



THE WORD



Editor: Stuart Baker: stjohnbirkdaletheword@gmail.com

**THE PARISH MAGAZINE OF
ST. JOHN'S CHURCH
ST. JOHN'S ROAD, BIRKDALE. PR8 4JP
Charity Number 1128171
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. 262

OCTOBER 2024

ST. JOHN'S PARISH CHURCH

God Centred, Relationship Driven and Life Transforming



After the tragic events of 29th July which caused widespread shock and grief throughout Southport and our own parish St John's provided a Big Party for children on 22nd September. The weather was not very nice so the party was held indoors. See page 15 to read about what you missed if you weren't there.

We look forward to a number of very happy events in our church life this autumn. On Friday 18th October we shall host a Music in the Hall evening

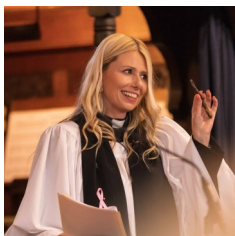
On Saturday 16th November there will be a Barn Dance in the Church Hall. We haven't had one of these for several years but they are always great fun. We have a live band who will lead the dancing.

We look forward to the return of the Southport Orchestra on Saturday 30th November, and a week later we shall have our annual Christmas Tree Festival and Christmas Market.

And on Friday 25th October there will be a wedding in church. Lucy Wright and Matt Royle will be married by Rev Jennie, and we are sure that many of our church family will attend to share in this very special and happy occasion.



**FOR ALL ENQUIRIES TO OR ABOUT ST. JOHN'S CHURCH PLEASE CONTACT US
BY EMAIL info@stjohnsbirkdale.co.uk OR PHONE THE VICAR: 07872 400718**



Hello everyone,

As we have officially now entered Autumn as summertime ended on 22nd September I have found myself reflecting on the seasons and on change.

As the seasons change each year (although not as distinctly, it seems, as in the past!) our patterns and routines often change with them. If you're anything like me, you may endure a time of mourning as summer leaves and begin to look forward to the next summer holiday! But, at the end of each season, I tend to experience this sense of appreciation for all that has been enjoyed. Autumn, Winter and Spring are all times where so much can be appreciated as well as times of sunshine during summertime.

In Ecclesiastes 3 in the Bible we read a great exhortation on there being a time for everything, for all things under the sun, there is a time. "There is a time to plant and a time to uproot... a time to mourn and a time to dance" and so on.

We might reflect upon the seasons of our lives in a similar way to the seasons of the year. Seasons change. Life offers so much to us all and each 'season' offers great joy and great sadness. As our lives continue to develop and experiences grow over time, it becomes easier to look back in appreciation. I know I can begin to look back and appreciate even some of the painful experiences I have had, because I can now acknowledge that they helped me to grow, to be more empathetic perhaps, to become more resilient and to help me grow as a person, able to walk with others as they have similar experiences in life. As well as to have hope. Hope increases as we look back, it enables us to also look forward in hope, that, "This too, shall pass."

The Bible tells us that God, is the same yesterday, today and forever (Hebrews 13:8). God does not experience seasons, as we do. He is unchanging. I find this so comforting. Though we may be rocked during the difficult seasons of life, we can turn to the 'rock' as Jesus is described (1 Cor 10:4). We can trust that though we may feel unsteady at times, that He remains steady and strong and His promises to be with us and to help us do not change and will not fail.

Verse 10 continues, "I have seen the burden God has laid on the human race. He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end."

God has everything in hand. Though we may not always understand (His ways are higher than ours Isaiah 55:9) we can look back with a grateful heart over each season, we can choose to look for the growth, the healing and the blessings that each season has brought, even, or more so through the difficult seasons.

Personally, I have had this experience. There are seasons of my life that were really painful. Some of those seasons occurred before I knew the Lord. Before I had the hope, joy and peace that being in relationship with God, through His Son, Jesus brings. And yet, now, I can look back and I can see God's hand over those situations that hurt me. I can see times, that although experiences were hard, they could have been worse. I look back knowing that God was with me in the difficult times as well as the good and that each season brought personal growth.

The poem, Foot Prints in the Sand, that is often shared at funerals describes God's presence in these seasons beautifully:

One night a man had a dream. He dreamed he was walking along the beach with the Lord. Across the sky flashed scenes from his life. For each scene, he noticed two sets of footprints in the sand: one belonging to him, and the other to the Lord. When the last scene of his life flashed before him, he looked back at the footprints in the sand. He noticed that many times along the path of his life there was only one set of footprints. He also noticed that it happened at the very lowest and saddest times in his life. This really bothered him and he questioned the Lord about it. "Lord, You said that once I decided to follow you, You'd walk with me all the way. But I have noticed that during the most troublesome times in my life, there is only one set of footprints. I don't understand why, when I needed you most, you would leave me." The Lord replied, "My son, My precious child, I love you and I would never leave you. During your times of trial and suffering, when you see only one set of footprints, it was then that I Carried You."

Whatever scene or season of life you are in now, whether you look with trepidation as the season changes, or with great joy. Know, that God is walking with you, perhaps even carrying you. And, He does this whether you know it or not. Perhaps, like me, one day you will look back and be blessed to observe God's protective hand on your life, even when you did not know Him or understand your situation at the time. I pray this for you.

God bless, Rev Jennie xxx

Miscellaneous observations on daily life...

What part of "THOU SHALT NOT" don't you understand?

The wages of sin is death. Repent before payday.

Don't let the littleness in others bring out the littleness in you.

WHO'S WHO AT ST. JOHN'S

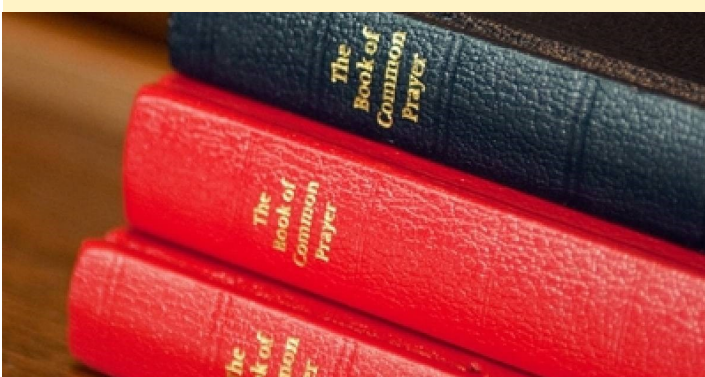
Vicar:	Rev. Jennie Hardy (07872 400718)	Transport Officer:	Mrs. Jean Morris (564206)
Priest (retired):	Rev. Roy Doran (572387)	Church of England Children's Society:	Mrs. Sylvia Kent (564071)
Reader:	Mrs. Christine Baker (560518)	Mothers' Union:	Mrs. Linda Caton (564737)
Churchwardens:	Clive Morris (564206)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

MIDWEEK COMMUNION SERVICES

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 church communal lunch was the highpoint of the social calendar



Taking steps

From a pew newssheet

"Would the person who took the church step ladder last week please bring it back, or further steps will be taken."

Thursday Evening Prayers on 3rd and 17th October 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 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

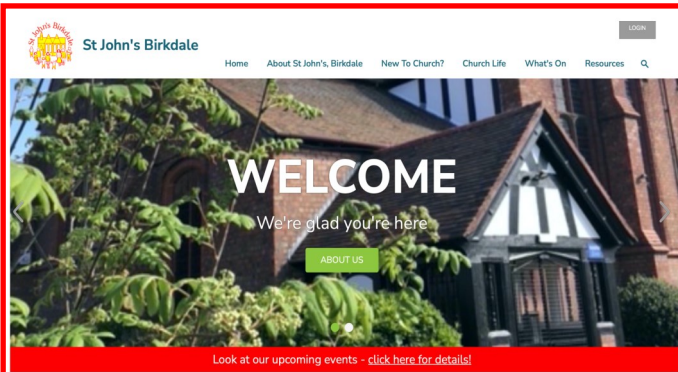
ST JOHN'S CHURCH BIRKDALE

MONTHLY
2ND FRIDAYS
10.30AM

**NEXT MEETING:
11th OCTOBER**



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

Friday 23 February @ 7pm

Friday 22 March @ 7pm

Friday 19 April @ 7pm

Friday 17 May @ 6.30pm

Saturday 15 June @ 11-2pm

Saturday 20 July @ 2pm

Friday 20 September @ 7pm

Friday 18 October @ 7pm

Saturday 16 November @ 7pm

Friday 6 December 6-9pm

Saturday 7 December 10-3pm



Burns Night Supper

Late, Late Pancake Party

Andy Dean's Quiz Night

Italian Food Night

Car Treasure Hunt

Summer Fair & Afternoon Tea

Strawberry Tea

Harvest Supper

Music 'in the' Hall

Barn Dance and Bangers

Christmas Tree Festival and Christmas Fair

YOUNG ADULT SOCIALS

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

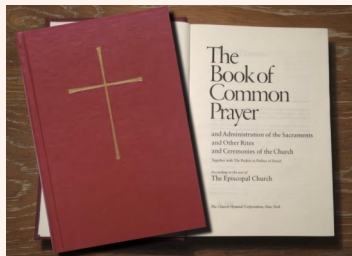
Barn Dance

Saturday 7th December

Christmas fair followed by food

St John's Church, Birkdale

Midweek Book of
Common Prayer
Holy Communion



WEDNESDAY
2nd OCTOBER
10.30am service
IN CHURCH
Followed by
BRUNCH

Worship on the
Nineteenth Sunday
after Trinity

SUNDAY 6th OCTOBER
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 Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity

Faithful Lord, whose steadfast love never ceases and whose mercies never come to an end: grant us the grace to trust you and to receive the gifts of your love, new every morning, in Jesus Christ our Lord.

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

**Songs of Orientation:
Bless His Holy Name**

The Text: Psalm 103

1 Praise the Lord, my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name.
2 Praise the Lord, my soul, and forget not all his benefits—
3 who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases,
4 who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion,
5 who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.
6 The Lord works righteousness and justice for all the oppressed.
7 He made known his ways to Moses, his deeds to the people of Israel:
8 The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love.
9 He will not always accuse, nor will he harbour his anger forever;
10 he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities.
11 For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him;
12 as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.
13 As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him;
14 for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust.
15 The life of mortals is like grass, they flourish like a flower of the field;
16 the wind blows over it and it is gone, and its place remembers it no more.
17 But from everlasting to everlasting the Lord's love is with those who fear him, and his righteousness with their children's children—
18 with those who keep his covenant and remember to obey his precepts.
19 The Lord has established his throne in heaven, and his kingdom rules over all.
20 Praise the Lord, you his angels, you mighty ones who do his bidding, who obey his word.
21 Praise the Lord, all his heavenly hosts, you his servants who do his will.
22 Praise the Lord, all his works everywhere in his dominion.
Praise the Lord, my soul.

Worship on the
Twentieth Sunday after
Trinity

SUNDAY 13th OCTOBER
10.30am service **IN CHURCH** and
via zoom & phone

Collect for the Twentieth Sunday after Trinity

God, our light and our salvation: illuminate our lives, that we may see your goodness in the land of the living, and looking on your beauty may be changed into the likeness of Jesus Christ our Lord.

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

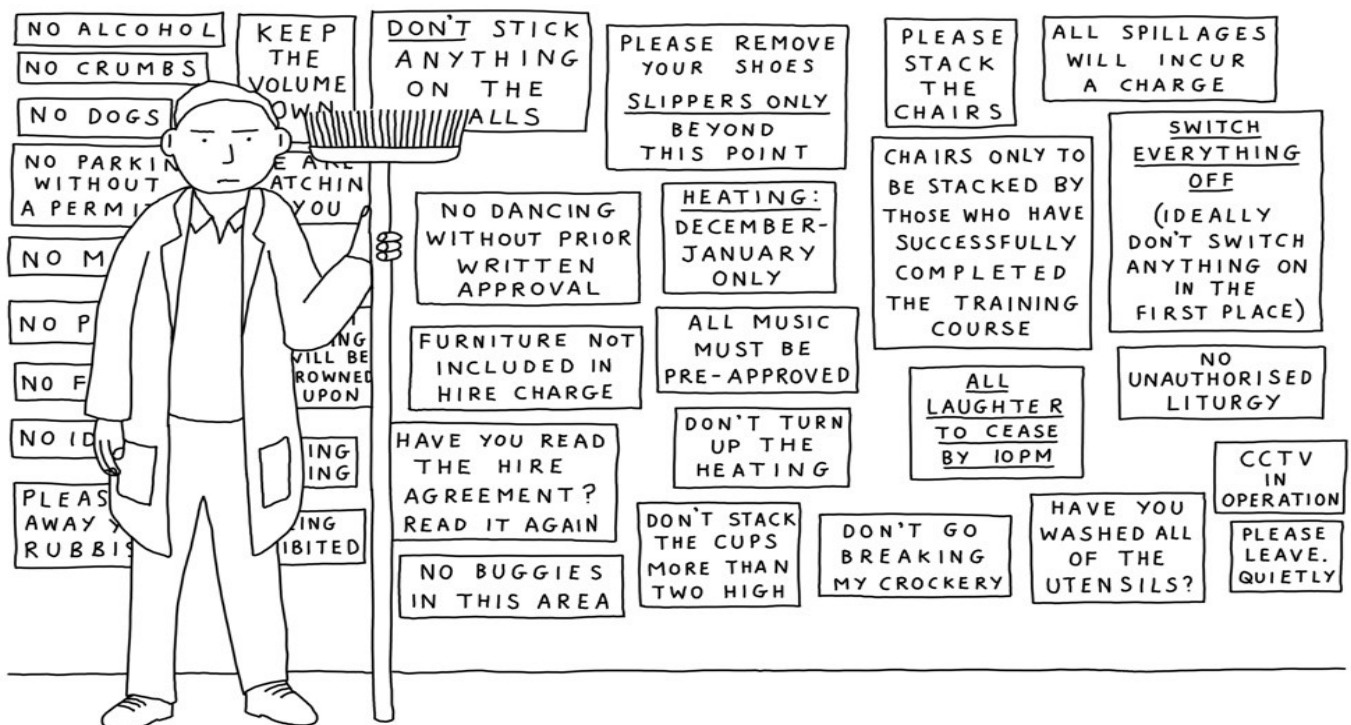
**Songs of Disorientation:
Worship in the Wilderness**

The Text: Psalm 63

1 You, God, are my God, earnestly I seek you; I thirst for you, my whole being longs for you, in a dry and parched land where there is no water.
2 I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory.
3 Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you.
4 I will praise you as long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands.
5 I will be fully satisfied as with the richest of foods; with singing lips my mouth will praise you.
6 On my bed I remember you; I think of you through the watches of the night.
7 Because you are my help, I sing in the shadow of your wings.
8 I cling to you; your right hand upholds me.
9 Those who want to kill me will be destroyed; they will go down to the depths of the earth.
10 They will be given over to the sword and become food for jackals.
11 But the king will rejoice in God; all who swear by God will glory in him, while the mouths of liars will be silenced.

THE CHURCH HALL CARETAKER

WILL WELCOME YOU WHEN YOU ARRIVE



Midweek Book of
Common Prayer Holy
Communion



WEDNESDAY
16th OCTOBER
10.30am service
IN CHURCH

Worship on the Twenty-
first Sunday after Trinity

SUNDAY 20th OCTOBER
10.30am service IN CHURCH
and via zoom & phone

Collect for the Twenty-first Sunday after Trinity

Almighty God, in whose service lies perfect freedom: teach us to obey you with loving hearts and steadfast wills; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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

**Song of Ascent:
Wait for the Lord—
Land it with Jesus**

The Text: Psalm 130

- 1 Out of the depths I cry to you, Lord;
- 2 Lord, hear my voice. Let your ears be attentive to my cry for mercy.
- 3 If you, Lord, kept a record of sins, Lord, who could stand?
- 4 But with you there is forgiveness, so that we can, with reverence, serve you.
- 5 I wait for the Lord, my whole being waits, and in his word I put my hope.
- 6 I wait for the Lord more than watchmen wait for the morning, more than watchmen wait for the morning.
- 7 Israel, put your hope in the Lord, for with the Lord is unfailing love and with him is full redemption.
- 8 He himself will redeem Israel from all their sins.



St John's continues to support Revive International which rescues neglected and abused children, mostly young girls in Olinda, Brazil. They provide shelter and care and, if returning the children to their families is not possible, they try to find them suitable foster parents and adopting parents. It is a slow process but they work very hard and the people of St John's should be heartened to learn of good news when it comes.

In their latest news letter the staff at Revive informed us as follows:

"In August, we welcomed a very special child, H.A.A. (6 years old). She had been in an institutional shelter, a municipal home, for almost a year. H. was taken in due to abuse and sexual violence. In addition, she has Down syndrome and requires a lot of care and medical follow-ups. We ask for prayers for this little girl who has already faced so many difficult situations at such a young age, and also for the foster family and technical team, that they may have the wisdom to handle these challenging circumstances.

This month, we also held a training session with foster families. We invited Leandro Rodrigues, a financial expert, to guide families on financial planning and managing the resources the child receives.

We are hopeful for new foster placements in September. Our foster families are eager to welcome and share love with children who need care and protection. We are also preparing for a new foster family training program in the second half of this year. Currently, three families are interested and are undergoing evaluation by our team."

This is just an example of what they are doing. Please continue to pray for them and for the children for whom they care. **AND PLEASE CONTINUE TO HELP ST. JOHN'S TO PROVIDE FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO REVIVE.** They cannot do their invaluable work without aid. Every penny and pound which you donate when you have a coffee or tea after our Sunday services goes to our International Mission Fund. They need it so much!

Worship on the Last
(22nd) Sunday after
Trinity.

SUNDAY 27th OCTOBER
10.30am service IN CHURCH and
via zoom & phone

Collect for the Last Sunday after Trinity

Merciful God, teach us to be faithful in change and uncertainty, that trusting in your word and obeying your will we may enter the unfailing joy of Jesus Christ our Lord.

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

Sing To The Lord A New Song

The Text: Psalm 150

- 1 Praise the Lord. Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heavens.
- 2 Praise him for his acts of power; praise him for his surpassing greatness.
- 3 Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet, praise him with the harp and lyre,
- 4 praise him with timbrel and dancing, praise him with the strings and pipe,
- 5 praise him with the clash of cymbals, praise him with resounding cymbals.
- 6 Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.
Praise the Lord.

Reflecting Faith: Window Glass

By Revd. Dr. Jo White

Last month I wrote about the Arts and Crafts Movement's influence in the decoration of churches in Britain. (*The style of St John's church is officially designated as "Arts and Crafts Movement with Perpendicular details" in the register of Listed Buildings of England. Ed.*) This is often evidenced in the designs of windows – but why do we have so much coloured glass of all shapes and sizes in church buildings?

Stained glass in churches is similar to wall paintings in that it adds colour as well as traditionally serving the purpose of teaching non-literate people the great events and characters of their religion.

But glass is so much more than that. The techniques used to create these windows have been refined over the centuries, and their intricate beauty has inspired countless artists and designers.

The way the light shines through the glass creates a unique atmosphere that is often described as ethereal or heavenly. In this way,

the use of stained-glass windows helps to create a sacred space that is set apart from the secular world.

The light shining through the glass is shown onto the brickwork or stonework surrounding the glass and depending on the original colours, the intensity of the light, the angle of the sun's rays as well as the height and angle away from the watcher: these can range from vibrantly strong to softly muted.

Hundreds of years ago people saw the changes in light in this way as being very significant. It was thought that the light passing through was transformed or transmuted and because of this it had a healing and revivifying effect on people who placed themselves within its light.

Last autumn we included a series of articles about our windows and their history. They were installed at different times between 1900 and the 1960s and for different reasons. Their styles reflect the artistic fashions of the eras in which they were created. After reading Revd Dr Jo White's article look at our windows again and appreciate the atmosphere which they create. Ed.

St John's Birkdale presents

MUSIC

in the hall

FRIDAY 18

OCTOBER

7PM

**Share in a night of music, featuring
the Ukulele Minstrels plus music
from top musical films**

Come and join us
for a main and dessert
bring your own drinks

TICKETS €10

Please let us know of any dietary
requirements when booking

ST JOHN'S. BIRKDALE

BARN DANCER

WITH LIVE MUSIC
FROM THE GANTY BAND

★ SATURDAY 16 NOVEMBER ★



STARTS AT
7:00 PM

TICKETS:
ADULTS £10
CHILDREN £5

JOIN US FOR DANCING PLUS
BANGERS, MASH & PUDDING
BRING YOUR OWN DRINKS

Please let us know of any dietary requirements when booking

St John's Prayers for those in need

St John's is a church that believes in the power of prayer and we are eager to include as many people who currently need prayer in our twice monthly prayer meetings and on the screen on a Sunday.

From the beginning of September we have begun a new system to enable us to keep the prayer list current and to receive regular updates on people who need longer term prayer so that we can pray meaningfully at the zoom prayer meeting.

Names will be on the list for a month at a time, so the lists will be refreshed at the beginning of each calendar month.

If you would like to be on the list for October **please let Sally Wright know** with a current update of why you would like prayer so that we can use that information on a Thursday. If you would like to put someone else on the list, provided you have asked their permission, then pass their name, and any other information on why they would like prayer, to Sally.

There are many ways to get this information to her:

email - sallyewright@aol.com

Text/WhatsApp - 07800550097

or through on the church WhatsApp group



If at the end of the month, you, or the person you have put on the list, wish to remain on the list just let Sally know. If there is need then names can remain on the list for as long as necessary, we just want to keep it current and meaningful. People with long term conditions may feel that their conditions are being managed, treatments have been successful, or pain controlled but then may have a change later on and need to come back onto the list.

Names will no longer be automatically carried forward into the next calendar month.

If you want to discuss anything about this change please contact Sally.

What's the Big Idea? – An Introduction to the Books of the New Testament: Mark

By Canon Paul Hardingham

Mark is the second of the synoptic gospels, along with Matthew and Luke. Traditionally this gospel is ascribed to John Mark, a close associate of Peter. It was written for Gentile readers, probably in Rome during Nero's persecution of the church (c AD 64-7).

Mark unveils Jesus' public ministry with the words: *'the beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God'* (1:1). The gospel provides a succinct and vivid account of Jesus' ministry, concentrating on what Jesus did rather than what He said. Mark moves quickly from one episode to another, often using the word *'immediately'* which is characteristic of his gospel.

For Mark, understanding the true identity of Jesus is fundamental to his gospel. Jesus asks

the disciples, *'Who do people say I am?'* (8:27), to which Peter replies, *'You are the Christ'*. This is evident in Jesus' role as teacher, the call for discipleship and the account of Jesus' death and resurrection, which occupies the last third of the gospel.

A key verse which helps us to understand the nature of Jesus' mission and how we might live in the light of it is: *'Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.'* (10:44,45). As the Suffering Servant, Jesus gave His life on the cross, that we might know and share his love.

Mark is understandably in a hurry to tell us about Jesus: the one who reveals the truth of God to us, that we might live in reality, not ignorance!

Do you want to rent a space?

CHURCH & HALL AVAILABLE TO RENT FOR CONCERTS, PARTIES, MEETINGS...

ST JOHN'S CHURCH BIRKDALE



Large Hall

Are you looking to hire a space for a regular group activity or for a family celebration such as a children's birthday party? Our halls are ideal.

We have both a large hall and a small meeting room available for hire for an hourly charge. A professional standard kitchen is also available.

If you would like to make a booking for any of our rooms in the church hall please contact Jean Morris - phone 01704 564206.

Small Meeting Room

- Dimensions - 30ft x 15ft (9.1m x 4.57m)
- Equipped with chairs and tables
- TV monitor screen

Ideal for meetings and small gatherings

- Dimensions - 55ft x 33ft (16.76m x 10m)
 - Equipped with chairs and tables
 - Theatre style capacity for up to 100
 - Ideal for parties, concerts, clubs, meetings
- Regular or one-off events

Kitchen

- Fully equipped, professional kitchen including cooker, heated cupboard and dishwasher.

Church

The church can accommodate 250 and can be available by arrangement for concerts by musical and choral groups. If you would like to enquire about using the church please contact Clive Morris - phone 01704 564206.



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

On The Perils of being a School Governor

The Rectory,
St James the Least of All

My dear Nephew Darren,

I was interested to hear that from this academic year, your vicar has asked you to take his place as a school governor. A whole new world of exciting meetings is about to open up to you. Naturally, you will have been told that the governors only meet three times a year. You will probably not have been told that you will also be expected to be on at least two sub-committees, where you will be immediately asked to become secretary, as a way of getting to know the job. Add on training days, parents' evenings, sports days, school socials, end of term services, charity events and accompanying classes on days out and you will begin to realise that your vicar's suggestion was not as innocent as you may have thought.

Remember, too, that all meetings require you sit on chairs designed for five-year-olds. You will then spend countless hours going through a 40-item agenda, trying to look dignified with your knees somewhere round your ears while drawing up school plans as if they were the Normandy landing. Be prepared to receive paperwork measured by the hundredweight; entire rainforests have been obliterated by your education authority sending what they seem to think is vital information; it does, however, make good cat litter.

Most meetings will be so full of acronyms that for the first few years you will have the feeling that conversation is taking place in a language that may bear a passing resemblance to English, but isn't. There is little point in trying to learn what they all mean because before too long, they will all be replaced by another set anyway, which will be equally incomprehensible.

Your computer abilities will be expected to be far beyond what anyone over the age of 30 could ever be expected to achieve; if you sink without trace, ask a seven-year-old, who will soon put you right.

You will also be encouraged to attend training days; I strongly suggest you select all-day events, as at least you will get a lunch out of it. You needn't bother to arrive on time, since the first hour will be spent with everyone introducing themselves and you can leave early, as the final hour will go on filling in evaluation forms.

Just keep reminding yourself that your term of office is a mere five years; you may even get remission for good behaviour.

Your loving uncle,
Eustace

How many church members does it take to change a light bulb?

What do you mean CHANGE??? That light bulb was given in memory of my grandmother! My father installed it with his bare hands! He donated his time AND the use of his ladder to do it, too! My family's been members of this church for four generations! And if you think you're going to come in here and make changes all of a sudden, Vicar, you've got another think coming!
(Only joking, Jennie! We must move with the times, even if it does mean changing a light bulb! Ed.)

What a Harvest! Christine Baker reports on a special afternoon.

For those of you who were not at St John's on 22nd September, you missed a treat!

The celebrations started in the morning at our 10.30am service when Jennie supplied a large number of cardboard boxes for the building of 'The Beautiful Gate' which was once one of the gates into to the city of Jerusalem. The construction work was undertaken by a very willing and enthusiastic team of young builders, helped by a couple of adults (who had the requisite ladder training to comply with our Health and Safety Policy!!) All the harvest gifts were then taken up to the table by the children passing through their 'Beautiful Gate'. All the donations of food were given to the Soup Kitchen to help to feed those sleeping on the streets of our town. As a church we support the Soup Kitchen all year round and they are truly grateful for our help.



The fun and celebrations then continued into the afternoon with our Big Harvest Party. Around 36 children and their parents came to enjoy a variety of craft activities and games – Face Painting, Tattoos, Beat the Goalie, Treasure Hunt, Name the Pig, Guess how many sweets in the jar, a puppet show, Pass the Parcel, music and dancing. They were all fed with hotdogs, sandwiches, cakes and ice cream, and the whole event was FREE!!

The Big Harvest Party was to try to show the community some love and support after the tragic events at the end of July. Hopefully we succeeded, and those who came will have good memories to share with others they meet.

Thank you to all those who worked hard at the Party.



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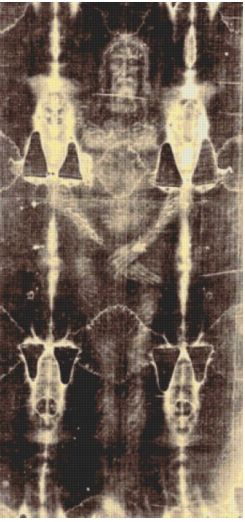
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The Turin Shroud: A New Study

In the Middle Ages it was common practice amongst unscrupulous priests to sell faked holy relics and pardons for sins committed. *The Canterbury Tales* by Geoffrey Chaucer contains several references to these practices.



One item which appears to have first come to light in 1354 is what is known as The Holy Shroud, or The Shroud of Turin. It has been venerated for centuries, especially by members of the Catholic Church, as the actual burial shroud used to wrap the body of Jesus of Nazareth after his crucifixion, and upon which Jesus's bodily image is miraculously imprinted. For the last 670 years there has been debate amongst theologians and history scholars about its authenticity.

The documented history of the shroud dates back to 1354, when it was exhibited in the new collegiate church of Lirey, a village in north-central France. The shroud was denounced as a forgery by the bishop of Troyes, Pierre d'Arcis, in 1389. It was acquired by the House of Savoy in 1453 and later deposited in a chapel in Chambéry where it was damaged by fire in 1532. In 1578, the Savoys moved the shroud to their new capital in Turin, where it has remained ever since. Since 1683, it has been kept in the Chapel of the Holy Shroud, which was designed for that purpose by architect Guarino Guarini and which is connected to both the royal palace and the Turin Cathedral. Ownership of the shroud passed from the House of Savoy to the Catholic Church after the death of former king Umberto II in 1983.

A microscopist, Walter McCrone, found, based on his examination of samples taken in 1978 from the surface of the shroud using adhesive tape, that the image on the shroud had been painted with a dilute solution of red ochre pigment in a gelatin medium. McCrone found that the apparent bloodstains were painted with vermilion pigment, also in a gelatin medium. McCrone's findings were disputed by other researchers and the nature of the image on the shroud continues to be debated.

Radiocarbon dating has established that the shroud is from the medieval period, and not from the time of Jesus. This corresponds with its first documented appearance in 1354. Defenders of the authenticity of the shroud have questioned this finding, usually on the basis that the samples tested might have been contaminated or taken from a repair to the original fabric. Such fringe theories have been refuted by carbon-dating experts and others based on evidence from the shroud itself. Refuted theories include the

medieval repair theory, the bio-contamination theories and the carbon monoxide theory. Though accepted as valid by experts, the carbon-dating of the shroud continues to generate significant public debate.

The nature and history of the shroud have been the subjects of extensive and long-lasting controversies in both the scholarly literature and the popular press. Currently, the Catholic Church neither endorses nor rejects the authenticity of the shroud as a relic of Jesus.

A new study, published by the University of Padua, is by Professor Giulio Fanti, co-ordinator of the international Shroud Science Group. He suggests that the bloodstains and markings on the Holy Shroud of Turin correspond to the brutal treatment of Christ described in Gospel accounts of his crucifixion. Fanti, a professor of mechanical and thermal measurements, is the author of numerous works on the Shroud over 25 years, and is convinced of the Shroud's authenticity.

"Bloodstained marks on the head consistent with a crown of thorns, blood marks on the hands and feet with crucifixion, and a bloodstain on the chest with the post-mortem spear wound that Christ received." The presence of particles which are often a by-product of muscle contractions, provides microscopic confirmation of "very heavy torture", he says. The 11,300-word study, which includes medical and forensic images, concludes that the likely cause of Jesus's "relatively early death on the cross" was a heart attack brought on by kidney and liver failure.

"Jesus was severely scourged and nailed to the cross — he died and his corpse was placed in the sepulchre in Jerusalem and wrapped in the Holy Shroud."

Professor Fanti argues that the image on the Shroud was produced by radiation or an "electric-type energy" of unknown origin, "probably connected with the Holy Fire of Jerusalem which emanated from the corpse and reacted with the linen".

Features of the facial image, he argues, "accurately coincide" with depictions of Christ on Byzantine coins from the seventh century, suggesting that the Shroud was "seen during the Byzantine Empire".

His study refers to previous investigations, including those of 1980 and 1981 which confirmed the existence of human blood and fluid on the Shroud while traces of local clay and limestone also indicate a "quick burial", the new study says.

Professor Fanti writes that his study was "partially supported by a religious group that requested anonymity", which had backed his forensic work on other objects. The results, he says, are "fully consistent" with the description of Christ's scourging and crucifixion in the Gospels.

The controversy continues!

Stuart Baker, acknowledging source material contained in an article by Jonathan Luxmoore in 'The Church Times.'

W CROSS R D

Solution below

The Bible version used in our crosswords is the NIV.

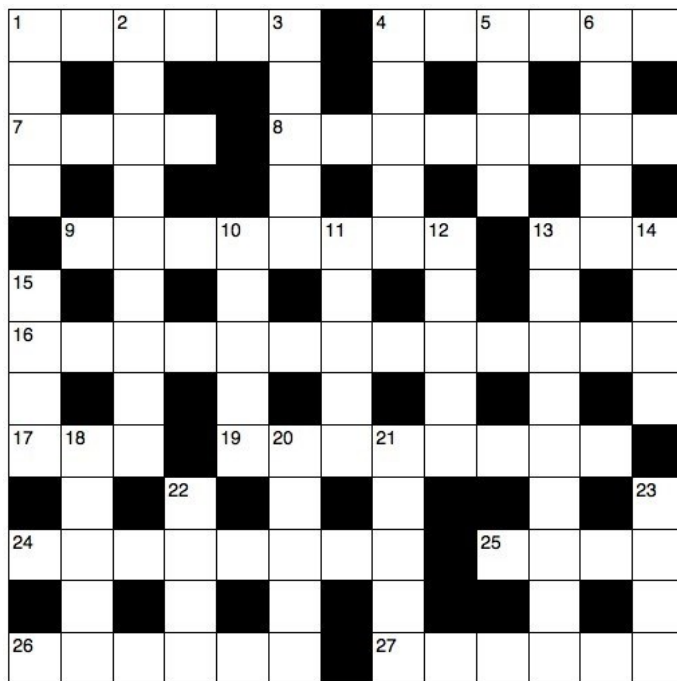
Crosswords reproduced by kind permission of BRF and John Capon, originally published in Three Down, Nine Across, by John Capon (£6.99 BRF).

Across

- 1 He must be 'the husband of but one wife and must manage his children and his household well' (1 Timothy 3:12) (6)
- 4 'For we must all — before the judgement seat of Christ' (2 Corinthians 5:10) (6)
- 7 'They reeled and staggered like drunken men; they were at their — end' (Psalm 107:27) (4)
- 8 See 19 Across
- 9 It concerned who among the disciples would be the greatest (Luke 9:46) (8)
- 13 Formed by the Jews in Thessalonica to root out Paul and Silas (Acts 17:5) (3)
- 16 'He has sent me to bind up the — ' (Isaiah 61:1) (6-7)
- 17 Moved rapidly on foot (Matthew 28:8) (3)
- 19 and 8 ' — a great company of the — host appeared with the angel' (Luke 2:13) (8,8)
- 24 Hindrance (Romans 14:13) (8)
- 25 Comes between Luke and Acts (4)
- 26 Empower (Acts 4:29) (6)
- 27 'Get these out of here! How dare you turn my Father's house into a — !' (John 2:16) (6)

Down

- 1 Sunrise (Psalm 119:147) (4)
- 2 The part of the day when Cornelius the Caesarean centurion had a vision of an angel of God (Acts 10:3) (9)
- 3 He was one of those who returned with Zerubbabel from exile in Babylon to Jerusalem (Nehemiah 7:7) (5)
- 4 'No one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born — '(John 3:3) (5)



- 5 Animal hunted or killed as food (Ezekiel 22:25) (4)
- 6 'He encouraged them — — remain true to the Lord' (Acts 11:23) (3,2)
- 10 Ruses (anag.) (5)
- 11 Jewish priestly vestment (Exodus 28:6) (5)
- 12 Visible sign of what had been there (Daniel 2:35) (5)
- 13 This was the trade of Alexander, who did Paul 'a great deal of harm' (2 Timothy 4:14) (9)
- 14 'This is my — , which is for you; do this in remembrance of me' (1 Corinthians 11:24) (4)
- 15 One of Noah's great-great-grandsons (Genesis 10:24) (4)
- 18 Traditionally the first British Christian martyr (5)
- 20 Relationship of Ner to Saul (1 Samuel 14:50) (5)
- 21 Jacob had one at a place he named Bethel while on his way to Haran, fleeing from Esau (Genesis 28:12) (5)
- 22 Bats (anag.) (4)
- 23 'You strain out a — but swallow a camel' (Matthew 23:24) (4)

In our Book of Remembrance in October

- 1st Norman Edmondson, 1972
- 3rd John Brown, 1973
Charles Hare, 2011
- 4th Maude Crosby, 1977
- 5th Winifred Webb, 1986
- 8th George Pacey, 1986
- 12th Jane Gorton, 1981
- 13th Albert Beeley, 1981
- 14th Elizabeth Rimmer, 1986
- 16th Robert Burge, 1992
- 19th Doris Shawe, 1980
Marjorie Tasker, 1989
Lucy Maguire, 1992

- 20th Margaret Forshaw, 1985
John Monk, 1985
- 21st Janet Anderton, 1981
- 22nd Sylvia Mather, 2021
- 24th Mary Livesley, 1964
George Lockie, 1980
Helen Whitehill, 2017
- 26th Annie Vowles, 1976
- 27th Sarah Whitehead, 1994
Albert Butterworth, 1989
- 30th Karen Calvert, 2010

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

CROSSWORD SOLUTION

ACROSS: 1, Deacon. 4, Appar. 7, Wits. 8, Heavenly. 9, Argument. 13, Mob. 16, Broken-hearted. 17, Ran. 19, Suddenly. 24, Obstacle. 25, John. 26, Enable. 27, Market.

DOWN: 1, Dawn. 2, Afternoon. 3, Nehum. 4, Again. 5, Prey. 6, All to. 10, Users. 11, Ephod. 12, Trace. 13, Metawork. 14, Body. 15, Eber. 18, Alban. 20, Uncle. 21, Dream. 22, Stab. 23, Gnat.

From Our Own Correspondent Doris Brookfield, in Ilkley

Hello everyone,
What a difference I have seen in the last few months with Jennie settling into her new role as your vicar. She has blended in so beautifully with you all. The congregation is growing so fast I can hardly keep up to date. I loved coming to the garden party with my daughter Adele and catching up with you all, It was as if I had never left.

Adele started her religious life as well as my son Stephen at a very young age at St. Mary's in Carr Lane. What a happy church it was over 60 years ago, being the daughter church of St. John's. So many ladies I made friends with all those years ago, unfortunately all gone now, but they all played a part of keeping the word of God alive in Birkdale.

St Mary's closed after many years trying to encourage more people to attend our services, but due to financial pressures St. John's decided to close our little hut. It was truly a very special place to worship but St. John's was our main church, so we all moved there. Some of us moved reluctantly as it was so sad to see St Mary's get demolished. It was very special to us. Thank goodness the little block of flats was tastefully built and named St. Mary's Gardens. The almond tree is still growing there all those years after my husband Bob planted it.

When I became a regular parishioner at St John's my children had left home to start their careers in other parts of England. They supported me whenever they could, and Adele and her husband Paul still join me on Zoom on a Sunday morning and on prayer time. I knew most people at St John's. Rev. Harding, the Vicar, greeted all of us when we went to St Johns and I've known all the vicars you have had. But the main thing I loved about the church was the friendship shown to everyone from the groups of families who supported the vicars.

There have been tough periods during the years, but they have never let the church down or the parishioners, always reliable and always with a smile that made you feel good. Their friendship during my years of watching Bob slowly declining with Alzheimer's was wonderful. I certainly couldn't have managed without their support, and when he died I totally relied on them to help me as the family couldn't come because of COVID. I won't name the people as we all know who they are, they made our time worshipping at St John's a pleasure and they still do. They are all God's angels.

Now you have Jenny to lead you, after many years of Keeping the Word of God alive in Birkdale. I thank you all. My heart is still in Southport. It was my home for nearly all of my 91 years and it is now 3 years since I left. God Bless you all .

Harvest Supper and Thanksgiving

On Friday 20th September 36 parishioners and friends enjoyed a Harvest Supper of shepherd's pie and apple crumble (with custard, of course!) in the church hall. We were entertained with some tricky quiz questions and harvest Bingo.



Happiest of all, it seems from this photo was Clive. He did not win this jug of custard in the Bingo, but with several others served the meals and helped to clear away afterwards. Thanks go to all who helped in many ways in preparing the meal and the entertainment.

On Sunday 22nd September Rev. Jennie led our Harvest Thanksgiving service. The church was not filled with the delicious aroma of fruit and vegetables as it was a few generations ago but our congregation provided a lot of tinned food which has been sent to the Soup Kitchen to help feed the many people who rely on it.

Jennie preached on Psalm 100 and was assisted by children (and a few tall men with a ladder) to build a cardboard gateway to illustrate the text **“Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name.”** Although we did not sing Henry Alford's hymn “Come Ye Thankful People Come” we were reminded that all good things come from God and how thankful we should be for all that He provides.



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.

“Fearfully and Wonderfully Made”

Psalm 139 v.14:

I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.

Every person was once a sperm and an egg. Those two unique germ cells fused together, and in nine months they turned into a living, breathing, human being. One of the most important stages of this process is when each section of the body, from head to rump, takes on its identity.

In this context, identity means what shape it takes, and which limbs or internal organs grow there: legs or arms, lungs or pancreas, and so on. The source of that physical identity is DNA: the networks of genes that are switched on or off in each segment of the body, making all the proteins that are needed to grow and develop in the right way. The master-genes that control the whole process are called homeobox, or Hox genes for short.

The most beautiful thing about the process of body patterning is the way it brings the dimensions of time and space together in such a tidy way. The Hox genes are organised into several clusters on the chromosomes, in the order in which they are needed during development *and* the order in which they appear on the body.

As the embryo develops, the cells near the head end activate the first genes in the Hox clusters.



The cells just below the head then switch on the second genes in the cluster, and so on. A wave of gene activation passes down the embryo, specifying each section of the trunk in turn. Once a Hox gene is switched on it can stay switched on in the next few sections of cells, and it is the overlapping activity of the genes which gives each section of the body its proper identity.

The Wisconsin-based developmental biologist Jeff Hardin often quotes Psalm 139 to express the wonder of embryonic development. *“For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb...your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.”* The story of the tidy Hox genes is very relevant to these verses, bringing out the hidden beauty in the process.

The more biologists get to find out about how we came to be born, the more we can say, *“I am fearfully and wonderfully made”!*

The Names We Love To Give Our Homes

Many people name their homes, and there is certainly a dizzying variety of names out there. But now a new study has found that nearly all the most common property names have something to do with nature. And in Britain, the most popular house name of all is short and sweet: ‘The Cottage’. Next in line? ‘Rose Cottage’.

Other popular house names include Ivy Cottage, Garden Cottage, Orchard Cottage, Yew Tree Cottage, The Barn, The Stables,

Orchard House, The Lodge and The Granary. Dr Lynn Robson, Fellow in English at Regent’s Park College, Oxford said the trend seems “to reflect a nostalgia for a rural past.”

The survey also found that Newcastle has the greatest number of named homes, followed by Glasgow and Sheffield. The survey was carried out by Admiral Home Insurance.

(I heard years ago of a burglar who said he had retired from his occupation and named his house “Dunrobbin.” The local police were not convinced! Ed.)

Local History: Birkdale's Cinemas

by Henry James

The golden age of cinema-going lasted from the 1920s through to the 1940s, and during this period most towns, including Birkdale, had cinemas. This was a time before people had their own TVs and it was decades before there were any movie streaming services. An article on the British Newspaper Archive website states that in 1948, which was the height of the golden age of cinema-going, there were 1,650 million visits to a cinema in Great Britain. This works out at 4.5 million people 'going to the pictures' each day.

Residents of Birkdale didn't have far to go to catch a film when the Birkdale Picture Palace opened on 18 Mosley Street in 1913. It was situated near the Upper Aughton Road roundabout junction. The purpose-built cinema opened on Saturday 10th May and had seats for 450 people and a single screen. There was a small foyer on entering and the auditorium was situated parallel to the road. As with most early cinemas, a pianist provided the music to the silent pictures. However, the website Cinema Treasures says he/she would give up playing during Westerns when the noise of children shouting out would drown out the music!



Unfortunately, the introduction of "talking pictures" or "talkies" led to the closure of the cinema. The cinema was not soundproofed, so sound could be heard by people living nearby. The residents complained and a petition they drew up led to the closure of the cinema in 1929. This was two years after the release of "The Jazz Singer", the first feature film talkie. Since its closure as a cinema, the building has been used as a confectionery warehouse and a cycle store. Today it is a boxing and fitness gym.

The Birkdale Picture Palace may have closed in 1929, but in the same year another opened a short distance away. It was called the Bedford Cinema, was based in Bedford Road, near the Kew Road junction, and was run by the Birkdale Picture Palace Company. The architect for the building was George Tonge, whom we have featured in past editions of the Birkdale Buzz for his work on the Royal Birkdale clubhouse and the Garrick Theatre. The auditorium held 528 seats, with a single screen, and was decorated with English country scenery.

From the start talkies could be seen and heard at the Bedford. CinemaScope widescreen films were shown from 1956 and these would have been likely to include: the David Lean classic "The Bridge on the River Kwai" (1957) and "An Affair to Remember" (1957) starring Cary Grant and Deborah Kerr. During the 50s cinema audiences were dropping as ownership of TV sets increased. A third of homes in this country had a TV set by 1955. Like everywhere, the Bedford Cinema felt the effect of this and closed at the start of 1959. The last film to be shown there was "A Night to Remember", about the sinking of the Titanic, starring Kenneth More. The building still stands today and is a car and tyre centre.

*The Editor acknowledges local historian Henry James as the author of this article which was first published in **Birkdale Buzz** in September 2024, and we thank him for permitting us to reproduce it in **THE WORD**.*

All Hallows Eve – or Holy Evening

Modern Halloween celebrations have their roots in pre-Christian times. In those long-ago days, on the last night of October, the Druid priests celebrated the Festival of Samhain, or ‘Summer’s End’. They lit great bonfires and performed magic rites to ward off the dark supernatural powers of oncoming winter. Today, Christians turn to prayer instead of charms to overcome the powers of darkness. And the deeper, true meaning of All Hallows’ Eve, should not be forgotten. As Christians, we all draw closer to Christ when we remember and give thanks for our loved ones and for others who have gone before us through the gates of death.



- | | | | | |
|-----------|----------|--------------|--------|--------|
| ALL | FESTIVAL | SUPERNATURAL | CHARMS | CHRIST |
| HALLOWS | SAMHAIN | POWERS | DEEPER | THANKS |
| HALLOWEEN | BONFIRES | WINTER | TRUE | LOVED |
| DRUID | MAGIC | CHRISTIANS | EVE | DEATH |
| PRIESTS | DARK | PRAYER | CLOSER | GONE |



A Note for your Diary

After many years of absence Southport Orchestra will return to perform a concert of classical music at our church on Saturday 30th November.

The Orchestra played here several times before the Covid pandemic, but in the aftermath of the lockdowns when “social distancing” (remember that?) was still in people’s minds it was felt that the church could not accommodate a large audience if they had to sit a yard apart from each other.

But now those days are over, and we hope that they never return. The Orchestra has been invited to perform again in our church and it is expected that there will be an audience of approximately 250.

The programme will include Dvorak’s ever popular “New World” Symphony and a Violin Concerto by Brahms in which the solo will be performed by the highly acclaimed violinist Ben Cartlidge.

Tickets are likely to sell fast when they become available in October. If any of our readers would like to purchase tickets please contact Stuart or Christine Baker (560518). Supporting this concert will provide some much needed funds for our church, so do come and enjoy it!

GOD in the Arts

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

'Glorious the song when God's the theme': 'The Dream of Gerontius'

John Henry Newman was a great Victorian churchman, an inspired Anglican preacher and teacher who became a Roman Catholic in 1845. Newman was also a poet and wrote hymns that have remained perennial favourites – among them, 'Lead, kindly Light' and 'Praise to the Holiest.'

The first hymn was written when, as an Anglican, Newman was ill in Sicily and his servant thought he might die. But he recovered and, anxious to return home, he wrote these words, knowing that God had important work for him to do. The light that he prayed for in Sicily was to shine out, resplendent and glorious, in that later hymn which expresses the vision of the heavenly courts in the longer poem, 'The Dream of Gerontius.'

Newman wrote the poem in 1865 after the death of a 41-year-old fellow Oratorian, Fr John Joseph Gordon, who had said to him as he lay dying, "I do not say that I do not fear to die: for death must always be a fearful thing. God's justice is very terrible; but then, in the crucifixion, God's mercy appears so very great."

'The Dream of Gerontius' is about death and judgment, but it is the judgment of a loving God.

Newman presented Dvorak with a copy of this poem when the composer visited Birmingham, and he was invited to compose a setting for the city's 1888 Festival. Although Dvorak felt inspired by the words, the timescale was too demanding.

The poem was presented to Elgar on his wedding day a year later, again with the suggestion that he set it to music. The words simmered and stirred in Elgar's imagination to produce one of the great oratorios of all time in 1900, when it was given its first performance in Birmingham.

Elgar inscribed the score ADMG (To the greater glory of God) and wrote on the last page of the manuscript, 'This is the best of me.' The light of God's glory and grace that inspired Newman shines through the music as it shone through Elgar's own life. His funeral card of 1934 contained words from the poem, and on his own score of 'The Dream' he wrote these words of Virgil, 'Whence doth so dear desire of Light on wretches grow?'

It is now difficult to separate the poem from Elgar's setting. The composer, like the poet, leads the listener from the prayer of faith, 'Firmly I believe and truly' – a prayer sustained by the words of the priest, 'Go forth upon thy journey, Christian soul' – to the judgement throne where the angels praise God in the heights.

One of the angels then leads the soul away with a beautiful setting of 'Softly and gently,' not to the fire of judgement, but to the cleansing, sustaining water of eternal life. The work ends with echoes of that angelic hymn, praising God who is our refuge in every generation.

Newman wrote, "I always sleep better after music." He compared music to an electric current that passes through the body and then into the mind and heart. And Elgar's wonderful setting can do exactly that, creating a vision of that new world of eternal glory that Gerontius expresses in the words, '*Novissima hora est*.....into thy hands, O Lord, into thy hands.'

Which do you prefer, when it comes to eating scones? Of course, Cornwall and Devon have long been in rivalry over it, with Cornwall preferring the jam first, while Devon opts for the cream.



Now a recent YouGov survey has found the Cornish method is currently winning the debate. 62 per cent of us, and every British county (except Devon and Somerset) favour the jam-first Cornish approach. Even the Queen also favoured the Cornish method. But the King is more pragmatic, once

admitting that "I go with whichever is closest to me to start off."

But now YouGov has discovered that when it comes to people under 30, the preference is beginning to swing the other way. While 80 per cent of

people who are over-70s choose jam before cream on their scone, the figure falls to 48 per cent among the under-30s.

YouGov calls it a "glimmer of hope" for the Devon method and reckons that "on current trends we could start to see some crossover in coming generations".

Making Donations to St John's through online banking

The church's bank details are:

Account name: Parochial Church Council of St John's Parish (Birkdale)

Sort Code: 60-20-11

Account Number: 86882120

the elderberries gardening club

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



The club offers talks from guest speakers, trips to historical houses and gardens, and

social events.

To find out more, email elderberriesgardening@gmail.com or call Shelley Lewis-Lavender on [01704 560690](tel:01704560690).

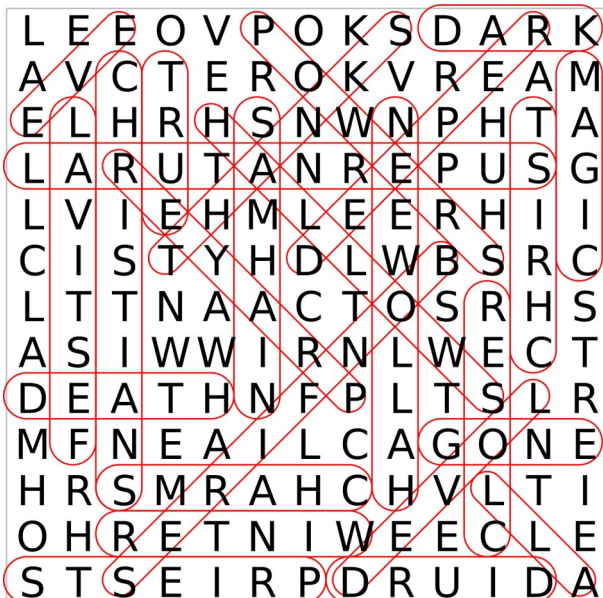


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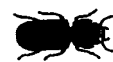
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Nocturnal Nostalgia

By Dennis Davis

Singing has always played a part in my life starting as a boy at school and singing the hymns at Sunday school and the Band of Hope.

I first joined a Church choir in 1953 at a little country church at Ballyculter in County Down. I had taken up farming at the time and often attended the evening services. It was the second church on this site and the family church of Lord Bangor of Castleward. The church was a bit run down and still had oil lamps for lighting; it gave it a soft homely feeling. Over the years through work and part-time military duties I came to love this evensong service, now alas gone in most churches, and the evening hymns which are no longer sung are in danger of being forgotten.

Many choirs have a warm up session and one of the Ditties we sang was, "Keep music alive, let the whole world hear this song, keep music alive."

I hope that by looking at some of these old hymns will bring back memories and help to keep them

alive. So I share with you one of my favourites, "Sun of my Soul, Thou Saviour Dear" written by John Keble (1798-1866). It can be sung to one of three different tunes. I prefer Hursley from the Katholisches Gersangbuch, Vienna 1774.

"Sun of my soul, Thou Saviour dear,
It is not night if thou be near.
O may no earth born cloud arise.
To hide thee from thy servant's eyes.

When from the soft dews of kindly sleep.
My weary eyes gently steep.
Be my last thought, how sweet to rest,
For ever on my Saviour's breast.

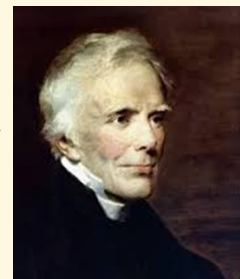
Abide with me from morn to eve,
For without thee, I cannot live.
Abide with me when night is nigh.
For without thee, I dare not die.

If some poor wandering child of thine.
Have spurned today the voice divine,
Now, Lord the gracious work begin.
Let him no more lie down in sin.

Amen."

Who was John Keble?

He was born in Gloucestershire, the son of a rural vicar. He did not attend school but was tutored at home with his brothers by their father. At the age of only 15 years he won a scholarship to Corpus Christi College, Oxford, and was elected a Fellow of Oriel at the age of 18. He obtained a double first at Oxford when 18, a distinction equalled only by Robert Peel who went on to become the Prime Minister.



He was ordained in 1815, and in 1836 he became the Rector of the rural parish of Hursley (which became the name of the tune which Dennis prefers: see above) where he remained for 30 years.

In 1827 he published a book, "The Christian Year", containing devout reflections and meditations in verse, and about 100 of the sacred poems were converted into hymns, often after being drastically abridged, including "Sun of my soul, thou Saviour dear" and (perhaps more well-known to many) "New every morning is the love" and "Bless'd are the pure in heart."

When he was at Oxford Keble associated with many leading academics and ecclesiastical figures of the age, and formed an affinity with some in the Anglican church who were gravely dissatisfied with the direction which the church had taken and who wanted the Church of England to be taken back to its traditional Catholic roots. They disapproved of certain odious practices in the Established church such as the younger sons of the gentry becoming ordained without vocation so that they could live in comfort without the benefit of inherited estates.

Another friend, who could well have featured in our occasional "Colourful Clerics" articles, was Richard Whately, an intensely shy and absent-minded Fellow of Oriel who once shocked his congregation by standing with one leg hanging out of his pulpit (*people must have been easily shocked in those days! Ed.*) because he found it more comfortable that way. To the surprise of everyone, including himself, he was eventually appointed Archbishop of Dublin.

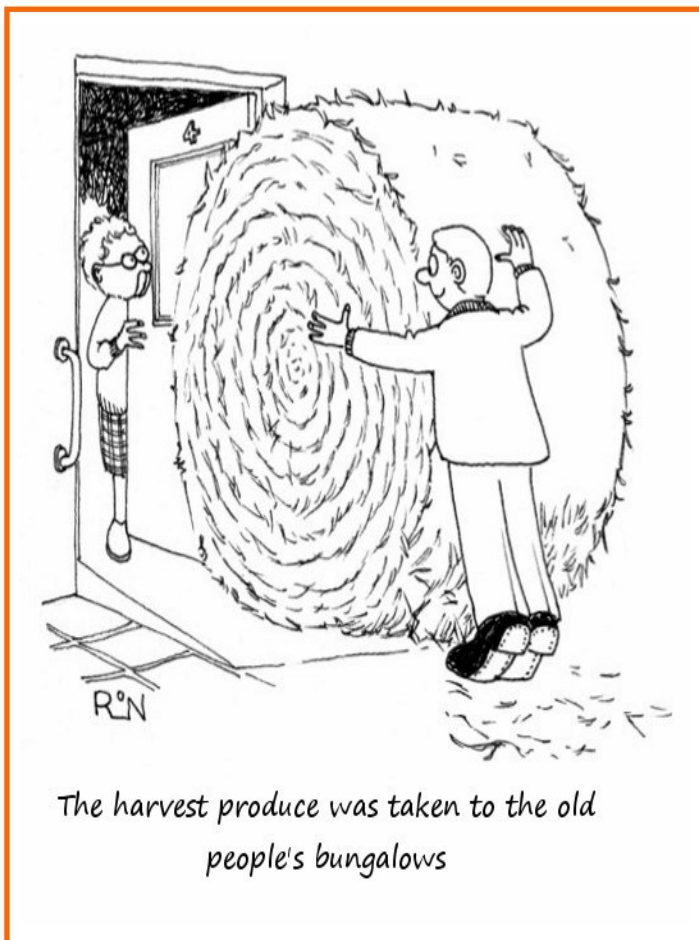
In addition to the collection of his hymns Keble's lasting memorial is the Oxford College which bears his name. He devoted his life to the parishioners of Hursley, and there, among the woodsmen, farmers and poachers, he lies buried in the churchyard.

Stuart Baker: source material "Every Hymn has a Story" by John Large



Forgiveness, by Penny Candlin

Turn to the Lord and He will freely forgive
 Who can forgive like the Lord
 Who does not punish us as our deeds require,
 Who only reprimands us as a parent to keep us
 from further harm?
 Our God who pardons sin and forgives
 transgressions,
 Our God will not stay angry forever but delights to
 show mercy.
 Our God who gave His only beloved Son Jesus
 that we might be forgiven
 Jesus freely gave his life as repentance and
 forgiveness for our sins
 Forgive those who sin against you and the Father
 will forgive you. If you do not forgive their sins
 neither will the Lord forgive your sins.
 Forgive your brother not seven but seventy seven
 times.
 Forgive from the heart have mercy on your brother
 just as the Lord is merciful to you
 We have been rescued from the dominion of
 darkness and into the kingdom of the Son in whom
 we have redemption the forgiveness of sins
 In love we conquer in love our sins are forgiven.



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Reflections on the Christian life...

Worship is no longer worship when it reflects the culture around us more than the Christ within us. – Tozer

We do the works, but God works in us the doing of the works. – Augustine

A time will come when instead of shepherds feeding the sheep, the Church will have clowns entertaining the goats. – Spurgeon

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THE GIFT OF THANKS

by John M. Shakespeare

Thankfulness for grateful appreciation, is a reward sought, I would imagine, by most writers or speakers in the sphere of public expression. How we show our appreciation of life's gifts to us, are reflected in the way we treat others. Giving help to those in difficulty, is one way we give thanks for our own good fortune, especially when we can do this in some anonymous fashion.

An extraordinary exhibition of natural Thankfulness was exhibited in May last year 2020, when people throughout the UK came to their doorways to applaud all those NHS workers who had performed their duties in answer to the coronavirus pandemic.

I was taught as a child that it was only good manners to say thank you, for something being given to me. This can be seen as a dutiful response, rather than a meaningful one! David Hume (1711-1776), recognised as a Scottish philosopher of Enlightenment, saw Thankfulness as an act of gratitude for things that we cannot in any meaningful sense display. What is needed he felt, was a feeling of love and sincere appreciation for the benefactor. A lack of this feeling, he truly felt, was a horrid crime in his eyes and deeply discourteous to the benefactor.

I'd like to show the sentiment of Thanks expressed in a short poem entitled "Sometimes" by Sheenagh Pugh. The last verse goes like this, "Sometimes our best efforts do not go amiss, sometimes we do as we meant to! The sun will sometimes melt a field of sorrow, that seemed hard frozen, may it happen to you".

Being Thankful is a gift we can all celebrate, suggestions as to how we should do this are given in Ephesians (Ch 8 verses 18-20),

" Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts, giving Thanks to God the Father at all times for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ".

In Shakespeare's play "Hamlet", when Francisco the castle guard at Elsinore Castle is relieved, his response to Bernardo is, " For this relief much Thanks, tis bitter cold and I am sick at heart". I can sympathise with how he felt, having been on guard duty myself when threats seem to be hanging in the air.

The concept of Thanks means to some people, the acceptance of some sort of obligation. As a Christian I believe in giving Thanks to God for all that he provides. In personal relationships it is I believe of equal importance to acknowledge the helper when we are in need. Family and friendship can play an important part in our lives, and I believe where these relationships are in place, Thanks may be the appropriate action.

I would like to close this article on Thanksgiving with a verse from the poem, "The World", by William Brighty Rands, (1823-1882), "Ah, you are so great, and I am so small, I tremble to think of you, World at all; and yet, when I said my prayers today, a whisper inside me seemed to say, You are more than the Earth, though you are such a dot. You can love and think, and the Earth cannot".

Passwords

An elderly vicar got a call from a scammer who said, "I've got all of your passwords." The vicar replied: "Excellent! What are they? Just wait while I grab a pen."

Too eloquent?

Fresh out of seminary, a young pastor found an associate position at a prestigious church. One Sunday early on, he was given the opportunity to preach. He prepared diligently – perhaps a bit too excited to use all the learning he'd acquired – and worked hard to make his words eloquent and smooth.

Shaking hands at the end of the service, he was approached by one of the older ladies who was known and respected in both the church and community. "Sir," she said with a smile, "your sermon was like the peace of God!"

The young preacher's grin widened and his chest puffed a bit ... until she continued on, "it surpassed ALL understanding!"

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?...

65 years ago, on 11th Oct 1959 Britain began introducing postcodes. They began in Norwich, and by 1974 had been rolled out across the whole country.

60 years ago, on 14th Oct 1964 the American civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for combating racial inequality in the USA without violence.

50 years ago, on 2nd Oct 1974 US researchers announced that smoking cannabis causes lasting brain damage. More than 50 medical schools and research centres took part in the year-long government-funded study.

40 years ago, on 12th Oct 1984 an IRA bomb exploded during the Conservative Party Conference at the Grand Hotel in Brighton, killing five people. Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher was apparently the primary target, but she escaped injury.

30 years ago, on 13th Oct 1994 the three main loyalist paramilitary groups in Northern Ireland announced a ceasefire following the IRA's ceasefire announcement on 31st Aug.

25 years ago, on 12th Oct 1999 the United Nations announced that the world's population had reached six billion. It reached seven billion in 2011/12.

20 years ago, on 2nd Oct 2004 that the first Parkrun was held in Bushy Park, London. Parkruns are now held every Saturday morning at more than 2,000 locations in 22 countries.

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

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 October 2024

by Daphne Kitching

Lord,

As we move into autumn and the month of October, the normal seasonal changes are all around us, the beautiful colours, the falling leaves, the cooler days. And that is reassuring.

But, so much else in our world is changing so rapidly, often in ways we don't understand. And that can be worrying.

Thank you that You never change.

You are always the same, faithful, present and loving.

And You tell us in Your Word, not to be anxious about anything, but to bring all things to You in prayer and to trust You. When we do this, You promise us Your Peace – a peace of heart that steadies us and helps us move forward.

Thank you that whatever comes, we are secure in You, when we put our trust in Jesus.

In His name, we pray. Amen.

What colour is that?

Nigel Beeton writes: *Carol, my wife and I have done some redecorating. That involves choosing paint, when I discovered that reading a paint chart is a bit like reading a poem. These are absolutely true!*

Sweet Embrace and Tranquil Dawn
Golden Jasmine, Copper Blush
Wild Mushroom and Grey Steel
(How does all this make you feel?)

Snowy Scene of Mineral Haze
Sapphire Salute of Clouded Pearl
The Jewels of Night surround my heart –
I'm only reading a colour chart!

£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 NOVEMBER** please let the Editor know by email to stjohnbirkdaletheword@gmail.com

The Last Laughs

Mark Oakley, Dean of Southwark, spent his summer holiday cruising down the coast of France and Spain.

One of the passengers, he writes in Church Times, was a nervous sailor and asked the captain on the first night if ships like theirs often sank.

"Usually only once," the captain replied.

Fish

**Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day.
Teach him how to fish, and he will sit in a boat and drink beer all day.**

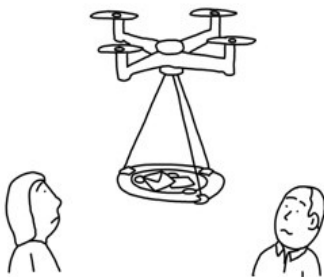
Right resting place

The new vicar was a bit of an efficiency expert, whose obsession was to move around the hymnbooks, the notice-sheets, the magazines, the guides, and most of the other portable things in his church, in search of the perfect place. From porch to display stand to table to vestry to side chapel – round and round various things went, week by week.

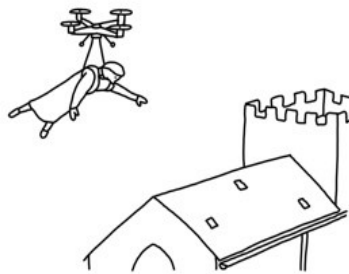
After several months, a visitor approached a harassed churchwarden before church one morning, and asked if he could tell her where the copies of the church guides were kept. "No, I'm sorry," he said wearily. "But if you just stand here a while, I'm sure you'll see them go by!"

DRONES

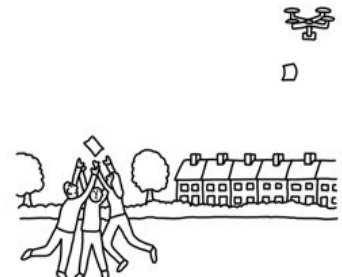
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