



# THE WORD



Editor: Stuart Baker: [stjohnbirkdaletheword@gmail.com](mailto: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. 266**

**FEBRUARY 2025**

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

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



In their "Song of The Weather" Flanders and Swann sang that "February's ice and sleet freeze the toes right off your feet." This has been a cold and windy winter but mercifully Birkdale has been spared much of the worst effects of the recent storms. Our church hall roof suffered a little damage during the gales but this has been repaired at relatively small cost and we hope to see out the rest of the winter without any more problems.

We have a lot to look forward to in the next few weeks. The most important date for our diaries is Saturday 8th February when we shall have a morning in the church hall when all those who offered last November to do jobs in and for our church can come and find out more details. As always, there will be food! Even if you did not put your name on a list last November please come

and join us. There are so many ways in which we can all help to run and maintain our church and its ministry. Some are small jobs. Some are more time consuming. But they all need to be done by someone. Please don't leave it to someone else because "Someone Else" is probably already doing a lot already.

Starting in March we shall be hosting, in conjunction with St James' and St Peter's, an eleven week Alpha Course. It is many years since we have run an Alpha course at St John's. It will be a great opportunity for us to open the doors to people who might know little or nothing about the Good News of Jesus and to introduce them to Christianity. Or we may just wish to learn more about it ourselves. It's never too late to learn! Read more about it in Rev. Jennie's article on the next page.

In the light of recent shocking news stories about sexual and other alleged misconduct committed by or condoned by senior members of Anglican clergy we wish to assure all our readers that Safeguarding is regarded very seriously here at St John's. Every member of the PCC has a DBS certificate which was issued within the last three years, and they have all undertaken all the safeguarding training which is required (and some have done more than is required). If any parishioner has any concerns about this please contact our Safeguarding Officer Stuart Baker.

**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**

Howdie, **WORD** readers! I'm writing to you today in the spirit of our 'Being the Church' sermon series as I write about the **Alpha course** that we will be hosting at St John's.



Our sermon on 19th January focussed on the Great Commission in Matthew 28:19-20, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." It is in this spirit that we, together with St James' and St Peter's in Birkdale, have decided to run an Alpha course, to reach out to people, to make new disciples and to help us all in our current discipleship to grow in our walk with Jesus, being equipped with knowledge and blessed with food, fellowship and good teaching.

We want to make disciples who make disciples as this command of Jesus was to the whole church, not just those who lead or wear dog-collars, but God has called each of us to strive to make new disciples or followers of Christ. The Alpha course is a proven, tried and tested method of doing this, so it's a great course to run during Lent.

Rev Sam and I want to really encourage you to plan to join us if you can, even if you can't make the whole course, come to the sessions you can and, if at all possible, not alone! We'd encourage you to be praying about who you might be able to invite to come along with you.

As we know, Lent is a time for self-reflection, penitence and drawing closer to Jesus and I believe there's no better way to do this than obeying the final command that Jesus gave us before His ascension.

### **What's it all about, Alpha!?**

So, what is Alpha? For those who may not be familiar with the Alpha course some background may be helpful. The Alpha course was written by Rev Charles Marnham of Holy Trinity Brompton Church in London and began in 1977. It was first used as a basics course for those within the church but over time developed into a course for seekers outside of the Church. When in 1990 Nicky Gumbel took over leading the course it saw huge expansion

and it is now estimated that over 25 million people have experienced Alpha in over 140 countries and in over 100 languages.

Personally, I have led the Alpha course a number of times in churches, cafes and even pubs! I valued doing the course as a new Christian as it helped me to learn and grow and even when running the course since I always learn something new every time. This is partly due to the diversity of the course and people who are on the course. I have seen many people become Christians from the impact of the Alpha course and we will hear personal stories from one or two people on the **launch of the course on Ash Wednesday 5th March at 7.30pm.**

The course will run for 11 weeks having a break for a week on 9th April and will include a Holy Spirit Day on Holy Saturday 19th April. The topics covered include, 'Is there more to Life than this?', 'Who is Jesus?', 'How can I have faith?', 'Why and how should I read the Bible?', 'Who is the Holy Spirit?', 'How can I resist evil?' and more!

Each evening will consist of a welcome, a meal together, a talk and a discussion on your table led by a table leader and a helper. Everyone is welcome, I've found the most exciting guests are the ones who say they are atheists! This leads to some interesting discussion! So, there's no limits on who you can invite to come along, everyone really is welcome. If there's someone who you have been praying for why not take this opportunity to invite them. We will be providing some small invitation cards in our three churches over the next few weeks that you can use to invite people.

Why not use this Lent as a time to give up your Wednesday evenings to grow in your faith and be a part of a group that will be introducing people to Jesus for the first time! I can't think of anything better to do during Lent, personally! I'm going, it's going to be great, why don't you come too – and bring a friend!

Please also do be praying for the course over the coming weeks as we prepare, that we will all deepen our faith and are able to draw others into the Kingdom of God as we go!

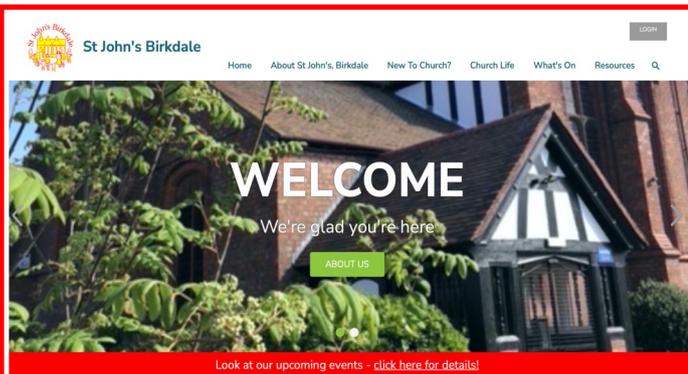
### **Hope to see you there!**

Love, Rev. Jennie xx

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

Vicar:	Rev. Jennie Hardy (07872 400718)
Priest (retired):	Rev. Roy Doran (572387)
Reader:	Mrs. Christine Baker (560518)
Churchwarden:	Clive Morris (564206)
PCC Treasurer:	Mrs. Sylvia Kent (564071)
PCC Secretary:	Vacant
Parish Hall Secretary:	Mrs. Jean Morris (564206)
Electoral Roll Officer:	Stuart Harris (563789)
Deanery Synod Reps:	Clive Morris (564206) Stuart Baker (560518)
Safeguarding and Recruitment Officer	Stuart Baker (560518)

Transport Officer:	Mrs. Jean Morris (564206)
Church of England Children's Society:	Mrs. Sylvia Kent (564071)
Mothers' Union:	Mrs. Linda Caton (564737)
Girl Guides	Mrs. Janette Law (565951)
St. John's Brownies:	Mrs. Helen Jones and
Brownie Guiders:	Mrs. Lesley Scott
St. John's Rainbows:	Mrs. Lesley Scott
Church Flowers:	Mrs. Cath Whiteside (07732 993025)
Magazine Editor:	Stuart Baker (560518)
Magazine Printer:	Mrs. Christine Baker (560518)
Buildings Inspector:	David Halsall (07790 822343)
Eco Champions:	Mrs. Elizabeth Rothwell and Duncan Rothwell (564192)



## 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**

## Easter Lilies

At Easter our flower arrangers will use lilies to decorate the church.



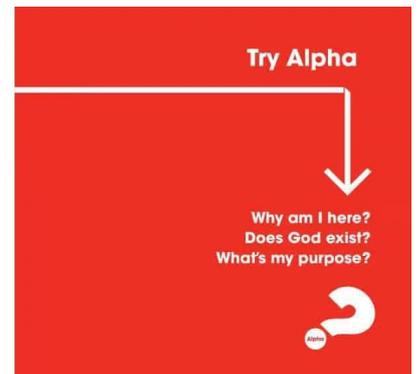
If members of our church would like to make a donation to the church in order to provide lilies in memory of a loved one please contact Cath Whiteside or Judith Foster.

## ALPHA COURSE

**You're invited to explore life's big questions**

Alpha is a place to explore the Christian faith with others.

Join us at St John's Church Hall, Birkdale  
Wednesdays @ 7.30pm



See Rev. Jennie's article on page 2 for details.



"It may well attract more young folk to join the congregation but I still prefer the old church notice board"

# WHAT'S ON AT ST. JOHN'S



## Pray Together

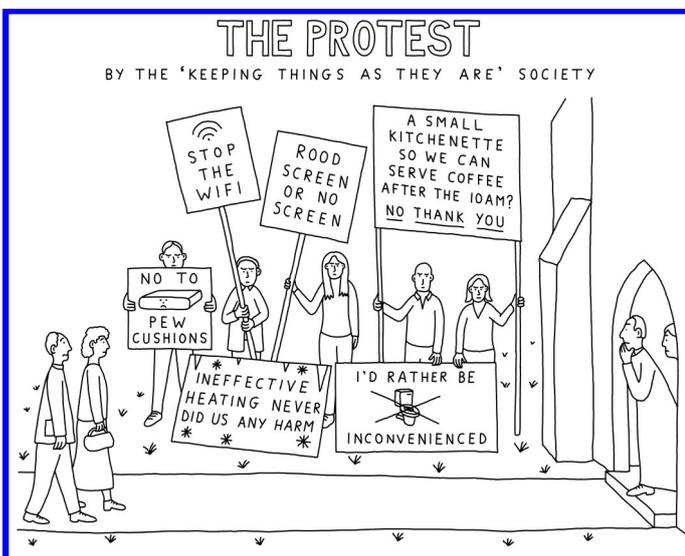
**Thursday @ 7.30pm**  
**on Zoom**  
**Meeting ID: 83550743780**  
**Passcode:**  
**7ehHEK**

The prayer meetings are on the **1st and 3rd Thursdays each month** and last half an hour.

This month they will be on **6th and 20th February.**

If there is anything which readers would like to be included in the prayers please contact Jennie Hardy, Roy Doran, Christine Baker or Clive Morris.

Do join us if you can. See page 29 for details about logging in on zoom by computer or by telephone.



## FILM NIGHTS

January 10th

February 14th

March 14th

April 18th - Good Friday special with Fish Supper

£15 please book

May 9th

June 20th

July 4th



Contact Christine: 01704 560518  
Start: 6.30pm with hot drinks & Cake  
For which we charge £5

St John's Hall, PR8 4JP

Our copyright licence does not permit us to advertise the titles of the films outside our church or by publications. A list of films will be displayed on the noticeboards in the church, and details can be requested from Christine.



## 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



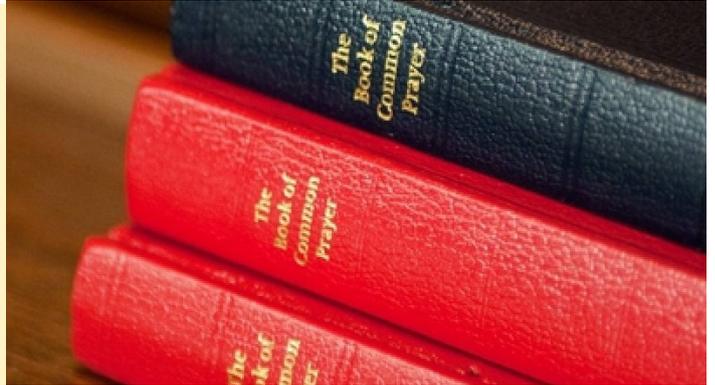
# WHAT'S ON WEDNESDAYS AT ST JOHN'S

## WEDNESDAYS 5TH & 19TH FEBRUARY

### MIDWEEK COMMUNION SERVICE

There will be a Midweek traditional Communion service at 10.30am in church on **Wednesdays 5th and 19th February**.

On 5th February the service will be followed by Brunch: do stay and enjoy fellowship and a bite to eat.



## WEDNESDAYS 12TH & 26TH FEBRUARY

**BIBLE STUDY LED BY  
REV. ROY AT 2.00PM**



**GROWTH GROUP LED BY  
REV. JENNIE AT 7.30PM**

St John's Birkdale  
DRIVEN BY SPIRIT

2nd & 4th Wednesdays  
2pm

God's  
Word

STUDY  
GROUP

@ the small hall, St John's  
Church PR8 4JP  
[revroydoran@btinternet.com](mailto:revroydoran@btinternet.com)

St John's Birkdale  
DRIVEN BY SPIRIT

2nd & 4th Wednesdays  
7.30pm

Growth

HOME  
GROUP

@ the vicarage - 17 Kirkstall  
Road PR8 4RA  
**food. fellowship. fun.**  
[revjenniferhardy@gmail.com](mailto:revjenniferhardy@gmail.com)

# WHAT'S ON AT ST. JOHN'S

St John's  
Birkdale

DRIVEN BY JESUS

YAMAS!

JOIN US AT ST JOHN'S HALL FOR

 *Greek Night* 

SAT / FEB 22 / 7PM

TICKETS £10

[INFO@STJOHNSBIRKDALE.COM](mailto:INFO@STJOHNSBIRKDALE.COM)

BRING YOUR OWN OZO  
OR OTHER DRINK OF CHOICE  
& A GLASS!

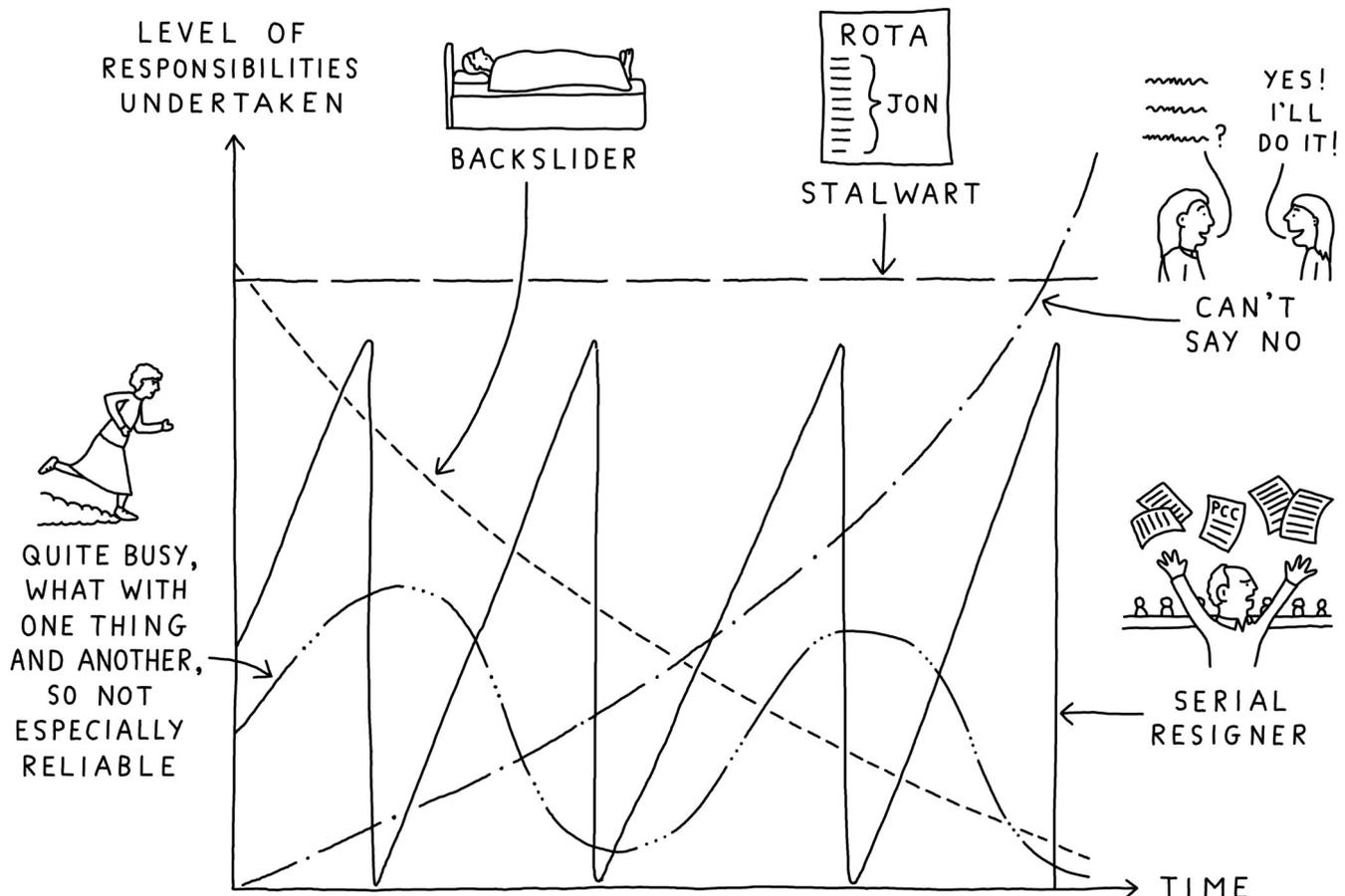
*Greek food, Plate smashing & Abba Music*

 *Disco dancing - optional* 

## Equipped Day

An old adage from the First World War: "One Volunteer is worth Ten Pressed Men." That may have been true in a time of conflict, but in peaceful and comfortable times it can be difficult to find volunteers to do necessary jobs in our church, and there are many different types of volunteers as humorously characterised in the Dave Walker cartoon below.

# VOLUNTEER TYPES



We are fortunate at St John's in having a few stalwarts (though none is called Jon!) and a handful of those who "can't say no." But we need more of them.

In our current series of Sunday sermons we are looking at "**Being the Church**". This involves more than attending Sunday worship (important though that is) and leaving it to someone else to do the jobs which have to be done to keep our church running and well maintained and which are essential in our ministry to the population of Birkdale.

Last November we invited our congregation to consider if they are able to volunteer to help with the many aspects of church life at St John's, and there was an encouraging response.

On **Saturday 8th February** we shall have a session in the church hall billed as "**Equipped Day**" when everyone who expressed willingness to help (and even those who did not!) will be given more details of what they can help with. These days everyone seems to be busy, what with one thing and another, but please do not let that hinder you from helping reliably.

The meeting will start with a breakfast of bacon or sausage barmes and will give us all an opportunity to offer our time and our talents to **equip the church to be the church** and to release people into ministry in many different ways.

Please attend on 8th February. If we all pull together we could make such a difference to our church and all that it can do to minister to the people in our parish. Your church needs you: it's time to say Yes!



# WHAT'S ON AT ST JOHN'S DATES FOR YOUR DIARY IN 2025



## Upcoming Events

~~**JAN**  
**24**  
7PM  
"Cheese, Wine & Quizzes"~~

**FEB**  
**22**  
7PM  
"Greek Night"  
with Abba & Dancing

**MAR**  
**15**  
7PM  
"Games Night"  
classics with snacks

**APR**  
**18**  
7PM  
"Good Friday Film & Fish Supper"

**MAY**  
**24**  
7PM  
"Indian Night"  
Food & Activities

**JUNE**  
**13-15**  
10AM - 3PM  
"Summer Fair & Flower Festival"



Worship on the Fourth  
Sunday of Epiphany:  
Candlemas

**SUNDAY 2nd FEBRUARY**  
**HOLY COMMUNION**  
10.30am service **IN CHURCH** and via  
zoom & phone

### Collect for the Fourth Sunday of Epiphany

God of heaven, you send the gospel to the ends of the earth and your messengers to every nation: send your Holy Spirit to transform us by the good news of everlasting life in Jesus Christ our Lord.

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

**Being The Church:  
Meet People Where They Are**

### The Texts:

**Acts 8: 26-31**

Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Go south to the road—the desert road—that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of the Kandake (which means "queen of the Ethiopians"). This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the Book of Isaiah the prophet. The Spirit told Philip, "Go to that chariot and stay near it." Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. "Do you understand what you are reading?" Philip asked. "How can I," he said, "unless someone explains it to me?" So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.

**1 Corinthians 9: 22.** To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some.

**MIDWEEK TRADITIONAL  
COMMUNION SERVICE**

Brunch will be served after the  
service

**WEDNESDAY  
5th FEBRUARY  
10.30am  
IN CHURCH**

Worship on the Fourth  
Sunday before Lent

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

### Collect for the Fourth Sunday before Lent

Lord of the hosts of heaven, our salvation and our strength, without you we are lost: guard us from all that harms or hurts and raise us when we fall; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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

**Being the Church:  
It Won't Always Be Easy**

### The Texts:

**Jonah 3: 1-5**

Then the word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time: "Go to the great city of Nineveh and proclaim to it the message I give you." Jonah obeyed the word of the Lord and went to Nineveh. Now Nineveh was a very large city; it took three days to go through it. Jonah began by going a day's journey into the city, proclaiming, "Forty more days and Nineveh will be overthrown." The Ninevites believed God. A fast was proclaimed, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth.

**Romans 15: 20-21**

It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else's foundation. Rather, as it is written: "Those who were not told about him will see, and those who have not heard will understand."

Worship on the Third Sunday  
before Lent

**SUNDAY 16th FEBRUARY**

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

### **Collect for the Third Sunday before Lent**

Eternal God, whose Son went among the crowds and brought healing with his touch: help us to show his love, in your Church as we gather together, and by our lives as they are transformed into the image of Christ our Lord.

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

**Being the Church:  
Jesus Calls Us To Outreach**

### **The Text: Luke 24: 46-49**

He told them, "This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."

**MIDWEEK TRADITIONAL  
COMMUNION SERVICE**

**Tea, coffee and biscuits will be  
served after the service**

**WEDNESDAY  
19TH FEBRUARY**

**10.30am  
IN CHURCH**

Worship on the Second  
Sunday before Lent

**SUNDAY 23rd FEBRUARY**

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

### **Collect for the Second Sunday before Lent**

Almighty God, give us reverence for all creation and respect for every person, that we may mirror your likeness in Jesus Christ our Lord.

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

**Being the Church:  
Gifts and Talents**

### **The Text: 1 Corinthians 12: 8-10**

To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues.

### **A Man of Many Gifts and Talents**

From a Cambridgeshire local newspaper in January 1900: 'WANTED – a steady respectable man who is able to look after a garden, milk a cow, and sing in the church choir.' It's not only women who can multi-task!

#### **Thanks for a safe deliverance:**

A teenager who had just received her provisional licence offered to drive her parents to church. After a hair-raising ride they finally reached their destination. The mother got out of the car and said in a quiet but fervent voice: "Thank you!" "Anytime," her daughter replied. As the woman slammed the car door she said, "I wasn't talking to you. I was talking to God."



# Pancake Party

stjohnsbirkdale.co.uk



Crafty Pancakes

Pancake Races

Biggest Tossler Challenge

Tuesday 4th March

4pm

@ St John's Church Hall

St John's Road

With all the Christmas and New Year activities behind us, now is the time for us to think about the tremendous work which **The Children's Society** do in caring for and helping young carers, who have to balance school life alongside anything that they have to do at home, as well as being a child themselves.

If you hold one of the society's collection boxes and have very kindly been making donations over the past year towards their work, could I please ask you to either bring your box to church or speak to me and I will arrange to collect it so that the money can be sent to **The Children's Society**.

On behalf of the Society I would like to thank you for continuing to support their work, and hope you will continue throughout this year.

Many thanks,  
Sylvia Kent



## The Children's Society

## FLOWER FESTIVAL & FAIR

Sixteen years ago, West Lancs Flower Club celebrated an anniversary by staging a festival of floral displays in our church under the title of **St John's in Bloom**.

This year we are collaborating with them to do it all over again but this time we will make it part of our Church Summer Fair as well.

If you can imagine our wonderful Christmas Tree Festival taking place in summer, with beautiful floral displays in place of the Christmas Trees, you will have the general idea. The Fair will be in the hall as usual with an extended café facility to handle all the extra visitors!

The event will take place over 3 days – **Friday 13th June (PM only), Saturday 14th June (AM & PM) and Sunday 15th June (PM after our morning service).**

The displays will need to be supported by sponsorship but we don't want the same people who support the Christmas trees thinking that we are relying upon them here. Monies raised after costs will be split between the Parkinson's Disease Society and St John's and we hope that you may know some local businesses or generous friends (!) who would like to help the good cause.

More details will be published in each future edition of The Word – but please put these dates in your diaries: we will need volunteers to welcome people to church and to help with the café.

For any other information Clive Morris will be delighted to talk to you.....



*One of the many magnificent displays from St John's in Bloom*

## The Canterbury Tales

In the November 2024 issue of this magazine we noted with dismay that students at Nottingham University have been **warned** that the book contains “expressions of Christian faith.” Although we live in an increasingly secular world it is disturbing that anyone needs to be warned about Christianity, as if it is something to be afraid of.

The Canterbury Tales, written by Geoffrey Chaucer between 1387 and 1400, is a collection of stories about fictitious characters on a pilgrimage from London to the tomb of Saint Thomas Becket at Canterbury Cathedral. To pass the time on their travels each was required to tell a story. Written more than six hundred years ago, many of the stories are as vibrant and full of understanding of human behaviour now as they were then. In the next few months we shall look at some of the tales and see what lessons can be learned from them.

My introduction to these stories at school was The Pardoner's Tale whose moral message was summed up in the Latin maxim *Radix malorum est cupiditas* which means the root of evil is greed. This was based on 1 Timothy 6: 10 “For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil...” The Pardoner's story illustrates this:

Three young wastrels were drinking at a tavern when they heard the bell signalling the sound of a passing coffin. A servant told them that the dead man was a friend of theirs who had been stabbed in the night by a thief called Death. They decided to seek and slay this

false traitor Death and pledged to be true to each other as brothers in this quest. They met an old man in rags who said that he must wander the earth restlessly because Death will not take his life. They demanded that he tell them where they can find Death. The old man says that he has just left Death a moment ago sitting under an oak tree. They ran down a crooked path to the tree, where they found not Death but eight bushels of gold. The worst of them spoke first, saying that this was their lucky day, but if they took the treasure down to the town by daylight, they would be accused as thieves, and therefore they must wait for nightfall to move the gold. He proposed that they draw straws, and whichever one drew the short straw must go to town to buy food and drink so they could wait out the day. The youngest drew the short straw and left. While he was away, the other two plotted to kill him when he returned so that the two of them would each have a larger share of the treasure. Meanwhile, the youngest decided to poison the other two so that he could keep all the money for himself. He went to an apothecary, bought the strongest poison available, and poured it into two bottles, keeping a third clean for himself. When he returned, the other two slew him. Then, celebrating, they drank the poisoned wine. Thus, all three of them met Death, although not as they had hoped to do so..

Their greed was truly the root of their evil deeds.  
*Radix malorum est cupiditas.*

*Stuart Baker*





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

## **On The Peculiarities Of Ordination Candidates**

The Rectory,  
St James the Least of All

My dear Nephew Darren,

I was quite happy to see the young person from your church whom you are encouraging to get ordained – even though we did not entirely see eye to eye.

When I answered the door to someone dressed in T-shirt, jeans and trainers, I naturally assumed he was the gardener; it was only after I had given him the wheelbarrow and shown him where the spades were, that I found out who he really was. His assurance that this is how Jesus would dress, were He to visit in person again, jarred somewhat. I think that a three-piece suit and stout pair of brogues would be far more likely. We agreed to differ. I was interested to hear that he was a church musician. Wanting to know if he sang tenor or bass, or even played the organ, he told me that he was the drummer in the worship band and provided backing vocals. I felt obliged to comment that I was not sure how that would fit in with Mattins, but he told me that he had never heard of that Service, and only attended Mega Rock Praise. Since I suspected it would not have been written by Cranmer, we moved on.

I had hoped we may have been on safer ground when I asked him whether he preferred early perpendicular or Victorian gothic, but as he had apparently only ever worshipped in your converted cinema, he was unable to offer any opinion. His reaction to my offer to show him round our late Norman church, prompted him to tell me that he believed all churches should be closed and people should gather in each other's homes, like the early Christians.

In a last despairing attempt to find common ground I asked him if he had ever preached. He was slightly apologetic to admit that he had done so very rarely, as he found it took such a long time to write an hour-long sermon. When I mentioned that I did not think I had ever exceeded eight minutes in my entire life, he gave me such a look of withering astonishment that with heroic Christian charity, I did not beat him over the head with the Bible he was carrying.

Your loving uncle,  
Eustace

### **Notices which didn't come out quite right...**

Notice in health food shop window: Closed due to illness.

Spotted in a safari park: Elephants, please stay in your car.

In a Laundrette: Automatic Washing Machines. Please remove all your clothes when the light goes out.

This coming Sunday our special service will be gin at 11:00am.

When parking on the north side of the church, please remember to park on an angel.

Volunteers are needed to spit up food for distribution.

This evening at 7:00pm there will be a hymn sing in the park across from the Church. Bring a blanket and come prepared to sin.

# WINE and CHEESE

# and Quiz Night



On Friday 24th January 30 parishioners and friends met in the church hall for an evening of fun and fellowship enjoying many different cheeses with wine and pitting their wits against questions compiled by our usual but absent quizmaster Andy Dean.

Andy's substitute was Clive Morris who, unlike Andy, was not aided by a glamorous assistant. The glamorous Jean declined scoreboard duties and joined a team of competitors who rather inappropriately named themselves as The Ever Hopefuls. Other teams included "The Atheists" (where did that name come from? This was a church event!), "Without a Clue" and "Not Much of an Option."

Each question was difficult, unless you knew the answer, and the teams battled valiantly for two rounds with the scores being quite close to each other.

Round three was a round of questions about song lyrics from films and shows. To make this music round doubly difficult the stand-in quizmaster did not play any music to which the lyrics are sung, and this caused much difficulty to all..... except one. Jean has an encyclopaedic knowledge of these songs and, despite a steward's enquiry and a request for VAR, led her team to a commanding and unassailable lead at the end of the round. If there is a music round at the next St John's quiz we beseech Jean to be a glamorous assistant and leave the field open to other competitors!.



*Jean enjoying the music round!*



There was much good natured banter during the quiz and Clive managed to keep us all in sufficient order as to get through the six rounds of questions and to reveal that The Ever Hopefuls had walked through the storm, held their heads up high, and won by a country mile. A message on the screen said "It's not the winning that counts... it's the taking part!" And so say all of us.

Thanks are expressed to Andy for setting the questions, Clive for being the genial quizmaster, Christine for buying all the cheese and wine, and everyone who stayed to help clear up.



## MAMMA MIA!

Our readers are reminded that the next social event at St John's will be a Greek Evening in the church hall. There will be some Greek-styled food, and plate smashing (yes! you read that correctly, but no church crockery will be deliberately damaged). Also the evening will be enlivened by music including songs by that well known band of Greek minstrels Abba. It will be great fun. Bring your own Retsina, Demestica, Ouzo and glassware. We shall provide everything else. Fancy costume is not necessary, but if you have anything in the colours of the Greek national flag (blue and white) do feel free to wear it. Tickets @ £10 from Christine or Clive.

For everyone who could not come to the cheese and wine and quiz evening, we shall not deprive you of a Quiz.



## How well do you know Southport?

Test your local knowledge by answering these 15 questions: (answers at the foot of the page). Questions compiled by Southport University Extension Society (SUES)

1. When was Southport founded ? a.1792 b. 1892 c. 1992
2. What is the name given to someone from Southport?
3. What was the name of Southport's own car manufacturer?
4. In the 1870s the Southport Directory likened Southport to a very fashionable resort in the south of France calling it the M..... of the North?
5. Southport's first newspaper was founded in 1844. What was it called? a. The Southport Visitor b. The Southport Visiter c. The Southport News
6. Which French aristocrat was reputed to have visited Southport in 1846 and taken his inspiration for the Boulevards of Paris from Lord Street?
7. When was the first Southport Flower Show held? a. 1914 b. 1924 c. 1934
8. Which famous American showman did local girl Nancy Fish marry in 1874?
9. What colours comprise the current Southport Football Club's kit?
10. What colour was Lord Street until 2017?
11. In what year was Southport Rugby Club formed? a. 1856 b. 1864 c. 1872
12. Which team did Southport Rugby Club play against in their first match?
13. When was Southport Pier first built? a. 1860 b. 1869 c. 1859
14. How was Southport pier originally? a. 2,965 feet b. 4,568 feet c. 4,380 feet
15. Who set a new land speed record on Southport sands in 1926?

### **The C of E is facing "one of the biggest existential crises ... since the Reformation,"**

following the Makin review of abuse perpetrated by John Smyth. That is the view of the Bishop of Rochester, Dr Jonathan Gibbs.

He was speaking recently after his diocesan synod had voted in favour of a motion that expressed no confidence in the Archbishops' Council's past oversight of safeguarding.

Dr Gibbs said: "In many people's views, and I think I would share it, this is one of the biggest existential crises that the C of E has faced since the Reformation. There is a real need for what I would call a pastoral response, acknowledging that hurt

and pain, particularly of victims and survivors, that so many people are feeling."

The bishop said there should also be "a call to prayer and repentance across the Church, leading to a period of deep reflection on the kind of cultural change that is needed at all levels."

**SAFEGUARDING will dominate the agenda for the first three days of the upcoming General Synod session, a five-day meeting beginning on Monday 10 February. The business will "help with the journey of improvement that the Church of England is on", the secretary-general, William Nye, told a press briefing recently.**

How well do you know Southport?

Answers:

1. a. 1792; 2. A Sandgrounder; 3. Vulcan Motor and Engineering Company Limited; 4. Montpelier; 5. b. The Southport Visitor; 6. Napoleon III (Louis Napoleon); 7. b. 1924; 8. P.T.Barnum; 9. Old Gold (yellow) and Black; 10. Red; 11. c. 1872 (the club moved to its current ground in Hillside in March 1927); 12. Seaforth Rugby Football Club; 13. a. 1860; 14. c.4,380 feet; 15 Henry Seagrove.

## 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.

We aim 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 February **please let Rev. Jennie 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 Jennie.



## Was he the Greatest Ever Briton?

Sixty years ago, on 30th January 1965, Sir Winston Churchill was buried. He had died six days earlier at the age of 90. Although post-war revisionism has not been universally favourable to him he was voted in a poll conducted by the BBC in 2002 to have been the greatest Briton ever to have lived, surpassing Queen Victoria, Queen Elizabeth II, Princess Diana (perhaps an unlikely candidate, but this was only five years after her death), Shakespeare (William, not John!), Alan Turing, Isaac Newton, Charles Darwin, Isambard Kingdom Brunel and Horatio Nelson. 63% of all those who were asked held him to be the Greatest Ever Briton. He was of mixed English and American parentage and was born into an aristocratic way of life in Oxfordshire. At the age of about 21 he joined the British Army and served in India and in the Second Boer War in South Africa, gaining fame as a war correspondent and writing books about his campaigns. He entered Parliament in 1900 as a Conservative but defected to the Liberal Party in 1904. As Home Secretary he championed prison reform and workers' social security. As First Lord of the Admiralty in

the First World War he oversaw the disastrous Gallipoli campaign which led to him being demoted from that office, after which he joined the Royal Scots Fusiliers and served on the western Front for six months.

He held numerous offices in Government in the 1920s but in the 1930s when he was not a Government minister he was in his "wilderness years" and took the lead in calling for rearmament to counter the threat of Nazi militarism. In 1940 he succeeded Neville Chamberlain as this nation's wartime Prime Minister.

Although he has been heavily criticised for many tactical decisions, including the decision to bomb to obliteration the German city Dresden, he has been regarded by many as having been the best war leader which this nation has had or could have had at that time in our history. After the war he and his Government were voted out of office but he returned to serve again as Prime Minister between 1951 and 1955, and he served as an MP until 1964.

In addition to his many roles in public life he was a writer (gaining a Nobel prize for literature), an historian and a painter. Dictionaries of Quotations contain numerous *bons mots*, quips, pronouncements and put-downs



uttered by him. It's always a safe bet that if you struggle to remember where a particular expression or quotation has come from that it probably originated from Shakespeare (William, not John), the Bible or Winston Churchill.

Whatever one may think about him it is difficult to imagine anyone in current political life in Britain ever achieving the stature of Churchill. He was an inspirational leader at a time when this nation was under severe pressure and threat, and there are not many like that in public life today.

**Those of our readers who remember the state funeral of Winston Churchill are invited to send their recollections of that day to the Editor. Where were you on that day? What were you doing? Did you, like many hundreds of thousands, form part of the crowds on the streets as the cortege passed, or did you watch it on television?**

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*A life well remembered lives on*

**Southport**

☎ 01704 500 086

**Ainsdale**

☎ 01704 577 786



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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.**



# Give to Church

Give cash, use the card reader at the back of church or give regularly and most efficiently through the Parish Giving Scheme



**Scan to learn more**

## 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**

### Observations on Love...

Marriage is more than finding the right person; it is being the right person. – Anon

'One plus one equals one' may not be an accurate mathematical concept, but it is an accurate description of God's intention for the marriage relationship. – Wayne Mack

Our love for God is the root; our love for others is the fruit, expressed through patience, kindness, courtesy, humility, unselfishness, good temper, gentleness and sincerity. – UCB Word for Today

Even if it's a little, do something for which there is no pay, but the privilege of doing it. – Albert Schweitzer

The purpose of this world is not to have and to hold, but to forgive and to serve. – Wilfred Grenfell Penn

## Too Long

by Penny Candlin

Too long our church leaders have stood back and done nothing.

Too long our church parishioners have shuffled along with their heads in the sand.

Too long they have lain dormant and inactive.

I will light a fire in their bellies that will not go out.

I will call my church into action, not just words but action .

We stand for a God of power and truth.

We stand on the rock of salvation.

We stand not in our strength but God's.

We speak not our own words but God's.

Come Holy Spirit come revive your church again.

## 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**  
**10am - 4pm**

The Stationmaster's House,  
2 Liverpool Road, Birkdale. PR8 4AR

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



**FULLY ACCESSIBLE**

With disabled access, a large accessible lift and disabled toilet with baby changing facilities.

A warm welcome guaranteed by our friendly hosts at our 'enhanced' warm space, community hub and library. We offer free tea, coffee and biscuits as well as newspapers, puzzle books, activities and occasional guest speakers alongside other services. FREE WI-FI and computer access.

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

## Taste

A woman wasn't feeling well and went to A&E. The nurse asked her: "Have you experienced a sudden loss of taste?" "No," admitted the woman sadly. "I've always dressed this way."

# W CROSS R D

*Solution below*

The Bible version used in our crosswords is the NIV.

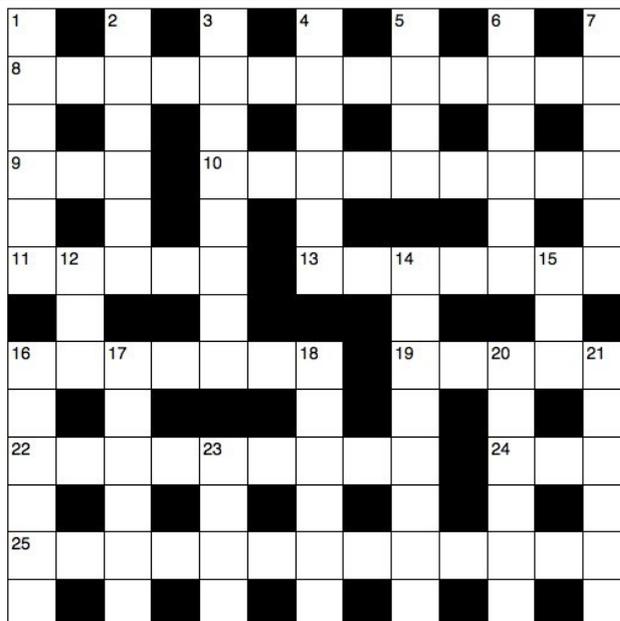
Crosswords reproduced by kind permission of BRF and John Capon, originally published in Three Down, Nine Across, by John Capon (£6.99 BRF).

## Across

- 8 Interrogated (Acts 12:19) (5-8)  
 9 'Burn it in a wood fire on the — heap' (Leviticus 4:12) (3)  
 10 Tobit, Judith, Baruch and the books of Esdras and the Maccabees are part of it (9)  
 11 Science fiction (abbrev.) (3-2)  
 13 Clay pit (anag.) (7)  
 16 Went to (John 4:46) (7)  
 19 'Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to — your bodies as living sacrifices' (Romans 12:1) (5)  
 22 David's plea to God concerning those referred to in 14 Down: 'On — — let them escape' (Psalm 56:7) (2,7)  
 24 Royal Automobile Club (1,1,1) 25 How the book of Ezekiel refers to God more than 200 times (Ezekiel 2:4) (9,4)

## Down

- 1 Seas (Proverbs 8:24) (6)  
 2 One of the sons of Eli the priest, killed in battle by the Philistines (1 Samuel 4:11) (6)  
 3 Specialist in the study of the Muslim religion (8)  
 4 'Do not rebuke an older man harshly, but — him as if he were your father' (1 Timothy 5:1) (6)  
 5 One of Esau's grandsons (Genesis 36:11) (4)  
 6 Taking a chance (colloq.) (2,4)  
 7 God's instructions to the Israelites concerning grain offerings: ' — salt to — your offerings' (Leviticus 2:13) (3,3)  
 12 Confederation of British Industry (1,1,1)



- 14 'All day long they twist my words; they are always — to harm me' (Psalm 56:5) (8)  
 15 The crowd's reaction to Jesus bringing back to life a widow's son in Nain (Luke 7:16) (3)  
 16 Disappear (Psalm 104:35) (6)  
 17 How Jeremiah was likely to die if he wasn't rescued from the cistern where he was imprisoned (Jeremiah 38:9) (6)  
 18 What the prophets do to a wall, with whitewash (Ezekiel 13:10, RSV) (4,2)  
 20 Made by a plough (Job 39:10) (6)  
 21 Noah was relieved when the flood waters continued to — (Genesis 8:5) (6)  
 23 Jesus gave the Twelve the power and authority to do this to diseases (Luke 9:1) (4)

## In our Book of Remembrance In February

- 2 Howard Stoner, 1986  
 6 Maud Whaite-Chapman, 1944  
 7 Arthur Hignett, 1989  
 9 Ivy Sinnott, 1988  
 11 Simon Owens, 1990  
 Ann McCann, 1995  
 12 Jean Arnold, 2021  
 13 William Whaite, 1982  
 14 Susan Halsall, 2019  
 15 Ernest Bennett, 1999  
 17 Joseph Pritchard, 1981  
 19 Stephen Rigby, 1986  
 20 Winifred Beeley, 1951  
 21 Edith Smith, 1966  
 22 Ernest Ball, 1963  
 24 Lucy Leather, 1987  
 25 Elizabeth Clegg, 1978  
 27 Harry Champion, 1984  
 Barbara Hughes, 1996  
 28 Harry Beckingham, 2014

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

## In our Parish Register In January

**Baptism:** 1st January, Luca Cockbain



**CROSSWORD SOLUTION**  
 ACROSS: 8, Cross-examined. 9, Ash. 10, Apocrypha. 11, Sci-fi. 13, Typical. 16, Visited. 19, Offer. 22, No account.  
 DOWN: 1, Oceans. 2, Hopht. 3, Islamist. 4, Exhort. 5, Omar. 6, On spec. 7, Add all. 12, CBI. 14, Plotting. 15, Awe.  
 16, Vanish. 17, Starve. 18, Daub it. 20, Furrow. 21, Recede. 23, Cure.

## God in the Arts

*The Revd Michael Burgess considers the sacred in Art.*

### 'My First Sermon' by Sir John Everett Millais

There is a story of two men talking about their new vicar. One says to the other, "This new one's not a patch on the old vicar. With the old one preaching I was asleep in five minutes. With the new one it takes all of ten." Some churches in times past employed 'sluggard-walkers' who had long rods and walked down the aisles, ready to wake up the faithful if they had nodded off during the sermon.

Sluggard-walkers are not needed for this month's painting, *My First Sermon* by John Everett Millais. It hangs in the Guildhall Art Gallery in London, which houses the art collection of our capital city. The Gallery is built on the site of an amphitheatre and was only completed in 1999, having replaced a building that was destroyed in the blitz of 1941. It has over 4000 works, many of them from the Victorian and Pre-Raphaelite period. Among them is this painting by Millais which depicts Effie, his 5-year-old daughter sitting in Kingston Church. She is dressed properly and sensibly for the occasion with feathered hat, muff and a cloak of vivid red. Her mother's prayer book and gloves are by her side. Effie is listening with great concentration.

When the painting was exhibited in 1863, it was a great success. In the following year Millais produced *My Second Sermon* – a very different occasion, for Effie has now fallen asleep with her hat by her side. Millais was often criticised for his sentimental portraits of children as in *Cherry Ripe* and *Bubbles*. But in 1864 the Archbishop of Canterbury, Charles Longley, praised this second painting for reminding us of 'the evil of lengthy sermons and drowsy discourses.'

As we look at Effie alert one Sunday, asleep the next, we can smile. But we might also ask how we respond to the Word that comes to us through the medium of words in the weekly sermon. The preacher has the daunting task of using this everyday coinage of words to draw us into that mysterious, life-giving realm of the Word, Jesus. The words spoken must make a straight path for the Lord to reach each human heart.

The two paintings of Millais depict the reality and fragility of this endeavour. Sometimes our attention is engaged; at others, drowsiness



Acknowledgment: John Everett Millais, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

closes our eyes and even our hearts to the good news of salvation. On occasions the sermon sows seeds, which can bear fruit. At other times, all kinds of factors mitigate against the sermon's success. Let us pray that as listener or as preacher, we may be aware of the dynamic power of the Word, which, as Karl Rahner wrote, calls us 'out of the little house of our homely, close-hugged truths into the strangeness of the mystery of God that is our real home.'



*My Second Sermon, at the Victoria and Albert Museum*

Readers may be aware that the Painting "Bubbles" was used as an advert for Pears Soap and is housed at The Lady Lever Art Gallery, Port Sunlight. The child in the painting rose to the rank of Admiral in the Royal Navy but was known as Bubbles throughout his life.



## THE INFLUENCE OF RELIGION ON LAW

Many of our readers will know that the Editor of **THE WORD** spent his entire working life as a lawyer. It often occurred to me that some of the law in England has its roots in Christianity and the Ten Commandments. One of the most famous English judges in the second half of the twentieth century was The Rt. Hon. Lord Denning who was also of that view. In 1989 Lord Denning wrote a short book entitled "The Influence of Religion on Law" published by The Lawyers' Christian Fellowship in which he considered several aspects of personal and societal conduct and he offered his opinion on how our laws have been influenced by Christianity.

In this issue of **THE WORD** and in instalments over the next few months we shall include some of Lord Denning's views, with which our readers may or may not agree but which we hope will provide food for thought.

We start with Lord Denning's foreword:

"In primitive societies the influence of religion on law was obvious, but it is not so obvious in modern societies. In primitive communities religion, morals and law were indistinguishably mixed together. In the Ten Commandments, for instance, you find the first Commandment which is religious: "God spake these words and said 'I am the Lord thy God: Thou shalt have none other Gods but me?'" You find the fifth Commandment which is a moral precept. "Honour thy father and thy mother; that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." You find the eighth Commandment

which is a legal duty: "Thou shalt not steal." This intermingling is typical of all early communities.

The severance of three ideas (of law from morality, and of religion from law) belongs very distinctly to the later stages of the evolution of modern thought.

This severance has gone a great way. Many people now think that religion and law have nothing in common. The law, they say, governs our dealings with our fellows: whereas religion concerns our dealings with God. Likewise they hold that law has nothing to do with morality. It lays down rigid rules which, they say, are right or wrong. Its function is to keep order, not to do justice.

The severance has, I think, gone much too far. Although religion, law and morals can be separated, they are nevertheless still very much dependent on one another.

Without religion, there can be no morality, there can be no law. I shall try to show you how many of the fundamental principles of our law have been derived from the Christian religion: and in so doing I will try to indicate how they are challenged by a changing world which knows no religion, or at any rate treats religion as something which is of no moment in practical affairs."

In our March issue: Lord Denning on Truth.

*Copyright in Lord Denning's book is owned by the Lawyers' Christian Fellowship whom we thank for their kind permission in allowing us to publish extracts from it.*



Lord Denning,  
drawn by Sallon

### What's the Big Idea? – An Introduction to Books of the the Old Testament: Job

By Canon Paul Hardingham

*'Why does God allow suffering?'* This is a frequently asked question of Christians, because we believe in a God who is both good and powerful and it is explored in the book of Job. This book is part of the wisdom literature, along with Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon.

Job was both wealthy and righteous, yet he experienced catastrophic suffering, losing all his wealth, children and health. This is portrayed as a result of Satan's challenge to God, testing whether Job's devotion to God was dependent on his circumstances or not.

The main body of the book (3:1-42:6) consists of dialogues between Job, his friends (Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar) and God. Job and his friends assume that God is almighty and just, and that no

human being is wholly innocent. In the three cycles of speeches they wrestle with the reasons for Job's suffering, remembering his morally upright character.

Finally, all are silenced by God, as He speaks Himself (chs 38-42). He points out that Job knows very little about the universe when he reflects on God's power. Job confesses his lack of understanding and weakness, but then goes on to confess his confidence and trust in God. This puts suffering in a right perspective. Job is not condemned, and the book ends with the restoration of his family and possessions.

The importance of this book is that it realistically addresses the painful questions of life, without offering simplistic answers. It focuses on *how* we should respond to suffering, rather than on *why* God allows suffering: *'Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I shall depart. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised.'* (1:21)

# WORD SEARCH *Solution on page 25*

February opens with Candlemas – the naming of Jesus in the temple. Simeon and Anna praised God to see the promised Messiah, sent by a loving God to save his people.

February also celebrates the love between men and women: Valentine cards and wedding fayres abound.

‘Love’ as in social compassion is also remembered: Fair Trade fortnight, Holocaust Memorial Day, World Leprosy Day, Education Sunday and National Nest Box Week... Love is truly needed by everyone!



NAMING  
CHRIST  
CANDLEMAS  
SIMEON  
ANNA  
TEMPLE

LOVE  
VALENTINE  
ROMANCE  
MATTHIAS  
FAIRTRADE  
FORTNIGHT

COFFEE  
BANANAS  
CHOCOLATE  
JUSTICE  
POVERTY  
NEST BOX

MARRIAGE  
WEDDING  
HOLOCAUST  
LEPROSY  
EDUCATION  
SUNDAY

## The story behind “Glorious Things of Thee are Spoken.”

This hymn was written by John Newton in 1779 and was inspired by Psalm 87 verse 3 (“O city of God, what glorious things are said of you!”) and Isaiah 33 verses 20-21.

Newton had a very colourful life. He had been a ruthless and blaspheming sailor and was for some time heavily implicated in the slave trade as the captain of a ship taking Africans to the Americas to be sold as slaves. But he underwent a conversion which was almost as dramatic as that of Saul on the road to Damascus and after many years he became a parish priest who was renowned for his compassion. On 21st March 1748, at the age of 22, he was returning to England from the American colonies when the ship which he was steering became overwhelmed by a violent Atlantic storm. The ferocious winds tore the sails and cracked the timbers and he, his crew and his ship were in peril. This caused him to see the frailty of man when faced with the might of the Creator of the elements. When the storm eased and his ship had survived he was thankful for the great deliverance which he and his crew had received from a merciful Saviour. This became the date of his conversion.

As years passed he made up for his missed

education and learned Latin and studied the Bible daily. In 1754 he gave up his life at sea and settled with his wife in Liverpool. His desire to be ordained was unfulfilled until 1764 when he became the curate in the parish of Olney in Buckinghamshire. He wrote many hymns, sometimes one a week which he would introduce at his weekly evening prayer meetings. “Glorious Things of Thee are Spoken” was one of these hymns, of which only a few remain in popular use. It was written in collaboration with the classical writer William Cowper and is considered to be Newton's best composition. The hymn was a favourite of Confederate General Stonewall Jackson who once awakened his soldiers in 1862 while they were in the Shenandoah Valley by singing “Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken” out of tune (he was probably not the first nor will be the last to do so). It has been sung to many different tunes, in particular Haydn’s “Austria” which later also became the tune for “Deutschland, Deutschland Über Alles.” Amongst Newton’s other hymns are “How Sweet the Name of Jesus Sounds” and “Amazing Grace.”



John Newton

Stuart Baker

Primary Source: “Every Hymn Has a Story, Vol.2”, John Large

## 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.*

### The Love of Wisdom of Natural Things

Some time ago a scientist was invited to speak at the Dewsbury Women's Institute. He spoke about his research on polymers, hoping that the women of this Yorkshire mill town would connect with his desire to develop new fibres.

One person in particular, a woman called Betty who had worked in a mill since the age of 15, listened as if her life depended on it, and peppered him with questions afterwards. She had always been interested in how things work, but until that day had not found anyone to answer her questions. Whenever she had asked about the processes that they were using in the mill, she was just told to get on with her job.

From the outside, science can seem a closed specialty, hemmed in by intimidating jargon. When McLeish described science as 'the love of wisdom of natural things', however, he realised he was opening a door. He was moved to see that Betty was not the only person who shed a tear when her questions were finally taken seriously, confirming that her enquiring mind was indeed probing in the right direction – only 50 years too late.

Hearing about people like Betty reminds me that science is a very natural activity for anyone to be involved in. McLeish is convinced that there is a future in 'science therapy'. In his book *Faith and Wisdom in Science*, where this story appears, he asks the question "If a reintroduction to the activity of representing both inner and outer worlds in paint, music and drama can help to heal minds, what hope might there be for a participation in a gentle and contemplative science in restoring a broken or misunderstood relationship with the physical world?"

This story inspired me to run a number of hands-on science activities with adult audiences in churches. I have extracted DNA from strawberries with a midweek group for older people, organised hands-on exhibits to liven up lecture or discussion events, and even had groups extracting DNA from their own cheek cells.

Every time I lead activities like these, I find that grown-ups are grateful for the opportunity to have a go at science themselves. I love helping church-based groups, in particular, to reconnect with science and celebrate what they find. Science is not just for children and professionals – it is for everyone to enjoy and explore the world God made.

### Let's Hope and Pray for this change...

A £2.6 billion transfer of assets from the Church Commissioners to diocesan stipend funds, to be used to support parish ministry, **is to be proposed** to the General Synod next month.

The sum is based on a calculation of the amount that diocesan boards of finance could have gained had they invested the sums that they have contributed to clergy pensions since 1998.

The motion is to be moved by the Bishop of Bath & Wells, Dr Michael Beasley, who writes in an accompanying paper that, without the urgent change called for in the motion, "the increasing crisis consequent to the catastrophic inadequacies of diocesan stipendiary funds" will "fatally undermine" the national Vision and Strategy. The success of the Commissioners — who now

preside over assets of £10.4 billion — is "not supporting parishes or dioceses in their current situation of destructive and destabilising financial deficit", he writes. The size of the endowment acts "as an active discouragement to people in churches and their communities participating in fundraising, giving and calls to generosity". Among the examples of "widespread degradation" in parishes and dioceses listed are the sale of houses and other assets, and cuts to clergy posts "achieved through pastoral reorganisations with the creation of ever more and larger multi-parish benefices that are devastating to the workload and morale of clergy, church officers and parishes". The paper warns that "the idea that in the future dioceses may not be able to pay for their clergy is a major disincentive to people answering God's call on their lives."



...are you late with your 'Vicar's Letter' again, dear?

The Editor is grateful to receive material from our readers for **THE WORD**. After all, this is YOUR parish magazine.

I try not to impose impossible deadlines for articles to be submitted. The magazine is usually delivered on the last Friday of each month, and I am willing to receive articles until the last Monday of each month so as to give myself time to set it out and check it. If any of our readers would like to submit anything for the March issue please let me have it by not later than Monday 24th February.

## 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).

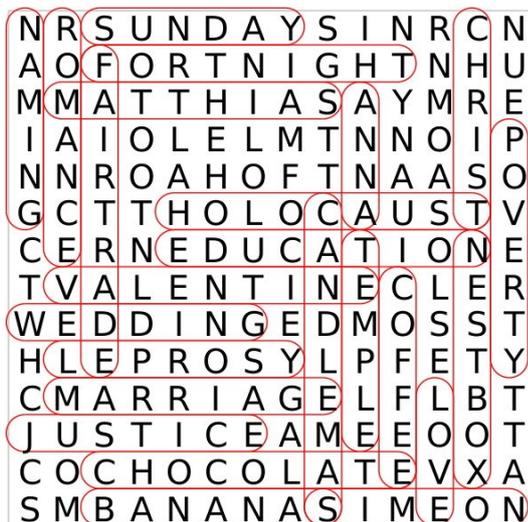


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## THE SCOTTS OF BUCCLEUCH

By Dennis Davis

*Inspired by an article in last month's issue of this magazine Dennis interrupts his research into the Good and Bad Kings of England to write about some of his distant Scottish ancestors.*

John Shakespeare's article on The Debatable Lands (**THE WORD**, January 2025) has touched on a strand of my ancient ancestry and has prompted me to supplement this with tales of some of the Moss Troopers. My mother's name was Edith Annie Scott and her great grandfather John (my Great Great Grandfather) was born at Hawick, Roxboroughshire in 1808, the ancient centre of the Scotts of Buccleuch. I have been unable to establish the names of his parents as there were several John Scotts born around that time. There was a weaver and a butcher, but none of them was a saddlemaker like John.

Most of these tales have come from my Grandfather Edgar Alfred Scott who, though born in Sheffield, was proud of his Scottish ancestry. I recall that my great grandfather, also named John, had a set of bull's horns over his fireplace which were said to have come from the Chilling herd of white cattle. The bull was thought to have been culled and shot by the Prince of Wales. How the Scotts obtained the carcase I do not know. They are now up in my roof space, badly dilapidated, I keep them in memory of my great-grandfather who with his wife Charlotte I had the privilege to know.

The Scott's of Buccleuch were one of the leading families of Moss Troopers, raiding other border clans several hundred years ago. Auld Wat's young son, Wil went on a hot trod (raid) to steal cattle from one of their feudal enemies the Murrays, but he was caught and was to be publicly hanged a few days later. They had a daughter who nobody would marry known as Muckle Mouth Meg; accounts vary, some say she had a big ugly mouth, others imply that it was her loud raucous speech. A picture of her showed her to be not unattractive, but then paintings could cover a multitude of sins. The girl's mother interceded by saying that if they could get him to marry Meg they would free him and it would tie the two clans together instead of the continuing feud. He held out for a week then finally agreed. It was said that she was a sweet pleasant lady and they had a happy marriage.

Once a year there was a day's truce when Scots and English could meet together on the border as some could meet their cross-border relatives. Thomas Scrope was the Warder of the English West March. He broke the truce to capture a wanted Moss Trooper called "Kinmont Willie" (Armstrong). The Scottish Warder was Walter Scott, known as "The Bold Buccleuch" and he was infuriated by this and

organised a raid on Carlisle Castle to free him. This has gone down in legend because it has never been established how they got into the castle and took Kinmont Willie out. A ballad of this has been written, possibly by the poet Sir Walter Scott..



The Bold Buccleuch

*(Editor's note: Dennis has kindly provided the full version of this ballad, but its length and the almost impenetrable dialect in which it is written make it unsuitable for inclusion in these pages. However, as it tells the story we shall include a condensed version in Modern English. See page 27)*

The Border Wizard, Michael Scott, was a scholar, skilled in Arabic, Latin, Hebrew, Maths and Medicine, who translated Arabic into Latin. He predicted his own death by a stone falling on his head and he constantly wore a steel helmet; One day however he went into a Church, took off his helmet and a stone fell on his head. He died 5 days later and was buried at Melrose with a book beside him

Possibly the greatest Scott was the historian, novelist and poet Sir Walter who is thought to have had a club foot which troubled him all his life. I have heard it said that it was a genetic ailment in the Scotts. Perhaps it was not a mere coincidence that my Great Uncle Percy Scott also had a club foot.

James Croft (Fitzroy) was the illegitimate son of King Charles the 2<sup>nd</sup> to Lucy Walter. He had a difficult childhood in which he was kidnapped for 10 days. He lived in Oxford during the Civil War, and moved to London where he and his mother were placed in the Tower of London. They escaped and moved to Paris where his Grandfather looked after him. On his return to England he became the King's favourite and was made the Duke of Monmouth. He married Anne Scott, the Countess of Buccleuch, and changed his name to Scott becoming the first Duke of Buccleuch.

He became the leader in the West Country rising against the King which culminated in the Battle of Sedgemoor which was put down with a ferocious fury by hard-line troops called The Tangiers Regiment with mass executions, imprisonments and transportation. The Duke of Monmouth was sentenced to death. His pleas for mercy were ignored and he was beheaded in one of the most brutal manners. It was customary to pay the executioner a sum of money so as to get a merciful single blow but the incompetent executioner took several attempts to complete his task.

*(If any of our readers know of any interesting ancestors of their own please share their stories with us and write to the Editor).*

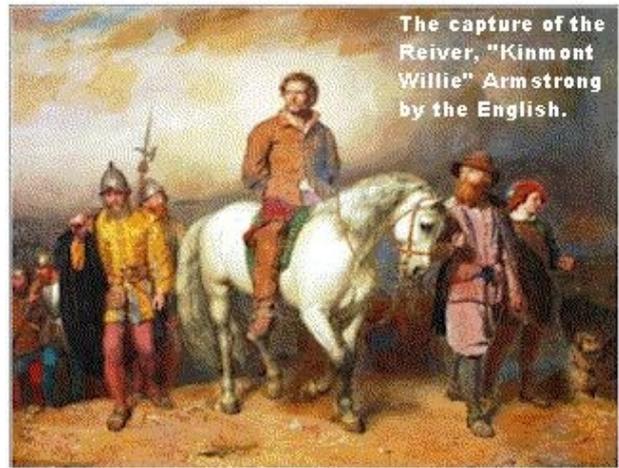
## The Ballad of Kinmont Willie

The ballad, which is based on real events, celebrates the rescue of William Armstrong of Kinmont from Carlisle Castle by a group of riders led by Walter Scott of Buccleuch - The Bold Buccleuch. The raid was made on the 13th April 1596 and was considered an audacious act, as indeed it was. The ballad does not state that Kinmont Willie was an innocent man – historically, William Armstrong of Kinmont was a notorious reiver (border raider/livestock rustler). Instead, it emphasises the fact that he was taken after a Warden Meeting on a Day of Truce, which relied on a 24-hour amnesty for everyone attending the meeting (and, it was argued by some Wardens, for everyone in the respective Marches). The meeting was between the deputy Warden of the English West March, Thomas Salkelde and the Keeper of Liddesdale, Walter Scott, the “Bold Buccleuch”. William Armstrong of Kinmont had attended as a witness and was returning home when he and other riders were pursued and he was captured by Salkelde, who most probably could not resist the chance to capture such a notorious rider.

The ballad recounts that Salkelde and his men tied Armstrong to his horse and took him across the Carlisle sands to the castle where he delivered him to the English Warden, Lord Scrope. Armstrong spoke defiantly to Scrope who assured him that no Scotsman would set him free.

When news of this reached The Bold Buccleuch he determined to free Armstrong without harming any English men or women. He assembled a rescue party of forty men some of whom posed as hunters, some as builders, some as Warden’s official men, and some as raiders. They crossed the Debatable Land and the first person whom they met was Deputy Warden Thomas Salkelde who asked where they were going. Those dressed as hunters said they were hunting a stag. Those dressed in armour said they were searching for a border raider who had broken faith with The Bold Buccleuch. Those attired as builders said they were going to disturb a crow’s nest. But when those dressed as raiders were asked where they were going one of them (according to the ballad) thrust his lance at Salkelde and killed him. This is historically incorrect: Thomas Salkelde was in fact not injured in any way during the rescue, but it made for a bloodcurdling story!

On they went, through the high waters of the river Eden which was in full spate until eventually they reached the walls of Carlisle Castle. They erected the builders’ ladders and the Bold Buccleuch was the first to scale the wall. He overpowered a watchman and then others in the rescue party climbed the ladders and set to work making a hole



in the lead roof to gain entry. They made such a loud noise with trumpets that Lord Scrope thought the castle was being invaded by a large army although there were only thirty. They forced their way into the inner prison where Kinmont Willie was detained and set him free. He shouted farewell to Lord Scrope and said, no doubt with heavy sarcasm, that if they were to meet at the border he would pay for his enforced lodgings.

He and his rescuers did not get far from the castle before the Carlisle bells were rung and Lord Scrope and a thousand men went after them in hot pursuit. When the rescuers crossed to the north side of the river Eden The Bold Buccleuch threw a gauntlet towards Scrope who was on the south bank and challenged him: if you don’t like my visit to merry England come to visit me in fair Scotland. Scrope could hardly believe that Buccleuch and his men had managed to cross the Eden, declaring “He is either the devil himself or his mother must be a witch. I would not have ridden through that water for all the gold in Christendom.”

As is often the case the balladier omitted many historical details. The ballad suggests that Buccleuch raised his rescue party immediately, but in fact he had written to Lord Scrope requesting Armstrong’s release and he made an appeal to a Scottish Court. These measures did not have the desired effect and it was only at that stage that Buccleuch decided to take matters into his own hands. His plan for the rescue was devised several weeks before it was executed.

The rescue of William Armstrong of Kinmont was one of the most notorious events of its time: his capture was not necessarily lawful although it is understandable that Salkelde’s impetuous capture may have had much to do with Kinmont Willie’s reiving exploits; the rescue was audacious; and the consequences were far reaching. In fact, the political impasse which resulted from Buccleuch’s initial refusal to hand himself over to the English to answer for his rescue raid brought Scotland and England to the edge of war.

*Stuart Baker*

# My BROTHER'S KEEPER

by John M. Shakespeare

A sense of Responsibility has been something that has developed in me since my schooldays as milk monitor. Later, in my working life, I have been criticised by my bosses for having an overdeveloped sense of Responsibility for staff.

There is the question of how much self Responsibility do we have for our actions. This is a debatable area of philosophical thought! If, as some people suggest, all our intentions are in some form predetermined, then it brings into question how much as individuals we have a Responsibility for them.

Research into the moral development of our Responsibilities by the psychologist Carol Gilligan suggests that there are differences between male and female individuals. She detected a different and distinctive voice, when considering the moral values between the sexes. With regard to "core ethics", she concluded that women are more responsive to their Responsibilities in this field, than the more abstract feelings demonstrated by men.

One form of male response to Gilligan's proposition, is best expressed perhaps by the following quotation from Francis Bacon (1563-1626): "He that hath wife and children hath given hostages to fortune, for there are impediments to great enterprises either of virtue or mischief". On a personal note, in today's world I have found that there seems to be little difference between the senses of Responsibility between the sexes.

St. Francis of Assisi (1181-1226), gives guidance as he sees it in our Responsibilities towards others, by

asking the following:

"Lord make me an instrument of thy peace, where there is hatred, let me sow love. Where there is injury, let me sow pardon. Where there is doubt, Faith. Where there is despair, Hope. Where there is darkness, Light. Where there is sadness, Joy".

All jobs, careers, or roles that we exercise in society today will most probably have had what we call a "job description". This lays out what is to be expected of the person, with regard to their duties and their Responsibilities, in the role designated to them.

Revolutionaries and demonstrators may have in their eyes the best motives for their actions, but how much Responsibility do they really take for their actions. Recent revolutions in historical terms, are the French, American and Russian. The results of all three of these national revolutions, resulted in major changes to the Responsibilities of those, who then took over the running of those countries.

In similar ways, groups of demonstrators must realise that with the demands for change comes also the Responsibility of managing that desired change. As I have said in previous articles, we cannot leave the question of our Responsibilities to the environment and future generations, to chance! We must ensure, I believe, that the environment is still fit for purpose with regard to how we exploit it.

"Am I my brother's keeper?" In some ways I believe that I am, which leads to the dilemma of how much advice and guidance is it appropriate to offer. How we react in response to others needs defines our natures.

I conclude with the proposition that our Responsibilities lie to a great extent in the friendships that we have. To quote Epicurus (347-270 BC), a Greek philosopher: "Of all the means which wisdom acquires to ensure happiness throughout the whole of life, by far the most important is Friendship".

## 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: 812 3403 0688

The Password every Sunday will be: 201823

To join the **weekly Sunday morning services** by **TELEPHONE**:

The telephone number you must ring is: 0203 481 5240

The Meeting Identification Number every Sunday will be: 812 3403 0688

When prompted to do so, enter that number and then press HASH (#)

The Password every Sunday will be: 201823.

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: 835 5074 3780

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To join the **twice-monthly Thursday evening prayers** at 7.30pm by **TELEPHONE**:

The telephone number you must ring is: 0203 481 5240

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**IF YOU NEED ANY HELP:** Please contact Clive (564206) or Rev. Jennie for any further details you require.

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

50 years ago, on 11<sup>th</sup> Feb 1975 Margaret Thatcher became the first female leader of the Conservative Party. She became Britain's first female Prime Minister in 1979.

Also 50 years ago, on 14<sup>th</sup> Feb 1975 P G Wodehouse died. This well-loved British-born American comic novelist, short story writer, lyricist and playwright is best known as the creator of Jeeves.

40 years ago, on 16<sup>th</sup> Feb 1985 the Islamic militant group and political party Hezbollah was founded in Lebanon.

30 years ago, on 2<sup>nd</sup> Feb 1995 the leaders of Egypt, Jordan, Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation held an emergency summit in Cairo, where they reaffirmed their commitment to the Middle East peace process.

Also 30 years ago, on 23<sup>rd</sup> Feb 1995 James Herriot, veterinary surgeon and best-selling author, died. Best known for his autobiographical book *All Creature Great and Small*, which was adapted into a popular TV series.

Also 30 years, on 26<sup>th</sup> Feb 1995 Barings Bank, the oldest merchant bank in London, collapsed after its chief trader in Singapore, Nick Lesson, lost £827 million on unauthorised transactions.

20 years ago, on 10<sup>th</sup> Feb 2005 Charles, then Prince of Wales, and Camilla Parker Bowles announced their engagement. They were married on 9<sup>th</sup> April 2005.

Also 20 years ago, on 10<sup>th</sup> Feb 2005, North Korea confirmed it had nuclear weapons.

Also 20 years ago, on 14<sup>th</sup> Feb 2005 YouTube, the online video-sharing service, was founded. It was purchased by Google in 2006.

Also 20 years ago, on 16<sup>th</sup> Feb 2005 the Kyoto Protocol came into effect. The international treaty obliges industrialised nations to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions.

15 years ago, on 18<sup>th</sup> Feb 2010 Wikileaks published the first classified documents leaked by US Army intelligence analyst Chelsea Manning. In total, she sent Wikileaks nearly 750,000 sensitive documents. She was arrested and served seven years in prison.

10 years ago, on 27<sup>th</sup> Feb 2015 Leonard Nimoy, actor and film director, died. Best known for his role as Spock in the *Star Trek* films and TV series.

**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.

**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 February 2025**

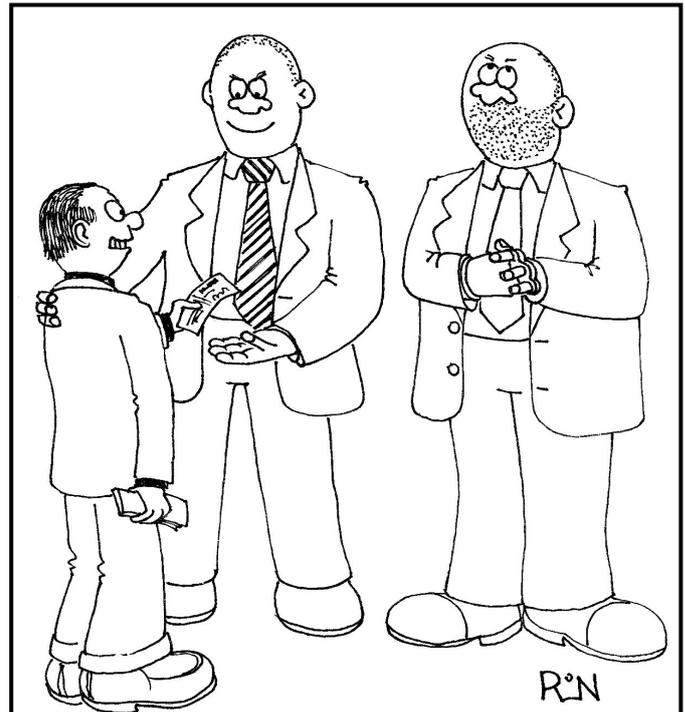
Dear Lord,  
February can be a trying month, but there are special associations too and we thank you for the hope they bring.

In February we remember how Jesus was taken, as a baby, to the Temple. Simeon took Him in his arms and by the power of the Holy Spirit, recognised Him as the Saviour you had sent as a light, to bring revelation to the whole world. And how this world needs your light and revelation in this new year, 2025.

Lord – as we notice more light in the lengthening days of this month, as we see the promise of the Spring in the bobbing heads of the beautiful snowdrops – help us most of all to recognise Jesus as our Light and to trust in Him as our Lord and Saviour.

Thank you, Lord, for the gift of each new day. In Jesus' name. Amen.

By Daphne Kitching



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To: Judith Harris on 2nd February  
Cheryl Dean on 6th February: 60 today!!  
Dennis Davis on 25th February  
Judith Foster on 24th February

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

## The Last Laughs

### Lost in translation

There was an occasion at the European Court of Justice when a flamboyant lawyer declared: "What's sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander." This led the more prosaic interpreter to inform non-English speakers via their headphones that "Counsel has made a jocular remark about poultry". Sounds like it was a turkey!

### BIBLICAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

A judge at Blackfriars Crown Court recounts this story: one Maundy Thursday, the listing officer gave him a case where the defendant's name was Jesus Jerusalem. The Judge, His Honour Timothy Pontius, saw the funny side of this, remarking: "The listing officer stopped short, however, of placing a bowl of water and a hand towel within my easy reach on the bench."

Meanwhile, at the Crown Court at Chester many years ago a case took a little longer than expected and did not finish on Maundy Thursday. The judge, who had a reputation for getting cases finished, announced that instead of resuming the case on the Tuesday after Easter he would sit on the next day which prompted counsel to observe that if he did so he would be the first Judge to sit on Good Friday since Pontius Pilate. The case went ahead on Friday.

### In the tradition of Mrs Malaprop

Mrs Malaprop was a humorous aunt who became mixed up in the schemes and dreams of young lovers in the 1775 comedy of manners "The Rivals" by Richard Brinsley Sheridan. One of the funniest aspects of her character was that she often used an incorrect word to express herself. For example "the pineapple of kindness" (instead of the pinnacle of kindness).

The name comes from the French word *malapropos* which means inappropriate. Some of our politicians have unwittingly provided some delightful examples of malapropisms and here are a few:

The late Lord John Prescott once said that an industrial dispute could be "settled by meditation". He may also

have once said that it was good to be "back on terracotta" but that may be apocryphal.

Another Deputy Prime Minister, Angela Rayner, accused the Tories of "14 years of abstract failure".

But it's not only politicians who are Mrs Malaprops! Numerous people have submitted their favourite malapropisms to "The Times" newspaper recently. We include a selection of them here:

Caroline Picking lost enthusiasm for her niece's offer to cook dinner when she asked if they had any "defecated coconut".

Paul Thomas reported that in a council meeting that a speaker felt he could "speak without fear of contraception".

A Cambridgeshire estate agency advertised a cottage "situated in a conversation area". Not ideal for those who want peace and quiet.

Sue Brandon reported that a neighbour went to an exhibition by Grayson Perry and "came home raving about the brilliant art of Perry Mason".

Corporal Jones in an episode of Dad's Army was asked to drive a fire engine but warned Captain Mainwaring to open the garage doors to let out the engine fumes first "otherwise we'll all be sophisticated".

A university tea lady asked a lecturer during the exams "do the vigilantes want coffee?"

Ted Grant was once warned by his wife that if he kept overeating he would suffer a "culinary thrombosis."

Nick Adams' neighbour's daughter misheard the advertising slogan for Fry's Turkish Delight as "full of yeast and pumice." (For anyone under 60: this should have been "full of eastern promise").

And the Editor of **THE WORD**, as a very young child in the 1950's, overheard his parents discussing joining the Civil Defence. Not wanting to be left out he asked "can I sit on the fence too?"

### The right name for the job?

At Oxford Crown Court there sits one Judge Nott. Inspired by Matthew 7 verse 1, no doubt.



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