 28th APRIL
10.30am service
IN CHURCH

Collect for the Fifth Sunday of Easter

Almighty God, who through your only-begotten Son Jesus Christ have overcome death and opened to us the gate of everlasting life: grant that, as by your grace going before us you put into our minds good desires, so by your continual help we may bring them to good effect; through Jesus Christ our risen 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 appears to reinstate
Peter**

The Reading: John ch.21 vv.15-17

15 So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You."

He said to him, "Feed My lambs."

16 He said to him again a second time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?"

He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You."

He said to him, "Tend My sheep."

17 He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?"

And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You."

Jesus said to him, "Feed My sheep."

ANNUAL CHURCH MEETING

On Sunday 28th April the Annual Church Meeting (APCM) will be held in church after the end of the 10.30 service. We shall have a brief interlude in which refreshments will be served as usual, and we shall aim to start the meeting at about 11.30am.

Our readers are all invited - nay, urged! - to attend the meeting at which the annual report and financial statement will be presented and elections will be held for positions on the Church's council (the PCC).

This is an important meeting. Attendance at it shows that we are interested in knowing what is and has been happening in our church. Many in our congregation are content to attend our Sunday services but do not take part in doing what is necessary to keep the church operating. St John's has developed over the years what we call our "church family" and **in family life we can all find a part to play.**

All of our congregation are invited to consider if they are willing to spare a little time to support our church by offering to serve on the PCC. There are only a few PCC meetings each year. Please do not read this article and ignore it or think that it is addressed to someone else. Please think that if you want this church to be there for you there may be ways in which you can be there for it.

President John Kennedy's inaugural words exhorting Americans to think not what their country could do for them but what they could do for their country could be adapted to life in our church.

Please come to the meeting (which will last about an hour) and show your support for the work and dedication of the PCC and the churchwardens who bear great responsibility.

Stuart Baker

St John's Church, Birkdale

Italian Night

FRIDAY 19 APRIL

32 HARTLEY

CRESCENT

7PM



TICKETS

£15



Please let us know of any food allergies when booking

Date for your Diary

ST JOHN'S CHURCH, BIRKDALE

SUMMER
Social

SATURDAY 15 JUNE

11 AM - 2 PM

ST JOHN'S HALL

**AFTERNOON TEA
BOTTLE TOMBOLA
PLANTS | CRAFT STALLS
BOOK STALL
CAR WASH**

Free entry

ST JOHN'S ROAD, BIRKDALE, PR8 4JP

Where are the Chibok Schoolgirls now?

Ten years ago, on 14th April 2014, the Boko Haram Islamic terrorist group kidnapped 276 female students from the Government Girls Secondary School in Chibok, Nigeria. Some of the girls escaped, some were rescued, or have been reported dead. But over 100 are still missing, fate unknown.

The girls, who lived in surrounding areas, were seized at gunpoint at night from the boarding school, where they had gone to take important final exams. It was believed to be safe because Chibok had never been attacked before.

Many of the girls were Christian. Boko Haram is opposed to western-style education, because they say it corrupts the values of Muslims. The name Boko Haram in the local Hausa dialect means "Western education is forbidden".

Some of the girls escaped within hours – many of them by jumping off lorries – but a total of 219 girls were taken away. About 100 have been exchanged for Boko Haram militants, following negotiations arranged by the Red Cross. Two others escaped in 2016 and 2017, and one was found hiding in the forest with a child.

Meanwhile the Nigerian army launched a major offensive against Boko Haram, with help from the US, UK and France, and were said to have regained nearly all the occupied territory in north-east Nigeria. But no more of the Chibok girls were found, and in the years since then, many more reports of atrocities have continued to come in. These girls have disappeared from the public's consciousness but they continue to need our prayers.



Regular worshippers were upgraded to first class

Those typos in the church newsheet...

The church's AGM will be held on 22nd April.

While the pastor is on holiday, messages can be given to the church secretary.

More sinners wanted for the choir.



Ten Pound Talent Challenge

Are you up for it?

On the day of our Annual Parochial Church Meeting (28th April) after the morning service we shall be giving you the opportunity to enter a very special challenge.

Everyone will be offered £10

Sadly this is not for you to keep for yourself!

It's for you to use in whatever way you choose to grow it into a larger sum for church funds.

You could use the money

- to hold a coffee morning and sell tickets
- to buy something you could raffle
- to buy the ingredients to bake cakes to sell
- to buy craft materials to make something to sell

Or anything else you can think of.

Use your imagination and your own individual talents to see how much you can make.

**Bring your earnings to the Summer Social
on 15th June between 11.00am and 2.00pm**

"There are diversities of gifts but the same Spirit."

£130 for our church: Home Insurance offer from Ecclesiastical Insurance Company

Take out a home insurance policy with Ecclesiastical – one of the UK's most trusted home insurance providers and a Which? "Best Buy" – and Ecclesiastical will donate £130 to our church.

This offer will expire at the end of 2024.



Letters of Thanks

The church has received letters from First Steps Family Wellbeing Centre and Queenscourt Hospice for the support which we have provided to them. We publish them so that our congregation may know that their generosity is appreciated.

St John's has been supporting the First Steps Family Wellbeing Centre since 2021. During the last three years the donations from our congregation have enabled us to provide 106 £30 vouchers for emergency assistance to families, and we have also provided a bed on one occasion and nearly £1200 in Harvest and Easter baskets for 30 families. This is all owed to the willingness and generosity of our church family to make extra donations, over and above what they give on a regular basis to the church and for our mission partners overseas. Sometimes it may be a struggle to find anything extra for additional charitable donations, so it is much appreciated to know that the charities take the time to express their gratitude. And on the next page read about the continuing work of our mission partners in Brazil supporting abused and neglected children.



I am an Early Help worker from First Steps Family Wellbeing Centre. We have a small team who work with and support families of children aged 0-19 years within the Ainsdale and Birkdale communities.

We receive referrals from social care to offer early intervention. This involves us working with agencies/partners to empower the families to thrive going forward.

We are finding in our assessments that there are families suffering financial hardship in addition to other issues including domestic violence, mental health of the parent or child, risk of homelessness, and school attendance.

Your contributions are greatly appreciated and enable us to concentrate on the families' bigger issues and to know that the children will have food.

Thank you for your continued support.

Clare Horton

14th February 2024.

Dear Friends,

Thank you so much for your kind donation of £48.16 following the Christmas Tree Festival 2023. We are grateful that we are invited to take part each year as a local charity.



It is wonderful that you are thinking of Queenscourt and choosing to support us in this way.

From 1991 to the present day our dedicated team of nurses, doctors, educators and support staff have provided exceptional palliative care and support for thousands of patients across West Lancashire, Southport and Formby, as well as their families and carers.

As a small local charity with a big reach we can only provide this level of care with the generosity of people like you.

We are therefore very grateful for the donation that you have given us at this challenging time as it will make all the difference.

Yours faithfully,

Aisling Halligan-Giles
Support Care Co-ordinator.

We do hope you're doing well and send our love from here as always.

January was the summer holidays here at Revive and we had a lot of plans! The girls got to know more about our culture; visiting a local museum, the sites and the old town of Olinda. They went to the cinema, the local shopping centre, the water park and of course the beach! They did a lot of activities in the house which they all enjoyed. I think a highlight was a 'princess party' which they organised themselves, where they all dressed up as princesses and sang their Disney song!

We also take care of each girl's health, so it was a time to go to the dentist and check on their oral care, have physical health check ups and got them up to date on their vaccines!

We had lectures at the house to address racism and self-esteem which were held by a local NGO – one each week during the month of January.

In January, we had 12-year-old G.M reintegrated back into her family which we were all so happy for this to be the case once more!

As we arrived in February, the girls returned to school and the house routine once more, we had the arrival of an 11 year old girl R.K. She was transferred from another shelter and is adapting well to home and routine. We also had the departure of 17-year-old T.P who has been with us for some time now. She was reunited with her maternal aunt, and it was a day of celebration as she was very happy to return to her family.

Foster Care Service

We will soon be welcoming families to the next foster course, scheduled to start in the second week of March. We currently have three families interested in this process, and we hope that come April we will have new families registered. We currently have two host families registered and hosting.

At the end of January we welcomed two sisters, A. S. 4 years old and M.R. 6 years old. It is the family's first time fostering and but so far it's been going really well – and the care and protection these children have been receiving has been very positive. Furthermore, the other child who was already in foster care (M.F. 7 years old - boy) is approaching adoption and the court decision will soon be made.

We are happy for M.F. as God placed a loving and understanding family in his life. We believe that his time with a foster family enabled significant transformation in his life and today we are seeing the fruits of this with his soon to be adoptive family.

Community Market

The community market had a little refresh this new year as we said goodbye to a few families whose situations had changed and no longer had such need, and we gave their places to other families who do. As a result, we are now providing food to even more children! And they provide lots of fun to our Friday afternoon too.

As we look ahead to Easter we'd love to ask for your help in blessing the families that we serve through providing food specifically for a traditional Easter meal. We'll be making up hampers that include fish, rice, beans, coconut milk, and more. If you'd be able to support this appeal, we'd be so grateful. We estimate the cost of a hamper to be roughly £10 if you do feel able. Please follow the link to find out more and donate. Thank you so much!

<https://revive-international.org/2024/02/20/easter-market-2024/>

Please pray that 2024 will be a year of growth, particularly partnerships with supermarkets as we would really benefit from more food donations.

Thank you as ever for all your support.

We pray that as you bless the work of Revive, you in turn will be blessed knowing that you are playing a part in the big picture of **bringing God's love in action to children, women and families here in the city of Olinda.**



The Late Pancake Party

Friday 23rd February was a few days after the start of Lent but many of our congregation and their friends enjoyed some pancakes at 32, Hartley Crescent. Tim, Sally and Lucy hosted a very enjoyable evening and were assisted by apprentice pancake chef Matt (who did very well!)

There were lots of different accompaniments and some of those present tasted several—but no one was counting! It was a very well attended gathering and, as these photos show, everyone had a very good time. Many thanks to the Wrights for their generous hospitality.



Quiz Night

On Friday 22nd March St John's held a very enjoyable Quiz Night at which our genial quizmaster, Andy Dean, posed a selection of challenging questions to the 60 participants. Andy was not accompanied by his usual glamorous assistant Cheryl on this occasion but was assisted by his son William.

The competition was intense! The scores of each team of six were carefully recorded at the end of each round and the lead changed hands from "Ladies Who Lunch" to "The Birkdale Belles" and eventually to "The Hopeful Laggards" who were the eventual winners. It was a lot of fun and we had an excellent meal of chilli con carne followed by cake. (There's always cake at St John's!)

Special thanks go to Andy and William for the quiz, and to Sally and Christine for the catering, and to all who helped to organise the event and to clear up afterwards. If you enjoyed this social gathering we have another one in April: an Italian Night. See page 10 for details.



Left: Andy, about to pose topical (or should that be tropical?) questions.

Above centre: Scorer William.

Above right: The excitement builds as the competitors prepare to do battle.

Right and below: The contest is over. All smiles! A good time was had by all.



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

On Why a Church Should Always Resist Change

The Rectory,
St James the Least of All

My dear Nephew Darren,

I am not the least surprised you have got yourself into trouble; innovation is never to be encouraged. New ideas tend to cause revolutions. The move from incandescent lightbulbs to energy saving ones may ultimately change the Church of England.

Change is something everyone claims to be in favour of – provided it has no measurable effect on their own lives. I remember as a young curate once suggesting that at the Harvest Supper, tables might be enlarged so that eight people could sit together rather than the traditional six, thus helping more people get to know one another. The response would have been similar if I had suggested we travel to London to murder the Prime Minister. I was firmly told that tables for six had been perfectly adequate for parishioners in Queen Victoria's day. For the rest of my curacy, I was regarded as a revolutionary, to be watched carefully.

So, at your last visit to our church, to suggest that our 11am Mattins might be moved to 10.30am, in order to encourage those who wanted to have more of the day free to themselves, certainly lobbed a hand grenade among the post-Service coffee cups. The only person who was mildly in favour was Colonel Wainwright, who quickly realised that it would give him an extra half-hour at the gin and tonics before lunch.

Should you ever feel that people lack imagination, you should watch them in action when they find reasons for resisting an unwelcome suggestion. One said that the time couldn't be moved, since it would then be too early for the local bus – omitting to mention that none of our congregation travel to church by bus and that the service doesn't run on Sundays anyway.

Another pointed out that it would confuse those who didn't attend church – not explaining why if they never attended, it mattered what time the Service was.

A third, rather touchingly mentioned that it wouldn't give the rector time to enjoy his breakfast after the rigours of the 8am Service.

Your suggestion did, however, serve one useful purpose; it brought our congregation together in united opposition. They may not necessarily always know what they are for, but they certainly know what they are against. For that, I thank you.

Your loving uncle,
Eustace

WORD SEARCH

Solution on page 25

St George of the Golden Legend

St George is Patron Saint of England, but he never actually came here. He was a Christian officer in the Roman army under Diocletian, who refused to abandon his faith during the Terror. George was therefore martyred in Palestine about 300 AD. His courage became legendary, and St George became the example of a Christian fighting man, a powerful helper against evil powers affecting individual lives. He was the soldier-hero of the Middle Ages. In the Golden Legend of the 13th century, Jacobus de Voragine tells the story of how St George helped rescue the people of Sylene in Lybia from a dragon, especially the princess, who had been offered to the dragon as a sacrifice. With the dragon dead, and the princess returned to her father the King, the people of Sylene converted to Christianity.

GEORGE
PATRON
SAINT
ENGLAND
OFFICER

ROMAN
ARMY
DIOCLETIAN
TERROR
MARTYRED

PALESTINE
COURAGE
EXAMPLE
HELPER
EVIL

SOLDIER
HERO
GOLDEN
LEGEND
DRAGON

PRINCESS
CONVERTED

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

From Our Own Correspondent

An Easter Greeting to all my friends at St. John's, from **Doris Brookfield** in Ilkley.

I still feel I'm part of your lovely church as I open my iPad on most Sundays. You have helped me through my bad times and good. I am so pleased you will have your new Vicar with you soon. I'm sure she will fit in with you all, and she will know how good you have been keeping God's word alive in St. John's over the last years.

You are an amazing group of people and I love you all.

So as we approach Easter we read how Jesus gave his life on the cross to save us from our sins, and then on Easter Sunday we celebrate his rising to be with his Father in Heaven, about 2000 years ago.

I know times are hard keeping a church going, but with you and soon with your new vicar soon it can only get better.

So I say Happy Easter to you all. I don't need to name you, it's meant so much to me just being able to still join you on Zoom. So to everyone, Thank you.

God Bless.

An Introduction to the Book of The Bible: Deuteronomy and Joshua

The setting for these books is Israel's entry into the promised land after 40 years of wanderings in the wilderness. Deuteronomy gives us Moses' addresses on the plains of Moab, as the Israelites prepare to enter Canaan. The book of Joshua recounts the crossing of the Jordan and the victories that give the people control of Canaan.

The theme of Deuteronomy is God's covenant and his call for His people's obedience, loyalty and love. The 'shema' (Heb: 'hear'), expresses this response to God: 'Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts.' (Deut. 6:4-6).

The book contains instruction on how to live intentionally as God's people in response to His love and mercy. Total loyalty to God is also crucial, with the worship of any other gods being totally rejected. It is also widely quoted in the NT eg. Jesus' temptations (Deut. 8:3, 6:13, 16).

The book of Joshua, with its description of the conquest of the land and the destruction of cities and peoples, reminds us that God's love and purposes for us are worked out in the messes, storms and sins of our daily lives. As God says to Joshua: 'Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.' (Joshua 1:9). Joshua ('The Lord saves') is the same name as Jesus Himself. Jesus overcame all powers of evil to bring God's people into their eternal 'rest' (Heb 4:1-11).

The Easter Glow

Adapted from the London Institute of Contemporary Christianity website.

For three years Jesus had held the tiny band together, through journeyings, storms and opposition. And now – following a public trial and execution – He was gone. Take away the dominant figure, and an organisation can quickly crumble. Take Theudas, an earlier messianic claimant. Once killed, his 400 devotees melted away. Then there was Judas the Galilean. When he, too, was removed, the movement scattered.

Now, it was Easter Day. Here were two disciples walking to Emmaus. As far as they were concerned, their leader was dead. The 'scattering' process had already begun. It had started on that fateful Thursday evening of Christ's arrest, when Jesus had quoted to His disciples from the prophet Zechariah: "It is written 'I will strike the shepherd and the sheep of the flock will be scattered'" (Matthew 26:31).

The dream was over. "Let's go home – back to Emmaus." Yet Luke 24 is the glowing account of the entire rebuilding of a worldview. As the apparent Stranger joins the two, it was like the uncorking of a bottle; the story pours out. Surely crucifixion

and the future Redeemer of Israel had nothing to do with each other!

Then began a fascinating Bible study on the road. Evidently in their studies, the two had skipped the passages that spoke of a suffering Messiah. The Stranger says, "Let me fill in those bits for you." Now the figures of a Conquering King and a Suffering Servant begin to coalesce into a single photo fit. Then, at supper with the two, comes the familiar action of the breaking of bread, and – *Why.... it's Jesus.*

The disciples rush the seven miles back to Jerusalem. They can't keep the glowing news of the risen Christ to themselves!

If Jesus had not been bodily raised from the grave, the demoralised movement – like those of Theudas and Judas the Galilean – would have folded within days. And you and I would never have heard of Him!



The Road to Emmaus by Altobello Melone (National Gallery, London)

Local History Southport's Garrick Theatre

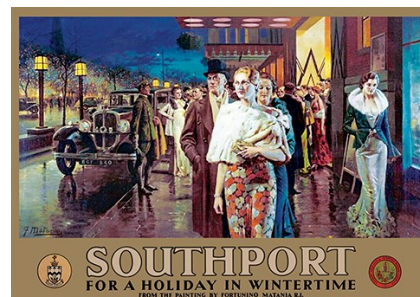
We publish an article written by local historian Henry James and which was first printed in the March 2024 edition of 'Birkdale Buzz'. We are most grateful to Mr James for kindly permitting us to reproduce his interesting article in these pages.

A visitor driving along the south end of Lord Street might not take much notice of the large, rather sombre, brick building on the corner with Kingsway. Yet, in its heyday, the Garrick Theatre (named after a famous Shakespearean actor) was the crown of Southport's entertainment venues, attracting many star names from stage and screen.



When the Garrick opened in 1932 it had an auditorium on two levels and seating for 1,600, along with boxes. It was designed by local architect George Tonge, who was also behind the iconic clubhouse at Royal Birkdale Golf Club. Both buildings are built in the art deco style of the period – streamlined, curved lines, bold geometric shapes and ornamentation. It is worth having a close-up

look at the Garrick Theatre with its decorative panels around entrances and windows. When the building opened it was claimed to be the most beautiful in Europe, and the building's exciting design was matched by the glamour of the theatregoers of this time, as can be seen in the famous poster by Fortunio Matania.



The theatre put on a regular series of long-running and successful plays and musicals, interspersed by occasional visits by international stars. Those who attended the opening night on December 19th could see Gladys Cooper in the mystery drama 'Firebird' which came direct from the Playhouse Theatre in London's West End. Laurel and Hardy came for a week in August 1952, appearing twice-nightly with a matinée, staying over the road at The Prince of Wales, then Southport's premier hotel. Three years later Peter Sellers brought his stage act to the Garrick, entertaining his audience with impressions of famous people such as Sir Winston Churchill.

However, along with cinemas, theatres around Britain in the 1950s were feeling the adverse effect of television, sales of which were booming. There was now much less need to leave the home for entertainment. The Garrick Theatre too felt these adverse changes and closed after Christmas in 1956. In January 1957 the Essoldo Cinemas chain bought the Garrick and on January 21st it opened as a cinema. The first films to be shown at the venue were 'Love Me Tender' starring Elvis Presley, and 'Miracle on 34th Street'.

The cinema lasted until 1963 after which it was converted to a Mecca bingo hall. The business was successful for more than 60 years until it had to close in March 2020 because of the Covid pandemic. Afterwards, Mecca did not renew their lease on the venue and the bingo hall was closed. There are ambitious proposals to reopen the Garrick theatre as "the UK's only theatre spa hotel". The hotel would include more than 100 rooms and the existing event auditorium would be refurbished. We can only wish the project well, hoping the wonderful building can be given a new purpose.

Henry James

“Thank God for Women Priests!” by Rev Lucy Winkett who has kindly permitted us to include this article in **THE WORD**.

At St John’s we greatly look forward to welcoming Rev. Jennie Hardy as our new Vicar. In last month’s **THE WORD** we reported that it was 30 years ago when the first women were ordained in the Church of England. Rev. Lucy Winkett, now the Vicar of St Pancras Church, London, recounted some of her experiences for publication in a recent issue of *‘The Oldie’* magazine.

She has been ordained for twenty-two years and she learned, especially in the early days, that the very sight of a women in a dog collar could send some people into a bit of a spin.

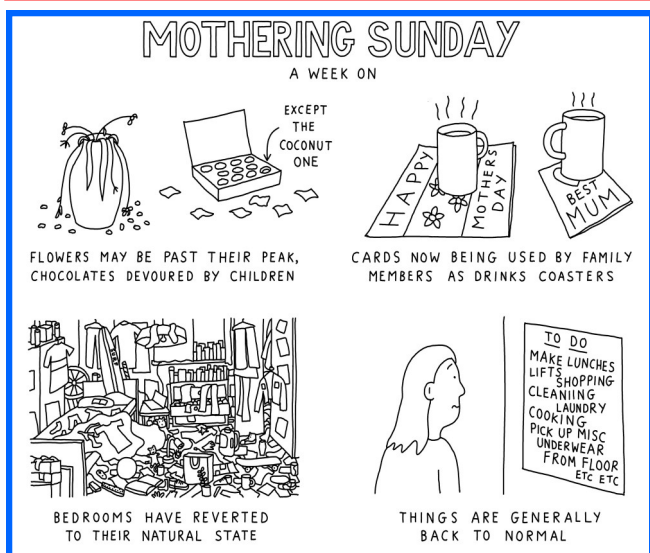
Once, as a new priest, she was celebrating early morning Prayer Book communion in an East End Norman church for her beloved ‘eight o’clockers’. Joan – long-time sacristan of the parish, not totally sure about women priests, but giving Lucy a go anyway – approached her with the wine and water, to lay the altar. She mistakenly poured red wine over Lucy’s hands as she washed them in preparation for the Eucharistic prayer. The Sunday morning peace was pierced as Joan screamed, ‘IT’S TURNED TO BLOOD!’, before setting off down the aisle, leaving Lucy to her bemused congregation.

Lucy was later appointed as the first woman priest at St Paul’s Cathedral, and she discovered what it was like to be at the centre of a storm. A press conference was hastily arranged at St Paul’s, and given that retired military gentlemen lead logistics at cathedrals, she was allocated a codename for her arrival, to make sure she didn’t unsuspectingly trip over the waiting press. For this female first, for this breaching of the barricades, was Lucy given a suitable code-name such as Boudicca, Joan of Arc or Amy Johnson? No. She was ‘Little Red Riding Hood’.

Twelve years at St Paul’s Cathedral provoked some unforgettable encounters. ‘Has the Pope said that England can have women priests?’ asked southern European and South American tourists, not knowing any churches existed other than Roman Catholic. Lucy dutifully explained, time after time. A front row of Mexican women wept throughout a service she was taking. She learned they were overcome and overjoyed to see a creature they had never imagined; a priest celebrating mass, who was a woman like them. An American visitor stood under the famous dome, watching her at the altar. When asked by a verger if he needed any help, he simply said, utterly bewildered, ‘Why is that priest speaking with a woman’s voice?’

Lucy observes that none of those who witnessed the General Synod vote in November 1992 to permit the ordination of women could have imagined how things would unfold. But by 2020 there were two women diocesan bishops sitting in the House of Lords, with a brace of suffragan bishops and a whole host of archdeacons, deans, canons and incumbents, all getting on with it in situations as varied as Saxon churches in Northumberland, inner-city projects in Manchester, hospices, prisons, housing estates and palaces. Just getting on with the day-to-day life of being a priest alongside men. The intervening years have been exhilarating, bruising, confusing and fulfilling.

We hope, and we will do all that we can to ensure, that Rev Jennie will find her ministry in St John’s to be only exhilarating and fulfilling!



Wages:

Seen on a church notice board: 'Despite inflation, the wages of sin remain the same.'

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': Allegri's Miserere

In the 1980s thanks to Godfrey Smith, a columnist for The Sunday Times, there was a series of letters about particular pieces of music that have the TQ – the Tingle Quotient. As we listen, the music sends a shiver of excitement up and down the spine and opens out for us a new world of beauty and wonder.

The letters started with a novelist writing about his travels across the Sahara. In moments of desolation and loneliness he would think of music that meant the most to him and which he thought he might never hear again. Then a schoolmaster in Rochester wrote of a production of 'Romeo and Juliet' where the funeral scene virtually brought the house down. Juliet entered a darkened school hall, lit only by glimmering candles with music sung that brought the audience to tears.

For both novelist and schoolmaster, the work that had that TQ factor was Allegri's *Miserere*. It provided consolation in the cold desert nights, and it created the impact in that production of Shakespeare's play. Other readers supplied their list of TQ music, and always the *Miserere* was in the top five. I suspect that this music strikes the TQ for many of you as well.

Why is it, I wonder? We can provide an answer by talking of the contrast between the plainsong sung by the men's voices and the responses from the choir that lead to that small group of solo voices where the treble or

soprano reaches a high C and comes down the scale to the cadence. We can point to the intriguing history of this work for the setting by Gregorio Allegri (1582-1652) was the exclusive possession of the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican. To copy the music was a crime punishable by excommunication.

In spite of this, a 14-year-old Mozart heard the piece in 1770 and wrote it down from memory, paying another visit to verify some of the notes he had copied down. The Emperor, Leopold 1, the king of Portugal, persuaded the Pope to grant him a copy. When it was performed in his own imperial chapel, he was disappointed. He even thought the Pope had palmed him off with an inferior work. Then he realised that the beauty and magic of the music lay in its being sung in the Sistine Chapel where the plainsong and the high C cadences could ring out among the pillars and arches of that great building.

The *Miserere*, or Psalm 51 is the heart-felt cry of the Church for mercy. As one of the penitential psalms, it is a very personal expression of sorrow for sin and a moving appeal to God for mercy and restoration.

In Allegri's setting that high C is reached as the individual acknowledges his sin, and again as he cries for mercy and finally as he proclaims that his tongue will sing of God's grace and righteousness. A single voice in the music scales the heights of heaven to represent all of us as we turn to God with that same awareness of sin, that same plea for mercy, and that same affirmation that we will then turn to God with thanksgiving and the offering of a humble and contrite heart.

And so with the psalmist and with Allegri, we can pray 'Have mercy upon me, O God, after thy great goodness.'

Here is something you didn't expect: using hearing aids if you are a bit deaf can be of great benefit to your overall health.

Crystal Rolfe, director of health at the Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID) said: "Hearing aids bring enormous benefits for people with hearing loss. Research shows that wearing hearing aids may reduce the risk of cognitive decline, and it is well known that they have positive effects on physical, social, emotional, and mental wellbeing. According to hearing loss charity RNID, 12 million adults in the UK are deaf, have hearing loss or tinnitus and an estimated seven million people could benefit from hearing aids, but only about two million use them.

The researchers hope the findings, published in The Lancet Healthy Longevity journal, will encourage more people to wear hearing aids. As one doctor said: "If you have hearing loss, get hearing aids. The benefits could be limitless."

W CROSS R D

Solution below

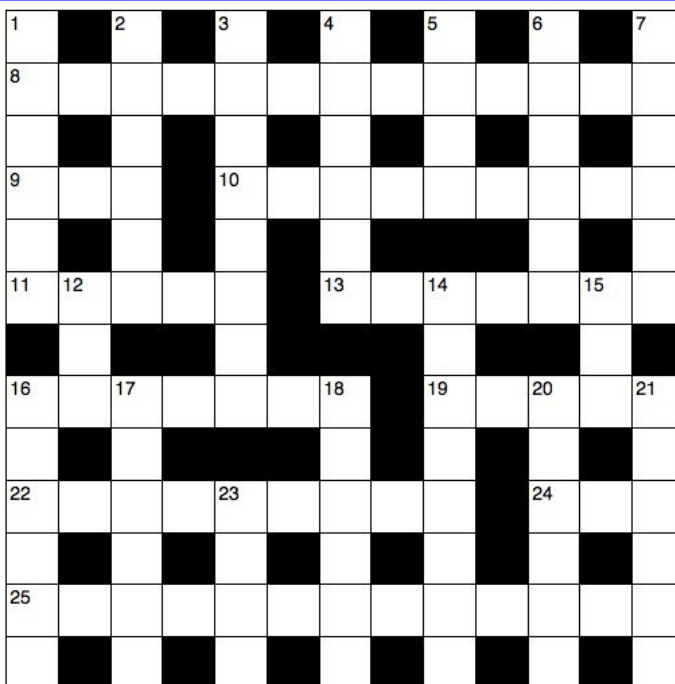
The Bible version used in our crosswords is the NIV.
Crosswords reproduced by kind permission of BRF and John Capon, originally published in Three Down, Nine Across, by John Capon (£6.99 BRF).

ACROSS

- 8 'He poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the —' (Isaiah 53:12) (13)
 9 'When they had sung a hymn, they went — to the Mount of Olives (Matthew 26:30) (3)
 10 Comes between Galatians and Philippians (9)
 11 'Your heart will — and swell with joy' (Isaiah 60:5) (5)
 13 Muslim holy month (7)
 16 Ten ears (anag.) (7)
 19 Under (poetic abbrev.) (5)
 22 How Abram described himself to God when he complained that his inheritance would pass to a servant (Genesis 15:2) (9)
 24 'Go to the —, you sluggard' (Proverbs 6:6) (3)
 25 Debar from receiving Communion (13)

DOWN

- 1 My — for His Highest (Oswald Chambers' best-known book) (6)
 2 Festival of the resurrection (6)
 3 'His sons will prepare for war and — a great army' (Daniel 11:10) (8)
 4 'Let not the — string his bow' (Jeremiah 51:3) (6)
 5 Name of the River Thames in and around Oxford (4)
 6 'From then on Judas watched for an opportunity — — him over' (Matthew 26:16) (2,4)
 7 'But Christ is faithful — — — over God's



- house' (Hebrews 3:6) (2,1,3)
 12 Long-handled implement used to till the soil (Isaiah 7:25) (3)
 14 Order to which monks and nuns devote themselves (8)
 15 Appropriate (Proverbs 15:23) (3)
 16 I, uncle (anag.) (6)
 17 'They gave him — — of broiled fish' (Luke 24:42) (1,5)
 18 'Weren't there three men that we — — and threw into the fire?' (Daniel 3:24) (4,2)
 20 Mountain where Noah's ark came to rest (Genesis 8:4) (6)
 21 'Don't you know that friendship with the world is — towards God?' (James 4:4) (6)
 23 Prominent architectural feature of large cathedrals such as St Paul's (4)

In our Book of Remembrance in April

- 2nd Harry Tucker, 1986
 Mark Harding, 2003
 3rd Henry Prescott, 1988
 6th Ralph Gregson MBE
 8th John Hamer, 1972
 9th Ruby Bennett, 2000
 Harriet (Pat) Hind, 2007
 12th James Canadine, 1986
 Elizabeth Powney, 1990
 William Baker, 2000
 13th Eric Whitehead, 1983
 15th Alan Short, 1977
 17th Bernard Rimmer, 1996

- 18th Elizabeth Critchley, 1989
 19th Annie Rimmer, 1986
 20th Samuel Maguire, 1996
 21st Dora Gott, 1987
 George Hamer, 1983
 22nd Robert Rimmer, 1974
 23rd Aubrey Hanoman, 1997
 24th Ruth Beaumont, 2009
 26th Joyce Crosby, 2010
 30th Ada Whitehead, 2013

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)

CROSSWORD SOLUTION

ACROSS: 8, Transgressors. 9, Out. 10, Ephesians. 11, Throb. 13, Ramadan. 16, Nearest. 19, Neath. 22, Childless. 24, Ant. 25, Excommunicate.
 DOWN: 1, Utmost. 2, Easter. 3, Assemble. 4, Archer. 5, Isis. 6, To hand. 7, As a son. 12, Hoc. 14, Monastic. 15, Apt. 16, Nuclei. 17, A piece. 18, Tied up. 20, Ararat. 21, Hatred. 23, Dome.

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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).



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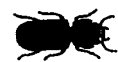
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WHAT IF...?

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 Friendly Sea.

The Dutch opened the sea gates at every opportunity and flooded the land. This allowed The Sea Beggars to sail in and attack the Spaniards resulting in more victories for the Prince. The Sea Beggars were regarded as the best sailors in the world and invincible in their own environment. The sea level dropped and the ships were left stranded and at the mercy of the Spaniards. The Patriots prayed fervently for deliverance. Two days later a strong gale drove a surge of water across the land allowing the ships to escape.

At Bergen the Spanish and Dutch fleets met and after a violent fight in which no quarter was given the Sea Beggars were victorious. The Prince went to raise the siege of Middleburg and offered terms for the garrison to leave allowing them to take all their belongings; the Spaniards had threatened to burn the town to the ground and the Prince did this to save the town and its residents. The Priests, however, were only allowed to take their clothing.

Count Louis in Germany had raised an army of mercenaries and invaded Brabant; at first the Spaniards were driven back but received reinforcements and after a bloody and fierce battle they overcame Louis who, with his brother and a small group, made one last charge in which all perished. After the battle the Spanish troops mutinied because they had not been paid for three years.

The Prince made an appeal to Queen Elizabeth for help, while the Queen gave passive support she did not

have the finances needed and told the Prince that the Netherlanders would have to fend for themselves and find their own funds as she did not want to upset Spain or France. At this point Requisens died after a short illness leaving Philip in a quandary as to who to replace him with. In the meantime, Count Peter Mansfield was established as supreme military commander including being the governor of Brussels until Philip could decide.

The Prince took advantage of Philip's inertia by opening discussions with leading gentlemen in Brussels and elsewhere who were disposed to side with the country against the tyrant whereas before they had been equally divided: Holland and Zeeland were for the Prince, and the other mainly Catholic provinces were for the King.

In spite of their differences they were drawn together by the intolerable excesses of the foreigners and wanted to regain their earlier ancient privileges. The country was desolate, the dykes all broken. Most of the animal livestock had been lost in the floods. A law was made for a period of time forbidding the slaughter of oxen, cattle calves, sheep and poultry. In spite of the impoverished conditions. They co-operated together and repaired the dykes.

The Estates of Holland and Zeeland assembled at Delft and signed a new act of union in April 1576. It established 18 articles of authority of law and order, free intercourse and traffic. The Prince was given supreme authority; he was to maintain the practice of the Reformed Evangelical religion and not permit the Inquisition to be used against anyone's beliefs or conscience.

Neighbouring countries watched with interest, Elizabeth with some jealousy of France and Spain. The motives of some of the self seeking Princes disgusted the nobles with the discord this was causing, with many new protestant doctrines springing up.

To be continued

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.

Science and Society: how can we approach new ethical issues?

Science tells us how the world works, and technology offers applications of that knowledge, but neither can tell us what we ought to do. All scientific discoveries or new technologies can be used to either help or harm others. For example, a smartphone can be used to stay in touch but also enables bullying.

It is important to get past our initial reactions: the 'yuk!' or 'wow!' These feelings may well change once we learn more about the science and other factors behind a new development.

Ethical thinking can be divided into three main categories. The **consequentialist** approach is demonstrated in Proverbs, when Wisdom calls young men to consider the outcome of their actions. Utilitarianism is a form of consequentialist ethic that tries to maximise the greatest good for the largest number of people affected, but unchecked it leaves minorities out in the cold.

Duty or law-based ethics start with intrinsic values, asking what is the correct course of action, or our duty? These values might be God-given, such as the Ten Commandments, or worked out by human reason. It is possible, however, to do harm while obeying the law, especially if someone asks 'What can I get away with?' Also, what happens when rules collide? For example, who should be treated first when resources are limited?

Virtue ethics are about building character, growing in wisdom and the fruit of the Spirit. There are plenty of biblical principles to guide virtuous living, such as the idea that we are 'made in the image of God' which supports the value of every human life (e.g., Genesis 1:26-27, Genesis 9:6, James 3:9-10), but the right decision can vary depending on circumstances.

So how can we make ethical decisions about new technologies? **The five Cs** bring together a number of different types of ethical thinking into a helpful framework for decision-making.

Clarify the facts and key questions.

Consider our choices: what could we achieve?

Constraints: External – what must we do? ; Internal – how should we behave?

Compare the pros and cons of each approach.

Choose what is best, with all parties in mind.

Finally, we have to recognise that the information available to us will change over time, our knowledge of God and His Word will keep growing, and we cannot avoid making mistakes – so our ethical decisions will need to be revisited and revised from time to time.

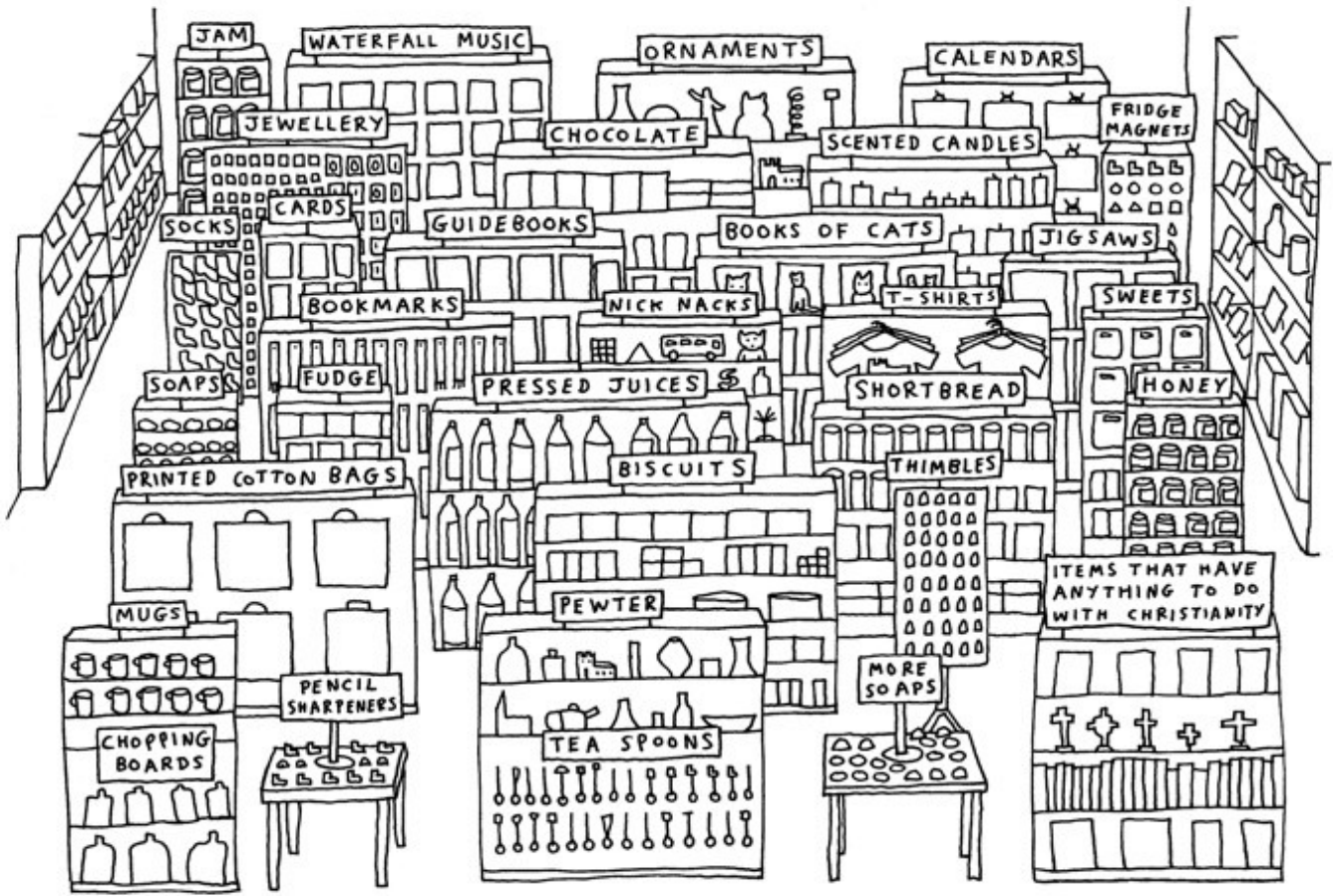


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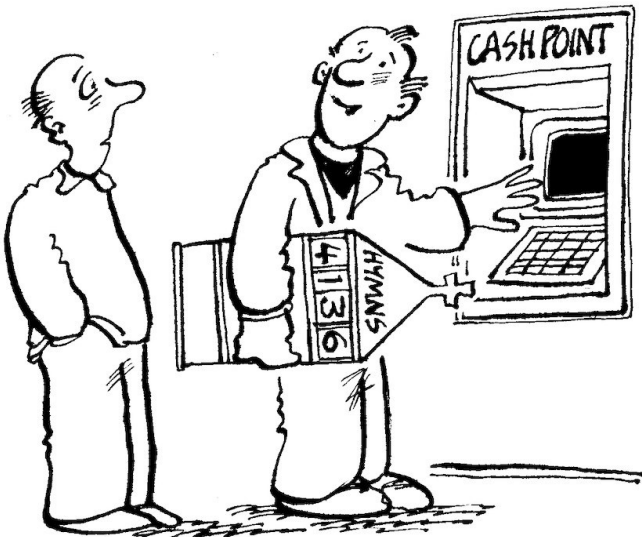
From a church magazine: "The restoration of the churchyard was finally completed by the resurfacing of our driveway. The following Sunday, the church wardens praised everyone who had helped, and gave special thanks to the vicar and his wife who had rolled in the gravel.



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observations on life....

Do not believe in miracles...rely on them. – Anon
 Every day is a gift; that's why they call it the present. – Anon
 The two hardest things to handle in life are failure and success. – Anon

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I KNOW WHAT I LIKE

by John M. Shakespeare

Criticism, given in a reasoned manner, can only be seen as helpful to progress, as a fault finding exercise. However it may be seen as discouraging, to the writer or speaker involved.

It can be argued that philosophy thrives on Criticism, on challenging views, the exploration of alternative forms of thinking, or (for that matter) beliefs. The ability to think critically but also constructively is, I believe, what makes the practice of philosophic thinking worthwhile!

Social and Technical Criticism usually resolve the techniques used in either case. Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) believed that we all see things through the filter of our own experiences, not necessarily as the way things really are. A Critical as against a Naïve realism is often the appreciation of what is the perception of and the relationship to whatever the subject represents to the eyes of the beholder.

The question of our interpretation and historical understanding of certain social interactions leads us to adopt a Critical stance with regards to what we see as acceptable forms of behaviour or not.

The fact that we may be misunderstood is often the catalyst that inspires Criticism. To quote a verse from the poem by Thomas Bracken entitled "Not Understood": "O God that man would see a little clearer, or judge men less harshly, where they cannot see.

O God that men would draw a little nearer to one another- they'd be nearer Thee and understood".

Words of guidance, when we are prone to passing judgement on others, is expressed in Romans (Ch 14 verses 10-12), which states: "Why do you pass judgement on your brother or sister? Or you, why do you despise your brother or sister. For we will all stand before the judgement seat of God. For it is written: As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me,

and every tongue shall give praise to God, so then each of us will be accountable to God!"



C.S. Pierce (1839-1944) was a founding figure (in many people's eyes) of the practice of Pragmatism. It appeals to me because it suggests that if what is being proposed or said does not make any difference to everyday life then in reality it has no significance.

So I believe that for a Criticism to have any useful meaning it should be measured by its influence on the subject under discussion i.e. is it the source of the Criticism, the cost of the Criticism, the appearance of the Criticism or the effectiveness of the subject, which is in question?

If the Criticism in effect has no practical outcome, then as the Pragmatists would say, what is its point. There can of course be instances where a Critic's remarks can be of importance and therefore worthy of note.

I conclude this article with a verse from the poem "Consideration", by Derek Bourne-Jones:

"Stranger", I said, "You chasten me to clear my inner-self I see. Admitting daily I have failed, since selfishness each time prevailed. Nor claim perfection do I dare. May I of you request a prayer, that those offended will supply, forgiveness and sweet charity".

A heartfelt plea, I believe, that we all can echo as mitigation for our failings.

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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 4th April 1949 the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) was founded. Also 75 years ago, on 7th April 1949 the Rodgers and Hammerstein musical South Pacific was opened in Broadway.

70 years ago, on 26th April 1954 the Soviet Union transferred Crimea from Russia to Ukraine. In 2014 Russia annexed Crimea, but it is not recognised internationally, and a number of sanctions were imposed on Russia as a result.

60 years ago, on 15th April 1964 twelve men convicted of carrying out the Great Train Robbery in England in August of 1963 were jailed for a total of 307 years. They were given some of the longest sentences in British criminal history.

50 years ago, on 6th April 1974 the Swedish pop group ABBA won the Eurovision Song Contest with their song Waterloo. It was the first time that Sweden won the contest. ABBA went on to be one of the most successful groups in music history.

40 years ago, on 17th April 1984 British police officer Yvonne Fletcher was shot dead during a demonstration outside the Libyan Embassy in London. This led to an 11-day siege by the police.

20 years ago, on 1st April 2004 Google launched its free email service, Gmail.

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

Prayer for April 2024

based on John 20: 19-end

Almighty Father,
In these weeks after Easter, help us to receive afresh
the new life Jesus' resurrection makes possible.
Lord, come to us. Walk through the locked doors of our fears.
Bring us your peace. Fill us with your Holy Spirit.

Send us onto our daily front lines to share your resurrection
peace and hope and love with those who are lost and lonely.

Thank you for meeting us in Jesus, our Lord and our God.

We are your Easter people. Hallelujah. Amen.

By Daphne Kitching

★HAPPY★
BIRTHDAY!

HAPPY
ANNIVERSARY

30th
37th

John Shakespeare on 13th April
Andy Dean on 21st April
Tim Wright on 22nd April
Cath Whiteside on 26th April
Lucy Wright on 27th April
Tim & Sally Wright on 2nd April
Bob & Linda Caton 18th April

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

The Last Laughs



"Police? This is St Mary's Ladies' Knitting & Vigilante Circle. We've detained two gents trying to nick the church silver."

Brain Teasers (submitted by Judith Foster)

1. I can't be bought, but I can be stolen at a glance. I'm worthless to one but priceless to two. What am I?
2. Turn me on my side and I am everything. Cut me in half and I am nothing. What am I?
3. How can $8+8=4$?
4. What is harder to catch the faster your run?
5. What fastens two people yet touches only one?
6. What can be swallowed but also swallow you? *(Answers in next column)*

Plain English for Beginners

We'll begin with a box and the plural is boxes, but the plural of ox should be oxen not oxes.

Then one fowl is a goose but two are called geese yet the plural of moose should never be meese.

You may find a lone mouse or a whole nest of mice but the plural of house is houses not hice.

If the plural of man is always called men Why shouldn't the plural of pan be pen?

The cow in the plural may be cows or kine but a bow if repeated is never called bine, and the plural of vow is vows never vine.

If I speak of a foot and you show me your feet and I give you a boot would a pair be called beeth?

If one is a tooth and the whole set are teeth why shouldn't the plural of booth become beeth?

If the singular's this and the plural is these should the plural of kiss ever be nicknamed keese?

Then one may be that and three would be those yet hat in the plural would never be hose, and the plural of cat is cats not cose.

We speak of a brother and the plural is brethren but though we say mother we never say methren.

Then the masculine pronouns are he, his and him but imagine the feminine she, shis and shim.

So that English I think you all will agree is the queerest language you ever did see.

- Answers
1. Love
 2. The number 8
 3. 8 o'clock + 8 hours = 4 o'clock
 4. Your breath
 5. A wedding ring
 6. Your pride



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