



# 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. 257**

**MAY 2024**

## ST. JOHN'S PARISH CHURCH

**God Centred, Relationship Driven and Life Transforming**



### NEW SERIES OF SUNDAY SERMONS

After concluding our current series of "Resurrection Appearances" on 5th May our worship leaders will start to deliver **five talks on the book of Malachi**, the last book in the Old Testament.

Malachi prophesied the coming of the Messiah. These talks will commence on 12th May but there will be a gap for Pentecost and Trinity Sundays and the talks will resume on 2nd June.

These will take us up to 23rd June, the Sunday before the licensing of our new Vicar, Rev. Jennie Hardy on Wednesday 26th June.

### OUR MISSION PARTNERS IN SOUTH AMERICA

We are very pleased to inform our readers that our mission partners (Revive International) in Olinda, Brazil have recently achieved their 10th anniversary of caring for vulnerable, neglected and abused children.

On page 13 we include a letter from one of their founders, Andy Roberts. We have all been affected by the difficult economic conditions of recent years, and it may not be easy to make regular contributions to a charity whose work is many thousands of miles away, particularly when we know that there are many in our own parish who need assistance. But St John's has chosen to support Revive International because we can see that **their Christian work makes a real difference to children whose lives would be blighted without it.**

When you have a cup of tea or coffee after our Sunday morning services there is a **collection box specifically marked for Revive International**. St Paul told the early Christians in Corinth, "God loves a cheerful giver!" If our readers do not already make regular donations to our support of overseas mission we hope that they will **see the box, think how fortunate we are, and give cheerfully to support Revive International.**

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

## PARISH REGISTERS

### Baptisms

31st March Harry Edward Downey  
31st March Jasmine Alexandra Downey

### Marriages

4th April Samuel Mark Philip Oti and Harriet Grace Maguire  
27th April Craig John Wilby and Sophie Helen Hepworth

### Burials and Cremations

5th April Kenneth Howard (cremation) at West Lancashire Crematorium  
24th April Sheila Street who died on 28th March 2024 aged 93 years.

We record with sadness the death of **Sheila Street** on 28th March. Sheila had been one of our church family since 1956 and was a faithful supporter of St John's Church for 65 years.

Sheila was our parish secretary for the Church of England Children's Society for more than twenty years, a member of the PCC for 11 years, a Sidesman for many years, and a churchwarden here for five years from 2000 until 2004. She served diligently in all of those roles. And on 30th June 1979 she crowned our church's Rose Queen: a rare honour for them both!

Sheila was a very kind and generous lady and always had a twinkle of (sometimes irreverent) humour in her eyes. Many years ago when the nation was celebrating one of the anniversaries of Queen Elizabeth II we held a social event which was billed as "An Indoor Street Party." Sheila was amused to think that it had been organised for her!

During the covid pandemic Sheila moved to St Alban's to be with her family in 2021. She was missed when she left us and will be well remembered by all who knew her as a lovely lady .



### Thursday Evening Prayers on 2nd and 16th May 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 27 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

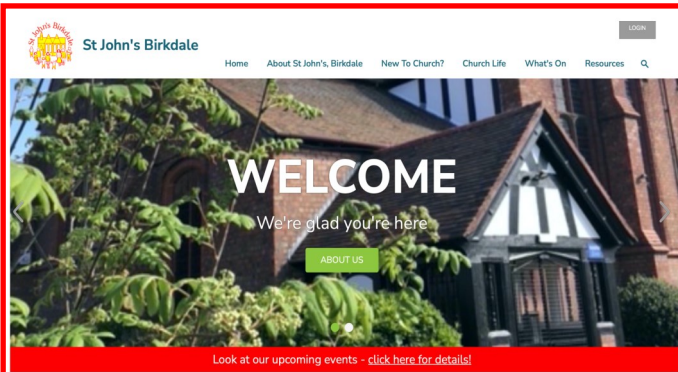
ST JOHN'S CHURCH BIRKDALE  
MONTHLY  
2ND FRIDAYS  
10.30AM

**NEXT MEETING:  
10TH MAY**





# WHAT'S ON AT ST. JOHN'S



## Visit our website

[stjohnsbirkdale.co.uk](http://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

Friday 23 February @ 7pm

Friday 22 March @ 7pm

Friday 19 April @ 7pm

Friday 17 May @ 6.30pm

Saturday 15 June @ 11-2pm

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

There will be another programme of events for our Young Adults. The details will be published soon.

But here are some pictures of their last outing at a pottery painting café in Formby.





Worship on the  
Fifth Sunday after  
Easter

Rogation Sunday

**SUNDAY 5th MAY**  
**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 Fifth Sunday after Easter

O Lord, from whom all good things do come: Grant to us your humble servants, that by your holy inspiration we may think those things that be good, and by your merciful guiding may perform the same; through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

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

**Resurrection Appearances:  
The Ascension**

## The Reading: Acts ch.1 vv.6-11

- 6 So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"
- 7 He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority.
- 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."
- 9 And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight.
- 10 And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes,
- 11 and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."

## Learning The Ropes: The Only Way Is Down!

Following on from our recent articles about Colourful Clerics our readers may be interested to learn about three Bishops taking leaps of faith but, fortunately, not falling from grace.

The Bishop of Sheffield, the Rt Revd Dr Pete Wilcox (*right*), recently abseiled 42ft from the bell tower of Rotherham Minster in support of a redevelopment scheme costing £3million. He was accompanied by Canon Batchford who described the experience, not surprisingly, as "terrifying". The Bishop was less troubled by it, perhaps because he had already abseiled down the west front of Liverpool Cathedral when he was the Cathedral Dean ten years ago.

In March the Bishop of Blackburn, the Rt Revd Philip North, together with the Speaker of the House of Commons Sir Lindsay Hoyle MP, abseiled down St Laurence's church in Chorley. He is another old hand, having abseiled down the side of St John the Evangelist church in Whittle-le-Woods in 2015. And the Bishop of Dorchester, the Rt Revd Gavin Collins, will soon do the same at his Abbey when he will descend 100ft from the tower. This gives a completely new meaning to "Flying Bishops"!

Meanwhile, in Leominster there is the possibility to abseil 100 feet down the Priory tower. Disturbingly, this activity is sponsored by Co-Op Funeralcare.



Source: The Times newspaper

## Ascension Day 9th May

There will not be an Ascension Day service at St John's this year. The Ascension will be the subject of the Sunday sermon on 5th May.

Worship on the  
Sunday after  
Ascension Day

**SUNDAY 12th MAY**  
**10.30am service IN CHURCH**

### Collect for the Sunday after Ascension Day

O God the King of glory, who has exalted your only Son Jesus Christ with great triumph unto your kingdom in heaven: We beseech you, leave us not comfortless; but send to us your Holy Ghost to comfort us, and exalt us unto the same place where our Saviour Christ is gone before, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen.

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

**Malachi's Message on Love**

### The Reading: Malachi ch.1 vv.1-5

- 1 The oracle of the word of the Lord to Israel by Malachi.
- 2 "I have loved you," says the Lord. But you say, "How have you loved us?" "Is not Esau Jacob's brother?" declares the Lord. "Yet I have loved Jacob
- 3 but Esau I have hated. I have laid waste his hill country and left his heritage to jackals of the desert."
- 4 If Edom says, "We are shattered but we will rebuild the ruins," the Lord of hosts says, "They may build, but I will tear down, and they will be called 'the wicked country,' and 'the people with whom the Lord is angry forever.'"
- 5 Your own eyes shall see this, and you shall say, "Great is the Lord beyond the border of Israel!"

### New series of Sermons

Today (12th May) we start a new series of Sunday sermons which look at the **Book of Malachi**, the last book in the Old Testament and the last of 12 books of the Old Testament that bear the names of the "Minor Prophets".

There is no certainty about the authorship of this book. *Malachi* is merely a transliteration of a Hebrew word meaning "my messenger." Some scholars believe that it was written by the Hebrew scribe Ezra (the author of the Book of Ezra) who used a pseudonym because he feared retribution for making his prophesies.

It was written approximately 400-500 years before the birth of Jesus and its aim was to correct the lax religious and social behaviour of the Israelites, particularly the priests, who had returned to Jerusalem after their exile in Babylon and whose commitment to their God began, once again, to wane. The book consists of six distinct sections. We shall look at five of them in May and June.

The author calls for fidelity to God's covenant. He emphasises the necessity of knowing the love of God, sincerely serving God, and the consequences of not loving God, and he foretold the coming of a messenger (John the Baptist) and the Messiah (Jesus). The last chapter of the book contains the prophet's final revelations, painting a vivid picture of the judgement day, speaking of both punishment for the wicked and reward for the righteous.



Midweek Book of  
Common Prayer Holy  
Communion



**WEDNESDAY**  
**15th MAY**  
**10.30am service**  
**IN CHURCH**

Worship on  
Pentecost  
(Whitsun)



**SUNDAY 19th MAY**  
**10.30am service IN CHURCH**  
**and via zoom & phone**

### Collect for Pentecost

God, who as at this time taught the hearts of your faithful people, by the sending to them the light of your Holy Spirit; Grant us by the same Spirit to have a right judgement in all things, and evermore to rejoice in his holy comfort; through the merits of Christ Jesus our Saviour, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the same Spirit, one God, world without end. Amen.

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

**Speaking the Other Language**

### The Reading: Acts 2:1-12

1. When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place.
2. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting.
3. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them.
4. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.
5. Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven.
6. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken.
7. Utterly amazed, they asked: "Aren't all these who are speaking Galileans?"
8. Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language?
9. Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,
10. Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome
11. (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!"
12. Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?"

### COMING SOON AT ST. PETER'S CHURCH, BIRKDALE

St Peter's have formed a new social group and they will invite other churches to join them at their events to share in the enjoyment.

On their calendar are a **Quiz on Saturday 1st June**; their **annual Open Church/Open Garden with a large sale of plants and delicious refreshments on Sunday 23rd June**; and a **Christmas Fair on Saturday 30th November**. Further details to follow in due course.

In recent years St John's has been trying to foster closer contact with the other Birkdale churches, so it would be good if we can join St Peter's at their social events.

## Worship on Trinity Sunday



**SUNDAY 26th MAY**  
**10.30am service**  
**IN CHURCH**

### Collect for Trinity Sunday

Almighty and everlasting God, who has given grace unto us your servants, by the confession of a true faith to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity, and in the power of the Divine Majesty to worship the unity: we beseech you, that you would keep us steadfast in this faith, and evermore defend us from all adversities, who lives and reigns, one God, world without end. Amen.

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

**The Blessing of  
God Almighty**

### The Reading: John Ch. 16 v. 12 to 15

- 12 Oh, there is so much more I want to tell you, but you can't bear it now.
- 13 When the spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not be presenting his own ideas; he will be telling you what he has heard. He will tell you about the future.
- 14 He will bring me glory by revealing to you whatever he receives from me.
- 15 All that the Father has is mine; this is what I mean when I say that the Spirit will reveal to you whatever he receives from me.

## ANNUAL CHURCH MEETING

The APCM was held on Sunday 28th April and was well attended by members of our congregation. The results of elections were as follows:

Churchwardens: Clive Morris and Tim Wright

Parochial Church Council ("PCC") members: Judith Foster, Howard Taylor and David Budworth.

Howard and David are new members of the PCC and they are welcomed. We hope that they find the role to be interesting and rewarding. Howie Lawson's term of office on the PCC expired and he was thanked for his service.

We now have 67 people on our Electoral Roll of whom 43 live within the parish and 24 live outside the parish. Three more applications were received at the meeting and will be added soon.

The meeting received reports from the PCC Secretary, the PCC Treasurer, the Electoral Roll Officer, the Wardens, and the Lay Chairman of the PCC.

The PCC Secretary reported that there were 6 meetings of the PCC since the last annual meeting. The details of our financial position were contained in the PCC Treasurer's Finance Report. Clive, on behalf of the Wardens, reported that the fabric of the church is in good condition and we are awaiting the repointing of the brickwork on the west wall of the church which will complete all the work which was recommended in the last quinquennial report from the Diocesan Architect in 2019.

Christine outlined the many aspects in which our church life has been sustained in the last twelve months and thanked everyone for the support that they have given in a multitude of ways.

The major event on our calendar for this next year is the installation of Revd. Jennie Hardy as our new vicar on 26th June. Jennie will become the Chairman of the PCC upon becoming the vicar of the parish.

Christine Baker was thanked for chairing the meeting for the seventh time in the last eight years. She looks forward to next year's annual meeting being chaired by Revd Hardy.

The next annual meeting will be on Sunday 27th April 2025.

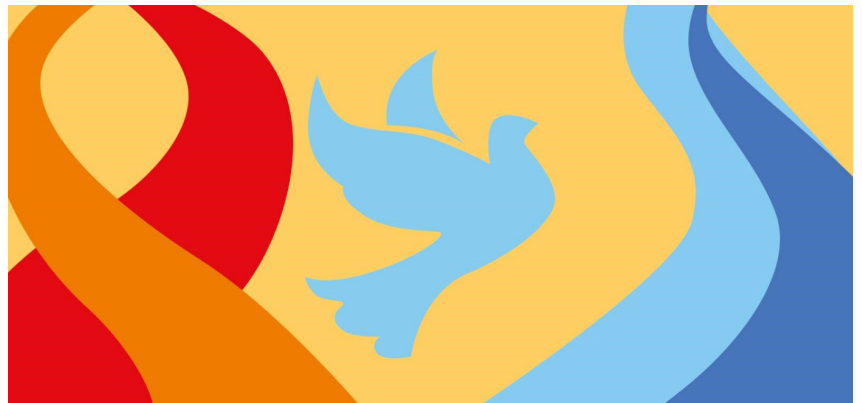


## Pentecost and Whit Sunday

We used to call it Whitsun – ‘White Sunday’ because long ago children marched to church in white on that day. There are no processions nowadays, and we’ve even changed its name. It’s now ‘Pentecost’, which is more accurate but needs explaining.

Pentecost took place on the well-established Jewish festival of First Fruits, which was observed at the beginning of the wheat harvest. It was seven weeks after the first Easter, or 50 days including Easter. Pentecost was the day that Jesus sent the Holy Spirit – the day the Church was born. Jesus had told His disciples that something big was going to happen, and that they were to wait for it in Jerusalem, instead of returning to Galilee. Jesus had plans for His disciples, but He knew they could not do the work themselves. They would need His help.

They waited in Jerusalem, praying together with His other followers, for many days. They were afraid to show their faces in case the authorities arrested them. And then on that fateful morning there was suddenly the sound as of a mighty rushing wind. Tongues of flame flickered on their heads, and they began to praise God in many tongues,



to the astonishment of those who heard them. The curse of Babel (Genesis 11: 1- 9) was dramatically reversed that morning when the Holy Spirit came to dwell in the disciples and followers of Jesus. The Church was born. The Christians were suddenly full of life and power, utterly different from their former fearful selves. The change in them was permanent.

Afraid no longer, they burst out on to the streets where crowds were gathering for the festival. Led by Peter they began to tell them about Jesus and His resurrection. As they did so, although many of the people in the crowd were foreigners who spoke other languages, everyone heard them in their own tongue. Peter told them that what they were seeing was the fulfilment of an old prophecy when God would pour out His Spirit on the human race, men and women, young and old.

Peter gave the first ever sermon of the Christian Church that morning, proclaiming Jesus was the Messiah. His boldness in the face of possible death was in marked contrast to the man who had denied Jesus 50 days before. And 3,000 people responded, were converted, and were baptised. How’s that for fast church growth! They were the nucleus of what in 100 years would be a Church that would turn history upside down. For Christians Pentecost is in effect the birthday of the Church.

Many people find the whole idea of the Holy Spirit mysterious and elusive. It wasn’t helped by the earlier title ‘Holy Ghost’. The Spirit is not spiritually a ‘ghost’ but a precious gift.

Of course, Pentecost was not the first time the Holy Spirit had acted in this world. All through the Old Testament there are accounts of how God’s Spirit guided people and strengthened them. But now, because of Christ’s death and resurrection, He could dwell in them. From now on, every Christian could have the confidence that Jesus was with them constantly, through the indwelling of His Holy Spirit.

Dates for your Diary

St John's Church, Birkdale



**TREASURE**

**HUNT**

**FRIDAY 17 MAY**

**from 6.30pm**

**Depart from St John's**

**Tickets**

**£10**

**including supper,  
bring your own  
drinks**

Bring your own car,  
with your team, or  
join a team on the  
night, follow the  
clues to find your  
supper!

Contact Christine 07821982477  
or Sally 07800550097



Dates 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



## SATURDAY 15TH JUNE - 11am to 2pm

We are now only a few weeks away from our **Summer Social** event and looking forward to enjoying a time of fun, fellowship and food, so please put the date in your diary and bring family and friends, and don't forget the children and grandchildren!

As always there will be a selection of stalls including summer plants, books and jigsaws, bottle stall, CD'S/DVD'S, hand-made candles, crafts and jewellery. Then why not take the weight off your feet and treat yourself to a sandwich and a home-made cake in our cafe.

If you enjoy a raffle and would like to go home with some money, try your hand with our new-style "50/50" raffle. If you win, you can take 50% of the ticket sales to spend as you wish! Sounds good!

Finally, please could you help to fill up our bottle stall by donating bottles of any content? If you are unable to bring them to church, please let me know and I will arrange to collect them, but if you prefer to bring them, please put them in the box at the back of church.

Your help at these times is always very much appreciated, and we are fully aware of the many requests put on everyone, so from the Team, thank you very much.

Looking forward to seeing everyone, **Sylvia Kent**

## KINGDOM COME

This year more than a million Christians worldwide will be joining in long-distance prayer between Ascension Day to Pentecost (9<sup>th</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup> May).

What started in 2016 with the Archbishops of Canterbury and York inviting the CofE to pray, has grown into an annual international and ecumenical call to 11 days of specific prayer that more people will come to know Jesus.

According to the organisers of Kingdom Come, the movement is now in nearly 90% of countries worldwide, and spread among 85 different denominations and traditions.

Kingdom Come explains that it encourages: "Every person, household and church to pray that those who have not yet heard the Good News of Jesus Christ and His love for the world, will hear it for themselves and respond and follow Him.

"Specifically, we again invite each Christian to pray that God's Spirit might work in the lives of 5 people whom they know, who have not responded with their 'Yes' to God's call."

Whether you have joined in 'Thy Kingdom Come' before or not, you are invited to take part this year. Archbishop Justin Welby says: "In praying 'Thy Kingdom Come' we all commit to playing our part in the renewal of the nations and the transformation of communities."





# REVIVE INTERNATIONAL

## RESTORING LIVES, RENEWING HOPE

Our church has been supporting the work of Revive International for many years. They provide essential care for children (mainly girls) who have suffered abuse or neglect in Olinda in Brazil. We have heard some inspiring talks from one of their founders, Andy Roberts, and we now share with our readers some of his reflections as they mark their 10th anniversary.

### **Revive is 10 years old!**

It all began - much longer than 10 years ago - in a regular prayer meeting seeking God's guidance on what to do about the many vulnerable children in the city but it's 10 years since the very first girl came to Revive and the dream of providing a safe house for girls became a reality. Some of you have been around for all of those 10 years! We are so grateful and thankful to you all, Revive wouldn't exist if it wasn't for you.

We found that girl in the middle of the night sleeping rough on the streets of Olinda. She was only 12 but had been in the care system since the age of 4 after her Mother went to prison for attempting to kill her (twice!). She stayed for many years at Revive being loved and cared for. We were able to help her receive the psychological help she needed to deal with the trauma of her past, catch up with her studies and begin a faith journey. It wasn't easy, she ran away a few times from Revive when it all became too much for her. One time led me and a friend, together with the social services, into the middle of one of the most dangerous slums in the city to bring her back. We'd managed to pin her location via social media messages she'd sent us and tracked down the shack she was in. She burst into tears when she saw us - no one had gone after her before - we told her at the time that Jesus doesn't give up on her, neither do we.

That 12 year old girl is now in her early twenties, working and with a young family of her own. Her life isn't perfect by any means, but whose is?

**By God's grace, through Revive, he had restored her life and renewed her hope for a better future.**

In the month that Revive turned 10, we also passed another milestone: taking in our 100th child. Who, just like our first, will be loved, cared for, and never given up on.

So many lives have been impacted over these last 10 years, even more when you count those involved in the community market and other community activities. Thanks to all who pray and support our work.

In recent years, Revive has pivoted towards family-based care rather than institutions. We were able to help write the law that allowed us to launch the first ever fostering service in the city. Just this month two sisters, 5 and 7 years old, who were in the Revive safe house have now gone to a foster family trained by Revive. It's wonderful to see these two young girls thrive in a family setting. Another child currently in foster care is going through the final stages of being adopted!

Revive currently has three foster families - more are on their way with the next foster training course taking place shortly. The reaction has been very positive and it's great to see Christian families from a number of churches come forward to become a foster family. Revive trains and supports these families. When they have a foster child, Revive provides the family with lots of support, including financial. Many thanks to all of you for your support over the years - it really does mean a lot.

Do keep Elise and the rest of the Revive team in your prayers.



## The Story behind "Praise my soul the King of Heaven"

by Henry Francis Lyte (1793-1847)

This stately poetic paraphrase of Psalm 103 has been included in probably more solemn ceremonies than any other hymn in the English language. It was even chosen by Queen Elizabeth for her wedding to the Duke of Edinburgh in 1947.

Henry Lyte had been a brilliant theological student at university in Dublin, with a gift for versifying. After graduation he moved to a tiny and remote parish in County Wexford to serve his curacy. It was here, when he was about 25, that Henry had a religious experience which would transform his life.

A close friend of his, another clergyman, had fallen ill, and was clearly dying. Henry went to visit him. The friend was not as distressed as Henry had imagined he would be. Instead, the friend confessed that he had been re-reading

the New Testament, with an eye on eternity, and had made a great discovery. There was no need to rely on religious duties and formalities and good deeds to gain peace with God. Instead, we can trust completely in the mercy of Christ and His saving power.

Henry was sophisticated and had been very formal in his ministry. But this encounter with his friend's faith at death's very door, made him reconsider his faith. He wrote later that his dear friend 'who died happy in the thought that there was One who would atone for his delinquencies' made him 'study my Bible and preach in another manner than I had previously done'. And soon after this hymn appeared, in 1834.

Lyte rejoices in the majesty and wonder of the living God, who in turn loves us. He captures the measure of the Psalm in enduring lyrics, which combine time, eternity, God and man all swept up into one embrace. Its last verse summons all the created order to join in a great act of joyous praise – surely a preview of eternity!



12 April 2024

**Your change makes a big difference. Thank you!**

Dear Mrs Kent.

Thank you so much to you and the box holders of **St John's Church, Birkdale** for collectively raising a **final total** of **£203.43** for The Children's Society.

I appreciate that counting and banking all those coins is not always an easy task, so I want you to know how grateful we are for your dedication and commitment. You and your box holders are helping improve the lives of children who feel scared, unloved and like they simply don't matter.

**Once again, on behalf of all the young people your gift supports, thank you so much for caring and making this life-changing work possible.**

To show our gratitude and to celebrate your achievements, I have enclosed a thank you poster that can be completed and displayed with your fundraising total. Please do display this so your network can also receive our heartfelt thanks.

If you have any queries please call our friendly Supporter Care Team on **0300 303 7000**. You can also visit our website at **childrenssociety.org.uk** for more information on how you're changing children's lives and other ways you can get involved.

Yours sincerely

**Andrew Moran**  
Head of Supporter Experience

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

## **On The Perils of Building a Kitchen in Church**

The Rectory,  
St James the Least of All

My dear Nephew Darren,

It never fails to amaze me how, in church life, an issue can suddenly become an Issue. In the last month, we have acquired an Issue: a proposal to convert a space at the back of church into a kitchen. Inevitably, battle lines have been drawn and trenches dug. Attendance at church council meetings has soared and unofficial sub-committees meet in the car park after Services. It's obvious that feelings are running high, because people have become remarkably polite to one another.

Some who are wildly in favour see it as an opportunity of being able to leave the pews ten minutes early, in order to get ready for the rush for weak coffee and damp biscuits. I can already hear in my mind the final hymn being drowned by kettles being filled, biscuit tins opened, cups thunderingly placed on saucers, while the volunteers discuss the dress sense of others in the congregation in deafening whispers.

I was a little surprised to hear that Colonel Wainwright was all in favour – until I realised that it would give him a place to totter into to read his newspaper once he got bored with my sermon, which usually seems to happen in the first minute. Naturally, smaller turf wars have broken out alongside the major battle. There is conflict about whether we should get new crockery, what colour carpeting tiles would look right – and most importantly of all, who will take charge of the coffee rota.

Others are totally against the project: the treasurer dreads the thought of signing yet more cheques, the churchwardens worry about removing pews which have quietly hidden the dry rot, and the theologically angst-ridden agonise about the fact that St Paul never mentioned coffee after Sabbath worship.

Naturally, I encourage all sides, especially if it will bring any possibility of progress to a halt. I proposed bringing in flasks of coffee, thus stopping anyone being able to escape before the end of the Service; I suggested drinks being brought to people in the pews, thus ruining the Colonel's hopes of finding a safe haven; I organised a group to study High Priestly attitudes to refreshments in the Temple in Jerusalem in Leviticus.

I am sure that by the time all these groups have come up with their conclusions, we will have safely moved on to fight the next Issue.

Your loving uncle, Eustace

### **Grazie mille!**

On Friday 19th April more than 40 members of St John's and their friends enjoyed a splendid time at the home of Tim, Sally and Lucy Wright who hosted an Italian themed evening of pizza, pasta and puddings at which it was announced that Lucy has become engaged to marry Matt Royle and we offer them our congratulations, in Italian: CONGRATULAZIONI.



## Rogation Sunday 2024 – 5th May

The first Sunday in May is Rogation Sunday. This is when many parishes still 'beat the bounds'. Rogation means an asking of God - for blessing on the seed and land. The practice began with the Romans, who processed around the cornfields each Spring, singing and dancing, sacrificing animals, in order to get rid of evil. About 465 AD the Western world was suffering from earthquake and storm. Mamertius, Bishop of Vienne, aware of the pagan custom, ordered that prayers should be said in the ruined or neglected fields. Thus 'beating the bounds' became a Christian ceremonial. It arrived in England early in the eighth century. Each Spring, led by the priest, a little party from the parish would set out with a Cross to trace the boundaries of the parish. They'd implore God to keep their corn and roots and boughs in good health, and bring them to harvest. In the days when maps were scarce, 'beating the bounds' helped remind everyone just where the boundaries were.

SUNDAY  
MAY  
ROGATION  
BEAT  
BOUNDS  
ASKING  
BLESSING  
SEED  
LAND  
ROMANS  
PROCESSED  
CORNFIELDS  
SPRING  
EARTHQUAKE  
STORM  
PRAYER  
CROSS  
BOUNDARIES  
CROPS  
HARVEST  
MAPS

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

## Miscellaneous musings on life.

How can we expect someone else to keep our secret if we have not been able to keep it ourselves? – Francois, Duc de La Rochefoucauld

Inanimate objects are classified scientifically into three major categories: those that don't work, those that break down and those that get lost. – Russell Baker

Examinations: Do not on any account attempt to write on both sides of the paper at once. – WC Sellar

It is easier for a father to have children than for children to have a real father. – Pope John XXIII.

Only one petition in the Lord's Prayer has any condition attached to it; it is the petition for forgiveness. – Archbishop William Temple

Humility is the hallmark of wisdom. – J Collier

To be aware that you are ignorant is a great step to knowledge. – Anon

## An Introduction to the Book of The Bible: Judges

by Canon Paul Hardingham

Following Joshua's death, a generation grew up who didn't know God (Judges 2:11) and 'every man did what was right in his own eyes' (17:6, 21:25). The book of Judges is a study in God's response to a permissive society.

The book takes its name from the *deliverers* that God raised up during this time. God empowered both men and women with His Spirit to rule and deliver the people. They included Ehud, Deborah, Gideon and his son Abimelech, Jephthah and Samson. The judges operated in the 350 years (from 1050 BC) between Joshua's death and the monarchy.

We see a recurring cycle of apostasy (defection from a previous faith), oppression, penitence and deliverance played out. When the people fell into sin, God sent an enemy nation to oppress them. As a result, they cried to God for help, and He responded by raising up a deliverer to free them.

The saddest words in Judges are those applied to Samson, 'He did not know that the LORD had left him' (16:20). Rejecting God in our lives can begin with tolerating those things that are not in harmony with His will for our lives. The people's toleration of the beliefs of their pagan neighbours led to a conformity in life and worship with them. Yet God waited for His people to return to Him, when He responded with grace to deliver them.

Gideon stands out as somebody who was unwilling to compromise with the surrounding culture. Despite his weaknesses, God used him to deliver Israel from the Midianite invaders. We read: 'the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon', lit: 'the Spirit clothed Himself with Gideon' (6:34). God's grace and faithfulness is at work in those who are prepared to trust Him.

### DailyHOPE IS ON THE LINE AGAIN!

A free telephone line that provides spiritual support for older people has been relaunched.

The DailyHOPE telephone line serves many people in later life unable to participate in person with church life in the community, either in the long term, or temporarily due to sickness or medical treatment. It was launched during the Covid pandemic.

The recorded phonenumber provides a vital spiritual resource aimed at the around six million UK people aged over 65 who are either unable to use the internet safely and successfully or are not online at all.

The organisation Faith in Later Life announced earlier this year that the line would have to be suspended because of a lack of funding. It came as many churches were being encouraged to 'grow younger' and put an emphasis on reaching younger people.

Now their chief executive officer Alexandra Drew has announced that the phonenumber is back in action. She said: "Closing the DailyHOPE line was an extremely heart-wrenching decision to make. I know that it's been a lifeline to many older people, especially those unable to attend church in person, and without access to spiritual comfort."

Now additional funding has been secured, DailyHOPE has been relaunched, with a drive to find new content and content-providers.

Broadcaster Pam Rhodes, an ambassador for Faith in Later Life, said: "DailyHOPE has brought Christian fellowship through the landline into the homes of so many, filling their hearts and souls with God's presence and comfort through word, prayer and song. It's no wonder that DailyHOPE has remained so popular – and the thought that this vital service may have been lost to those who value and rely upon it brought real despair. But now, we're thankful to God that DailyHOPE has been saved. This is wonderful news."

**Call Free to 0800 804 8044**



## 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': the *Stabat Mater*

May is traditionally the month of Mary, the mother of Jesus. When we read of Mary in the Gospels, we sense the heartache and trial of much of her life: a teenage mother giving birth in a stable, fleeing with her new-born baby and Joseph to Egypt, losing the child Jesus while on pilgrimage to Jerusalem, following her son on His ministry but always in the background, and there at the foot of the cross as her son is crucified. It is then that Mary must have thought back to that occasion in the temple when Simeon took her child and told her that a sword would pierce her own soul.

That sense of heartache and the sorrow it brings is poignantly expressed in a beautiful poem of the Middle Ages called *Stabat Mater*, which pictures Mary at Calvary and the sword of desolation and sadness that pierces her soul. We are not sure who wrote this poem. It is ascribed to Jacopone da Todi, who became a Franciscan friar on the death of his wife in the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

The contemplation of Mary's sorrows in the *Stabat Mater* has inspired many composers, and there are wonderful settings by Palestrina, Rossini, Dvorak, Verdi, Poulenc and Vivaldi.

Mary's love for Jesus, her son, touches the hearts of all parents. Hers was a protective, sacrificial love that led her to the foot of the cross, where Jesus gave His mother and John, the beloved disciple, into the care of each other. The sacrificial love of a mother mirrored in the sacrificial offering of her son in death.

Julian of Norwich meditated on this motherly love in her Revelations. In chapter 60 she wrote, 'A mother's caring is the closest, nearest and surest for it is the truest... As we know, our own mother bore us only into pain and dying. But our true mother Jesus, who is all love, bears us into joy and endless living. Blessed may he be!' The protective care of mother Mary cries out to us in Vivaldi's setting of the *Stabat Mater*. The closing lines of that poem look to Christ's maternal love like Mother Julian:

'Christ when Thee shall call me hence,  
Be my mother, my defence,  
Be thy Cross of victory.'

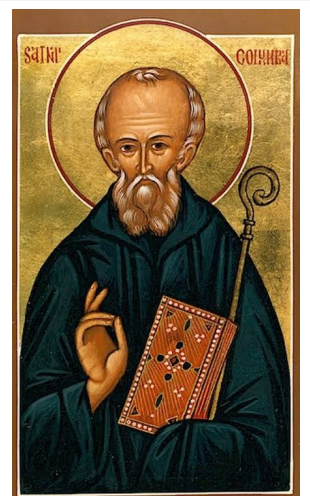
## St Columba and 12th May

*By Dennis Davis*

Born in County Donegal in 521, he took the name Colum Cille (which in the Irish language means "Dove of the Church") when he converted to Christianity. He began his training at Movilla and later at Clonard. He was probably a warrior priest and became involved in warfare. He had copied some precious manuscripts illegally. When the High King and the Head of the O'Neills (ui Neill) gave judgement they decided against Columba who was enraged by this. Between 555 and 561 several battles took place with the death of thousands of men. Columba was blamed for this and he deemed it unsuitable to remain in Ireland. On 12th May 563 he was sent in exile in a wicker Currach (a type of Irish boat) with 12 companions. He was so distraught that it was said that he wanted to sail until he could no longer see Ireland. They sailed to Dunaverty on the Mull of Kintyre before settling in Iona in Scotland, which was then part of the Ulster kingdom of Dál Riata. They founded there a new abbey as a base for spreading Celtic Christianity among the pagan Northern Pictish kingdoms.

12th May 2024 will be the 1461th Anniversary of this Irish Saint whose greatest legacy was the founding of Celtic Church in Iona and his stand against the Roman Church. He was directly linked to the Ard Righ; (the high King). He went on to expand the Celtic Church in Scotland and Northern England.

It is claimed that he is buried in Downpatrick with St Patrick and Saint Brigit. Another source claims that he was dismembered and parts sent to Iona and other parts of Ireland as well.





# W CROSS R D

*Solution below*

The Bible version used in our crosswords is the NIV.

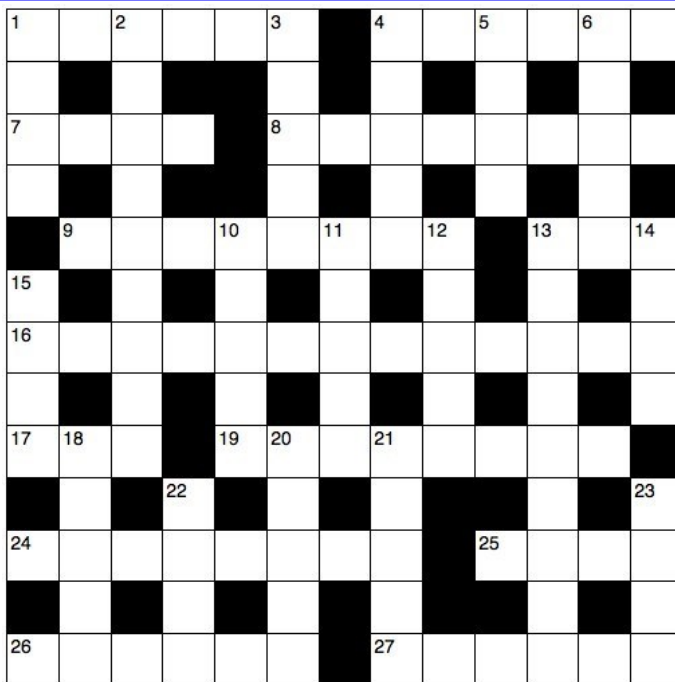
Crosswords reproduced by kind permission of BRF and John Capon, originally published in Three Down, Nine Across, by John Capon (£6.99 BRF).

## Across

- 1 One who owes money, goods or services (Isaiah 24:2) (6)  
 4 'A good measure, pressed down, — together and running over' (Luke 6:38) (6)  
 7 Continuous dull pain (Proverbs 14:13) (4)  
 8 This bread contains yeast (Amos 4:5) (8)  
 9 'But take heart! I have — the world' (John 16:33) (8)  
 13 And the rest (abbrev.) (3)  
 16 What Paul was accused of by Tertullus, the high priest's lawyer, in his trial before Felix (Acts 24:5) (13)  
 17 Rap (anag.) (3)  
 19 Founder of the Jesuits in 1534 (8)  
 24 'For where your — is, there your heart will be also' (Luke 12:34) (8)  
 25 The first word written on the wall during King Belshazzar's great banquet (Daniel 5:25) (4)  
 26 'We all, like sheep, have gone — ' (Isaiah 53:6) (6)  
 27 One was given in honour of Jesus in Bethany (John 12:2) (6)

## Down

- 1 'The blind receive sight, the lame walk, the — hear, the dead are raised' (Luke 7:22) (4)  
 2 Conduct (Colossians 1:21) (9)  
 3 In the Catholic and Orthodox traditions, the body of a saint or his belongings, venerated as holy (5)  
 4 'Like a — of locusts men pounce on it' (Isaiah 33:4) (5)  
 5 Very old (Genesis 44:20) (4)  
 6 In Calvinist theology, one who is predestined by God to receive salvation (5)



- 10 How Nicodemus addressed Jesus when he visited him one night (John 3:2) (5)  
 11 Sea (Psalm 148:7) (5)  
 12 'I will — you, my God the King; I will praise your name for ever and ever' (Psalm 145:1) (5)  
 13 One of the groups of philosophers that Paul met in Athens, who disagreed with his teaching about the resurrection (Acts 17:18) (9)  
 14 Barred enclosure (Ezekiel 19:9) (4)  
 15 'Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in — with the Spirit' (Galatians 5:25) (4)  
 18 Cares (anag.) (5)  
 20 Garish (Ezekiel 16:16) (5)  
 21 'So God said to Noah, "I am going to put — — to all people"' (Genesis 6:13) (2,3)  
 22 Just (2 Corinthians 6:13) (4)  
 23 'The — of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge' (Proverbs 1:7) (4)

## In our Book of Remembrance in May

- 2nd Mary Lockie, 1990  
 Leslie Duffield, 2011  
 3rd Elizabeth Boon, 1977  
 Amy Bell, 1987  
 4th Gerald Rimmer, 1977  
 7th David Astley, 2001  
 Barbara Brown, 2002  
 8th Robert Brookfield, 2020  
 9th David Jones, 1986  
 10th Clarissa Roberts, 1958  
 Wilfred Gott, 1968

- 12th George Williams, 2011  
 15th Kathleen Hiley, 2021  
 Mary Bailey, 2022  
 16th Dorothy Hall, 2013  
 18th Ian Stuart, 2010  
 20th Alan Livesley, 1985  
 29th William Bullen, 1997  
 30th Florence Boswell-Reid, 1993

***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: 1, Debtor; 4, Shaken; 7, Ache; 8, Leavened; 9, Overcome; 13, Etc.; 16, Troublemaking; 17, Par; 19, Ignatius; 24, Treasure; 25, Mene; 26, Astray; 27, Dinner.  
 DOWN: 1, Deaf; 2, Behaviour; 3, Relic; 4, Swarm; 5, Aged; 6, Elect; 10, Rabbi; 11, Ocean; 12, Exalt; 13, Epicurean; 14, Cage; 15, Step; 18, Acres; 20, Gaudy; 21, An end; 22, Fair; 23, Fear.

## 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](mailto:elderberriesgardening@gmail.com) or call Shelley Lewis-Lavender on [01704 560690](tel:01704560690).



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FOR ALL  
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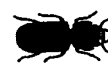
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## WHAT IF...?

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.

### Enter Don John of Austria

Don John of Austria was the illegitimate son of Charles the 5<sup>th</sup>, Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire and half brother of King Philip II of Spain, and the hero of the battle of Lepanto (in the Gulf of Corinth) when he captured the admiral of the Muslim fleet and destroyed the Muslim fleet. He now became Governor of The Low Countries. He defeated the Protestants at Gembloux forcing Prince William of Orange to leave Brussels.

He had a crush on Mary Queen of Scots and wanted to dethrone Elizabeth. The Pope told him he was at liberty to be King of England and of Scotland as soon as he liked, all he had to do was to conquer these Kingdoms.

Don John went to the Netherlands to restore the authority of the Crown and Catholicism, and Prince William waited calmly for the arrival of Don John realising that he could lose all he had achieved. Prince William urged the States not to make any agreements unless all foreign troops were removed. At their opening meeting Don John took offence and went into a rage and attacked a deputy who had suggested that he should renounce Philip's authority. The Ghent Treaty and the departure of foreign troops were the vital points of negotiation, which Don John countered with his own points in opposition to the treaty.

In February 1577 the Perpetual Edict was signed when Don John consented to the removal of all foreign troops and for the Prince's troops to disband, all obstacles to be removed. All that was required was an oath to maintain the Catholic Religion. The

Prince was indignant that it was signed before he had time to reply but he was overruled. The States of Holland and Zeeland were in agreement with the Prince.

Don John wrote to King Philip that he could see no remedy to save the State from destruction except to gain over this man who had so much influence with the nation. He declared that he was disillusioned as the States listened to the Prince and not to him. He felt they hated him, and he hated them and wished he could leave the Netherlands as he felt his life and honour were at stake.

Don John's plans for England had failed, and he persisted in the view that the Prince knew of a plot to assassinate him and that the Prince was strengthening himself in Holland and Zeeland, and that he knew the Queen of England was backing him and that the people loved him and wished to have him for their master.

Negotiations continued and Don John challenged the Prince, "When you have got all you want, you will declare war on us" to which the Prince replied "What have you to fear? You have 15 states to our 2 and we have seen what you could do when you are masters. You intend to extirpate us and we do not intend to be extirpated". The Duke of Aarschot replied "There is nobody wishes that". To which the Prince replied "Indeed you do. We had submitted ourselves in good faith and you would now compel us and the whole world to maintain the Catholic religion, this cannot be done without extirpating us."

Each side was now entrenched in their two main points. The King was willing to concede all points save the authority of the King and exclusive maintenance of the Catholic religion. The Prince claimed the return of the ancient constitution and religious freedom. The Prince told Aarschot, that if Utrecht was not restored he would take it by force. Neither side intended to change their position.

*Continued on the next page*



Don John now issued an Edict to all Bishops, to protect their flocks from the ravenous wolves who would devour them. This led to the arrest of Peter Panis, a tailor, being arrested on a charge of preaching. He was told to denounce all who had been present. He refused and was executed. The Prince had appealed the sentence on the grounds that it could reopen the fires of religious

persecution. Don John attended the execution.

There were now three separate groups within the Netherlands: the nobles who hated the Spaniards; the Walloons and Catholics who hated the Spaniards and Calvinists; and the Calvinists who hated the Spaniards and Catholics.

*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.*

### Finding Expression – and God’s Response – in Lament

The question of suffering comes up regularly in discussions about science and faith. I once visited a school to speak to some of the older teenagers. One of the pupils had sadly passed away from cancer a few weeks before and his classmates asked, “How could God let this happen?” Of course, these young people’s questions about where God was in this situation were important. But the chaplain also gently reminded the class that their friend’s family were Christians, and that they were finding that their experience of loss had brought them even closer to God than before.

One way that grief can bring us near to God is when we share it with Him, telling Him exactly how we feel. The biblical writers had no scruples about expressing themselves to God, giving vent to emotions we often hold back in a church context. As my colleague Roger Abbott has written in his book on ‘Unanswered’ Prayer, “Let us not confuse reverence with spiritual prudishness. Perhaps honesty, the way it feels, is precisely what God is waiting to hear from us.”

About one third of the Psalms express some form of grief. The book of Job is a series of responses to one man’s suffering as he loses his children, property and health in quick succession. Lamentations is also one long outpouring of sadness at what happened to Israel under the Babylonians. Some of the prophets, especially Jeremiah, also express their pain at these sort of events – which reflect something of God’s own feelings at the suffering of His people.

Most of these biblical authors would have had access to Scriptures that encouraged them to turn to God whatever the circumstances. Emboldened by their knowledge of His character and promises, these divinely inspired writers even express their anger to God about the things He lets happen, or complain that He seems to act unfairly or ignore them in their plight. Not only do these people let out all their feelings without fear of reprisal, but they also clearly expect a helpful answer. Some record a resolution to their troubles – often simply because God speaks to and comforts them, enabling them to keep going.

The biblical writers demonstrated that God can handle pretty much anything – anger, blame, bitterness – if we are actively looking to Him for help. As Pete Greig of the 24-7 prayer movement has written, “pain that is not expressed can never be transformed”.

**Adam and Eve had an ideal marriage: he didn't have to hear about all the men she could have married, and she didn't have to hear about the way his mother cooked.**

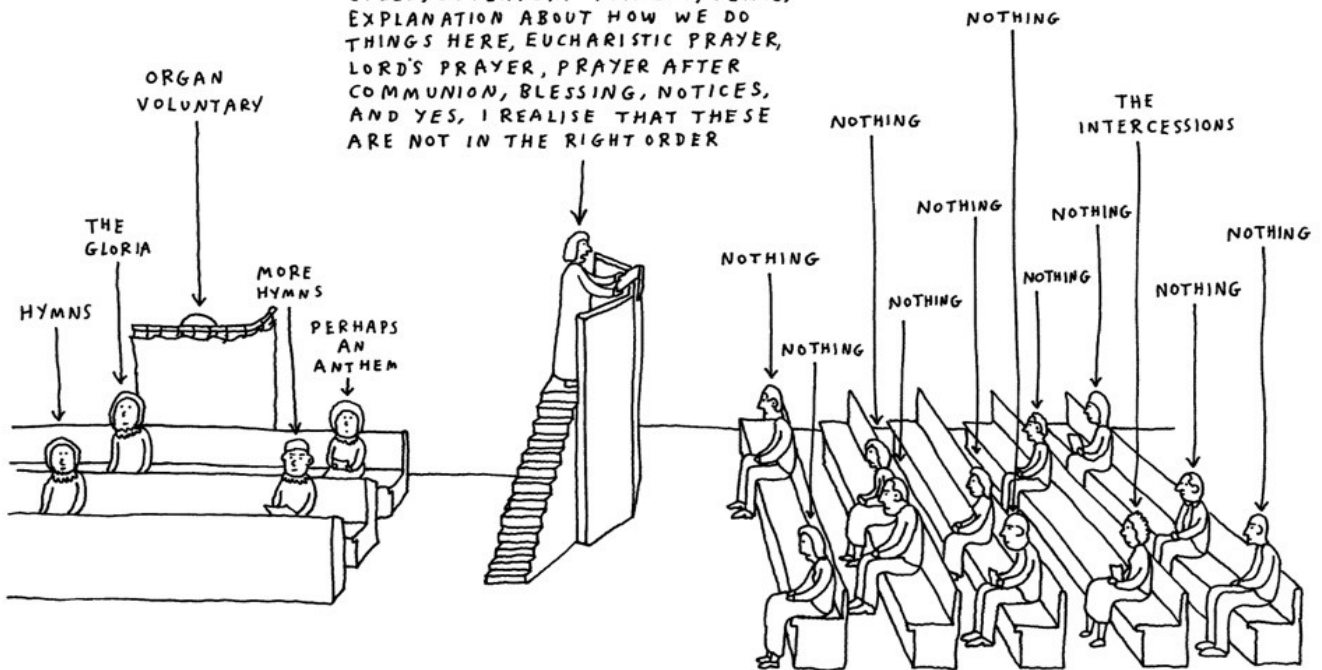


“I hope you didn’t take it personally, Reverend,” said an embarrassed woman after a church service, “when my husband walked out during your sermon.”  
“I did find it rather disconcerting,” the preacher admitted.  
“It’s not a reflection on you, sir,” insisted the churchgoer.  
“Ralph has been walking in his sleep ever since he was a child.”

# WHO DOES WHAT?

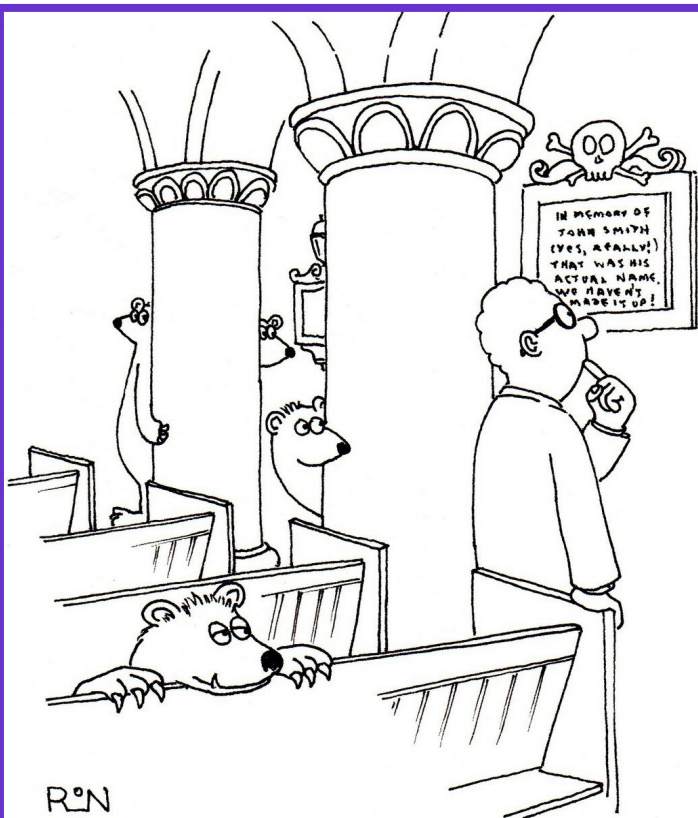
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TO PARENTS OF ROWDY CHILDREN,  
COLLECT, GOSPEL READING, SERMON,  
CREED, OFFERTORY PRAYERS, PEACE,  
EXPLANATION ABOUT HOW WE DO  
THINGS HERE, EUCHARISTIC PRAYER,  
LORD'S PRAYER, PRAYER AFTER  
COMMUNION, BLESSING, NOTICES,  
AND YES, I REALISE THAT THESE  
ARE NOT IN THE RIGHT ORDER



By Dave Walker. First published in The Church Times

CartoonChurch.com



R&N

Dennis spent a long time in church looking for his forbears

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## LEISURE OR LICENCE

by John M. Shakespeare

In our working lives we hopefully enjoy the tasks that we are engaged in. However, I must confess to also enjoying the more leisurely days that come around now and again. We must be careful not to see having nothing to do as being leisure.

To quote William Cowper (1731-1800): "Absence of an occupation is not rest, a mind quite vacant is indeed a mind distressed".

Art is often seen as a leisure pursuit, the use of the imagination to freely indulge in the pursuit of ones interests. Whether it be carving wood or hewing stone, painting in oils or designing ceramics, it could be seen as a type of licence away from the duties of work. Of course it is true that professional artists will see their efforts as a form of work like any other.

Hobbies can be seen as Leisure pursuits, whether done singly or as part of a team effort. The danger can however be in hobbies involving the stress of competition, such as in Bridge or Bowls, which can become obsessive. I believe that it is essential to keep hobbies as an interest and not an obsession. I feel justified in my Leisure on completion of some work, be it physical or mental. Nowadays it is more mental exertion rather than physical.

This is recognised by the Bible in Mark (Chapter 6 verse 30). The Apostles gathered around Jesus and told him all that they had done and taught. He said to them, "Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while." For many were coming and going and they had no leisure, not even time to eat.

Leisure is not just about forsaking work. Aristotle (384-322 BC), said, "It can be about working to achieve a more noble goal." This, I believe, makes the point that we find relaxation by taking up a different form of work, rather than not doing any sort of work. A change of activity can be seen as Leisure, when

it differs from our normal habitual style of occupation.

In the words of William Shakespeare (1564-1616):

"If all the year were playing holidays,  
To sport would be as tedious as to work;

But when they seldom come they wished-for come,  
And nothing pleaseth but rare accidents".

(Henry IV part one, Act 1, scene 2)

Sport today, as we know, is a big money earner for professional footballers and others. Olympic medallists are feted and in some cases respected for the time and effort they put into their sport. What we once saw as healthy keep fit activities have now become money making enterprises.

Perhaps this century has seen the biggest increase of the Leisure industry so far in history. Some areas of our country now rely on Leisure as one of their main sources of income, the Lake District being an example. Weather today has had a beneficial effect, in encouraging holidays at home instead of going abroad. We can take our Leisure e.g. in homegrown camping.

Making intelligent use of what Leisure we have can bring us satisfaction in many ways. Personally, listening to music and reading a good book are favourite Leisure pursuits of mine. Our mental state is one of the current preoccupations in society, and I believe that in such circumstances our leisure pursuits can assist and triumph.

There can I feel be no better ending to a piece of work on the subject of Leisure than some immortal words of the poem "Leisure", by **William Henry Davies** right (1871-1940),

"What is this life if,  
full of care,  
We have no time to stand and stare?"





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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 Lucy (553977) for any further details you require.

## Hearing the Word by telephone

**If you would like to hear a recording of the Sunday morning talks telephone 0151-329-2184 at any hour of the day or night.**

The calls are **free**. Each talk lasts about 15 minutes and is available for a week. Each recording becomes available during the afternoon of the Sunday on which it is given.

## Was it really that long ago?...

70 years ago, on 6<sup>th</sup> May 1954 Roger Bannister became the first person (on record) to run a mile in under four minutes (3 minutes, 59.4 seconds), in Oxford.

Also 70 years ago, on 20<sup>th</sup> May 1954 Bill Haley & His Comets released the song *Rock Around the Clock*. It brought rock and roll into the mainstream and is regarded as one of the most important records in music history.

Also 70 years ago, on 29<sup>th</sup> May 1954 Diane Leather became the first woman (on record) to run a mile in under five minutes (4 minutes, 59.6 seconds), in Birmingham.

40 years ago, on 17<sup>th</sup> May 1984 Prince Charles described a proposed extension to the National Gallery in London as a 'monstrous carbuncle on the face of a much-loved and elegant friend'. (The design was scrapped, but his comment sparked controversy over the Royal Family's role.)

30 years ago, on 6<sup>th</sup> May 1994 the Channel Tunnel linking England and France was officially opened.

Also 30 years ago, on 10<sup>th</sup> May 1994 Nelson Mandela was inaugurated as South Africa's first black president, after more than 300 years of white rule.

25 years ago, on 6<sup>th</sup> May 1999, that the first general elections for the Scottish Parliament and the National Assembly for Wales, took place. Donald Dewar became First Minister for Scotland and Alun Michael became First Secretary for Wales.

**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](mailto: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](mailto:info@connectedvoices.co.uk) or for more information visit the website

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

**Wednesday**

10.30 – 12 noon

2<sup>nd</sup> 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](mailto:elderberriesgardening@gmail.com)

**Thursday**

1.00pm to 2.00pm: **Balance Classes for the Elderly.**

Contact: [ageingwellmerseyside@outlook.com](mailto:ageingwellmerseyside@outlook.com).

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 May 2024

Dear Lord,

May, the loveliest of months – and this year, as we welcome the blossom and the beauty of late Spring, we also welcome Your Holy Spirit afresh, as we celebrate Pentecost.

May we open our hearts to receive Your Spirit, as Your people did on that first Day of Pentecost.

May we be filled and empowered and emboldened to witness to Your goodness and love.

May we be transformed by Him and reflect Your transforming grace to the broken world in which we live. May people who meet us ask, "What does this mean?" May they turn to You and hear You speaking in ways they can understand.

Without Your Holy Spirit we can do nothing. With Him living in us, we can do all things.

Come Holy Spirit, come to us, we pray,

In Jesus' name. Amen.

by Daphne Kitching

## £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.



# ★HAPPY★ BIRTHDAY!

To  
**Ann Shakespeare on 9th May**  
**Clive Morris on 13th May**  
**David Halsall on 21st May**  
**Mandy Potts on 26th May**  
**Beverley Cummins on 29th May**  
**Sue Paterson on 31st May**

## Congratulations!

To  
**Doris Brookfield and her family upon the birth of Doris's great grandson Isaac on 18th March.**  
**Lucy Wright and Matt Royle upon their engagement.**

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

## The Last Laughs

### The Bible in 50 words

God made.  
 Adam bit.  
 Noah arked.  
 Abraham split.  
 Joseph ruled.  
 Jacob fooled.  
 Bush talked.  
 Moses balked.  
 Pharaoh plagued.  
 People walked.  
 Sea divided.  
 Tablets guided.  
 Promise landed.  
 Saul freaked.  
 David peaked.  
 Prophets warned.  
 Jesus born.  
 God walked.  
 Love talked.  
 Anger crucified.  
 Hope died.  
 Love rose.  
 Spirit flamed.  
 Word spread.  
 God remained.  
 Anon

### High Hopes!

A runner in the recent London Marathon.





He didn't win, but he and his partner, George the Giraffe, crossed the line neck and neck.

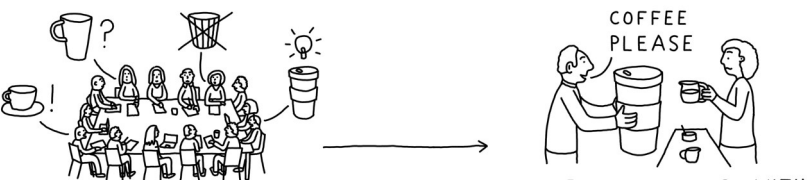


By Dave Walker. First published in The Church Times

## COFFEE CUPS

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	OLD 	NEW 	DISPOSABLE 	DRINKERS' OWN 
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ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT	*****	****	*	*****
COST	*****	***	*	*****
WHAT WILL JEAN THINK?	*****	*	*	*

  
 A DECISION WAS REACHED → MOST PEOPLE ARE HAPPY WITH THE NEW ARRANGEMENT

### Amazing Facts You Never Knew!

(Remember these! They may come in useful for the next St John's Quiz)

Bubble wrap was originally invented in 1957 to be sold as wallpaper.

DREAMT is the only word in the English language which ends in "mt"

Actress Marilyn Monroe has a higher IQ (163) than Albert Einstein (160).

Every few hours your central nervous system automatically switches which nostril you primarily breathe through.

Falling coconuts kill 15 times more people every year than shark attacks.

A honeybee can lift 300 times its own weight.

A single search on Google takes more computing power than it did to land Apollo 11 on the moon.



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