



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. 260

AUGUST 2024

ST. JOHN'S PARISH CHURCH

God Centred, Relationship Driven and Life Transforming



August Break

'Summertime and the living is easy.'

George Gershwin's words could be aptly applied to August, when many of us take holidays. It is a month to focus on summertime (weather permitting): family and barbeques; the beach and ice cream; long days with no school. It is a time to wind down from the hectic pace of normal routine.

We have not yet seen much evidence of Summer but August is the time when many of us have a break before the arrival of Autumn in September.

Our church services will continue as usual (see pages 6 to 9) and so will Bible Study and Coffee, Cake and Chat, but **the following regular events will have a break in August and will resume in September:** Thursday evening zoom prayer meetings; Wednesday Growth Groups; Friday Film Nights; Young Adults.

In this issue:

On pages 24 and 26 we include articles on two controversial subjects: the Church of England's position on same-sex relationships, and creating a £100 million fund as reparation for the transatlantic slave trade in the 17th-19th centuries. **THE WORD** does not indulge in party politics or religious politics and we do not promote any views for or against the Church of England's Bishops' and General Synod's position on these matters. We merely report and inform, and our readers may form their own opinions.

Reverend Jennie's first Sunday Service at St John's

After a short period of absence following the untimely death of her mother Jennie will take her first service at St John's on 4th August.

**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 Readers of THE WORD!



I'm pleased to finally be able to write to you after being fully installed, licensed and inducted as vicar of St John's church! As some of you may be

aware, my start was somewhat delayed after my mum sadly passed away. I'd like to say thank you to so many of you, not just for your lovely welcome, prayers, thoughts, cards, cakes and more but also for your prayers for me and my family as we grieve. I've already experienced such a warm and supportive welcome from this great community which has meant a lot to me.

Our sermon series for this month at church is based on new beginnings, inspired by the words from Isaiah 43:19, 'See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.'

When this theme was set alongside this verse I was thinking of an exciting new beginning, a new season both for me and St John's as we begin to work together to share the good news and love of God together in Birkdale.

Then, suddenly hit with an unexpected loss, a different beginning beckoned. Perhaps one not so filled with joy and expectation, but of sadness and pain.

We also, throughout the scriptures, read of many of these 'new beginnings' too. Job comes to mind as one who suffered a grievous and painful new beginning on a large scale, filled with loss. But also, we see perseverance in the face of persecution and martyrdom through Paul and his many times in prison. All but one of the apostles eventually faced death in horrendous ways as, indeed, did Jesus himself.

None are exempt from grief, from loss and from pain in this world. But I take encouragement from the words of Job to God, 'I know that you can do all things, no purpose of yours can be thwarted.' From Paul – 'to live is Christ, and to die is gain' and from the words of Jesus on the cross, 'It is finished'. The time is coming when the pain of this world will come to an end and those in Christ will experience a 'new Heaven and a new Earth'.

So what does it mean that God is 'making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland'? God gives us hope in the midst of every new beginning, whether fully joyful or mixed with pain and sadness. We can trust God when He says, 'Never will I leave you, never will I forsake you.' (Hebrews 13.5) As followers of the Way, we can live for Christ, knowing that He has overcome, it is finished and we can continue in each new beginning with hope. God's plans will never be thwarted and He is working for our good.

Whatever new beginning you might be facing, I pray that you know that God is with you, He will never leave you.

Lots of love, in Christ,
Jennie xx

Rev. Alex Galbraith's Crowdfunding

Our readers will recall that Rev. Alex Galbraith recently embarked on reading the New Testament in one day—in braille—with the aim of raising £1000 for his church of St Francis at Kew. In fact he has raised **£2871** to date! A remarkable achievement. He thanks everyone who donated to this effort.

Midweek Communion

Starting on 4th September there will be an additional Midweek Communion Service each month at St John's.

These services will be on the First and Third Wednesdays at 10.30am.

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	Mrs. Janette Law (565951)
Wardens' Assistant::	Miss Lucy Wright (553977)	St. John's Brownies:	Mrs. Helen Jones and
PCC Treasurer:	Mrs. Sylvia Kent (564071)	Brownie Guiders:	Mrs. Lesley Scott
PCC Secretary:	Mrs. Sally Wright (553977)	St. John's Rainbows:	Mrs. Lesley Scott
Parish Hall Secretary:	Mrs. Jean Morris (564206)	Church Flowers:	Mrs. Cath Whiteside (07732 993025)
Electoral Roll Officer:	Stuart Harris (563789)	Magazine Editor:	Stuart Baker (560518)
Deanery Synod Reps:	Clive Morris (564206) Tim Wright (553977) Stuart Baker (560518)	Magazine Printer:	Mrs. Christine Baker (560518)
Safeguarding Officer:	Mrs. Abbie Holden (07961003359)	Notice boards, I.T, Website developer, Publicity designer:	Mrs. Sally Wright (553977)
Safeguarding Assistant Recruiter:	Stuart Baker (560518)	Buildings Inspector:	David Halsall (07790 822343)
		Eco Champions:	Mrs. Elizabeth Rothwell and Duncan Rothwell (564192)

The Doings of the PCC

The PCC met on 17th July. After opening with prayer the PCC received a report concerning the long-awaited work on the west wall of the church. This has now started and will take several weeks. Perished bricks are being replaced and sections of the wall are being repointed.

The gas heater in the small hall is reaching the end of its life and the PCC discussed how it shall be replaced. It was decided that the heater will be removed and that it will be replaced with two modern electric heaters.

The PCC also received a report from Deanery Synod representative Clive Morris concerning the possibility of a new method of assessing Parish Shares being introduced later this year. Without going into detail at this stage it is possible that Parish Shares will not be assessed on the traditional basis of a parish's ability to pay but on the basis of whether a parish has a vicar of its own or shares a vicar with other parishes. Our Deanery Synod representatives will formulate our parish's response to this and will make submissions at the next meeting of the Deanery Synod in October.

Our Safeguarding Policy was updated and approved by the PCC.

The next meeting of the PCC will be on a date to be fixed in September.

We record the deaths of Reverend Jennie Hardy's mother on Friday 28th June; and Mrs Pat Gregson who died on Sunday 21st July; and Colin Paterson who died on 24th July after a long illness. On behalf of all our readers **THE WORD** sends condolences to the families of all the departed at this sad time.

Thursday Evening Prayers on 5th & 19th September on zoom.

The meetings will start at 7.30pm and last half an hour. If there is anything which readers would like to be included in the prayers please contact Jennie Hardy, Roy Doran, Christine Baker, Clive Morris, or Sally, Tim or Lucy Wright.



The number of those joining these prayer meetings has gradually increased. Do join us if you can. See page 29 for details about logging in on zoom by computer or by telephone.

St John's Church Birkdale

BIBLE STUDY GROUP

**NEXT MEETING:
14th AUGUST**

2nd & 4th
Wednesdays
2-4pm
St John's small hall

Growth Groups

2nd & 4th Wednesdays, 7.30pm
@ 32 Hartley Crescent

*Finding out more
together*

**NEXT MEETING:
11th SEPTEMBER**

WE'D LOVE YOU TO JOIN US

*We believe in
the power of
prayer*

**NEXT MEETING:
5th SEPTEMBER**

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

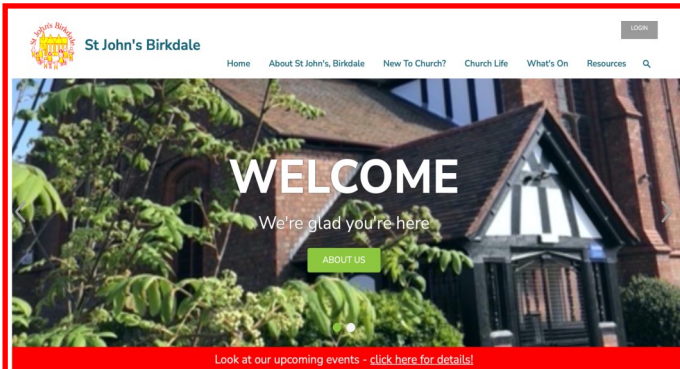
ST JOHN'S CHURCH, ST JOHN'S RD, BIRKDALE PR8 4JP

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

**NEXT MEETING:
9th AUGUST**



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 INVITE YOU
TO JOIN US IN OUR

SOCIAL EVENTS 2024

Please contact Christine 07821
982477 or Sally 07800 550097



Friday 26 January @ 7pm

Burns Night Supper

Friday 23 February @ 7pm

Late, Late Pancake Party

Friday 22 March @ 7pm

Andy Dean's Quiz Night

Friday 19 April @ 7pm

Italian Food Night

Friday 17 May @ 6.30pm

Car Treasure Hunt

Saturday 15 June @ 11-2pm

Summer Fair & Afternoon Tea

Saturday 20 July @ 2pm

Strawberry Tea

Saturday 20 September @ 7pm

Harvest Supper

Friday 18 October @ 7pm

Music 'in the' Hall

Saturday 16 November @ 7pm

Barn Dance and Bangers

Friday 6 December 6-9pm

Christmas Tree Festival and
Christmas Fair

Saturday 7 December 10-3pm

YOUNG ADULT SOCIALS

2024

Saturday 29th June

Walk @ Rivington

♥ Saturday 13th July

Pizza Making @ Lucy's

Friday 13th September

Bowling

Sunday 6th October

Pumpkin Picking

Saturday 16th November

Barn Dance

Saturday 7th December

Christmas fair followed by food

St John's Church, Birkdale

Worship on the
Tenth Sunday after
Trinity

SUNDAY 4th AUGUST
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 Tenth Sunday after Trinity

Lord of heaven and earth, as Jesus taught his disciples to be persistent in prayer, give us patience and courage never to lose hope, but always to bring our prayers before you; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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

**Our Saviour, Jesus-
A New Covenant**

The Text: Jeremiah ch.31 vv.31-33

31. "Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah,
32. not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the Lord.
33. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people."

An Introduction to the Book of The Bible: The Books of Kings 1 and 2

by Canon Paul Hardingham

1 & 2 Kings is a single literary work telling the history of Israel's monarchy from the end of David's reign until the Babylonian exile following the fall of Jerusalem (586 BC). After Solomon's reign, Israel was divided into two kingdoms: Israel to the north and Judah in the south. In the north 20 rulers reigned over 210 years until the fall of Samaria (722 BC). In the southern kingdom there were also 20 rulers, spanning a period of 345 years.

This account is not like reading a modern history book. The author views the story through the lens of God's relationship with His people. The welfare of Israel depended on their leaders' trust in and obedience to God, e.g. Solomon building the Temple, as well as listening to the prophets e.g. Elijah and Elisha. The kings who receive the most attention are those whose disobedience is greatest (e.g. Ahab and Manasseh) or those who truly follow God (eg. Hezekiah and Josiah).

The book ends with exile in Babylon, fulfilling God's warning of the consequences of disobedience for both kingdoms (cf Dt 28:64-68). However, this doesn't mean that there is no hope for the future. At the end of the book, Jehoiachin is released from prison in Babylon, and he is given a place of honour (2Ki 25:27-30). The future remains open for God to fulfill His promises to the house of David.

'We begin to realise that if God's sovereignty is never cancelled out by the so deeply sin-flawed leaders ('kings') in both our culture and our church, we can quite cheerfully exult in God's sovereignty as it is being exercised in all the circumstantial details of the actual present.' (E Peterson).

Worship on the
Eleventh Sunday
after Trinity

SUNDAY 11th AUGUST
10.30am service IN CHURCH and
via zoom & phone

Collect for the Eleventh Sunday after Trinity

God of glory, the end of our searching, help us to lay aside all that prevents us from seeking your kingdom, and to give all that we have to gain the pearl beyond all price, through our Saviour Jesus Christ.

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

**New beginnings –
Peter**

The Text: John ch.21 vv.15-17

15 When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Feed my lambs."

16 He said to him a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Tend my sheep."

17 He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" and he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep."

Worship on the Twelfth
Sunday after Trinity

SUNDAY 18th AUGUST
10.30am service IN CHURCH
and via zoom & phone

Collect for the Twelfth Sunday after Trinity

Almighty and everlasting God, you are always more ready to hear than we to pray and to give more than either we desire or deserve: pour down upon us the abundance of your mercy, forgiving us those things of which our conscience is afraid and giving us those good things which we are not worthy to ask but through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

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

**New beginnings –
Making It Last**

The Text: Nehemiah ch.9 vv.1-3

1 Now on the twenty-fourth day of this month the people of Israel were assembled with fasting and in sackcloth, and with earth on their heads.

2 And the Israelites^a separated themselves from all foreigners and stood and confessed their sins and the iniquities of their fathers.

3 And they stood up in their place and read from the Book of the Law of the Lord their God for a quarter of the day; for another quarter of it they made confession and worshiped the Lord their God.

Midweek Book of
Common Prayer Holy
Communion



WEDNESDAY
21st AUGUST
10.30am service
IN CHURCH

Worship on the Thirteenth
Sunday after Trinity

SUNDAY 25th AUGUST
10.30am service IN CHURCH
and via zoom & phone

Collect for the Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity

Almighty God, who called your Church to bear witness that you were in Christ reconciling the world to yourself: help us to proclaim the good news of your love, that all who hear it may be drawn to you; through him who was lifted up on the cross, and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

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

**His church -
A Place Of New Beginning**

The Text: Isaiah ch.43 vv.18-19

18 "Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old.

19 Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert."

THE ROOF BOSSES

EDITED HIGHLIGHTS

By Dave Walker

GENEROUS
BENEFACTOR



MYTHICAL
CREATURE



EXHORTATION
TO LIVE A
BETTER LIFE



SCARY
FIGURE



DEAD
VICAR



REMINDER
TO TURN OFF
THE URN




MIRROR USED
TO LOOK AT
ROOF BOSSES



MISUSE OF
MIRROR USED
TO LOOK AT
ROOF BOSSES





ST JOHN'S CHURCH BIRKDALE

HARVEST SUPPER

*Friday 20 September
@ 7pm in the hall*

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

**TICKETS £10
FROM CHRISTINE OR SALLY**

Please let us know of any food allergies when booking

The Licensing Service: revisited

In our July issue we included some photographs of the Licensing Service on 26th June when the Bishop of Liverpool, clergy, the congregation and representatives from the community warmly welcomed Jennie to Birkdale.

Below are some more photos of the event, kindly captured by Zackary Downey of [@ZEDshoots](#)



Lucy Wright welcoming us all



It was a very hot evening!



Jennie with the key to the church!



The Bishop giving the church into Jennie's care



Our 10th Incumbent and the Wardens, Clive Morris and Tim Wright



*How many of the previous 9 Incumbents can **you** remember? If any reader has a photo of Reverends Hughes, Marshall, Wright or Yandell please let the Editor see them..*



ST JOHN'S BIRKDALE Strawberry Cream Tea



On Saturday 20th July the weather omens were not good. Rain had been forecast and it seemed likely that the 60 people who were to come to the Strawberry Cream Tea would have to be squeezed into the garage at Christine and Stuart's home. There was much praying for sunshine! Tables and chairs had been positioned in the garage but at 1.00pm there was a break in the clouds, the sun appeared and (almost miraculously) the forecast changed to give us a few hours before the rain would start. Tables and chairs were hastily brought out and between 2.00pm and 4.00pm we enjoyed a lovely afternoon in the garden.

Whilst we enjoyed our tea we were grateful to be treated to excellent entertainment by the Ukelele Minstrels who performed a medley of four songs including one by Status Quo! Who would have thought it possible? We look forward to Colin Jackson and the Ukelele Minstrels performing at St John's in the future.



Ukelele Minstrels or Garage Band?



Enjoying the sunshine whilst it lasted



There were a few spots of rain shortly after 4.00 o'clock but this gave us just enough time to clear everything away. And then a few minutes later the heavens opened and there was a deluge.

How lucky we were that we had been able to sit outside and enjoy tea, strawberries and company in the sun.

Christine and Stuart thank all those who helped to serve the tea and put away the furniture. It was a very nice occasion which brought together many of our congregation, past and present, and friends.



Watch the pages of **THE WORD** each month for details of future events.

Mistaken Values

There is a beautiful picture, by Gustave Doré, of a woodland scene, with its solemn growth and undergrowth, its warm, brooding twilights, its glimmer of broken sunbeams, and with a still pool in which a male deer is beholding itself as in a glass. The buck is admiring its beautiful antlers, but complains bitterly that nature has given it legs so slender and disproportionate.

Shortly afterwards the creature, hearing the deep baying of hounds, makes off in terror and finds that whereas its beautiful antlers delay its speed and threaten its capture, its safety is secured by the slim legs which enable it to fly as swift as the wind. The picture, which illustrates a fable by la Fontaine (17th century French author), illustrates also how we foolishly admire the ornamental, and despise the useful, and how often our estimate of values is mistaken.





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

On The Perils of Swinging Incense

The Rectory,
St James the Least of All

My dear Nephew Darren,

Well, at least you tried. Filling in for another colleague who was away on holiday was kind of you; that it was somewhere with a high church tradition was adventurous of you. But just because something is worth doing, must you do it to *such* excess?

I can remember the first time I saw you having to use incense; you held the thurible as though you had just been presented with a dead rat. This time, however, I am told that you heated so much charcoal that the congregation thought you were going to hold a barbecue rather than burn incense.

The church warden was impressed with how quickly everyone knelt down, as you went by. If it was in more of an effort to stay clear of your thurible than to pray, well never mind, at least they were on their knees. And I am entirely on your side; you were not to know that their new fire protection system included automatic sprinklers, activated when too much smoke is detected. I am sure most of them would have dried out by Evensong.

You told me that you had not been sure what to do with the thurible when you reached the front. But swinging it so enthusiastically that the chain broke and catapulted several pounds weight of red-hot brass through one of their stained glass windows was really not the best solution. Never mind. I am sure the insurance company will be sympathetic.

But surely you knew that smells also implies bells? So why the panic when the server rang the bells in your ear beside the altar? To have promptly dropped the chalice and shouted, 'fire!' was surely something of an over-reaction? Especially as it meant that the verger re-started the sprinkler system. I am told that several in the congregation left church looking as if they had taken part in a mass baptism, involving full immersion whilst fully clothed.

I am told that you actually even wore full robes, rather than your customary T-shirt and jeans. Just one tip: should you ever wear them again, you might wish to wear the chasuble right side out. But that is a small point compared to the 'hat', as you called it. My dear nephew, wherever did you get it from? That is only worn by a bishop – and even then, the two tabs hang at the back, not over your face.

I am told that some of the congregation feared that in some frightful 'fresh expression' of episcopal rule, you had suddenly been handed control of the diocese. With the Church of England in its present woeful state, I suppose anything is possible.

Your loving uncle, Eustace

The musings of Zsa Zsa Gabor:

"Husbands are like fires - they go out when unattended" (March 28, 1960)

"I never hated a man enough to give him his diamonds back." (August 28 1957)

"I am a marvellous housekeeper. Every time I leave a man, I keep his house." (Attributed)

"A man in love is incomplete until he has married. Then he's finished." (March 28, 1960)

"I believe in large families: every woman should have at least three husbands." (Attributed)



THE NEW SONG

By Dave Walker.

WE SHOULD SING MORE
NEW SONGS, VICAR



BUT NOT LIKE THAT ONE THIS
MORNING - NOONE KNEW IT



WAYS TO HELP THE CONGREGATION LEARN A NEW SONG

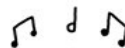


SOUNDTRACK TO
THE LATEST
PARISH TIKTOK

AGAIN!



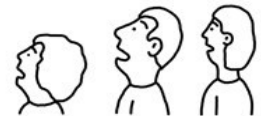
OLD-FASHIONED
REPETITION



ASSIGNED CHOIR
MEMBER REPEATEDLY
DEMONSTRATES



EACH LINE
COMING UP
SHORTLY
AFTER YOU
NEEDED
TO HAVE
SUNG IT



WORDS ON
THE LARGE
KARAOKE SCREEN

WORD SEARCH

Solution on page 21

Remembering John Bunyan

After the Bible, John Bunyan's Christian allegory, the *Pilgrim's Progress*, is one of the most celebrated and widely read books in the English language. It has been translated into more than 100 languages around the world and is a Christian classic. Names of people and places from its pages are known wherever English is spoken: Mr Great-Heart, Mr Valiant-for-Truth, Giant Despair, Madame Bubble, the Slough of Despond, Vanity Fair, the Delectable Mountains, the Hill Difficulty and the Celestial City. Bunyan was a popular preacher of Baptist conviction, but because of his opposition to the Established Church and because he did not have a Church of England preaching licence, he was imprisoned in 1661. It was in prison that he wrote *Pilgrim's Progress*. He is remembered by the worldwide Church on 30th August.

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

JOHN
BUNYAN
PILGRIMS
PROGRESS
GREAT

HEART
VALIANT
TRUTH
GIANT
DESPAIR

MADAME
BUBBLE
SLOUGH
DESPOND
VANITY

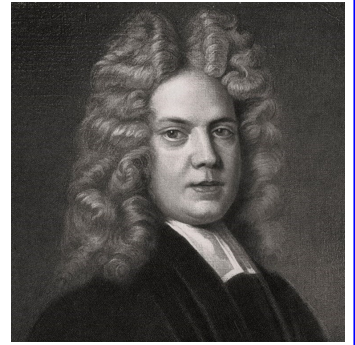
FAIR
DELECTABLE
MOUNTAINS
HILL
DIFFICULTY

CELESTIAL
CITY
PRISON
PREACHING
LICENSE

Colourful Clerics

Continuing our occasional glimpses into the lives of colourful clergymen we look this time at a Vicar who triggered a riot and a landslide General Election victory!

Dr Henry Sacheverell [right], who is almost completely unheard of today, was a popular celebrity in the early years of the 18th century. His grandfather and father had both been Anglican priests. He was educated at Marlborough Grammar School and Magdalen College, Oxford where he graduated with a Master's degree in 1695.



When he presented himself to the Bishop of Lichfield not long after ordination, the Bishop queried Sacheverell's use of Latin. The young deacon responded that "it was better Latin than he (the Bishop) or his chaplains could manage." Notwithstanding this arrogance and rudeness in 1696 he was appointed chaplain to Sir Charles Holt and curate for Aston parish church. However, when the Aston living fell vacant, Holt refused to appoint Sacheverell. Holt's wife years later claimed this was because Sacheverell "was exceedingly light and foolish, without any of that gravity and seriousness which became one in holy orders; that he was fitter to make a player than a clergyman; that in particular, he was dangerous in a family, since he would among the very servants jest upon the torments of Hell".

Sacheverell first achieved notability as a High Church preacher in May 1702 when he gave a sermon entitled *The Political Union*, on the necessity of the union between church and state. He made his mark in Oxford where he spent much of his early career. The Archbishop of Canterbury was "much troubled" by his subsequent appointment to St Saviour's in Southwark but his popularity among lay people grew and grew. One admirer was the new Lord Mayor of London, Sir Samuel Garrard who, in 1709, asked Sacheverell to preach at one of the first great services of his mayoral year: the commemoration of Gunpowder Treason on 5 November.

Normally, these sermons took the form of crude anti-Catholic rhetoric, designed to whip up hatred of Roman Catholics. But he took as his text on which to preach, 2 Corinthians 11.26, where Paul writes of being "in perils among false brethren". After briefly talking about the Gunpowder Plot, Sacheverell turned to the real target of his ire: those who sought to undermine the Church of England from within: the "false brethren" of his day, asserting that the Church had given positions of power to people who were totally opposed to the worship, doctrine, and position of the Church of England itself and that it had got into bed with a governing class that, in fact, hated it and sought its destruction and who "neither believe her faith, own her mission, submit to her discipline, or comply with her liturgy". As he put it, "if the Church can't be pulled down, it may be blown up."

The powerful elite in Parliament brought Sacheverell before the House of Commons in 1710 and he was put on trial for impeachment. This was a major news story in its day. He was found guilty and suspended from preaching for three years and thereby achieved the status of a martyr and "saviour of the church." Riots erupted across the land, leading to the passing of The Riot Act of 1714. Unrest grew. Queen Anne's Whig first minister was dismissed. A General Election was called. The Tory Opposition took the cleric's side, and won by a crushing landslide. Bells were rung and toasts were drunk across the nation to the man of the hour: Dr Sacheverell.

This celebrated priest died on 5 June 1724 at his house in Highgate which was later occupied by the poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge and is now owned by the celebrity model Kate Moss. A very different celebrity!

Sources: various, condensed by Wikipedia. And Fergus Butler-Gallie 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 and 3 Two of the disciples who witnessed the transfiguration of Jesus (Luke 9:28) (4,3,5)

3 See 1 Across

8 'Let us draw — to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith' (Hebrews 10:22) (4)

9 O Simon is (anag.) (8)

11 Form of government under the direct rule of God or his agents (10)

14 How Jesus found his disciples when he returned to them after praying in Gethsemane (Luke 22:45) (6)

15 In The Pilgrim's Progress, the name of the meadow into which Christian strayed, which led to Doubting Castle (2-4)

17 Glad sin rat (anag.) (10)

20 Spinal column (Leviticus 3:9) (8)

21 Valley of the Balsam Tree with a reputation of being a waterless place (Psalm 84:6) (4)

22 'The oracle of Balaam son of Beor, the oracle of one — — sees clearly' (Numbers 24:3) (5,3)

23 Adam and Eve's third son (Genesis 4:25) (4)

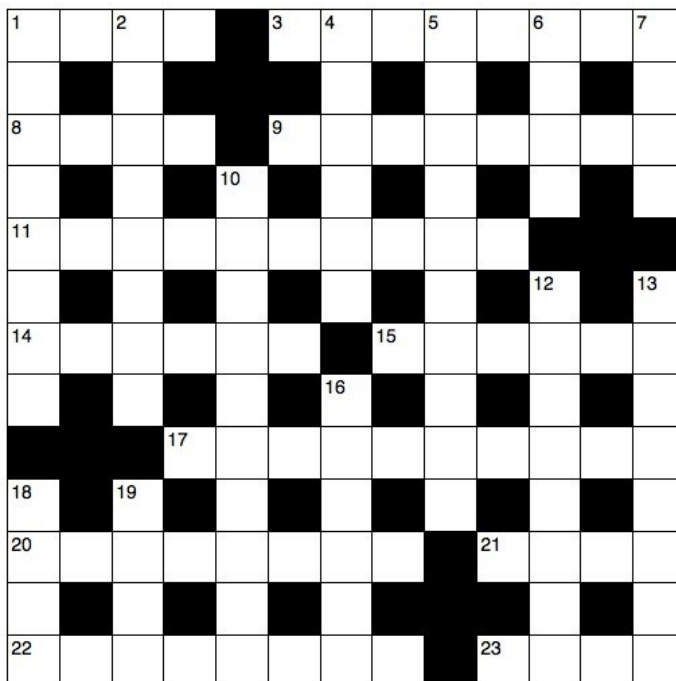
Down

1 David's great friend (1 Samuel 20:17) (8)

2 'The Lord... will bring me safely to his — kingdom' (2 Timothy 4:18) (8)

4 'I, Daniel, mourned for three weeks. I ate no choice food; — — or wine touched my lips' (Daniel 10:3) (2,4)

5 Seeking to vindicate (Job 32:2) (10)



6 Female servant (Isaiah 24:2) (4)

7 'For Christ died for — once for all' (1 Peter 3:18) (4)

10 'Offering spiritual sacrifices — to God through Jesus Christ' (1 Peter 2:5) (10)

12 Jesus said that some people had renounced this 'because of the kingdom of heaven' (Matthew 19:12) (8)

13 One of the three men thrown into the furnace for refusing to worship Nebuchadnezzar's golden image (Daniel 3:20) (8)

16 'You have — of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry' (Luke 12:19) (6)

18 'There before me was a white horse! Its rider held — —, and he was given a crown' (Revelation 6:2) (1,3)

19 Equipment to Charity Hospitals Overseas (1,1,1,1)

In our Book of Remembrance in August

2nd Elizabeth Jackson, 1960

3rd Albert Wright, 1972

4th Ernest Wright, 1966

Robert Randles, 1999

6th Betty Hartwell, 2021

7th Betty Duffield, 2013

8th Joan Tait, 1993

9th Louisa Short, 2002

10th May Evans, 1996

11th Thomas Macfarlin, 1980

Anne Hall, 1997

13th Cecele Welch, 2010

15th Elizabeth Livesley, 1979

Henry Baker, 2007

17th James Foster, 1985

19th Joan Horrocks, 1990

24th Agnes Thomas, 1990

26th Richard Livesley, 1967

27th Eunice Wall, 1987

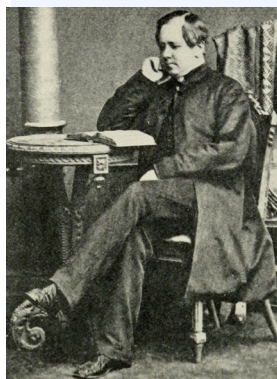
David Moss, 2017

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, John, 3, And James, 8, Near, 9, Omission, 11, Theocratic, 14, Asleep, 15, By-path, 17, Stalingrad, 20, Backbone, 21, Baca, 22, Whose eye, 23, Seth.
DOWN: 1, Jonathan, 2, Heavenly, 4, No meat, 5, Justifying, 6, Maid, 7, Sins, 10, Acceptable, 12, Marriage, 13, Shadrach, 16, Plenty, 18, A bow, 19, ECHO.

The Story behind "The King of Love My Shepherd Is"



Sir Henry Williams Baker [left] was born in 1821. He went up to Trinity College, Cambridge, and obtained his B.A. in 1844, the same year that he was ordained and in 1851 he was appointed to the living of Monkland, near Leominster where he

remained for the remaining 26 years of his life. This small village in the Welsh Marches would not have been a demanding parish, and living alone in his rambling old vicarage with his housekeeper (for he held to the doctrine of celibacy among the clergy), he was able to devote much of his time to his great interest in writing and compiling hymns.

In 1852 he wrote his first hymn, "Oh, what if we are Christ's." Seven years later he succeeded to the third baronetcy on the death of his father, but he was far more interested in the compilation of the first edition of 'Hymns Ancient and Modern' which appeared in 1861.

From the middle of the 19th century the High Church wing of the Church of England had finally been persuaded that hymns had an important part to play in worship. The Evangelicals already had their books which were very popular with their congregations, and between 1852 and 1857 no less than six hymnals were produced. An element of competition between the hymnals developed, and it was felt that the best of all the books could be pooled into a common book which would satisfy the needs of all High Church congregations. The idea was to include the best of the traditional hymns with more modern ones of obvious merit.

A small committee was formed to set this project in motion, with Sir Henry Baker the guiding light. In October 1857 an advertisement appeared in the Manchester Guardian which announced: "The editors of several

existing hymnals, being engaged with others in the compilation of a book which they hope may secure a more general acceptance from churchmen, would be very thankful for any suggestions from persons interested in the matter."

More than 200 letters were received, and as a result a large committee held its inaugural meeting in the clergy house of St. Barnabas, Pimlico, with Sir Henry in the chair. Reverend John Keble (after whom Keble College, Oxford is named) took a great interest in the project, and gave the advice: "If you wish to make a hymn book for the use of the Church, make it comprehensive."

Sir Henry would stand for no nonsense from fellow members of his committee. He put the Bishop of Lincoln firmly in his place when he suggested that some of the hymns for the proposed new hymnal were heretical. When Sir John Stainer, the organist of St. Paul's Cathedral, failed to produce a tune for "There's a Friend for little children" by the deadline set, he was confined to his hotel bedroom until his task was accomplished!

In November 1859 a small paper-backed book of 138 hymns was produced for temporary use. The musical editor was Dr. William Henry Monk, organist at King's College, London. The completed original edition of "Hymns Ancient and Modern", with 273 hymns, appeared in 1861.

Some of Baker's hymns that appeared in that first edition are as popular now as they were then. These include "The King of love my Shepherd is" and "O praise ye the Lord!" As was to be expected, the Evangelical wing regarded the hymnal as odious in the extreme, and it was looked upon with suspicion and dislike in other quarters as well, some considering it "an offence to sober churchmanship." But overall the hymnal met with remarkable success. 350,000 copies were sold in the first three years, which encouraged the compilers to expand it in 1868 into a book of 386 hymns.

For the first time in the new edition hymns appeared by Newman and Bishop Christopher Wordsworth, and Cecil Frances Alexander's "Once in royal David's city" and "There is a green hill far away" made their introduction.

Although most of the tunes in the original version were traditional, there were works by important contemporary musicians including W.H. Monk, who is said to have composed the tune for "Abide with me" in ten minutes.

Baker died at the relatively early age of 56, much loved by the people of Monkland and by his associates in the High Church movement. He was

buried at Monkland, where stained glass windows in the church are his memorial, as well as in All Saints' Church, Notting Hill.

As he lay on his deathbed his last audible words were the third verse of his beautiful hymn based on the 23rd Psalm, "The King of love my Shepherd is:"

"Perverse and foolish oft I strayed,
But yet in love he sought me;
And on his shoulder gently laid, And
home rejoicing brought me."

Source material: "Every Hymn Has A Story" volume 2, by John Large.

And with thanks to Judith Foster for providing it.

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

Reflecting Faith: Church towers

I want to think about the highest part of the church building - the tower. This is the aspect that is most recognisable from a distance; the element that almost defines the church building.

Have you ever seen a church building without a tower? Most religions use this same structure on their buildings, so clearly there must be overlapping reasons for this. But there is not just one design even within religions.

The structures of all buildings are dependent on the materials available, the architectural knowledge, the purpose, the fashion of the day as well as the finance available.

Norfolk churches in particular have 'special' towers. There are around - pun intended! - 181 round church towers in England of which 126 are in Norfolk. They were built from as early as the ninth century onwards.

In the medieval period, churches were the highest buildings around. Cathedrals with spires were visible from miles away, and it was done to point the worshippers' eyes toward heaven.

Editor's note:

What is the difference between a spire and a steeple? These words tend to be used interchangeably to mean the same thing but they are slightly different. The word "spire" is of old German or Dutch origin meaning the tip of a blade of grass and is used to describe the tall conical or pyramid-shaped structure built on a roof or tower. The word "steeple" is a tower which often houses bells and which often supports a spire.

At St John's we do not have a separate tower. Joseph Pearce in his book "The Spires, Towers and Choirs of Southport" (1922) included some brief architectural notes which had been provided by the first Vicar of our parish, Rev Charles Middleton, who recorded that "...we have a bell turret astride the roof in place of a tower or spire, reminding one of the Flèche in French work..." In the same book he noted that the church has a "...spirelet .. which is slender and is not without some elegance." The turret and spirelet are clad in green Westmorland slates. Our bell turret and our spire together comprise a steeple.

A very old engraving of our church shows that it originally had a metal cockerel weather vane on the top of the spire. This has long since gone, possibly when the lightning conductor was installed. If any of our readers can remember what happened to it or have a photo of it please write to the Editor.

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God in the Sciences

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

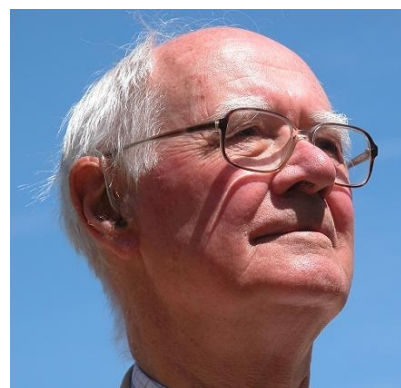
Physicist and Priest: John Polkinghorne (1930-2021)

At the age of 48 the Cambridge Professor John Polkinghorne decided he'd done his bit for physics and that it was time for a different sort of adventure. Resigning his academic position, he trained for ordination in the Church of England. In an interview 40 years later he said, "It's one thing to go to church on Sundays but to give up a professorship and train for something else – that was a bit more than a gesture...I think a lot of people realised I was a religious person but they didn't expect me to take it quite that seriously...People were saying to me, 'Oh John what are you up to?' They mostly weren't thinking so much about my becoming a clergyman but just the fact that I was a Christian." (From *Test of Faith, Paternoster*, 2009)

John saw his work in science as a Christian vocation, and he felt a responsibility to use his talents in that area. Once ordained he found himself thoroughly engaged in the conversation about science and religion. One of his main messages was that "I'm not a vegetarian butcher. There is a cousinly relationship between thinking about theology and thinking about science."

When asked for a Bible passage to appear at the end of his 2009 interview John chose Colossians 1:15–20: 'He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born over all creation. For by Him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. And He is the head of the body, the church; He is the beginning and the first-born from among the dead, so that in everything He might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through His blood, shed on the cross.'

John's explanation for his choice speaks volumes to anyone interested in the science-faith dialogue. "I value this passage because it speaks of the cosmic significance of Christ, the One in whom all things hold together and who redeems all things (notice, not just all people) by the blood of His cross. Here meet my deepest religious beliefs and my strongest scientific concerns."



Professor John Polkinghorne



"After evensong, Barry liked to slip into plane clothes"



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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).

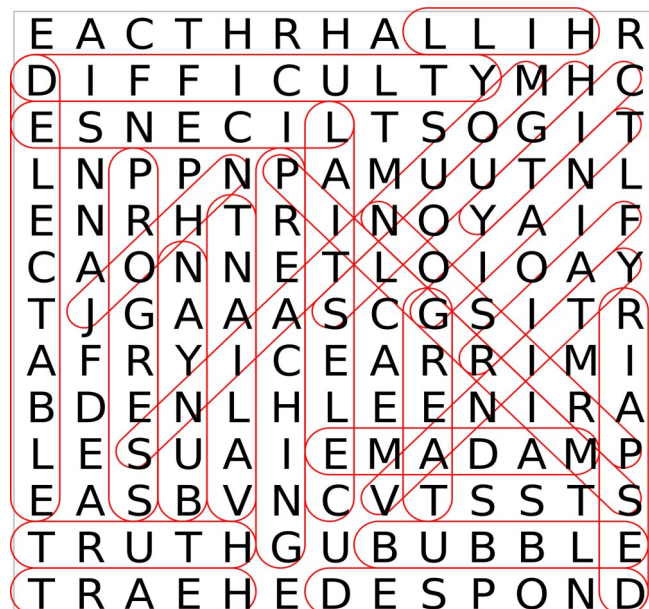


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Aidan, the man who brought Christianity to England

31st August is the feast of St Aidan, who brought Christianity to northern England. He is a strong contender for the title of the first English bishop. Not that honours meant a great deal to this austere but captivating character.

In 635 he came to Northumbria at the invitation of the local ruler, Oswald. Oswald had spent several years of his childhood on Iona, and when he succeeded to the throne of his northern kingdom he was shrewd enough to realise that the Christian faith would be an ideal unifying force to pacify rival tribes of warlords.

Oswald's invitation was not immediately successful. The first missionary from Iona returned in despair, claiming that the barbarity of the Northumbrians made them unconvertible. But as Aidan listened, he felt the unmistakable call of God to try again.

"Perhaps you were too harsh on them," he found himself suggesting to the travel-stained missionary. Shortly afterwards, Aidan found himself at the head of a party of brothers heading for Northumbria. He was never to see his beloved Iona again.

The monks made the long journey to Northumbria on foot, singing psalms as they went. Their need to ward off the powers of evil with prayer was genuine, for these were dangerous times to travel through remote country unarmed. They arrived safely at Oswald's castle in Bamburgh, where he offered them lavish hospitality and assumed that they would 'found' their community there. However, the brothers realised that to live under the king's protection would make it difficult to avoid the world's temptations and establish a rapport with the local people. They saw the tidal island of Lindisfarne on the horizon and chose it as their base. The rest, as the saying goes, is history.

Aidan was much loved as a teacher and evangelist; though stern in his own self-discipline, he was prepared to travel to the most inaccessible villages, where he cared for the local people with compassion and gentleness. In time, his influence grew, and noble people joined the stream of visitors to Lindisfarne.

After Oswald's death in 642, his brother Oswin succeeded him as king. Oswin was concerned about Aidan's habit of walking everywhere.

The saint was ageing rapidly, his body weakened by years of harsh fasting and exposure to the elements. Oswin wondered what would happen to him one day on the road, and also he felt that such a lowly means of travel was not appropriate for a bishop. So, he gave Aidan one of his finest horses, complete with a beautifully worked saddle and bridle.

Aidan did not feel able to risk offending the king by spurning his generosity, but he rode out of the palace with a heavy heart. He knew that people would relate to him differently now that he had the trappings of affluence, and that it would be dangerous to stop and rest with such valuable belongings beside him.



The king had intended to give him comfort, but his gesture had had the opposite effect. Aidan had learnt that possessions, and the need to protect them, make it more difficult to follow God with an undivided heart. The story goes that he gave the horse, complete with saddle, to the first beggar he met outside the palace gates.

A more pragmatic Christian might have reasoned that keeping on the right side of Oswin would lead to opportunities that were too valuable to risk. Indeed, the king was angry when he heard what Aidan had done. "That horse was fit for a king, not for some vagabond," he protested. "I could have found you an old nag if you wanted to give it away." Aidan's reply was simply, "What do you think, O King? Is the son of a mare worth more in your eyes than the Son of God?"

There was an awkward silence; then the King removed his sword, knelt at Aidan's feet and asked his forgiveness. When he returned to the banqueting table, it was with a beaming smile. Sadly, he too was to perish in battle shortly afterwards; these were violent times. Yet Oswin, whose culture demanded that he should appear all-powerful in the eyes of his followers, had been publicly humbled by the integrity of a simple monk who had challenged his values.

WHAT IF...?

By Dennis Davis

Dennis continues his research into the religious wars, terror, persecution, murder, rebellion and turmoil after the Reformation. It is his aim to show what was done in the past for the religious freedom we have today. What if this had never happened? Our world would be a different place today.

Plots, Poison and Treachery

An attempt was made on the lives of the Prince and the Duke of Anjou. An Italian called Busa and a Spaniard called Salsela were detained, arrested and they confessed that they had been hired by Parma. Basu killed himself. Salsela was sent to Paris where he was brutally executed.

It was thought that Lamoral Egmont had been implicated in this plot against the Prince who was his guardian; a hollow ring filled with poison had been found. He was imprisoned but his life was saved by the Prince's intercessions and with the Egmonts' near relationship with the French Queen it was covered up and he was allowed to leave for France.

A plot to incorporate the Netherlands was made by the Duke of Anjou. It was fixed for the 15th January 1583. The French Commandant of Dunkirk secured Ostend. Dixmunde also fell. The Commander was captured by some Patriots on his way to capture Bruges who had wind of what was happening and the whole population was on the alert. The French retired. The Duke of Anjou had vehemently declared his loyalty to the Prince but violated it as soon as it had been made.

French cavalry advanced through the streets. The alarmed citizens threw up barricades. Both Catholics and Protestants together repulsed the French who had started to loot and they were soon overwhelmed and attempted to retreat. Anjou had ridden out before his routed soldiers. Nearly 20,000 Frenchmen perished of which 250 were nobles of high rank while Anjou looked on from a distance. He was bitterly reproached for his treason, and so ended the French Fury.

The fourth time the Prince of Orange married his bride was the widow of

the Seigneur de Teligny who was the daughter of the illustrious Huguenot Admiral Coligny, who had died in the St Bartholomew Day massacre. In April 1584, Hans Hanzoon was executed for attempting to blow up the Prince by placing Gun Powder under the prince's seat in Church. There were five attempts on the Prince and a sixth was soon to follow.

Balthazar Gerard, a fanatical Catholic, had designs of murdering the Prince from birth. He devised a plan of passing himself off as the son of an executed Calvinist so as to gain a place of service to the Prince. Palma encouraged him and promised to pay the reward to him or his heirs. His chance came when he was asked to deliver an important dispatch to the Prince. To his astonishment he was summoned to attend the Prince. On leaving he loitered near the Prince's house and he was asked by a sergeant as to why he was loitering there. In reply he said he wanted to go to a nearby Church but his clothes were too ragged. The sergeant reported this to an officer who told the Prince who ordered that he be given a sum of money. Gerard went out and bought two pistols from a soldier with the money the Prince had given to him. On the next day he hid behind an archway near the Prince's house, and when the Prince passed he discharged the pistols into the Prince's chest. As he fell he exclaimed, "O my God, have mercy on my soul, O my God have mercy on this poor people". These were the last words he spoke except to say "Yes" when asked if he commended his soul to Jesus Christ. He was laid on a couch where he breathed his last in the arms of his wife and sister.

The murderer was caught as he attempted to escape and he boldly owned up to the deed. When interrogated he said that like David, he had killed Goliath. He was told, falsely, that the Prince was not dead; he knew this to be false because he had used poisoned balls. He endured incredible torture without saying a word and suffered a gruesomely brutal death (which we shall spare our readers from reading).

To be concluded in September

The Controversial Issue of Blessing Same-Sex Relationships

I have been going to church of my own volition for 45 years in London, Canterbury, Bristol, Sussex and abroad. Not once have I heard anyone raise same-sex relations and their blessing in church as a matter of the remotest concern. The dwindling attendances, the inability to attract young families, and the need to help others and preserve church buildings are, by contrast, subjects of almost constant concern. *Tim Reid, letter, The Daily Telegraph, 28 June*

Perhaps the letter from Mr Reid reflects the views of many members of the Church of England and, possibly, many in our own congregation here at St John's. We may all have our own views about it, but this issue is not going away and it seems likely to result in deep divisions within the Church of England.

Proposals to remove impediments on the use of new blessings for same-sex couples in stand-alone services were shown a pale green light from the General Synod recently. After two hours of debate, members voted by narrow majorities in the House of Clergy and the House of Laity in favour of a motion put forward by the lead bishop for Living in Love and Faith (LLF), the Bishop of Leicester, the Rt Revd Martyn Snow. The current proposals also defer until next February a decision on whether priests are permitted to be in same-sex civil marriages. The Bishop said "none of us get what we want.... but all of us have to trust each other. ... We are united in our hope of one day being sat at the table of heaven, and that will be a beautiful sight."

Despite being imperfect, the motion sought to chart a path forward, he said, acknowledging that there were those who felt that they were being forced out of the Church, though he did not believe that this was the case. Time will tell if he is right about that. During a more informal session on LLF, Bishop Snow had said that he struggled to see how, once they had been commended for a trial period, stand-alone services of blessing could be "uncommended". This comment, Helen Lamb (Oxford) said, demonstrated that "the bus is travelling, the route stops are mapped out . . . and right now, it feels like some of us are being run over by the bus." She called for the bishops to engage in further discussion with those who opposed the changes, and to find a settlement which they considered acceptable.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, whom one might hope would demonstrate clear leadership, urged those who opposed the changes not to walk away, saying that he could not imagine the C of E without the members of the Alliance network — an umbrella group which has been vocal in its opposition in the past year. "The reality of the Church as we live it is always messy," Archbishop Welby said, but its diversity of traditions was "indispensable to the gospel".

An opponent of the motion was the Bishop of Bath & Wells, Dr Michael Beasley, who has previously voted for LLF motions but he voted against the motion this time because he felt that it was necessary to do more work on questions about whether doctrine was being changed by the introduction of services that some feared would resemble weddings.

The Rt Revd Paul Williams, urged members to vote against it and invite the Bishops to think again rather than proceeding in a way that, he said, threatened to split the Church.

The Archdeacon of Bolton and Salford, the Ven. Rachel Mann (Manchester), however, said that the motion, despite being imperfect, would help move the debate forward. It was a sentiment echoed by the Archbishop of York. He emphasised that no one would be forced to do anything against their conscience, and appealed to members of the Alliance to work with the Bishops to work out what further provision was necessary.

Source material : The Church Times



None of his training had prepared Gary for this..

I Must Sit Down And Pray

by Penny Candlin

So much to achieve today I must sit down and pray
 There's the clothes to wash
 The shirts to iron
 The beds to make
 So much to achieve today I must sit down and pray
 There's the furniture to dust
 The floor to Hoover
 The windows to clean
 And that's all before breakfast
 So much to achieve today I must sit down and pray
 There's the mess to tidy up
 The dishes to wash
 The meals to prepare
 So much to achieve today I must sit down and pray
 There's the letters to write
 The friends to phone
 The bills to pay
 So much to achieve today I must sit down and pray
 There's the garden to water and weed
 The rubbish to bin
 The food to be brought
 So much to achieve today

I must I must sit down and pray

What's Coming to Southport this summer?

Green Sefton: beach cleaning on Ainsdale Beach on 2nd August from 11am—1.00pm. Meet at Ainsdale Discovery Centre, Shore Road, Ainsdale.

Southport Flower Show: 15th-18th August in Victoria Park [celebrating 100 years of the Flower Show]

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

British Musical Fireworks Championship: 20th-21st September

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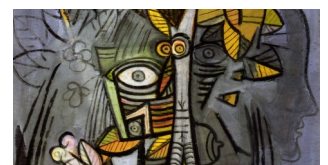
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Mistaken Identikit

The artist Picasso was burgled and did a drawing of the robbers. Police arrested a horse and two sardines.





Church of England fears parish backlash over £100m slavery fund

Bishop concedes there is anecdotal evidence that anger about the scheme has led to people stopping giving to their local church

The Church of England has set aside £100 million into a Slavery Reparations Fund which is to be distributed in grants during the next nine years. The C of E's wealth is valued at about £10.4 billion. A significant proportion of this wealth can be traced back to a fund called Queen Anne's Bounty which was created in 1704 by the Church of England's Commissioners from a gift from the monarch to supplement the income of poor clergy.

The Church formed a committee to work with forensic accountants to review historic ledgers and to report on the scale and circumstances of its investment and they discovered that one of the fund's early investments was in the South Sea Company amongst whose main activities was participation in the Atlantic slave trade. It is estimated that it transported 34,000 African slaves.

The Church has made apologies for the investment of more than 300 years ago and has responded to what the Archbishop of Canterbury has called "the shameful and horrific sin of slavery" by committing £100 million to "a programme of impact assessment, research and engagement." The Church will also be "supporting dioceses and parishes to research and address their historic links with transatlantic chattel slavery."

Bishops have moved to reassure congregations that none of the money they give to their local parish is being used for the fund but there are fears that worshippers are donating less to the collection plate in protest over the creation of the fund. The Bishops have said the money is coming from the church's central investment pot and that the cash would be given out in grants to projects working with communities that were still suffering from "the legacy of horrifying cruelty" of the slave trade.

The term "reparations" has been used to refer to the fund, but the money will not be given out as compensation to descendants of enslaved people. It will instead be awarded to community projects working in black communities in Britain.

The Church of England's finance chiefs have stressed that they were investing more than £3 billion in parishes, a figure 30 times larger than the slavery fund, over the same period. The project has, however, received a mixed reception in parishes that are struggling financially. Luke Appleton, a lay member of the General Synod, the church's governing assembly, said in a written question to bishops that there had been a "backlash" against the project and said that some "parishioners have, as a result of the fund, withdrawn or reduced their giving".

The Bishop of Salisbury, the Right Rev Stephen Lake, is deputy chairman of the Church Commissioners who control the church's assets and he responded by saying that the £100 million for the reparations scheme would come "in its entirety from the endowment fund managed by the Church Commissioners" and said: "None of the money given to a parish church will be used for this fund. None of the money will come from parish income. Every gift made to a parish ... will go to the intended beneficiary, now and always."

The church has said that its fund was not "virtue signalling" and would not be "using parishioners' money".



Making a Difference

by John M. Shakespeare

It often seems to me that politicians and theologians appear to thrive on emphasising the Differences between their respective beliefs, rather than seeking some kind of concord.

C.S. Peirce (1883-1914) is generally credited with the introduction of the Science of Semiotics which gives meaning to the Differences in signs that act as indicators.

Perhaps the commonest uses of this science are e.g. in medicine and also when considering the variations in our weather. What sort of spots have we come out in? Is the sky clear or overcast? These are examples of Differences that potentially could be a problem.

Observing people's behaviour can indicate to us Differences in their attention and understanding of what we are saying. Such considerations are important to teachers and during interviews.

Differences can be spotted in people's reaction to situations that occur. I quote the last verse of the poem, "Invictus", by W.E. Henley (1849-1903) which, I believe, epitomises the Difference to a person that self-belief can bring:-

"It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishment the scroll,
I am the master of my fate,
I am the captain of my soul."

For those in authority, there is a tendency to persuade people to toe the line. I must admit guilt for this in the past, but now believe that we may thrive on Differences, and therefore make life more challenging.

The following quotation from Luke (Ch 3 verses 4-5), written in the book of the Prophet Isaiah reads as follows :-

"The voice of one crying out in the wilderness. Prepare the way of the Lord, make his path straight. Every valley shall be filled and every mountain shall be made low and the crooked shall be made straight and the rough ways made smooth."

In his book "A Theory of Justice", published in 1971, the American philosopher John Rawls (1921-2002) had at the core of his theory on equality the Difference principle. I understand this to have been a fair sharing of wealth and benefits to all members of society. In any society there will be people amongst us with Differences in skills and aptitudes. I know that I do not have the gifts to attempt "DIY" types of work but I do hope that my skills lie elsewhere. It is for others to judge!

Difference comes with God's seasonal blessings in all their varied ways. The ice and snow of Winter bring upon us cold winds and frosty days. Change comes in Spring with all its coloured blooms, the Winter blues are swept away by vigorous use of twigged brooms. Summer brings the joy of sunny days, hopefully not too hot, for us to enjoy. Autumn is a time to see the amazing Differences in leaf colour, with their brown Autumnal tints.

In a world obsessed with so many difficulties has the need for spiritual health and well-being ever been greater to make a worthwhile Difference?



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Joining the Sunday morning services and Thursday evening prayers by zoom or by telephone

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

The Identification Number every Sunday will be: 827 7997 1592

The Password every Sunday will be: 860066

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

The telephone number you must ring is: 0131 460 1196

The Meeting Identification Number every Sunday will be: 827 7997 1592

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

The Password every Sunday will be: 860066.

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

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

The Identification Number every Thursday will be: 879 8059 1143

The Password every Thursday will be: 966358

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

The telephone number you must ring is: 0131 460 1196

The Meeting Identification Number every Thursday will be: 879 8059 1143.

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The Password every Thursday will be 966358.

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

BUT PLEASE CHECK YOUR CALL PACKAGE CHARGES WITH YOUR PROVIDER

IF YOU NEED ANY HELP: Please contact Clive (564206) or Sally (553977) or Lucy (553977) for any further details you require.

Hearing the Word by telephone

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

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

Was it really that long ago?...

75 years ago, on 24th August 1949 the North Atlantic Treaty came into effect, establishing NATO.
65 years ago, on 7th August 1959 the USA launched the Explorer 6 satellite, which sent back the first images of the Earth from space.

50 years ago, on 8th August 1974 US President Richard Nixon announced his resignation, effective from noon the following day. He was facing impeachment over the Watergate scandal.
Also 40 years ago, on 5th August 1984 Richard Burton, Welsh stage and film actor (*Cleopatra* and *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*), and many more, died.

30 years ago, on 28th August 1994 Sunday trading was legalised in England and Wales.

Also 30 years ago, on 31st August 1994 the IRA agreed to a complete ceasefire after 25 years.

25 years ago, on 16th August 1999 Vladimir Putin became Prime Minister of Russia. He became President in May 2000.

15 years ago, on 20th August 2009 Libyan intelligence officer Abdelbaset al-Megrahi, who was convicted of the bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 which crashed onto Lockerbie, Scotland in December 1988, was released from prison on compassionate grounds after being diagnosed with terminal cancer. He died in May 2012.

10 years ago, on 24th August 2014 Richard Attenborough, Lord Attenborough, died.

Church Hall Users (Note: with the exception of the Friday Film Nights the activities listed below are NOT run by St John's Church. They are run by independent groups who use our hall). Contact details are provided in case readers wish to enquire about or join these groups.

Monday

7.00pm to 8.00pm Zumba@Fitness

A fun and friendly class and a great workout.

No dance experience needed. All ages and all fitness levels welcome

Contact: Kay Bennett on 07716312909

Tuesday

4.30pm – 5.30pm Kiwi Sports Coaching

Tag Rugby class for boys and girls aged 5-7

School holiday classes sometimes available

Contact: shanehuttonnz@gmail.com

7.30pm – 9.00pm Connected Voices Choir

We are a non-audition choir for adults, singing a range of uplifting music – from pop and rock to soul and funk. We are open to anyone who loves singing, whether they think they can sing or not!

Contact: info@connectedvoices.co.uk or for more information visit the website

www.connectedvoices.co.uk

Wednesday

10.30 – 12 noon

2nd Wednesday of the month only. **Elderberries Gardening Club**

A social gardening club, where speakers are invited to talk on various topics, and visits and social events throughout the year.

Contact: Shelley Lewis Lavender on 01704 560690 or via email:

elderberriesgardening@gmail.com

Thursday

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

Contact: ageingwellmerseyside@outlook.com.

6.00-9.00pm: St John's Rainbows (6.00-7.00pm) St John's Brownies (6.00-7.15pm) and Girl Guides (7.15-9.00pm).

Contact: Janette Law 01704 565951

Friday

6.30-9.30pm Once per month **St John's Film Nights**

A chance to see some great modern films. Tea, coffee and homemade cake available.

Contact: Christine Baker 01704 560518.

Prayer for August 2024

Lord, in a year of changes in our country and in the world, we thank You for the regular rhythm of each year.

We thank You for August, the month of holidays and rest for many, especially for families and those tied to termly timetables. We pray for Your blessing and restoration for all.

As we take time out of normal routines, help us to still make space for You; to be refreshed spiritually as well as physically.

Feed us, Lord, by Your Word; revive us by Your Holy Spirit; encourage us by Your indwelling presence, so that we might naturally reflect Your love to all we meet, on holiday or at home or at work.

In Jesus' name. Amen.

by Daphne Kitching

£130 for our church: Home Insurance offer from Ecclesiastical Insurance Company

Take out a home insurance policy with Ecclesiastical – one of the UK's most trusted home insurance providers and a Which? "Best Buy" – and Ecclesiastical will donate £130 to our church.



This offer will expire at the end of 2024.

★HAPPY★
BIRTHDAY!

To

Linda Caton on 3rd August
David Jones on 5th August
Diane Barrington Moss on 9th August
Grace Wilkinson on 13th August
Abbie Holden on 14th August
Sylvia Kent on 14th August
Christine Baker on 17th August
Matt Royle on 24th August
Anita Hinds on 27th August
Andy and Cheryl Dean on 8th August
John and Ann Shakespeare on 10th August



To

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

The Last Laughs

The French election reminded the writer John Oxley of a schoolmate who used an online translator for his French homework. "He was caught out when his essay referred to the presidential candidate Jean-Marie Le Stylo," Oxley says. Presumably a Marine Le Pen is a stylo that works underwater.

A letter written to The Times newspaper recounted how the correspondent typed "out of sight, out of mind" into French in an online translation facility and then typed the French words back into English. To his surprise the re-translated words became "invisible idiot."



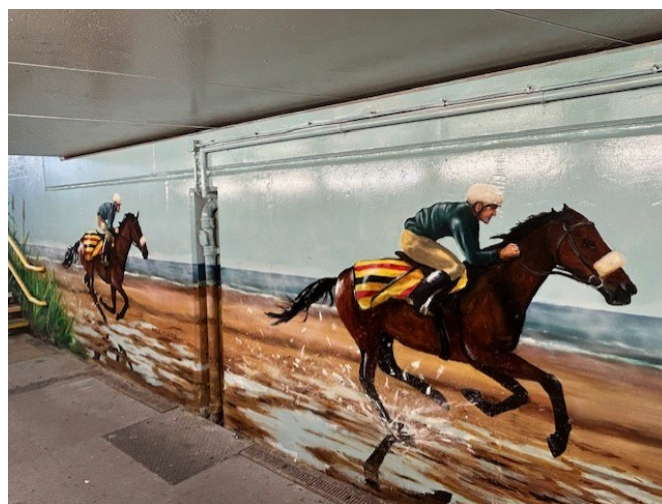
An optimist says the glass is half full. A pessimist says it is half empty. An engineer says "you need a smaller glass."



First past the post! Outside Birkdale Village Post Office The Southport Hookers have been getting us ready for the Olympic Games. Look out for this and other colourful adornments to our post boxes in and around Birkdale.



And on the bridge opposite Hillside Station is another sporting motif, a Rugby football dedicated to Southport Rugby Football Club.



This superb mural by artist Paul Curtis brightens up the subway under the level crossing in Birkdale Village.

The self-deprecating American actor Bob Newhart who has died at the age of 94 said his wife had a way of keeping his feet on the ground. One night, at the peak of his success, Mrs Newhart asked him to take out the recycling bin. He said "Do you think Joanne Woodward asks Paul Newman to recycle cans and plastic?" She replied: "If you were Paul Newman I wouldn't ask you to."



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