



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. 258

JUNE 2024

ST. JOHN'S PARISH CHURCH

God Centred, Relationship Driven and Life Transforming



A NEW BEGINNING

After nearly six years without a Vicar in post at St John's we shall have a new Incumbent as from Wednesday 26th June when Revd. Jennie Hardy will be licensed by the Bishop of Liverpool, the Rt. Revd. Doctor John Perumbalath as the new, and 10th, Vicar of our parish.

The service will commence at 7.00pm and is likely to be very well attended. If readers of **THE WORD** would like to attend but have not yet signed the list in church please contact Sally Wright (PCC Secretary) who will add your name to the list.

We believe that the service will be attended by our local MP, Damien Moore (subject to his commitments in the course of the General Election campaign), and the Mayor of Sefton, Councillor June Burns, and the headteachers of local schools.

There is much to do in our parish. The leadership team which was appointed by the PCC some years ago have striven to keep our church vibrant during the pandemic and its aftermath and we have seen our numbers gradually increasing in recent times but we have more than 11,000 residents in our parish and we must try to take the Gospel to more of them. Our new Vicar will have an important part to play in doing this but she cannot do it on her own and must not be expected to do so.

The arrival of a new Vicar is a New Beginning for our parish. We can carry on with the best of what we have done in the past, but must look forward with prayer, hope and enthusiasm to what we can do, and do better, in the future. This is a great opportunity for Christianity to thrive in our parish: let us all use that opportunity to best advantage.

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

WHO'S WHO AT ST. JOHN'S

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

Keeping our eyes on the Goal

A former Liverpool Manager Bill Shankly famously said, 'Some people believe football is a matter of life and death, I am very disappointed with that attitude. I can assure you it is much, much more important than that!'

This month sees the start of the UEFA Euro 24 football tournament, which will be watched by millions across Europe and the world. Yet it also illustrates some key points about the Christian life. As Paul writes: 'But one thing I do: forgetting what is behind and straining towards what is ahead, I press on towards the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenwards in Christ Jesus.' (Philippians 3:13b,14).

A prize to be won: The dream of every player in the competition is to be able to hold up the Cup themselves. For us the prize is the eternal life, God's gift of relationship with Him for now and eternity through Jesus. But there's an important difference between football and the Christian faith. To win the Euros you have to be good enough, while Christ's love for us is undeserved and is not dependent on how well we've done.

Training to be undertaken: If a team is going to win Euro 24, they need to have trained hard beforehand. Our training, as Christians, starts the moment we accept the gift of God's life. On a daily basis, we must train ourselves to say *no* to the wrong things in our lives.

As we build up our godly muscles, we are better able to choose to do what is right in God's eyes. To enable us to do all this we need to engage in the spiritual disciplines of prayer, studying the Bible and being part of a church and small group. How is your training going?

Thursday Evening Prayers on **6th and 20th June 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 29 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

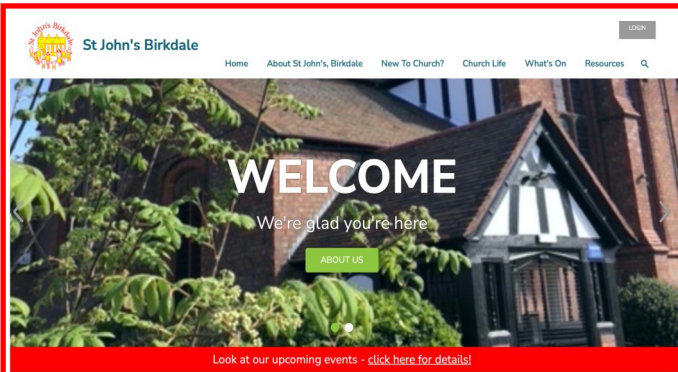
ST JOHN'S CHURCH, ST JOHN'S RD, BIRKDALE PR8 4JP

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

**NEXT MEETING:
14TH JUNE**



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

- ★ 21 June
- 26 July
- 13 September
- 4 October
- 8 November
- 20 December

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

2024

Saturday 29th June

Walk @ Rivington

♥ Saturday 13th July

Pizza Making @ Lucy's

Friday 13th September

Bowling

Sunday 6th October

Pumpkin Picking

Saturday 16th November

Barn Dance

Saturday 7th December

Christmas fair followed by food

St John's Church, Birkdale

Worship on the
First Sunday after
Trinity

**SUNDAY 2nd JUNE
HOLY COMMUNION**

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

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

Collect for the First Sunday after Trinity

God of truth, help us to keep your law of love and to walk in ways of wisdom, that we may find true life in Jesus Christ your Son.

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

**Malachi's Message
on Service**

The Reading: Malachi ch.1 vv.6-14

- 6 A son honours his father, and a servant his master. If then I am a father, where is my honour? And if I am a master, where is my fear? says the Lord of hosts to you, O priests, who despise my name. But you say, 'How have we despised your name?'
- 7 By offering polluted food upon my altar. But you say, 'How have we polluted you?' By saying that the Lord's table may be despised.
- 8 When you offer blind animals in sacrifice, is that not evil? And when you offer those that are lame or sick, is that not evil? Present that to your governor; will he accept you or show you favour? says the Lord of hosts.
- 9 And now entreat the favour of God, that he may be gracious to us. With such a gift from your hand, will he show favour to any of you? says the Lord of hosts.
- 10 Oh that there were one among you who would shut the doors, that you might not kindle fire on my altar in vain! I have no pleasure in you, says the Lord of hosts, and I will not accept an offering from your hand.
- 11 For from the rising of the sun to its setting my name will be great among the nations, and in every place incense will be offered to my name, and a pure offering. For my name will be great among the nations, says the Lord of hosts.
- 12 But you profane it when you say that the Lord's table is polluted, and its fruit, that is, its food may be despised.
- 13 But you say, 'What a weariness this is,' and you snort at it, says the Lord of hosts. You bring what has been taken by violence or is lame or sick, and this you bring as your offering! Shall I accept that from your hand? says the Lord.
- 14 Cursed be the cheat who has a male in his flock, and vows it, and yet sacrifices to the Lord what is blemished. For I am a great King, says the Lord of hosts, and my name will be feared among the nations.

The most effective way to remember your wife's birthday is to forget it once. – Ogdan Nash

I had some words with my wife, and she had some paragraphs with me. – Sigmund Freud

I took the wife's family out for tea and biscuits. They weren't too happy about having to give blood though. – Les Dawson

I had a ploughman's lunch the other day. He wasn't very happy about it. – Tommy Cooper



**Worship on the
Second Sunday after
Trinity**

**SUNDAY 9th JUNE
10.30am service IN CHURCH and
via zoom & phone**

Collect for the Second Sunday after Trinity

Faithful Creator, whose mercy never fails: deepen our faithfulness to you and to your living Word, Jesus Christ our Lord.

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

**Malachi's Message
on Discipline**

The Reading: Malachi ch.2 vv.1-9

- 1 And now, O priests, this command is for you.
- 2 If you will not listen, if you will not take it to heart to give honour to my name, says the Lord of hosts, then I will send the curse upon you and I will curse your blessings. Indeed, I have already cursed them, because you do not lay it to heart.
- 3 Behold, I will rebuke your offspring, and spread dung on your faces, the dung of your offerings, and you shall be taken away with it.
- 4 So shall you know that I have sent this command to you, that my covenant with Levi may stand, says the Lord of hosts.
- 5 My covenant with him was one of life and peace, and I gave them to him. It was a covenant of fear, and he feared me. He stood in awe of my name.
- 6 True instruction was in his mouth, and no wrong was found on his lips. He walked with me in peace and uprightness, and he turned many from iniquity.
- 7 For the lips of a priest should guard knowledge, and people should seek instruction from his mouth, for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts.
- 8 But you have turned aside from the way. You have caused many to stumble by your instruction. You have corrupted the covenant of Levi, says the Lord of hosts,
- 9 and so I make you despised and abased before all the people, inasmuch as you do not keep my ways but show partiality in your instruction.

Do You Struggle with Doubt? By Revd. Dr. Roger Roberts

Do you ever look at other Christians and wonder: "Do they REALLY believe this Christian stuff? That Jesus really was the Son of God who rose again, and is alive today?"

Doubt is an honest place to be, and it is not the opposite of Christian faith. To believe is to be in one mind. To disbelieve is to be in one mind also. To doubt is to waver between the two minds, to be in a state of 'double-ness', or 'two-ness'. To doubt something is to be willing to believe it – IF you can find evidence to back up the story.

If you are in this state of 'double-ness' just now, you may find the story of the disciple Thomas (John 20:24-29) to be helpful. Unlike the other disciples, he was not present on that first Easter night when Jesus appeared to the other disciples. Instead, Thomas was told that someone whom he'd seen crucified and dead was alive again three days later, and in perfect health.

Thomas had been devoted to Jesus, but the fact that dead people don't rise again was just too much for him. So, despite the joy of the other disciples, he could get only as far as: "unless I see the nail marks... I will not believe it." It was a week later that Jesus appeared again to His disciples and confronted Thomas. He said simply: "Put your finger here; see my hands... Stop doubting and believe."

Jesus then looked forward to all the millions of people in the future who would never meet Him in person, and so would have understandable grounds to doubt. "Because you have seen Me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

Thomas needed physical recognition before he could say "My Lord and My God." Today, if you want to believe, but honestly struggle with doubt, consider using this simple prayer:

"Lord Jesus, I have never seen You in person. So, I sometimes doubt that you exist. The Bible tells us that it is only the Holy Spirit who can open our 'spiritual eyes', and so I ask You to do that for me. Please give me not physical recognition, but faith recognition. I will do my bit, and will read about you each day in the Bible. Through Your Word, please open my spiritual eyes so that I can see You clearly as Jesus, the risen Son of God. Amen."

Worship on the Third
Sunday after Trinity

SUNDAY 16th JUNE

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

Collect for the Third Sunday after Trinity

God our Saviour, look on this wounded world in pity and in power; hold us fast to your promises of peace won for us by your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ.

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

Malachi's Message on Messiah

The Reading: Malachi ch.2 v.17—ch.3 v.6

- 17 You have wearied the Lord with your words. But you say, "How have we wearied him?" By saying, "Everyone who does evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and he delights in them." Or by asking, "Where is the God of justice?"
- 3 He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, and they will bring offerings in righteousness to the Lord.
- 4 Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old and as in former years.
- 5 Then I will draw near to you for judgment. I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, against those who swear falsely, against those who oppress the hired worker in his wages, the widow and the fatherless, against those who thrust aside the sojourner, and do not fear me, says the Lord of hosts.
- 6 For I the Lord do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed.

Midweek Book of
Common Prayer Holy
Communion



**WEDNESDAY
19th JUNE
10.30am service
IN CHURCH**

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 when available.

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 the Fourth
Sunday after Trinity

SUNDAY 23rd JUNE
10.30am service IN CHURCH
and via zoom & phone

Collect for the Fourth Sunday after Trinity

Gracious Father, by the obedience of Jesus you brought salvation to our wayward world: draw us into harmony with your will, that we may find all things restored in him, our Saviour Jesus Christ.

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

**Malachi's Message on
The Future**

The Reading: Malachi ch.3 vv.16-18 & ch.4

16 Then those who feared the Lord spoke with one another. The Lord paid attention and heard them, and a book of remembrance was written before him of those who feared the Lord and esteemed his name.

17 They shall be mine, says the Lord of hosts, in the day when I make up my treasured possession, and I will spare them as a man spares his son who serves him.

18 Then once more you shall see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve him.

1 For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, when all the arrogant and all evildoers will be stubble. The day that is coming shall set them ablaze, says the Lord of hosts, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch.

2 But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings. You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall.

3 And you shall tread down the wicked, for they will be ashes under the soles of your feet, on the day when I act, says the Lord of hosts.

4 Remember the law of my servant Moses, the statutes and rules that I commanded him at Horeb for all Israel.

5 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes.

6 And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction.

COMPASSION ACTS

Open Day

Always wondered what Compassion Acts gets up to? Have you always wanted to donate or ask a question and never got round to it? Perhaps you would like to enquire about partnering with us or using one of our services yourself?

On **Friday 28th June 2024** come along and find out more at 197A Sussex Road, Southport. PR8 6DG

In the morning we have our Stakeholder Workshop where you can hear about our impact in 2023. Plus a guest speaker in the shape of Rev James Green from Together Liverpool (ideally please book in for this on the link below). There is a free light lunch. Then from 12.30 onwards it is open for *anyone* to drop in to find out more.

Thanks to NEA (National Energy Action) for their sponsorship.

- Compassion Acts runs Southport foodbank for emergency help and the Food Pantry for ongoing support. It is experiencing shortages of: jam and spreads, tinned ham, uht fruit juice, shower gel.
- Did you know that Compassion Acts run a School Uniform Hub from Cambridge Walks in the town centre?
- Debt does not have to be a stigma and a cause of shame. Unmanageable debt creeps up on us and affects people from all backgrounds. Compassion Acts runs the Community Money Advice service for our area. See www.compassionacts.uk

Archbishops take comfort from small signs of growth in church attendance

A recent article in “The Church Times” contained some encouraging news about church attendance. After years of a steady decline in numbers it is reported that average all-age weekly attendance at Church of England services rose by 4.7 per cent in 2023 from 654,000 in 2022 to 685,000. These figures include Sunday services and any midweek services.

Although the actual number is substantially below the pre-pandemic levels (854,000) the increase is welcome news. The effect of churches being closed during covid lockdowns was little short of catastrophic, with numbers dropping to 345,000 in 2020 and increasing to 605,000 in 2021. It is reasonable to conclude that many people simply got out of the habit of attending church during the pandemic and are only slowly returning.

At St John’s we have seen our numbers gradually increase in the last two years and we hope that this will continue. It is particularly encouraging that we now have several children amongst our Sunday congregations.

A spokesperson from Church House said: “While total attendance is still below 2019 levels, the last year before the Covid-19 lockdowns, the analysis suggests in-person attendance is drawing closer to the pre-pandemic trend.” The Archbishops of Canterbury and York said that the figures show that the Church’s evangelistic efforts were working.

Archbishop Welby said “This is very welcome news and I hope it encourages churches across the country. I want to thank our clergy and congregations who have shown such faith, hope, and confidence over recent years to share the gospel with their communities. I’m especially heartened to hear that more children are coming along to church, and I’m grateful to everyone involved in that ministry. These are just one set of figures, but they show without doubt that people are coming to faith in Jesus Christ here and now – and realising it’s the best decision they could ever make.”

Archbishop Cottrell said “I take it as a great encouragement that our focus on reaching more people with the good news of Jesus, establishing new Christian communities, wherever they are, revitalising our parishes, and seeking to become a younger and more diverse Church, making everyone feel welcome, is beginning to make a difference.”

At St John’s we try to be, and pray that we are, a welcoming church which is God centred, relationship driven and life transforming. If anyone reading this article has not already come to St John’s on a Sunday morning or to our monthly midweek communion, or to any of the many activities which are available (details of which appear in **THE WORD** and on our noticeboards and our website) please come and see for yourselves what we do and what we are like. Our church services are less formal and, we hope, more accessible than in many other churches and our other activities are very sociable. Feel free to contact any of our people in the Who’s Who section on page 2.

Welcome support for Archbishop Justin Welby:

“You’re never going to find, if there’s a Labour government, politicians being sent out to attack the Archbishop of Canterbury for virtue-signalling, as Conservative MPs have done. It is literally his job. He’s the one person in the country whose job it is to signal virtue. And if the mission of the Church is not to alleviate poverty and suffering, then I don’t know what is.

Wes Streeting, Shadow Health Secretary, Sky News, 19 May

Worship
on the
Fifth
Sunday
after Trinity



SUNDAY 30th JUNE

This is the 5th Sunday of the month and there will NOT be a service at St John's today.

Instead, we shall worship **at St James' church on Lulworth Road with their congregation and with the people of St Peter's and Liverpool Road Methodist Church.**

Collect for the Fifth Sunday after Trinity

Almighty God, send down upon your Church the riches of your Spirit, and kindle in all who minister the gospel your countless gifts of grace; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Recent Doings of the PCC

On 20th May the PCC met and appointed Christine Baker as the Lay Chairman, Sally Wright as the Secretary, Sylvia Kent as the Treasurer, Stuart Harris as the Electoral Roll Officer, and David Taylor as the Independent Examiner of the PCC's financial report to next year's Annual Meeting.

We recorded our thanks to Andy Dean who has retired as Independent Examiner after several years of doing that important job.

We noted many reasons for celebration, including the number of people who are now willing to do jobs for our church, the efforts made by our team of "dancing decorators" who have worked so hard in preparing the vicarage for when Revd. Jennie arrives, the favourable response to the recent stewardship campaign, and an increase in our congregation numbers in recent times.

The PCC was asked to consider appointing a Transport Officer to liaise between those who need transport to get to and from church and those who are able to offer it. We used to have a **Transport Officer** several years ago but since the covid pandemic we have not had one. We are pleased to report that **Jean Morris has offered to take on this role.** If any of our readers who live in or around Birkdale would like to attend our church services at church instead of on zoom or by telephone, and if you would like to be assisted to come, please contact Jean (01704-564206) and if it is possible Jean will arrange for someone to give you a lift.



The PCC decided that there will be **a working party on Saturday 22nd June** to do some cleaning of the church and tidying of the gardens prior to the Licensing Service on Wednesday 26th June. We ask **ALL OUR READERS** to make a note in their diaries to come and help in any way if you are able to do so. Nobody will be expected to do anything strenuous or beyond their capabilities but many hands really do make light work and every bit of assistance will be appreciated ~ even if it is only making some tea and coffee for those who do the physical work. We all want our church and gardens to look their best when the Bishop and many other dignitaries come for the service, so please come and help if you can.

The next meeting will be on 17th July when it will be chaired by Revd. Jennie.

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

FINAL REMINDER

It's almost here, and we are looking forward to spending some time together, having fun, buying items from our various stalls and don't forget you can also enjoy a sandwich or cake and a drink in our cafe before going home.

You will be able to buy your plants; make a selection of gifts from our craft stalls; you can't go home without taking a good book for your bedtime reading, and I'm sure you will find a good jigsaw puzzle to indulge yourself in. And what about a hand made scented candle for that lovely aroma!

There will also be toys and stationery to buy to entertain the children in the school summer holidays.

The children (and adults too!) can spend their pocket money on the bottle stall and try to win one of their own favourite "bottles".

If you fancy taking home some money, why not try your luck on our 50/50 "raffle" where the winner takes home 50% of the total "raffle" money.

Don't forget to take advantage of our "Car Wash Team" (never mind going to Tesco!) who will be on hand to make your car gleam. What more could you ask for on a Saturday?!

If you haven't already done so, please put the date in your diary and come along, enjoy everything on offer and help to raise funds for our church.

Finally, let's pray for some of the lovely sunshine we have been blessed with recently!

Looking forward to seeing everyone there.

Sylvia Kent

Could YOU be St John's Eco Champion?

Faith communities are places where those small groups of thoughtful and committed citizens are found. We are not perfect. We are not uniform. But we are communities of hope whose values lead us to work for change ...to bring about a more sustainable world.

Steven Croft, Bishop of Oxford

Striving to safeguard the integrity of creation and to sustain and renew the life of the earth is one of the Five Marks of Mission which were developed by the Anglican Council in 1984 and adopted by the General Synod of the Church of England in 1996.

Caring for God's creation is one of the highest duties of the human race, and Christians have their part to play. At St John's the PCC would like to find practical and affordable ways of being more eco-friendly than we are at present. Our church and our hall are cavernous buildings which are expensive to heat, light and maintain but there may be ways in which we could try to use less fossil fuel and care more for our environment.



There are many possibilities, some of which require very little effort. For example:

- Can we measure our carbon footprint and think about how to reduce it?
- Can we find ways of improving the insulation in our buildings?
- Do we use environmentally friendly products for cleaning and for hygiene purposes?
- Can we create a planting scheme to attract birds, butterflies and bees?
- Can we encourage the use of car sharing?
- Do we promote the use of Fairtrade products?
- Can we promote the reduction of food waste at our social events?
- Can we use our church's communications networks (**THE WORD**, our noticeboards, our website, social media) to offer practical advice to our congregation and the wider community about how to care for God's earth?

All those ideas, and countless more, are possible but we really need someone with a lively interest in ecological and environmental protection to apply her or his mind to what we, as a Christian community, can do. In short, someone to be our Eco Champion!

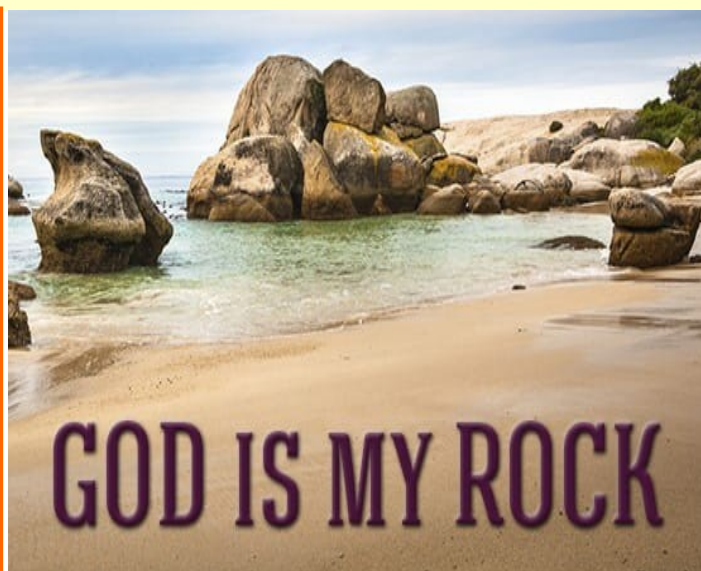
The PCC is not asking anyone to take on an onerous job. The Eco Champion would not become responsible for implementing the ideas. What we want is someone who cares about and thinks about these things and who has ideas which can then be considered by the PCC. Could it be YOU?

The PCC asks all our readers to think if they can help in this way. It would not merely be helping the PCC. It would be helping St John's to take small steps to care for our world.

If YOU might be interested in being St John's Eco Champion please speak to one of our wardens, Clive Morris and Tim Wright.

Grown By Penny Candlin

I have grown weary of day to day living
I have grown numb to the constant reminder of war
I have grown speechless in the midst of adversity
I have grown lazy where there is so much to do
I have grown deaf to the cries of pain
I have grown paralysed by the lack of movement
I have grown to fear the thought of change
I have grown complacent in my comfortable surroundings
I have grown away from my true calling
The love of God stays true
The dedication of God will remain
The faithfulness of God is my prayer
The love of God is my rock.



REVIVE INTERNATIONAL

RESTORING LIVES, RENEWING HOPE

Dear Friends,

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



We had fun with a project in April called "Reading in the Backyard". The initiative aimed to celebrate Children's Book Day (April 18th) by promoting a playful gathering among residents, staff, and family members through poetry, stories, and music.

Our goal was to provide members of the Storytelling and Reading group with an opportunity to showcase the results of their work done in weekly meetings since January. Storytelling covered various methods and resources including traditional storytelling, narration, interpretation, and reading itself.

Prayer requests:

- For the health of the girls
- For the workers here at Revive
- For the Revive finances



FOSTER CARE SERVICE

We are pleased to announce that we have completed our 5th training course for foster families. We have two families currently undergoing evaluation by our technical team, both of whom show great potential and will soon be registered in the legal system.

The child who was in transition, M.F. (boy - 7 years old), has been successfully placed with his adoptive family and is doing very well. The foster family has maintained contact with M.F.'s new family, which has helped him feel more secure and loved.

We are also happy to report that the two sisters in the foster family have begun the adoption process with a couple. The children, M.R. (7 years old) and A.S. (4 years old), are excited about getting closer to their new family. However, the younger girl, A.S. (4 years old), is struggling to cope with her emotions and has been displaying challenging behaviours for the foster family. Our psychologist and social worker have been providing significant support to both the child and the family during this transition period.

We thank God for placing good families in the lives of our children and for the dedicated team working for the best interests of the infants.

Prayer requests:

- The bonding of the sisters with the adoptive family, that they build stable, secure, and loving emotional ties.



- The new foster families who will undergo training this month of May, that they may remain and foster with responsibility and love.

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.**

"Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)

Please do share the work of Revive with your friends and family. We rely on the kindness and generosity of people like you to do the work that we do, and your prayer and provision is most appreciated.

Every Blessing,

The Revive Team

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

On The Impossibility of Keeping Silence in Church

The Rectory,
St James the Least of All

My dear Nephew Darren,

Your remark that you rather liked the silence we keep before starting Services gave me pause for thought. I suppose all things are relative. I know that the noise your congregation makes before worship resembles a packed stand on the football terraces any Saturday afternoon, but the days seem long-gone when I could expect our congregation to sit in real silence for ten minutes.

There's the sound of the treasurer counting the previous day's jumble sale takings, of the ladies at the back asking each other when the fish van will next come round, and of Major Hastings's deafening whisper as he comments on some women's choice of hats.

Add to this the weekly competition between the organist and the bell ringers to see who can make the most noise, the roar from the choir vestry as they all complain they don't like my choice of hymns and the sound of books, umbrellas and collection money being dropped. I sometimes suspect that an informal rota is arranged whereby people volunteer to drop heavy objects in rotation, thus maintaining a constant clatter, for which no single person can be held responsible.

There is also the weekly ritual when the verger – always waiting until the church is full – goes round each microphone, giving them a bash and bellowing "Testing, testing" and relishing the echo as it bounces off the walls.

The only time the noise level drops significantly is if the congregation see Miss Simpson sidle up to me to have one of her confidential little chats about someone in the village. Everyone knows that her information will provide more than enough to keep gossip flourishing for the following week.

Equally, periods of silence during Services are rarely welcomed; some find them threatening, but the majority simply assume it means I have lost my place. I gave up after one occasion when, on announcing we would say the Lord's Prayer and then leaving a time of silence for recollection, a choirman leaned over to me and whispered helpfully: "It begins 'Our Father'"

Your loving uncle,
Eustace

Techie Trouble

A vicar experienced some technical problems with the sound system one Sunday. Instead of starting the service as usual with 'The Lord be with you', he said: "There's something wrong with the microphone." Not hearing this, the congregation responded: "And also with you."

Grace

The banquet was about to begin when the master of ceremonies was informed that the invited clergyman would not be able to attend. He quickly asked the main speaker to give the blessing. The speaker nodded, rose, bowed his head and in all sincerity, said: "There being no clergyman present, let us thank God."

A TIME OF SILENCE

By Dave Walker.

PLEASE IGNORE ALL DISTRACTIONS

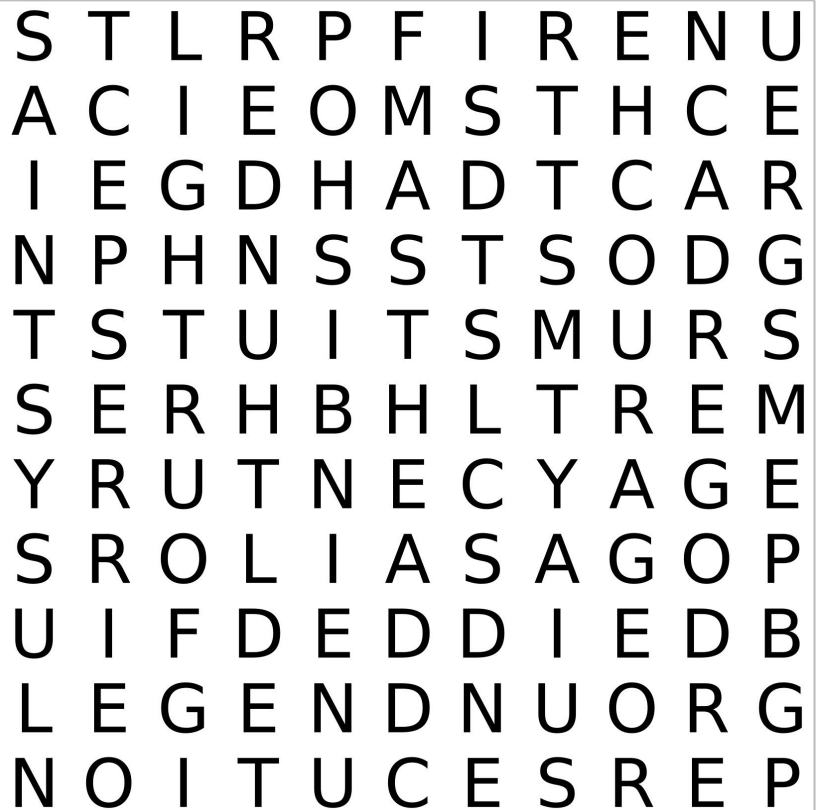


WORD SEARCH

Solution on page 23

Erasmus, patron saint of sailors

Do you like messing about in boats? If so, then you'll have heard of St Elmo's Fire. It is the light that is sometimes seen on mastheads of boats after storms at sea. St Elmo is another name for St Erasmus, a fourth century Syrian bishop who was not afraid of violent storms. Legend has it that one day when Erasmus was preaching outside, a thunderbolt hit the ground right beside him. That might have distracted modern bishops, but not Erasmus – he just kept on preaching. His courage won him the respect of sailors, who made him their patron saint. Erasmus finally died during the Diocletian persecutions in 300AD, and his feast day is 2nd June.



BOATS
ELMO
FIRE
LIGHT
MASTHEAD

STORM
SEA
FOURTH
CENTURY
BISHOP

LEGEND
PREACHING
THUNDER
GROUND
RESPECT

COURAGE
SAILORS
SAINTS
DIED
PERSECUTION

Bright and beautiful? Hymn is depressing, organist peer groans

For generations, the familiar strains of *All Things Bright and Beautiful* have served as a cherished song of praise, gracing countless Sunday services, weddings and school assemblies.

For Lord Lisvane, the former clerk of the House of Commons and chairman of the Royal College of Organists, however, the hymn's lilting melody is "deeply depressing" and should have been left behind in the 19th century. In a letter to *The Times*, he wrote recently: "We are fortunate in this country to have such a splendid repertoire of hymns: English, Welsh, Anglican, Non-Conformist, mighty, joyous, reflective, peaceful. Why do we have to suffer *All Things Bright and Beautiful*?"

The Anglican hymn was written by Dublin-born Cecil Frances Alexander and was intended to teach children about the Christian reflection of nature and God as its creator. Among her other works, Alexander wrote the beloved Christmas carol *Once in Royal David's City*.

All Things Bright and Beautiful is based on the words "maker of heaven and earth", from the Apostles' Creed in the Anglican liturgy. It is believed to have been written in 1848 while Alexander stayed at Llanwenarth House near Abergavenny and is a tribute to the surrounding Monmouthshire landscape and wildlife.

Singers praising the "purple-headed mountain" and the "river running by" probably celebrated the undulating Sugar Loaf and Blorengge peaks as the mountain and the River Usk as the river winding along the valley floor near the boundary of the Elizabethan estate.

Lisvane, a crossbench peer, is less than enthusiastic about the tune. He said: "It is chosen by about half the participants in the weddings I play for – although I am often successful in helping them choose something better. The hymn was first published in 1848 in Mrs Alexander's *Hymns for Little Children*, and I think it should have stayed there."

The melody most commonly associated with her words is believed to have been written by the English organist and Anglican church musician William Henry Monk (1823-1889). For centuries, the hymn has achieved popularity as a poetic icon, appearing in numerous hymnals across the English-speaking world and receiving original musical arrangements by contemporary composers such as John Rutter.

However, to Lisvane the tune is far from bright and beautiful. He said: "I find the saccharine doggerel, combined with the jingly tune – not that easy for congregations to sing, actually – deeply depressing, especially when there are so many wonderful alternatives. Am I alone?"

Entering into the debate the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord Williams, wrote: "Many of the hymns sung at weddings and funerals today are "bland" songs chosen because people remember them from primary school." He compared the hymns to "baby food". He added that there were so many "great classics" with imaginative and thought-provoking lyrics, but said many of these had "fallen out of common memory" as fewer hymns were sung in schools or at football or rugby matches. "For a lot of people approaching weddings or funerals, they simply have no background at all of singing hymns. They might vaguely remember something they sang in primary school. The unfortunate effect of that is you have hymns that work at a primary school level."

He said priests might suggest lesser-known songs but then find themselves singing a "solo performance" when guests do not know the tune, prompting "a desperate vicar to say: 'Do you remember anything from primary school?'"

He said that too many hymns just "tell God how I'm feeling", noting that many modern worship songs "do boil down to telling God that I'm really, really, really keen on him".

The Rev Christine Smith, a director at Hymns Ancient & Modern, a publishing company, said that "singing in public is a very rare thing" these days, which is why people want "familiar ground" at weddings or funerals.

In defence of Mrs Alexander's hymn the Rev Robert Canham, secretary of the Hymn Society, said: "In an age where it is increasingly difficult for the church to bridge the disconnect with an increasingly secular world, we should give thanks that, after 175 years, *All Things Bright and Beautiful* still speaks to people today."

If our readers have a view on this hymn do write to the Editor and perhaps see your name in print!

An Introduction to the Book of The Bible: Ruth

by Canon Paul Hardingham

The book of Ruth is a story of God's grace operating in difficult circumstances, during the period of the Judges. It unfolds as a four-act drama, telling the story of how Naomi, her husband and two sons left Judah for Moab, where her sons married. When Naomi's husband and sons died, she returns to Bethlehem in Judah.

In the first act, Naomi tells her Moabite daughters-in-law, Orpah and Ruth, to stay in Moab. However, Ruth refuses to leave Naomi and accompanies her to Bethlehem (chapter 1). In the next act Ruth meets Boaz, a relative of Naomi, while gathering barley in his fields (chapter 2). The third act takes place at the threshing floor where Boaz is asleep and Ruth lies at his feet. She expresses her desire to marry him, as her kinsman-redeemer. But Boaz tells her of another prior claim (chapter 3). Finally, at the city gate, the other relative renounces his claim, and Boaz marries Ruth (chapter 4).

In Ruth's story we see God's unseen hand directing the lives of the characters to accomplish his purpose e.g. *'Naomi returned from Moab accompanied by Ruth, arriving in Bethlehem as the barley harvest was beginning'* (1:22). He transforms Naomi's sorrow into joy, rewarding Ruth with a place of honour in Israel's history. In Boaz, we see a foreshadowing of the work of Jesus Christ, as he pays the price to secure Ruth's future.

'In its artful telling of this 'outsider' widow, uprooted and obscure, who turns out to be the great-grandmother of David and the ancestor of Jesus, the book of Ruth makes it possible for each of us to understand ourselves, however ordinary, as irreplaceable in the full telling of God's story'. (Eugene Peterson).

Quiz on the Book of Ruth (answers on page 26)

1. **Why did Elimelech go to live in Moab with his family?**

Disagreement with his town leaders; Famine in his home town; Distant relatives invited him

2. **What happened to Elimelech in Moab?**

He died; He left his wife; He was killed by the King of Moab

3. **What relationship was Ruth to Naomi?**

Daughter; Granddaughter; Daughter-in-law

4. **Who said "your God shall be my God"?**

Naomi; Ruth; Orpah

5. **What did Naomi tell the people in Bethlehem to call her?**

Sara; Rachel; Mara

6. **Who was Boaz?**

Kinsman of Elimelech; Kinsman of Naomi; Town mayor

7. **Why did Boaz allow Ruth to glean in his field?**

He was short of workers; She was beautiful; She had looked after Naomi

8. **What was Boaz doing at the threshing floor?**

Threshing grain; Winnowing barley; Treading grapes

9. **What did Ruth do while Boaz was sleeping?**

Uncovered his feet and lay down; Gently woke him up; Covered his head and sat next to him

10. **How did the townspeople regard Ruth?**

As a beautiful woman; As a virtuous woman; As a caring woman

11. **Why does the kinsman not want to marry Ruth?**

Didn't like her; Already married; Didn't want to spoil inheritance

12. **What was taken off and handed over to signify the agreement between Boaz and the kinsman?**

Robe; Sandal; Ring

13. **What was the name of Ruth's son?**

Obed; Boaz; Jesse

14. **What was the name of Ruth's great-grandson?**

Jesse; David; Solomon

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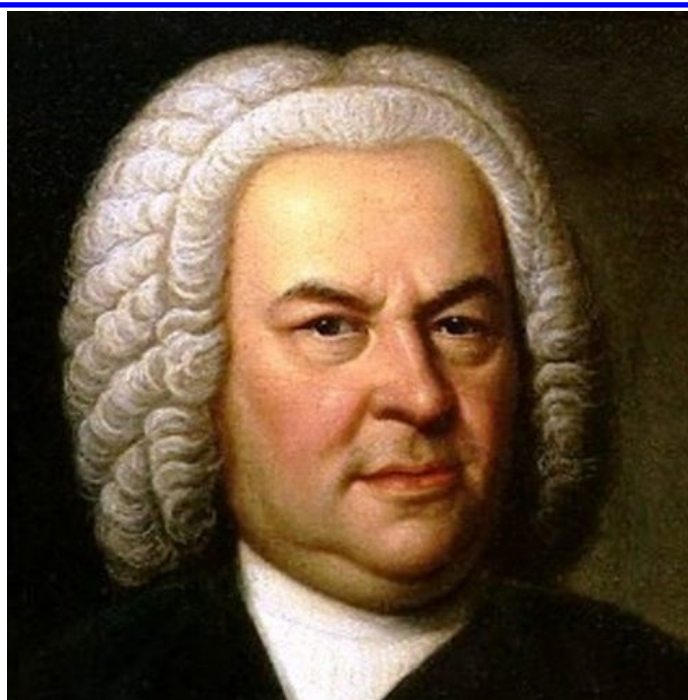
The Revd Michael Burgess begins a year-long series looking at great works of Christian music.

'Glorious the song when God's the theme': Johannes S Bach

'Surprised by Joy' is the title C S Lewis gave to his spiritual autobiography. To him, joy meant not just the name of the woman he eventually married, but also an awareness of God's glory and goodness. It was something that, like Wordsworth, he experienced in childhood, and later in his thirties when his faith was relit.

That experience of joy Jesus shared with His disciples at the Last Supper: it is a word that permeates chapters 16 and 17 of St John's Gospel. And it is a word that lies at the heart of the music of J S Bach.

Whenever he set Freude, the German word for joy, his music rises to a new level of movement and excitement. The joy is there, not just as a word set to music, but as the heart and life of all his compositions. Almost a thousand works with many for church worship: two Passions, three oratorios, six motets, a Magnificat, a great mass setting, nearly 200 church cantatas, 143 chorale preludes for organ, and dozens of other works – and that is just the music we have, for much has been lost.



When Bach moved to Leipzig in 1723, he had the task as choirmaster of composing cantatas for each Sunday of the year for five years, as well as looking after the choir, teaching, and tending his own family. And all with a reduced salary and social status, dreary living conditions, and a choir that was ill-fed and badly housed.

The miracle is that he produced work of such beauty and wonder and grace. There is a logic and a technical precision behind his music, but also a living pulse. One moment he can reach into the depths of the soul as it faces the realities of sin, death and judgment. The next, it is ecstasy and joy at the birth and resurrection of Christ.

Next month we shall continue our look at Bach's music.

Miscellaneous musings on life.

In order to keep a true perspective of one's importance, everyone should have a dog that will worship him and a cat that will ignore him. – Dereke Bruce

When you've seen one shopping centre you've seen a mall. – Anon

Bakers trade bread recipes on a knead to know basis. – Anon

Acupuncture is a jab well done. – Anon

When a clock is hungry, it goes back four seconds. – Anon

If at first you succeed, break it and start over again. – Anon

Our grandchildren are going to have a hard time paying for the good times we didn't have. – Anon

W CROSS R D

Solution below

The Bible version used in our crosswords is the NIV.

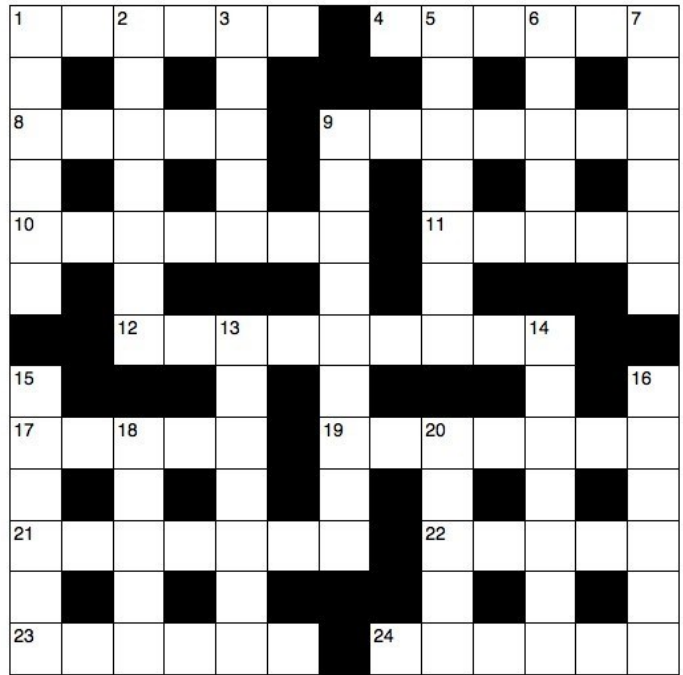
Crosswords reproduced by kind permission of BRF and John Capon, originally published in Three Down, Nine Across, by John Capon (£6.99 BRF).

Across

- 1 Military tactic used by Joshua to attack and destroy the city of Ai (Joshua 8:2) (6)
- 4 Place of learning (6)
- 8 'When Moses' hands grew — , they took a stone and put it under him and he sat on it' (Exodus 17:12) (5)
- 9 Unpleasant auguries of the end of the age, as forecast by Jesus (Matthew 24:7) (7)
- 10 Stronghold to which girls in King Xerxes' harem (including Esther) were taken (Esther 2:8) (7)
- 11 Where Saul went to consult a medium before fighting the Philistines (1 Samuel 28:7) (5)
- 12 Propitiation (Hebrews 2:17) (9)
- 17 Turn away (Jeremiah 11:15) (5)
- 19 So clear (anag.) (7)
- 21 'I have just got — , so I can't come': one excuse to be absent from the great banquet (Luke 14:20) (7)
- 22 Long weapon with a pointed head used by horsemen (Job 39:23) (5)
- 23 Musical beat (6)
- 24 What the Israelites were told to use to daub blood on their door-frames at the first Passover (Exodus 12:22) (6)

Down

- 1 Fasten (Exodus 28:37) (6)
- 2 Art bite (anag.) (7)
- 3 'The people of the city were divided; some — with the Jews, others with the apostles' (Acts 14:4) (5)



- 5 Contend (Jeremiah 12:5) (7)
- 6 Possessed (Job 1:3) (5)
- 7 Sheen (Lamentations 4:1) (6)
- 9 'You love evil rather than good, — rather than speaking the truth' (Psalm 52:3) (9)
- 13 Large flightless bird (Job 39:13) (7)
- 14 They were worth several hundred pounds each (Matthew 25:15) (7)
- 15 'A — went out to sow his seed' (Matthew 13:3) (6)
- 16 How Jesus described Jairus's daughter when he went into the room where she lay (Mark 5:39) (6)
- 18 The part of the day when the women went to the tomb on the first Easter morning (John 20:1) (5)
- 20 Narrow passageway between buildings (Luke 14:21) (5)

In our Book of Remembrance in June

- 1st Gertrude Edmondson, 1974
Miriam Rigby, 2005
- 2nd Mary Moore, 1987
- 4th George Williams, 1985
- 6th Robert Hall, 1986
Roy Maguire, 1992
- 7th Ann Beeley, 1984
- 8th Stephen Tasker, 1977
- 9th Elsie Bredow, 1973
Maureen Burton, 2009
- 10th Ethel Marshall, 1969

- 10th Edna Marriner, 2002
- 11th Harry Lea, 1983
Jean Beeley, 2012
- 16th Montague Hare, 1999
- 17th Jeane Smith, 2022
- 18th Reginald Hughes, 2008
- 19th Ernest Gorton, 1967
- 20th Norman Hamer, 1988
- 24th Marion Coop, 2004

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)

ACROSS: 1, Ambush. 4, School. 8, Tired. 9, Famines. 10, Citadel. 11, Endor. 12, Atonement. 17, Avert. 19, Oracles. 21, Married. 22, Lance. 23, Rhythm. 24, Hyssop.

DOWN: 1, Attach. 2, Biretta. 3, Sided. 5, Compete. 6, Owned. 7, Lustre. 9, Falsehood. 13, Ostrich. 14, Talents. 15, Farmer. 16, Asleep. 18, Early. 20, Alley.

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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).

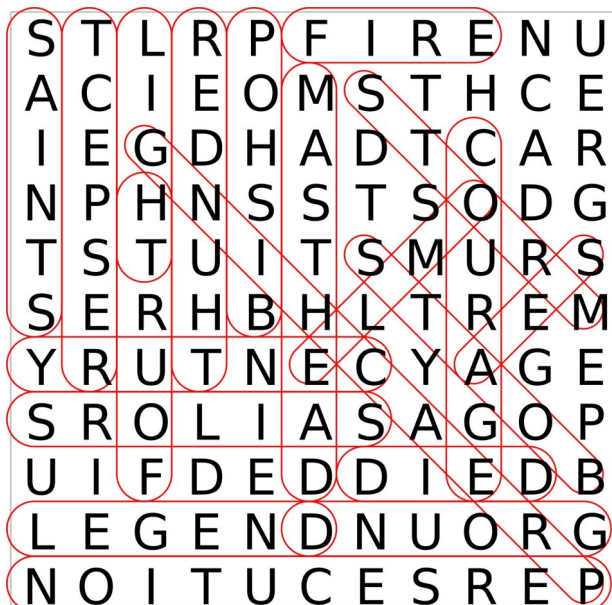


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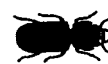
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WHAT IF...?

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.

Don John of Austria



Don John addressed a letter to the King giving an account of all he had done and the difficulties being placed in his way and of his first interview with the English envoy who had been sent to calm the situation. "I know nothing of England. Nor France nor of the Emperor". He went on to say that he had been commissioned to make war on the rebellious provinces and would do so with all his heart.

As for the Emperor he would unchain the Turks upon him for his perfidy; as for the Burgers of Brussels, they would soon feel his vengeance. He had gathered a small army in Luxemburg numbering 20,000 including some of the best disciplined veterans and officers with the most brilliant reputations. He issued a document to say that he had not come to enslave but to protect and

to re-establish the King's Authority and that of the Church of Rome.

The military affairs of the states were in confusion, they had equal numbers but it was not easy for the Nobles to keep control of them as some of them had been supporters of Don John or the King. John of Nassau remarked "There were very few patriots but plenty of Priests and no lack of inexperienced lads". There were also 13 companies of English and Scots under Colonel Balfour.

The armies met at Gembloux near Namur in January 1578. It was a disaster for the state's army who could not stand up to these veterans. A small group soon broke through the lines and the state's army fled in panic. It spoke of 10,000 being killed with the veterans each killing 10 men but hardly a single Spaniard perished. 600 prisoners were taken alive. Some were drowned in the river or were hanged.

The mercenaries of the state's army were only there for pay or booty; their commanders were absent and had no respect for their own flag. It was said that after this battle the Netherlands were never complete again. Fourteen lesser towns succumbed to the Spaniards with the accompanying atrocities for those who had resisted.

Demands were made to the Prince to accept the Royal and Catholic supremacy. The Prince replied that he would lay down arms if the Reformed Church was given its freedom, but he knew this would never happen. The Prince had arranged for subsidies from England to enable him to continue the conflict. As the two forces faced off each other a series of indecisive skirmishes took place but Don John was unable to achieve another victory like Gembloux and there was a danger that France would come to the aid of the Prince.

The States now chose the Duke of Alencon as leader of their army; he had only recently become a supporter of the Calvinists. The Prince was concerned because Alencon had been an ardent

Continued on the next page

supporter of the King and feared that he would turn back again. His worries subsided when Alencon was killed in battle.

There was jealousy in some Catholic states and amongst the French speaking Walloons that some of the states had religious peace so they circulated a petition of their own stating that Paris had kept itself clear of the new religion and that peace and prosperity had resulted. The Calvinists were inflamed by this allusion to Paris which caused them to yell: "Paris! St Bartholomew, are we to have a Paris wedding in

Brussels also, a Paris bloodbath here in the capital of the Netherlands? God forbid, away with the conspirators! Down with the Papists".

Don John took a fever and as he lay dying in a hovel used to house pigeons he wrote to Philip about all the difficulties put in his way and the lack of money to pay the troops. So died the hero of Lepanto. Poison was suspected and two Englishmen were falsely arrested and executed on the charge of assassination. It was suggested the real culprit was Philip!

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.

Wonders of the Living World

What are the best metaphors we could use to describe biological things? You might be used to hearing phrases like 'your genetic blueprint' or 'survival of the fittest', but are they helpful or even accurate? Some of these words fail to capture the wonder and joy of understanding something new about the nature of living organisms.

I learned that one researcher was using the phrase 'The Snuggle for Existence' as a way to convey the idea, familiar to biologists, that cooperation is at the heart of the living world. For example, every cell more complex than a bacterium contains minute energy factories, each one containing their own piece of DNA – which makes them a sort of miniature cell, hidden away inside the larger host cell. These 'mitochondria', as biologists call them, turn raw materials from the host into chemical energy.

In this way, everyone benefits: the mitochondria now have a safe a place to live, and the host receives the energy it needs. There are many more examples of organisms working together to produce something that is more than the sum of its parts, where often the individual parts could not survive on their own.

'The Map of Life' is a way of describing the regularities we see in biological processes. Eyes, legs and wings have emerged in the living world again and again, and why not? If the properties of light and gravity remain constant, we should expect living things to find the same solutions to seeing or getting around. When we look at these organisms' family trees, we see they share a common ancestor that had no eyes, or no wings. These structures have developed completely independently, or you could say that the paths of the living world have converged on the same solution. That's not to say they had a conscious goal, but that the world has certain properties, and those properties have channelled biological processes in certain directions.

None of these stories give us definite evidence for God. Science simply provides data, which can often be interpreted in several different ways. Perhaps the world just happens to be full of mathematical regularities, maybe there's an overarching physical law we don't yet understand, or perhaps there are multiple universes and ours happens to be the one in which life has arisen.

But I believe that the observations scientists make about the living world are compatible with the existence of the God described by Christian faith.

More at wondersofthelivingworld.org

A Rubbish Campaign!

No, this is not about the General Election! Our world has an urgent rubbish problem. But Christians are uniting to take global action. So says the charity Tearfund, as it launches a campaign to highlight the threat of the growing mountains of plastic pollution.

"Two billion people have no safe way to dispose of rubbish, and it's people in poverty who are suffering the worst impacts of this rubbish problem," says the charity. "They are forced to live and work among piles of waste, which is making them sick, releasing toxic fumes, flooding communities and causing up to a million deaths each year.

"But Jesus told His followers that even the smallest amount of faith can move mountains. So, we are asking you to put your faith into action and join us in demanding an end to plastic pollution."

And just now there is a "once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to do just that," explains Tearfund. "During 2023 and now 2024, nearly 150 governments have been meeting to develop the [first-ever global treaty on plastic pollution](#). But it's not a done deal. Please add your voice to demand an end to plastic pollution and its harmful impact on people living in poverty."

If you would like to know more and consider signing the petition, go to:

<https://www.tearfund.org/campaigns/rubbish-campaign>

Tearfund is part of the Renew Our World and #BreakFreeFromPlastics coalitions.



When it was Mrs Wilson's turn to do the flower arrangements, she always kept the vicar's hay fever in mind

Answers to the Quiz on the Book of Ruth

1. Famine in his home town (Ruth 1:1)
2. He died (1:3)
3. Daughter-in-law (1:22)
4. Ruth (1:16)
5. Mara (1:20)
6. Kinsman of Elimelech (2:1)
7. She had looked after Naomi (10-11)
8. Winnowing barley (3:2)
9. Uncovered his feet and lay down (3:7)
10. As a virtuous woman (3:11)
11. Didn't want to spoil inheritance (4:5-6)
12. Sandal (4:7-8)
13. Obed (4:17)
14. David (4:17)

Warm Space


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IT'S THE DONE THING

by John M. Shakespeare

David Lewis (1941-2002), an influential American philosopher, suggested that the regularity of practice that leads to problem solving forms the basis of a convention, i.e. an accepted custom.

There is always the challenge to go against custom, as was well expressed by William Shakespeare (1564-1616) in Hamlet: "But to my mind - though I am native here, and so to the manner born - it is a Custom more honoured in the breach than the observance".

There is an authority about traditional behaviour which comes from conventions and social behaviours that have evolved over a period of time. The effective adaptation of how we behave, to successfully meet our needs, demonstrates an active and ongoing evolutionary process that is reflected in society. Behaviours that I was conventionally trained to observe as a teenager many years ago have definitely changed. I think that this can especially be seen in terms of male to female relationships! Fashion trends can be seen to alter with the passing of the years. One example is the wearing of hats by both men and women and the wearing of gloves both formally and informally, and of course the wearing of animal fur clothing, to mention just a few.

Michael Oakenshaw (1901-1990), a political analyst, argued that the importance of practical knowledge, experience and judgement should be carefully employed when faced with any fresh problems of policy. Critics may well argue that traditional practices may just reproduce the prejudices of earlier times.

**DON'T LET THE
DONE THING
DULL YOUR
THINKING**

At times in our lives we can feel lost, far away in our thoughts.

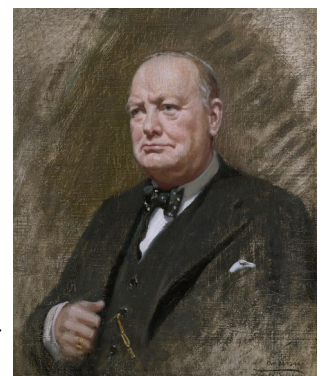
At such times we may look to convention and practice, and yet not be sure! The letter of James (Ch 1 verses 5-7), offers us a solution: "If any of you is lacking in wisdom, ask God who gives to all generously and ungrudgingly, and it will be given to you. But ask in faith, never doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind".

All my working life, I have been concerned with people's behaviours in both a working and social context. I believe that custom and current conventions may be employed as helpful guides, in meeting problems that arise. Personally, I see integrity of purpose as a substantial part of problem solving, along with the honesty of covering all points of view in discussions. These considerations need to be seen to be taking place. Not being flexible to other people's points of view, can sow the seeds of lasting rancour!

Convention and customs have in the UK been fashioned, changed and added to by the influx of immigrants. Anglo-Saxon and Norman warriors had no fear of death itself. In its place loyalty and chivalry became the watchwords for living. In later centuries there was an influx from Europe affecting our religious conventions of worship between Catholics and Protestants. The 20th century saw immigration from the West Indies, and refugees from Africa and Asia having effects in terms of diet and culture.

I would like to conclude with a quotation from a speech by Winston Churchill (1874-1965) in 1944:

"I confess myself to be an admirer of tradition. The longer you can look back, the further you can look forward".



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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?...

75 years ago, on 8th June 1949, George Orwell's novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* was published.

70 years ago, on 7th June 1954, Alan Turing, British mathematician, logician, cryptanalyst, and computer scientist died. Noted for his contributions to code-breaking during World War 2.

Considered the father of theoretical computer science and artificial intelligence.

60 years ago, on 4th June 1964, the Beatles' first world tour was held. Over two months they played 30 concerts in seven countries, beginning in Copenhagen.

50 years ago, on 28th June 1974, chemists at the University of California, Irvine, published the first report that warned that chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) could damage the Earth's ozone layer. CFCs were widely used in refrigerators, air conditioning systems and as aerosol propellants.

40 years ago, on 3rd to 6th June 1984, Indian government troops stormed the Golden Temple in Amritsar, which was being held by a Sikh militant group. More than 1,000 people were killed, including the group's leader. The resulting anger and fighting led to the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi that autumn.

15 years ago, on 25th June 2009, Michael Jackson 'the King of Pop', American singer, songwriter, and dancer, died of an anaesthetic overdose, aged 50. His hit songs included *Thriller*, *Bad*, and *Black or White*.

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

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

Thursday

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

Contact: 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 June 2024

Dear Lord, Here we are in June. Halfway through this year already! How the years fly by and often we are so busy, so taken up with everyday concerns that we forget to take time to be still; to consciously be in your presence; to be aware of the wonders of your world.

June is such a beautiful month, so we take this moment, Lord – and we thank you for your goodness to us and your provision for us. Especially we thank you for the gift of Jesus who is the only way to you, who is your truth and who offers us eternal life, if we will turn away from our self-centredness and put our trust in Him.

For June and for Jesus, Lord, we praise you and we glorify you. And we move into the rest of the year in hope and trust.

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★ To
BIRTHDAY!

Jasmine Sullivan on 13th June
Jan Ball on 15th June
Doris Brookfield on 23rd June

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

The Last Laughs



29th May was the 150th anniversary of the birth of GK Chesterton, author and philosopher, known for his Father Brown mysteries. He was a man of substance, physically as well as creatively. He weighed more than 20 stones.

During the First World War a patriotic matron harangued him for not joining up. "Why are you not out at the front?" she asked, to which he replied: "Madam, if you go round to the side you will find that I am."

(first reported by Patrick Kidd in The Times newspaper)



...well you cannot fault the efficacy of the new 'Planned Giving' scheme...

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