



# THE WORD



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

**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. 261**

**SEPTEMBER 2024**

## **ST. JOHN'S PARISH CHURCH**

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



### **A Town in Shock**

On Monday 29th July a dark shadow fell over Southport. A man wielding a knife entered a building in Hart Street in which young children were enjoying a dancing class and he inflicted many stab wounds which killed three defenceless young girls and injured many more and the adults who tried to protect them.

The families of all who were killed or injured have suffered unimaginable grief. They and all the children and adults who were present or who witnessed the events will bear emotional and psychological scars for ever.

In these dark times in which the whole of Southport has been shocked that such an atrocity could occur, many people have turned to prayer: for the victims; for their families and their friends; for the members of the emergency services who attended the scene and encountered the appalling consequences of the attack; and for ourselves and the wider community in which there is bewilderment as to why this atrocity occurred.

Throughout Southport, and here at St John's, churches have been open for prayer and reflection, and vigils have been held at which the dead, the injured and their families can be remembered. We can only pray that the Holy Spirit brings them peace and healing although that will take a very long time.

One of the murdered girls, Elsie Dot Stancombe, who had been baptized at St John's seven years ago, was remembered and honoured in a Special Day on 23rd August. Some details of that occasion are included on page 10. It is to be hoped that this will play a part, though it can only be a small part, in comforting Elsie's parents and family and friends as they cope with this tragedy.

**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 THE VICAR: 07872 400718**

## Rev. Jennie's Invitation to Come to Jesus



Hello everyone,

I ended my last note to you with the words, "As followers of the Way we can live for Christ, knowing that He has overcome, it is finished and we can continue in each new beginning with hope, God's plans will never be thwarted and He is working for our good."

I begin with them now. As I write, it seems incomprehensible all that has happened in our community over the last four weeks. We have all experienced a level of combined hurt, pain and heartbreak that none of us could have ever imagined.

Yet, despite all of this I have witnessed Southport come together in love and unity, we have stood together at vigils, bubble events, fundraisers, at church, where at St John's we have welcomed new members and many visitors. Though I am a new resident here, I am very proud to say that I am part of this community.

Not once, but twice, kind people have assisted me when I have been shopping and bought much more than I planned to and have refused to buy a carrier bag! (we've all been there, right?) I don't remember this ever happening in Liverpool! This is just a small example of the togetherness and kindness of the people in our community.

God is working for our good, just as we are collectively amid such pain and grief. God has overcome even the evil we have witnessed and we can continue to have hope in the words of Jesus, "it is finished" this continues in Revelation 21 with these words, "I will give free water from the spring of the water of life to anyone who is thirsty".

I wonder, have you ever been really thirsty? To the point that your throat is dry and your lips feel chapped and your body craves hydration? This is physical thirst. I believe there is such a thing as spiritual thirst. When we experience a huge loss, such as that of three precious children alongside the injury and hurt of many more, a spiritual thirst may develop as we ask those big questions, why? How? Is there more to life? How do we continue, move forward? We don't have the answers to these questions, so we look up. We look to God and we may lament to Him.

There's a book in the Bible called Lamentations and we see a lot of lament throughout the book of Psalms, which is the focus of our new sermon series. In these scriptures we see God's people lamenting the destruction of Cities, of them asking those big questions, of how and why. They are expressing deep hurt and confusion to God. And, it's okay.

We can come to God with our pain, with our questions, with our tears and even with our anger. Though we lament it does not mean we do not come to God, the coming to God in our pain and with our confusion is important. It is in these desolate places of searching that we need to come to Him, to receive of the life-giving water that Jesus promises as we keep our eyes fixed on the one who is the beginning and the end and promises eternal life.

### **"We are in this together"**

I shared Jesus' invitation to come to Him at Elsie Dot Stancombe's 'Special Day' at St John's on Friday 23rd August. It was a very difficult day for everyone involved but the words of Elsie's mum sum up the strength that we have all drawn upon when she said to me that morning, "we're in this together". We were and we are.

Jesus is in it with us. Let's accept His invitation to come to him today. Despite where you are or how you may be feeling. If you need to come to Him and cry, come. If you need to come to Him and shout, come. If you need to come to Him in confusion, come. Accept the invitation to receive the life-giving water of refreshment that only He can give.

Please be assured of our prayers for you all and if you need help, a listening ear, a shoulder, then please get in touch, we are in this together.

Love, in Christ,  
Rev. Jennie xx

## WHO'S WHO AT ST. JOHN'S

Vicar:	Rev. Jennie Hardy (07872 400718)	Transport Officer:	Mrs. Jean Morris (564206)
Priest (retired):	Rev. Roy Doran (572387)	Church of England Children's Society:	Mrs. Sylvia Kent (564071)
Reader:	Mrs. Christine Baker (560518)	Mothers' Union:	Mrs. Linda Caton (564737)
Churchwardens:	Clive Morris (564206) Tim Wright (553977)	Girl Guides St. John's Brownies:	Mrs. Janette Law (565951) Mrs. Helen Jones and
Wardens' Assistant::	Miss Lucy Wright (553977)	Brownie Guiders: St. John's Rainbows:	Mrs. Lesley Scott Mrs. Lesley Scott
PCC Treasurer:	Mrs. Sylvia Kent (564071)	Church Flowers:	Mrs. Cath Whiteside (07732 993025)
PCC Secretary:	Mrs. Sally Wright (553977)	Magazine Editor:	Stuart Baker (560518)
Parish Hall Secretary:	Mrs. Jean Morris (564206)	Magazine Printer:	Mrs. Christine Baker (560518)
Electoral Roll Officer:	Stuart Harris (563789)	Notice boards, I.T, Website developer, Publicity designer:	Mrs. Sally Wright (553977)
Deanery Synod Reps:	Clive Morris (564206) Tim Wright (553977) Stuart Baker (560518)	Buildings Inspector:	David Halsall (07790 822343)
Safeguarding and Recruitment Officer	Mrs. Abbie Holden (07961003359)	Eco Champions:	Mrs. Elizabeth Rothwell and Duncan Rothwell (564192)
Assistant Recruiter:	Stuart Baker (560518)		

## CHANGES TO THE MIDWEEK COMMUNION SERVICES

Commencing on Wednesday 4th September there will be a Midweek Communion service (Book of Common Prayer) at 10.30am in church on the **FIRST and THIRD** Wednesday every month.

Commencing on Wednesday 2nd October there will be a Brunch after the service on the **FIRST** Wednesday every month.

This will be a good opportunity to enjoy fellowship. Do come, if you can.

The summer and the holiday period is almost over. It is time to get back to work and, for our children and young family members, it is time to go back to school or college or university to start the new term. We congratulate all those who have passed their academic examinations this summer and hope that their successes will enable them to take the next steps of their choice.



### Parish Registers

#### Burials and Cremations

7th August Colin John Paterson, who died on 24th July 2024 aged 78 years

20th August Patricia Gregson, who died on 21st July 2024 aged 86 years

### Thursday Evening Prayers on 5th and 19th September on zoom.

The meetings will 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 Jennie Hardy, 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

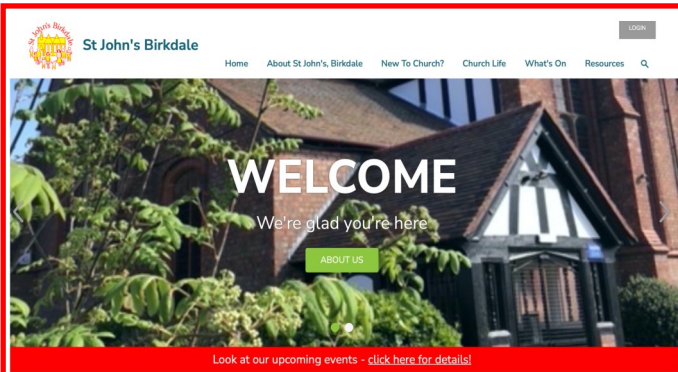
ST JOHN'S CHURCH BIRKDALE

MONTHLY  
2ND FRIDAYS  
10.30AM

**NEXT MEETING:  
13th SEPTEMBER**



# 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

- 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
<b>Saturday 20 September @ 7pm</b>	<b>Harvest Supper</b>
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  
Fourteenth Sunday  
after Trinity

**SUNDAY 1st SEPTEMBER  
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 Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity**

Almighty God, whose only Son has opened for us a new and living way into your presence: give us pure hearts and steadfast wills to worship you in spirit and in truth; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

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

**The Two Ways—The Gift of the  
Law**

### **The Text: Psalm 1**

- 1 Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers,
- 2 but whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night.
- 3 That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither— whatever they do prospers.
- 4 Not so the wicked! They are like chaff that the wind blows away.
- 5 Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.
- 6 For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked leads to destruction.

### **New Series of Sunday Sermons**

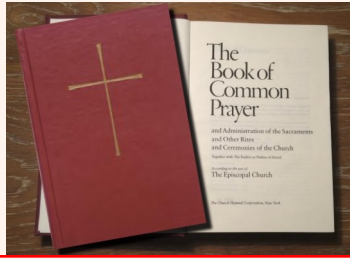
Today we commence a new series of talks concentrating on passages in the Bible. Throughout September and October we shall be looking at some of the **Psalms**. Years ago the Psalms were a regular part of church services but in many churches now they have become somewhat forgotten which is a pity because they contain much wisdom and underlie much of our Christian beliefs.

The book of Psalms is a collection of 150 Hebrew religious hymns divided into five sections, each ending with a hymn of praise. There are several types of psalms, including hymns or songs of praise, communal and individual laments, royal psalms and individual thanksgivings. The book also includes psalms of communal thanksgiving and wisdom.

Most modern Bible scholars attribute the composition of the psalms to various authors writing between the 9th and 5th centuries BC.

In English, the title of the book is derived from the Greek word *psalmoi*, meaning "instrumental music" and, by extension, "the words accompanying the music."

Midweek Book of  
Common Prayer Holy  
Communion



**WEDNESDAY**  
**4th SEPTEMBER**  
**10.30am service**  
**IN CHURCH**

Worship on the  
Fifteenth Sunday after  
Trinity

**SUNDAY 8th SEPTEMBER**  
**10.30am service IN CHURCH and**  
**via zoom & phone**

### **Collect for the Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity**

God, who in generous mercy sent the Holy Spirit upon your Church in the burning fire of your love: grant that your people may be fervent in the fellowship of the gospel that, always abiding in you, they may be found steadfast in faith and active in service; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

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

**Kiss the Son**

### **The Text: Psalm 2**

- 1 Why do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain?
- 2 The kings of the earth rise up and the rulers band together against the Lord and against his anointed, saying,
- 3 "Let us break their chains and throw off their shackles."
- 4 The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them.
- 5 He rebukes them in his anger and terrifies them in his wrath, saying,
- 6 "I have installed my king on Zion, my holy mountain."
- 7 I will proclaim the Lord's decree: He said to me, "You are my son; today I have become your father.
- 8 Ask me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession.
- 9 You will break them with a rod of iron; you will dash them to pieces like pottery."
- 10 Therefore, you kings, be wise; be warned, you rulers of the earth.
- 11 Serve the Lord with fear and celebrate his rule with trembling.
- 12 Kiss his son, or he will be angry and your way will lead to your destruction, for his wrath can flare up in a moment. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.

Worship on the Sixteenth  
Sunday after Trinity

**SUNDAY 15th SEPTEMBER**  
**10.30am service IN CHURCH**  
**and via zoom & phone**

## Collect for the Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity

Lord of creation, whose glory is around and within us: open our eyes to your wonders, that we may serve you with reverence and know your peace at our lives' end, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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

**What a Brilliant Lord!**

## The Text: Psalm 8

- 1 Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory in the heavens.
- 2 Through the praise of children and infants you have established a stronghold against your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger.
- 3 When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place,
- 4 what is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them?
- 5 You have made them a little lower than the angels and crowned them with glory and honour.
- 6 You made them rulers over the works of your hands; you put everything under their feet:
- 7 all flocks and herds, and the animals of the wild,
- 8 the birds in the sky, and the fish in the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas.
- 9 Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

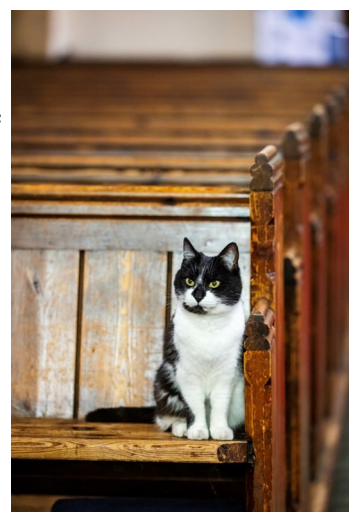
## Pastoral paw in the parish: 'Cats are a church institution'

**A church cat has reached the finals of a national award** reports Jane Common in "The Church Times"

"For he is the servant of the Living God, duly and daily serving him," the poet Christopher Smart wrote in the 18th century of the relationship between his cat Jeoffr and the Almighty. And so it is with Zara, resident church cat at St John the Evangelist, in Bexley, who has found her vocation dispensing pastoral care in the church community. Zara, who lives at the vicarage, comforts the grieving, shares the joy of the just-betrothed, and attends choir practice with a critical ear, and is now a finalist in a national cat competition in recognition of her efforts.

"The idea of a cat being part of church life has been ingrained in me since childhood when I read the 'Church Mice' books," the Team Vicar of Bexley, the Revd Edward Barlow, says. "Cats are a church institution — Mother Julian of Norwich was very famous for her cat, and Christopher Smart wrote all sorts of profound reflections about his cat drawing him closer to God, which feature prominently in Benjamin Britten's Rejoice in the Lamb."

Zara attends and contributes to church meetings, too: "On one occasion, the Bexley winter shelter trustees were puzzling over a big question when Zara marched in and sat on the centre of the table and meowed — she was very assertive and confident her answer was the correct one." And on one occasion she perched on Fr Barlow's shoulder during an online service broadcast from St John's.



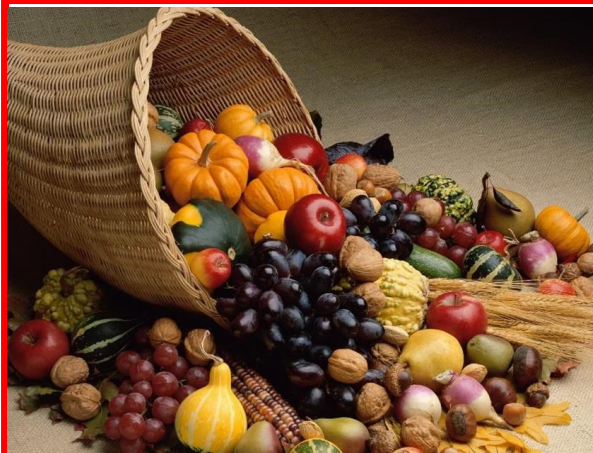


Midweek Book of  
Common Prayer Holy  
Communion



**WEDNESDAY**  
**18th SEPTEMBER**  
**10.30am service**  
**IN CHURCH**

Worship on  
the  
Seventeenth  
Sunday after  
Trinity.  
**Harvest**



**SUNDAY 22nd**  
**SEPTEMBER**  
**10.30am service IN**  
**CHURCH and via**  
**zoom & phone**

**TINNED & PACKAGED**  
**GOODS FOR THE**  
**SOUP KITCHEN WILL**  
**BE WELCOME**

### **Collect for the Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity**

Almighty God, you have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless till they find their rest in you: pour your love into our hearts and draw us to yourself, and so bring us at last to your heavenly city where we shall see you face to face; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

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

**Worship the Lord  
With Gladness**

### **The Text: Psalm 100**

- 1 Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth.
- 2 Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs.
- 3 Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.
- 4 Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name.
- 5 For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.

### **Worship on the Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity**

**SUNDAY 22nd SEPTEMBER**

This is the 5th Sunday of the month and as usual on the fifth Sunday we shall be joining with the other churches in Birkdale.  
This time the service will be at **St Peter's Church at 10.30am**.  
There will NOT be a separate service at St John's today.

## Elsie Dot Stancombe's Special Day

On Friday 23rd August more than 560 people attended in church or watched the broadcast of the Special Day service for Elsie Dot Stancombe whose life was tragically ended as a result of the injuries which she sustained in the horrific attack which occurred on 29th July at a holiday dance class in Southport.

The occasion was a celebration of the life of Elsie Dot and tribute to her. Her parents had decided that they did not wish the service to be a sombre event. They wanted everyone who was there, and many who watched from elsewhere, to know what a wonderful gift Elsie Dot had been to them and their family and to know how she had touched the lives of all who had known her, particularly the teaching staff and the pupils at Farnborough Road school.

The service was led by Revd. Jennie. Before it started there were songs from The Lighthouse Choir and the opening hymn was Abide With Me. The congregation heard the moving reflections of Elsie's parents and tributes from Katie Sykes (Farnborough Road School) and The Chief Constable of Merseyside Police, Serena Kennedy. Poems were read by Revd. Canon Anne Taylor of St Peter's Church Formby and Jennie Sephton, Headteacher at Farnborough Road Infant School. Revd. Roy Doran read from St Matthew's Gospel. Elsie's parents chose two more hymns, One More Step Along The World I Go, and Be Bold, Be Strong.

Our church and our church hall were full to capacity and so was Liverpool Road Methodist Church which kindly agreed to accommodate those whom we could not. The congregations were united in their grief for the life lost but also united in their love and respect for a life which gave joy to so many others.



*Elsie's  
Special Day*  
♡



Photos courtesy of Zackary Downey of zedshoots

ST JOHN'S CHURCH BIRKDALE

# HARVEST SUPPER

*Friday 20 September  
@ 7pm in the hall*

**COME AND JOIN US FOR  
MAIN AND PUDDING  
BRING YOUR OWN DRINKS**

**TICKETS £10  
FROM CHRISTINE OR SALLY**

Please let us know of any food allergies when booking



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

## On Why You Should Never Replace Your Hymnbooks

The Rectory,  
St James the Least of All

My dear Nephew Darren,

I am surprised you are considering buying a new set of hymn books for your church. I had assumed everything you sang would be projected on to one of those screens which are invariably placed to obscure the altar.

In my – fortunately limited – experience of such devices, they provide the projectionist with endless opportunities for showing the wrong hymn, or the right hymn but from another edition, which will contain either one verse too many or one too few. Should the hymn run to two pages, then the turnover always takes place some milliseconds after that verse has started, so that the congregation is faced with the snap decision of either trying to sing two lines at double time, or just to join in late, making a nonsense of the words.

When we decided to change hymn books some years ago, the reverberations made the consequences of that little event in Sarajevo seem insignificant. The proposal was to move from *Hymns Ancient and More Ancient* to the more recent version: *Hymns Ancient and Slightly Less Ancient*.

Colonel Wainwright said he would be happy so long as we continued fighting good fights and urging Christian soldiers onwards. The men wanted the hymns they remembered from school, the ladies those they sang at their weddings, and no one would consider anything that dropped 'thines' or 'wouldsts'. The basses in the choir wanted hymns they knew the tenors found difficult and those who couldn't read music wanted more hymns sung in unison. When a rumour started that the books may contain hymns written in the last 50 years, timetables were consulted for bus services to the next village.

Eventually we reached a perfect compromise: doing something which made no change whatsoever. Miss Simpson was charged with buying yards of sticky backed plastic and repairing the current books. She put a note on the front of every copy that if the page for the hymn they wanted was missing, they should share with the person sitting next to them – an experience which will be almost as traumatic as being invited to pass the peace. Yet another decision has thereby been deferred for a Church Council to make some time next century. Harmony reigns once again.

Your loving uncle,  
Eustace

### Miscellaneous observations on daily life...

The secret to a clean kitchen is simple. Don't cook. Ever.

The probability of being watched is directly proportional to the stupidity of your act.

Microchips: What's left at the bottom of the bag.

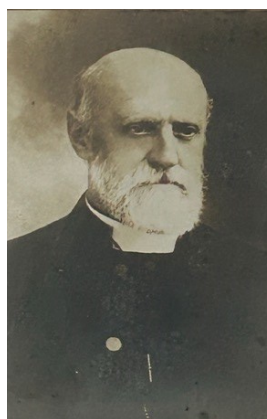
The inventor of the doorbell obviously did not own a dog.

## The Ten Incumbents of St John's

Rev. Jennie Hardy is the 10th Vicar of this parish. Although it has been a struggle we have managed to find photographs (some, regrettably, of poor quality) of all of our Vicars since we became a separate parish in 1905. Our first Vicar, Rev, Charles Middleton, had been a curate in this parish for more than 20 years before becoming the Incumbent.

The photo of Rev. Middleton is in our Choir vestry. Those of Rev. Earle and Rev. Hughes are from newspaper cuttings held at the Lancashire County Archives in Preston. The images of Rev. Marshall and Rev. Wright are from the very few items of memorabilia which were collected at the time of the church's centenary service.

We are indebted to Valerie Warren for providing the picture of Rev. Harding (from her wedding album) and for her research which produced the picture of Canon Yandell (taken when he was in a previous parish before coming to St John's). Rev. Caton was pictured when the children's playing area between the church and the hall was opened, and Rev. Leffler's photo was taken after his retirement when he attended the graduation ceremony of one of his daughters. And finally, we have Rev. Hardy at her licensing service last June.



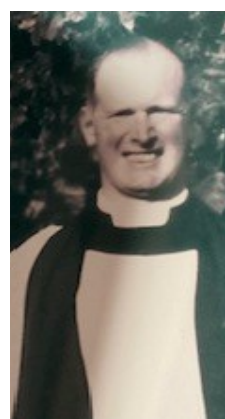
**Charles Middleton**  
1905-26



**Nicholas Earle**  
1927-32



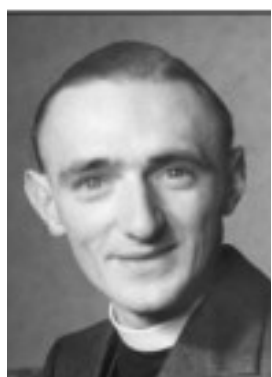
**Edwin Hughes**  
1932-49



**Frederick Marshall**  
1949-1956



**Ernest Wright**  
1957-66



**Owen Yandell**  
1967-73



**Jack Harding**  
1973-97



**Philip Caton**  
1998-2011



**Jeremy Leffler**  
2012-21



**Jennie Hardy**  
2024-

St John's possesses very little historical material. A few documents were deposited in the Lancashire County Archives by Rev. Harding, and there are some others in the Liverpool Library. These consist of a few old deeds in the library and some newspaper cuttings in the County Archives.

If any of our readers have any pre-1980 copies of the parish magazine, or any photographs of important events in the life of the church going back many years please consider whether you would make them available for copying. Contact: Stuart Baker (560518).

If anyone would like to read an interesting short history of our church there are copies of "The Church on the Common" by the late Rosemary Quinton available in the church. This slim volume records the history of North Meols going as far back as the Domesday Book of 1086 and how some of the parishes in Southport, as we now know them, evolved as the population of this area grew in the 18th and 19th centuries. The history was brought up to date in March 1998. Anyone with an interest in local history would be likely to find this to be a worthy contribution to their knowledge of our parish and its surrounds.

## Colourful Clerics

Continuing our occasional glimpses into the lives of colourful clergymen we look this time at the Rev. David Johnson who was described in his obituary in "The Times" on 6.5.2020 (*which we gratefully acknowledge as the source of this article*) as a "colourful and quixotic rector who liked to write spoof letters, chastise American tourists and make mischief wherever he roamed."



The Rev David Johnson was uniquely troublesome and often quite exasperating to know, as if possessed by a talent that could not be properly channelled and so had fallen into the habit of mischief. His main contribution to literature was *The Spiritual Quest of Francis Wagstaffe* (1994)\*, a funny collection of letters to a variety of dignitaries in the Church lampooning various ecclesiastical trends, as well as individuals and their pretensions.

His personal style resembled that of a 1920s "high and dry churchman" who regularly "went to town". He was, in fact, often high, but almost never dry. His lifetime skills of performance art included theatrical pipe-smoking, silk stocks, high starched ("Roman") collars and an array of garments for events requiring clerical morning and evening dress, including stockings ("I have good legs"), buckled shoes, frock coats, shovel hats and straw boaters.

He was born in Newcastle in 1953 and was both ashamed and proud of his northern background and unaware of the effect his diminutive stature and strangulated way of speaking had on others. He attempted to ascribe the latter to his mother having taught elocution.

His Cambridge years were for him a finishing school, though he never really grew up there. When Archbishop Donald Coggan visited his college he hung the organ scholar's underwear on a washing line between the chapel towers by way of a greeting. He became a scintillating speaker and would arrest attention, beginning with thunderous countenance and haughty, shatter-glass tones: "Mr President, it is not only a great privilege to be here . . . but also . . . highly inconvenient."

On ordination, he moved to London as a curate and produced a satirical edition of *The Church Times* which did not go down well in all quarters. He became a priest-vicar of Westminster Abbey, an honorary position. In this role he would make a point of marching up to unsuspecting American tourists in baseball caps and barking: "Hats off in church!"

Johnson's church was the church of the Book of Common Prayer, not Common Worship; of livings and squires, and thus of a sense of place; but preferably all with smells and bells and proper Latin cassocks. His politics were almost wholly reactionary. He was given his first parish in 1987 and his parishioners were treated to some extraordinary visitors who were invited to preach, such as Enoch Powell. He could not help but mock those in authority. He was in unlikely demand as an after-dinner speaker at rugby club events, appearing in full clerical evening dress to unleash a slightly risqué routine laced with the odd, surprising common touch, which was then greeted with delighted, shocked surprise by those present. They were even more shocked when they realised that he was, indeed, not a vaudeville act but a serving priest.

By 1995 the church authorities decided to retire him. He was unmarried but not, despite the rumours, ever unfrocked.

He died April 22, 2020, aged 66.

*\*The Editor has a copy of this book and if any of our readers would like to read it please contact him. It received mixed reviews but is very amusing.*

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## Colin Paterson A Life Remembered

On 7th August the family, friends and work colleagues of Colin Paterson came to church to pay our respects to his memory. Colin died on 24th July at the age of 78 after battling valiantly against a long illness.



The Editor is indebted to Colin's son Mark who has provided much of the material for this short tribute. Mark has encapsulated Colin's approach to life by citing this Chinese proverb:

If you want happiness for an hour, take a nap.  
If you want happiness for a day, go fishing.  
If you want happiness for a year, inherit a fortune.

If you want happiness for a lifetime, help someone else.

In his family life, his working life and his life as a valued member of St John's Church Colin was always there for others, cheerfully and graciously willing to help.

Colin was born in Liverpool on 29th October 1945. His father was a policeman in Liverpool, on duty in the Liverpool docks during the week and at the football grounds at weekends. Colin was able to enter Anfield through the police entrance with his father and became a life-long supporter of the Reds.

He was educated in Liverpool and had numerous jobs in his early years until he found the right fit and joined Lancashire Fire Service in 1964 and was based all over Liverpool before transferring to Southport and Formby.

The life of a firefighter can be very dangerous but it can have its lighter moments such as rescuing cows from the salt marshes near the Southport coast. And on one occasion Colin had to rescue a walrus from a ditch. The walrus was Craig Stadler, a professional golfer who was so nicknamed because of his ample girth and luxuriant moustache, who had driven his commensurately large American vehicle into a drainage ditch and was at risk of not getting to the first tee to play in The Open which was at Royal Birkdale that year. The technique for extracting cattle from the mud was equally effective in enabling Colin to remove the walrus from the ditch and Stadler was able to arrive in time. He finished 12th.

Colin met Sue in 1967 and they married two years later and lived in Hillside since 1970. They have two sons, Mark and Keith. Colin was a regular attender with his family at St John's for many years and undertook many important roles, not the least of which was as Lieutenant of the 5th Southport Boys' Brigade which flourished under him and the Captain, Jack Crosby. Colin also served very diligently as a deputy Churchwarden, Transport Officer, and Sidesman.

He had lots of interests including helping Mark and Keith to find spare parts for their elderly cars, and (after he retired) learning the skills of upholstery and French polishing.

It was with great sadness to all at St John's when we learned that Colin was seriously ill. He bore his illness and treatment with great fortitude. As a church family we are thankful for his life, his company, his dedicated service and his faith and we extend our sympathy to Sue, Mark and Keith and all their family.

## Contextual Comedy

The Revd Fergus Butler-Gallie is Vicar of Charlbury with Shorthampton, in the diocese of Oxford. He went to a fund-raising event at Ditchley Park to hear Michael Palin, travel journalist and former Monty Python member. Much of the first half involved his encounters with people who were avid fans of Monty Python. He described how he so easily tired of people quoting lines and gags at him, because invariably, out of context, they weren't funny.

There was one exception. During one of his very regular episodes of train travel, coming back through the Gare du Nord on the Eurostar, he found himself pulled aside by French customs, who insisted on rifling through his case. Even the usually insouciant Palin began to get flustered under these irritating circumstances. Then the official paused, looked up, and said, "I never wanted to be a customs officer you know. I wanted to be a lumberjack." A rare case of Gallic humour!



*This anecdote is reproduced from The Church Times*



# W CROSS R D

*Solution below*

**The Bible version used in our crosswords is the NIV.**

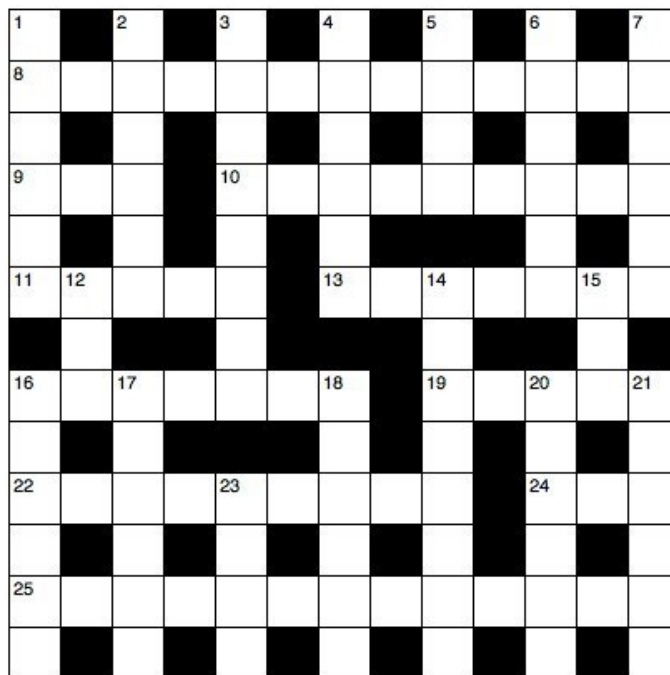
Crosswords reproduced by kind permission of BRF and John Capon, originally published in Three Down, Nine Across, by John Capon (£6.99 BRF).

### Across

- 8 Where the ark of the covenant was kept for 20 years (1 Samuel 7:1) (7,6)  
 9 One of the parts of the body on which blood and oil were put in the ritual cleansing from infectious skin diseases (Leviticus 14:14-17) (3)  
 10 Uncomfortable (3,2,4) 11 'Yet I have loved Jacob, but Esau I have —' (Malachi 1:3) (5)  
 13 Where Paul said farewell to the elders of the church in Ephesus (Acts 20:17) (7)  
 16 'Jesus bent down and — to write on the ground with his finger' (John 8:6) (7)  
 19 Prophet from Moresheth (Jeremiah 26:18) (5)  
 22 Comes between Exodus and Numbers (9)  
 24 and 2 Down 'Then Elkanah went home to Ramah, but the boy ministered before the Lord under — the —' (1 Samuel 2:11) (3,6)  
 25 There was no room for them in the inn (Luke 2:7) (4,3,6)

### Down

- 1 Rough drawing (2 Kings 16:10) (6)  
 2 See 24 Across  
 3 Underground literature (including Christian books) circulated in the Soviet Union (8)  
 4 Lo, mash (anag.) (6)  
 5 The Bible's shortest verse: 'Jesus ...' (John 11:35) (4)  
 6 'Can a mother forget the baby at her — and have no compassion on the child she has borne?' (Isaiah 49:15) (6)  
 7 Can be seen in a dying fire (Psalm 102:3) (6)



- 12 'Send me, therefore, a man... experienced in the — of engraving, to work in Judah and Jerusalem' (2 Chronicles 2:7) (3)  
 14 Second city of Cyprus (8)  
 15 United Nations Association (1,1,1)  
 16 One of the women who first heard that Jesus had risen from the dead (Mark 16:1) (6)  
 17 Braved (anag.) (6)  
 18 — of Evangelism, outreach initiative in the 1990s (6)  
 20 'Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes and — in their own sight' (Isaiah 5:21) (6)  
 21 'Neither — nor depth... will be able to separate us from the love of God' (Romans 8:39) (6)  
 23 What Jesus shed in 5 Down (4)

## In our Book of Remembrance in September

- 3rd William Halsall, 1945  
 6th Douglas Whitehill, 2008  
 Eileen Jones, 2020  
 10th Kathleen Hewetson, 1987  
 Alan Burdon, 2004  
 12th Audrey Moss, 2023  
 14th Alice Lloyd, 2000  
 15th Doris Perry, 1992  
 17th Annie Stoker, 2001  
 18th Harry Jones, 1975  
 21st Barbara Carr, 2022

- 22nd May Johnson, 1981  
 26th Margaret Ball, 1984  
 Arthur Bredow, 1955  
 27th Amy Madden, 2020  
 28th William Welch, 1984  
 29th John Taylor, 1993  
 Margery Abbott, 2007  
 30th Viola Marriner, 1978  
 Norman Isherwood, 2011

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

## CROSSWORD SOLUTION

ACROSS:  
 8, Kir'ath Jearim. 9, Toe. 10, Ill at ease. 11, Hated. 13, Miletus. 16, Started. 19, Micah. 22, Leviticus. 24, Eli.  
 25, Mary and Joseph.  
 DOWN:  
 1, Sketch. 2, Priest. 3, Samizdat. 4, Shalom. 5, Wept. 6, Breast. 7, Embers. 12, Art. 14, Limassol. 15, UNA. 16, Salome. 17, Adverb. 18, Decade. 20, Clever. 21, Height. 23, Tear.

## God in the Sciences

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

### Faithful to Scripture, Faithful to Science: Alister McGrath on science and Christian faith

Alister McGrath is well-known as a theologian, but he started out as a scientist. After becoming a Christian as a student, he wanted to learn about his new faith, so he studied theology at the same time as completing his PhD in molecular biophysics. He has not lost touch with science, but has continued to write and speak about how science and Christian faith work together. In this extract from a recently released interview, he shares his experience of being a scientist and a Christian.

"I think my most vivid experience of wonder took place in the 1970s when I was on vacation in Iran. We were travelling on a bus in the middle of the night because it wasn't hot then, and the bus broke down. We found ourselves in the middle of this solemn black desert, and the night sky shone with a brilliance like I had never seen before. That just overwhelmed me, it made me think there is something really wonderful here.

"Now, I was a Christian by that time and I knew how Christianity could answer that but it just struck me, that sense of wonder has two possible outcomes. One is science - this universe is wonderful, what's it all about? But of course, it is also about religion, the deeper levels of things that science can't really

engage. I think one of the things I have discovered over time is that maybe this sense of wonder both opens the gateway to science and to faith, and that those two together are able to answer questions which on their own they simply couldn't.

"I think science is wonderful at asking questions. Some of those questions can be answered, but very often when you do answer them they simply open up yet more questions. But of course, there are some more fundamental questions I think science simply cannot answer - they transcend its capacities to answer, and you might think of non-empirical questions like, 'Why am I here? What is the meaning of life? What is good and how do I live a good life?'

"These are real questions and they're good questions but they're not scientific questions. And the psychologists tell us that we really need answers to those questions if we are to lead a fulfilled human existence. You find some scientists who say, 'Well because science can't answer them there are no answers to be given', but actually most realise that there are answers waiting to be discovered - it's just that science can't deliver them.

"Science fills in part of a big picture but there are parts of the picture you have to fill in from somewhere else. Science is part of the answer but only part, and faith supplements it, giving us a vision of life that is exciting and reliable, and also something that we can inhabit meaningfully."

Find more on [wondersofthelivingworld.org](http://wondersofthelivingworld.org)

### Public will be able to feel the tree rings of Sycamore Gap

Members of the public are now able to feel the rings of the felled Sycamore Gap tree, thanks to a new art exhibition. The 200-year-old sycamore was cut down last year in a "malicious act of vandalism". But it has now been 'brought to life' through a series of five prints, created from a disc of the trunk.

The prints are on display at four locations along Hadrian's Wall. One of them, named Access, has been hand pressed, so that the 3D shape of the wood and tree rings became embossed on the paper. Visitors can touch the print and feel the rings.

The National Trust explains that the art exhibition is only part of an attempt to "ensure there is an enduring legacy of the tree informed by the huge public response to its loss."

The five bespoke prints have been named 'Heartwood.' They were taken from a 90cm disc of the original tree. They show every tree ring, groove and detail from the cross-section of the almost heart-shaped trunk.



## WORD SEARCH

Solution on page 21

### Michael and All Angels

The Church remembers angels this month, with the feast day of Michael and All Angels on the 29<sup>th</sup>. The Bible is full of angels, where they often had a key role in crucial events. It seems that Michael is their leader, an 'archangel'. In stained glass he's often seen with a sword, because in the Book of Revelation he leads the angelic host who fight and defeat Satan and his army.

In the Gospels, angels make numerous appearances. Just two examples: Gabriel was sent to Mary to announce the coming of her baby, Jesus, the Messiah, the Son of God. Another angel was sent to sit in the empty tomb on Easter morning, waiting to tell the startled women that Jesus wasn't there - He had risen (Mark 16:5)!

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S P W B U E A E S R A  
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G G I G D B A A A D M  
T A T C I L E G N A Y  
L I I A G F P E R E L  
L A N G E L P Y A L L  
S A G D Y B A B T A S

MICHAEL  
ALL  
ANGELS  
KEY  
CRUCIAL

LEADER  
STAINED  
GLASS  
SWORD  
ANGELIC

HOST  
DEFEAT  
SATAN  
APPEARANCES  
GABRIEL

MARY  
BABY  
JESUS  
WAITING  
ANGEL

### The Revd Dr Jo White considers the highest part of our churches...

#### Reflecting Faith: Arts and Crafts Churches

Originally, the theology behind church building was to build church buildings on higher land, so that people would have to lift their heads to look upon them; with the tower or spire giving it extra height.

This was reflecting the faith of lifting our eyes to God and recognising our place in His Creation – and yet He still came to earth for us.

Often a clock would have been placed on the tower or spire for the local people who would not have had personal time-pieces, and again they would have lifted their eyes heavenward to see it. The clock might have chimed, or would have been connected with the church bells to enable illiterate people to know the time.

There were 612 Commissioner churches built in the early 1800's, when society was becoming industrialised, and folk were moving away from rural life and into towns.

By the middle of that century the Arts and Crafts Movement was well under way, and church buildings were being 'targeted'.

Between 1884 and 1918 there were about 5000 churches built in the UK, of which around 350 can be identified as Arts and Crafts churches. Much depended on the Patron of the church and their generosity.

In East and North Yorkshire there are a set of 17 churches which were restored or built by the local patron(s) – father and son of the Sykes Family of Sledmere House – between 1866 and 1913. They say they are unparalleled elsewhere in Britain.

## 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': Fauré's Requiem

At the end of his life in 1924, Gabriel Fauré, the French composer, said to his sons, "When I am no longer here, you will hear it said of my works, 'After all, that was nothing much to write home about!' You must not let that hurt or depress you. It is the way of the world."

His concern was ill-founded, for Fauré's compositions, vocal, choral and instrumental, have become standard works in concert programmes, and are much loved by all who value the beauty and joy of music.

Curiously, the one work of Fauré's that is most frequently performed, his Requiem, had a lukewarm reception at its first performance. That was in 1888 at the funeral of an important Parisian architect in the church of the Madeleine. Afterwards the priests there told Fauré that the church's own musical repertoire did not require this new addition, and so for over 20 years the Requiem was virtually ignored.

Now it is one of the most loved and sublime settings of the Requiem. Is it because of the graceful, fleeting lines of melodies that Debussy compared to the gesture of a beautiful woman? Or is it because of the resigned, yet optimistic approach to death and eternal life that is at the heart of Fauré's setting. He wrote, "It has been said that my Requiem does not express the fear of death, and

someone has called it a lullaby of death. But it is thus that I see death: as a happy deliverance, an aspiration towards happiness above..."

Written on the death of his parents, the Requiem in many ways marks the end of Fauré's youth. It was a youth that could be said to have begun with another beautiful choral work, the *Cantique de Jean Racine*. This was composed in 1865 when Fauré was just 20 years old, and finishing his studies at the *École Niedermeyer*.

Yet however youthful, it has all the hallmarks of the great composer: a serenity and a delicacy in setting the words, and a clarity of line and beauty of proportion that makes the work sing out its prayer. It addresses Jesus the Word and asks that He will watch over us and send us His grace. If we have been forgetful, then stir our hearts again. Receive this song, it prays, which is your gift to us returned in full measure.

The *Cantique* points to God as the author of all beauty. The music we compose is His inspiration and gift in our lives, which we offer to the world and to Him. In the novel *God's Apology* by Olivia Fane, the ten-year old girl, Joanna, talks of music as God's gift in this way. "I have come," she says, "because the lines of communication between our two worlds has been frayed. Music is the language of God. We can not only hear it, we can also sing it. So, sing now: sing in joy and in pain, sing to God." As we listen to Fauré's Requiem or *Cantique*, we can rejoice in that gift of music, and find it opening up God's world of beauty and harmony for us to hear and enjoy.

### How having faith in God can help you here on earth

Anglicans are more likely to say that they are satisfied with their lives, and many older churchgoers say that they never feel lonely.

A recent survey for the Belonging Forum, which supports dialogue between faiths, has found that there is a strong association between belonging to a faith group and having greater well-being and health.

The survey found that religious people have higher levels of 'social connectedness' and friendships than the general population. They are more likely to speak with their neighbours regularly, and to have on average more friends than non-religious people do.

It seems that faith communities can play an important role in providing a sense of belonging and purpose in the UK.

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

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## 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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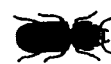
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## WORD SEARCH solution



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From Our Own Correspondent in Ilkley, Doris Brookfield

## Memories of the 2012 Olympics in London

After spending quite a lot of time watching the wonderful coverage of the 2024 Olympic Games from Paris I just remembered the happy memories I have of going with Bob to watch the Olympics held in London in August 2012. Bob had just been diagnosed with Cognitive Impairment so I thought it would be a nice idea to do as much as we could before the dreadful dementia took over our lives.

Thomas Cook were advertising a package deal for a trip to London with tickets for two events. We wanted to see the athletics in the newly built stadium. That was a must. The afternoon event was a bit trickier, so many to choose from, I wanted to watch the showjumping, but Bob said he would like to watch the football at Wembley as he had never been there.

On a sunny morning in August our holiday started and we arrived on a National Express coach and we easily found our hotel in the centre of the city. There were people from all over the world. It was very exciting.

The following morning we went by the Underground to the Stadium which was a wonderful sight. There was so much to see. Our seats were a little higher than I expected. Everyone was in such a happy mood and so friendly. It just shows how sport can bring everyone together.

We watched Usain Bolt start his heat which he won easily, then the hurdle heats and the javelin then the long jump, the ladies' 400 metres and ladies'

shot put. I thought the little minis carrying the javelins, racing across the field was a lovely touch.

All too soon it was time to change venues, so after a little lunch we caught the tube to Wembley, it was absolutely packed with Mexican and Japanese fans. It was the semi-final. They wore beautiful costumes and the Mexican music was exciting. Bob loved the stadium and after a long walk he was so happy we had come, and we were shown to our seats which were again very high up.

There were no hand rails. I found it very daunting as my knee wasn't good. Bob said let's leave as he could see I couldn't make it up the steps but a lovely gentleman in charge of the stand said "Don't leave there are places for people who can't climb" and he showed us to a lower level where there were seats for the disabled, so everything turned out fine. The match was quite boring to me but Bob loved it. Japan won. It took us half an hour to get out and a scary walk down concrete steps. Then we caught the tube back to our hotel. What a wonderful experience we had had.

It was so busy at the hotel with all different nations just happy to have been a part of this fabulous event. I'm so glad we did it. Bob and I were so happy. I'm glad to say we spent many happy holidays together before the Alzheimers and Covid eventually took him away. But life is full of memories, some happy some sad. I'm just so happy we took the decision to go. He absolutely loved it. London did us proud.

Thank God for giving us those moments together. Love to you all, from Doris.

PS. I still can't believe the tragedies in Southport these last few weeks. Unbelievable. God bless

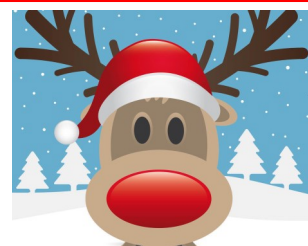
### **The coming of Rudolph the red-nosed reindeer** by Tim Lenton

75 years ago, on 1<sup>st</sup> September 1949, the Christmas song *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer* was released. It was sung by the American movie-star and singer Gene Autry, nicknamed the "Singing Cowboy". The song was adapted from a poem/story written by Robert L May for a children's colouring book: it was an assignment given him by his employers, the Chicago-based Montgomery Ward retail group. It was published in 1939, and 2.4 million copies were distributed free in its first year.

May initially considered the names Rollo or Reginald for his 'ugly duck' reindeer, but eventually settled on Rudolph. Concerned about how to make the reindeer distinctive, he was looking out of his office window when a thick fog blocked his view. This gave him the idea for Rudolph's bright red nose, enabling Santa to see where he was going.

Robert May's four-year-old daughter was used as a sounding board while he created the story, but it was initially rejected, partly because of the unfortunate associations of a red nose with chronic drunkenness at the time. However, May's friend and colleague, Denver Gillen, drew 'cute reindeer', which persuaded the managers to go for the idea. The story-poem was turned into a song by May's brother-in-law, Johnny Marks. Several popular singers rejected it, but Gene Autry took it on, and his recording reached No 1 on the Billboard chart for pop singles in the week of Christmas 1949. It sold 2.5 million copies in the first year. Up to the 1980s it was the second best-selling record of all time.

The United States Postal Service issued a series of postage stamps featuring Rudolph on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2014.



## 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.

### Postscript

Philip had promised a reward to whoever would kill the Prince of Orange. When Parma informed Philip that Gerard had executed the Prince and that Gerard's relatives were still alive he recommended that the payment be made to them for this laudable and generous deed. This was done and they were enriched and ennobled as well by their son's crime. They became landed gentry becoming Seignores of Levremont, Hostal and Dampmartin.

After 27 years, the Prince's eldest son returned from Spain, to all intents and purposes a Spaniard. The restorations of these were offered to him by Philip the Second providing he would pay a portion of the rent to the family of his father's murderer. This he scornfully refused.

The soldier who sold Gerard the pistols committed suicide when he learnt what they had been used for.

Then followed the wars of Spanish succession in which Holland was at war with Spain, France and on 4 occasions with England. In 1664 the Dutch state of New Amsterdam was captured by the English under the Duke of York who named it New York, recaptured by the Dutch and who now named it "New Orange." It was later ceded to Britain and became New York once again.

In 1667 a Dutch fleet under Admiral De Ruyter sailed up the Thames and captured the 2 prime English ships and set fire to the rest of the English fleet. They were said to have tied brooms to the masts of their ships to signify they had swept the English fleet from the sea.

The treaty of Utrecht brought Peace. It was a series of treaties all signed individually between Holland, France and England. The Netherlands had been broken up into Holland, Spanish Netherlands, and Flanders which was taken by France. They were never to be united again. The Spanish Netherlands finally got its freedom from Spain to become Belgium.

Ruled by Louis Napoleon, the Emperor's brother, the French wanted to annex the Netherlands into France. At Waterloo the Dutch, under the Prince of Orange at that time, fought on the British side but many had previously fought for Napoleon. They were the only troops to let the French break the Square "battle formation."

Michael Portillo in one of his train journeys sat with a group of young people from Belgium and asked them about the history of the past and how did they get on in the present day. They replied that the differences were still there but they had learnt to live with them. What a pity Northern Ireland could not follow this pattern in the same way.

### A Prayer for Unity

O God, the father of our Lord Jesus Christ, our only Saviour, the Prince of Peace, Give us grace lay to heart the great dangers we are in by our unhappy divisions. Take away all hatred and prejudice and whatsoever else may hinder us from Godly Union and concord; as there is but one body, one spirit, and one hope of our calling, one Lord, one baptism, one God of us all. So we may henceforth be all of one heart and of one soul; United in one Holy bond of truth and Peace, of faith and charity. May we with one mind and one mouth glorify thee, through our Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

***This concludes Dennis's series of articles based on "The Rise of the Dutch Republic" by John Lothrop Motley. He offers to make the book available to anyone who wishes to read the subject in greater depth.***



"Finally, we're still waiting for someone from last week's Parent & Toddler Group to come and claim this lost property..."

## Opportunity

by Penny Candlin

Do not miss the opportunity to make a difference in someone's life.

Do not miss the opportunity when you are nudged by the Holy Spirit to do something.

Do not miss the opportunity to grow.

The time is now.

The opportunity is now.

The Holy Spirit is here now, ready to help you

Opportunity knocks.

Are you ready to open the door?



## What's Coming to Southport this autumn?

**Craft & Gift Fair:** 7th & 8th September, Wayfarers Shopping Arcade

**'Allo 'Allo 2—The Camembert Caper:** 13th-21st September, Southport Little Theatre

**Antique, Vintage & Collectors Fair:** 15th September at Dunes Splash World

**Southport Classic and Speed Show and Parade:** 15th September (in Victoria Park: classic cars and speed event, especially for petrolheads!)

**Artisan & Gift Market:** 21st September, Southport Market Hall, King Street

**British Musical Fireworks Championship:** 20th-21st September

**Oliver!** 28th September-5th October, Southport Little Theatre

## Warm Space

Struggling with the cost of living? Feeling lonely?

Looking for a quiet, safe place to gather your thoughts?

Or, just need a friendly chat over a hot drink?

**EVERY THURSDAY**  
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**Sefton Warm Spaces**  
a space for community and warmth in Sefton  
in partnership with

## Yet more of those Church Notices that didn't quite make it...

A talk on drugs will be given at the next Mothers' Union meeting. This will be followed by a Bring and Buy Sale.

A sudden gust of wind took all who were at the ceremony by surprise. Hats were blown off and copies of the vicar's speech and other rubbish were scattered over the site.



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for more details visit  
[helpinghands.co.uk](http://helpinghands.co.uk)



## AGES OF LIFE

by John M. Shakespeare

We all begin this life as mewling and puking infants. I well remember as a new father those early days of changing nappies. I shall always, I hope, retain an underlying admiration for a mother giving birth. To quote Andrea Dworkin (1946-2005) "No phallic hero, no matter what he does to himself or to another to prove his courage, ever matches the solitary, existential courage of the woman who gives birth."

In 1870 the Elementary Education Act was passed, making school compulsory for all children between the ages of five to thirteen. This was an age when it was realised that literacy was needed for all in the land, regardless of status.

The next stage is, to quote William Shakespeare (1564-1616) "The whining schoolboy, with his satchel and shining morning face, creeping like a snail unwillingly to school."



The threat of corporal punishment was always in the air at school, finally being banned in 1986 at state schools and in 1994 in public schools.

I believe we may see ourselves as trees. We grow from a small seed and then we develop. How this development takes place can, I suggest, be likened as to how we are nurtured in this life. To quote from the Bible, Luke (Chp 6 verses 43 to 45) "No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit, for each tree is known by it's own fruit. Figs are not gathered from thorns, nor grapes picked from a bramble bush. The good person out of the good treasure of the heart produces good and the evil person out of evil treasure produces evil. For it is out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaks."

I must confess to at least two feelings over the years that are, I find, still with me. The first is "conscience" when I ask myself did I do or say the right thing at the time. The second is, "patience. As I grow older I feel at times that this is lacking. The following quotation from Sophocles (496-406 BC), is a good illustration. "A young bull sees the gate to a field full of

cows is open. He says to the old bull, "let's rush down there and have a few." The old bull replies "no, let's go down slowly and have them all."

To quote from the teachings of Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-43 BC) "Our longevity and growing old are natural processes that we all must endure, but should also make the most of the time that we have." He classified four main problems in the ageing process which were: "The mind and body lose their early strength, and as the body weakens there is less pleasure in physical working and the inevitability of death grows even closer." Although he claimed that we should not worry about dying, the less painful it was the easier it is to accept.

Having great age does not guarantee great wisdom is a truism that I accept. The way we have used our lives and the depth of experiences that we have lived through is, some may say, a better way to measure our claims to wisdom. I believe that growing old is very much a matter of attitude. How we feel about ourselves, will determine, I like to think, what we do with ourselves.

What is sometimes called the "serenity of life" when we are at peace, we hope will help us pursue our final days in a progressive form of living. For me the greatest fear of old age is not as much the form of physical deterioration, but rather mental deterioration. Dementia and other types of loss of mental knowingness is, I believe, a threat to dying in a peaceful way, something I find rather scary.

To quote J.G.Diefenbaker, a Canadian Statesman (1895-1979), "While there is snow on the roof it doesn't mean the fire has gone out in the furnace," So we reach the end years of our time on this earth.

To quote Dylan Thomas (1914-1953), "Do not go gentle into that good night, old age should burn and rave at the close of day, rage, rage against the dying of the light." When I was born old age was seen as three score years and ten, now with improved living and health standards this has somewhat increased. I believe in God and heaven, and so have no fear of death. I wish the same for you. I finish with a quotation from the Duc de la Rochefoucauld (1613-1680) "Old men like to give advice, to console themselves for no longer being able to set bad examples."

## 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 15<sup>th</sup> Sept 1954 the iconic photograph of Marilyn Monroe's billowing skirt as she stood over a New York subway grate was taken during filming for *The Seven-Year Itch*. The event was staged as a publicity stunt.

60 years ago, on 4<sup>th</sup> Sept 1964 the Forth Road Bridge opened in Scotland. It links Edinburgh to Fife across the Firth of Forth. (A second bridge, the Queensferry Crossing, opened in 2017 and largely replaced it.)

50 years ago, on 8<sup>th</sup> Sept 1974 former President Richard Nixon was granted a full and unconditional pardon by his successor Gerald Ford for any crimes he may have committed or participated in while in office. (Nixon had resigned in August after Watergate.)

40 years ago, on 10<sup>th</sup> Sept 1984 British geneticist Alec Jeffreys discovered genetic fingerprinting, also known as DNA profiling. It allowed criminals to be identified from hair, blood, or sweat left at crime scenes. It also allowed families to trace their lineages or determine the paternity of children.

30 years ago, on 22<sup>nd</sup> Sept 1994 Roy Castle, British TV presenter, dancer, singer, comedian, actor and musician, died. Best known as the presenter of the children's TV show *Record Breakers*. He himself broke nine world records while presenting the programme, including the fastest tap-dancing.

10 years ago, on 18<sup>th</sup> Sept 2014 the Scottish independence referendum was held. The citizens of Scotland voted to remain in the UK rather than becoming an independent country. (Independence: 44.7%; Remain in the UK: 55.3%)

**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)

**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 September 2024

### Harvest Field by Daphne Kitching

All around, confusion,  
All around, helplessness,  
People lost in the bad news of every day.  
Longing for purpose,  
Searching for security and significance  
Here in the white field of our generation.

The harvest is still great,  
The workers are still few,  
But the Lord of the harvest  
Is the same  
Yesterday, today and forever,  
And this is His field.

He planted, He will give growth  
If we will be His workforce  
And go out into the field - where He already is –  
To gather the harvest  
Of His kingdom compassion.

Lord of the harvest,  
In Your grace, we pray, Send us.



## £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.

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

## The Last Laughs

### Mind your Pies and Q's

A Mayor of Wigan, mid-lunch with the late Queen Elizabeth II, told her "I don't know what to call you."

Her Majesty replied:

"You could call me ma'am or you could call me Your Majesty, but it hardly matters as you've called me love three times already."

### Best gags from the Edinburgh Fringe:

The winner was "I was going to sail around the globe in the world's smallest ship, but I bottled it."

But Sathnam Sanghera offers a far better joke: "Describe yourself in three words."

"Lazy."

### Two nations separated by a common language

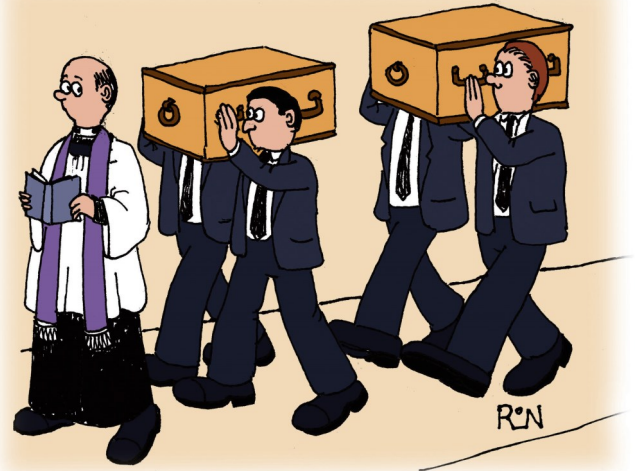
In 1 Samuel xxiv, 3, most modern versions say that Saul goes into a cave to relieve himself. A reader of "The Times" newspaper (Mr A G Wilmore) used to work in a cathedral shop and, leafing through a Bible one day, he came across the assertion that Saul went into the cave "to use the bathroom". It was an American edition, of course.

Charlie Higson, creator of The Fast Show, recently asked his social media followers:

"Does anyone know a reliable method of stopping a rum and coke from instantly going flat?" Readers will have their own techniques, but Eric Idle's method seems best. "Easy," the former Python replied. "Drink it."

It isn't only operas that can be too long for many people but church services too. Hugh Montefiore, the former Bishop of Birmingham, when asked whether he was high church or low church, replied: "I'm short church."

Or, as a Vicar in Surrey once observed: "One God, one church, one hour."



*"Millicent Hyssop had been a magician's assistant"*



...I take it our local supermarket has a rather good offer on tinned peas at the moment!

### Big or small?

Why does a £10 note seem so small at the supermarket but so big at church?



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