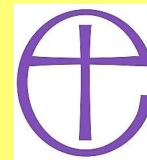




# THE WORD

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. 268**

**APRIL 2025**

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

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



There is a lot happening at St John's. New ministries are being developed by Rev Jennie and the PCC: SPACE, aimed at reaching out to families and children; and Godspeed for those who might be introduced to Christianity by joining a new exercise class (spin-cycling) which will be run by Jennie and a new member of our church family Karen Parkinson.

Our readers will find some details of all these activities in the pages of this month's edition. Jennie has secured funding to enable St John's to start SPACE (see page 14) and Godspeed (see page 14) and we have some volunteers to assist with a new group (Jolly Tots) for parents and very young children.

These new activities will commence in April and May. In addition, our established events will continue as normal, with a film night with a fish and chips supper on Good Friday, an Indian themed evening on 24th May and our annual Summer Fair on 14th June. So there's much to look forward to.

On 27th April we shall hold our Annual Church Meeting at which new members can be elected to the PCC and to the position of churchwarden, and you can hear reports of our church's life in 2024 and look at the financial report.

Our Alpha course is now well under way and will continue until early May on Wednesday evenings. There has been an encouraging response. Not everyone is able to attend each session but most of those who came at the start have continued to come. If you have not yet been to an Alpha meeting it is not too late to start. You can join in at any time. It's not like a course in which if you miss any meetings you will be left behind. If you have not yet been, give it a try!

**REMINDER: Clocks go forward by one hour overnight on 29th/30th March.**

**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**

I lift up my eyes to the mountains—  
where does my help come from?  
My help comes from the Lord,  
the Maker of heaven and earth.



Hello everyone!  
I hope you are enjoying the first signs of spring approaching as the daffodils begin to bloom and the pinkness of the blossom trees appear bringing a sense of joy and new life.

Where does our help come from? Our help comes from the Lord! Psalm 121 is a verse I've been musing on this Lent as the Church of England reflections have focussed on Living Hope, I wonder, where do you feel you are finding hope from and where do you turn to for help?

I was overcome with great hope recently when reading about the great surge of bible sales in Britain, up by 87% and attributed to the growing spirituality of generation Z. When we seem to hear so much about decline it is really positive to hear stories like this and that of the Talking Tots research by Hope Together which gives great statistics of the growing faith and church connection of 75% of parents with children aged 0-5. I'm encouraged and hopeful that we will see more of this and see it in our churches, in fact, I would say we already are at St John's to some degree and as we begin our Jolly Tots baby & toddler group in the coming weeks we hope to see even more!

We have just come to the end of our sermon series on Being the Church and it's worth reflecting on what we learned and how it can be applied in our daily walk with Jesus in relation to our hopefulness. We've reflected on the church of Christ being the people, you and I, a church made up of many parts (people), with many gifts given by the Spirit and talents. A people who are called out to sacrifice our will to God's will in obedience and trust, to walk in the Spirit as opposed to the flesh and to be salt and light on the earth, to be witnesses. We are called to clothe ourselves with Christ for such a time as this, a 'kairos' moment of time which speaks of great opportunity and to wake from our slumber to be Christ to others and share His great love.

Given that we are seeing so much growth of people turning to God outside of the church it is a good time to perhaps acknowledge that as we look to God for our help, we become help for others and as we seek hope from the Lord, He uses us to bring hope to others. There are people all around us, our neighbours, friends, colleagues, sons, daughters who are longing for hope and it seems a lot of them are now turning to God too. Statistics tell us that invitation and word of mouth is the best way to invite people to church and church events. It may be to a service, an alpha course or to a social event, but sharing the invitation, passing on the baton of hope and extending that helping hand in whatever way you can is our call and duty.

Though we find ourselves needing help and hope in our own life circumstances because our help comes from the Lord, we are enabled to be that help for others through the hope and strength that God gives us. I love hearing stories of inspirational people who turn their own pain into positiveness for the benefit of others. I'm encouraged by a lady I know whose son was murdered for no reason and for decades she has turned this horrendous pain for good by serving in prisons, helping inmates similar to those who took her son away to rehabilitate while sharing her faith and bringing hope and change into the world despite horrendous pain. In our own community in Birkdale, Elsie's Story is already beginning to bring hope, help and joy to others through raising funds to help children in our communities, continuing the positive story of a lovely little girl who was taken so tragically.

At our first Alpha evening a few weeks ago we heard an amazing testimony from Linzi, who became a Christian at an alpha course after having an amazing experience with God through His Holy Spirit and has been set free from the chains of addiction and now loves telling others all about Jesus.

How can you turn your pain to praise and your hurt to hope for someone in your life? Turning to God for help when we need it is the first step, as we turn our eyes to Him, and not to the problem, the problem is already minimised. God will help you, turn your eyes to Him. Sharing that hope can sometimes be as simple as sharing a smile, an encouraging word, or a hug, for those who enjoy them!

We turn our eyes to the hills because our help comes from the Lord and He looks to us to bring that help to others.

That is why we are setting up new ministries at St John's, our Godspeed indoor spin class, to encourage well-being, health and to build community around fitness and worship as we exercise to worship music. Space – in partnership with Liverpool Road Methodist Church we are creating a space to paint and chat if helpful, being a listening ear and being a space where people can come and feel safe. We're also relaunching a toddler & parent group – Jolly Tots, again building community and connection. We will also be beginning a pastoral team to be able to visit people at home who are unable to get out, to be salt and light to them.

Please be keeping all of these things in your prayers and perhaps get involved – offer to help if you can, speak to me or the Leadership Team about how to get involved, we need more people and more resources to sustain these projects.

Our help comes from above so that we can be help down below.

Have a blessed Lent, Holy Week and Easter – may you know God's peace, joy, help and love.

Rev Jennie xx

## WHO'S WHAT 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)

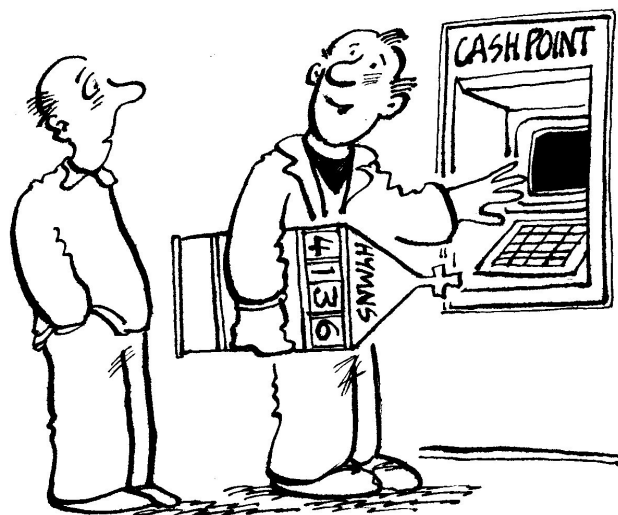


## Visit our website

[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**



*...between you and me, it's the  
only way I can remember my PIN number!*

## 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.



There are 80 million Easter eggs being sold in the UK this year, but **The Real Easter Egg** is unique. It is the *only one* which has a copy of the Easter story in the box, is made of Fairtrade chocolate and which supports charitable projects. There are six types of eggs to choose from. Each Real Easter Egg comes with an Easter story in the box, the stories range from simple guides to 24 page activity book versions. So, buy a 2025 edition Real Easter Egg this Spring, and encourage others to give one to their loved ones, a school or sponsor a food bank donation.

The 2025 Real Easter Egg is not available in any supermarket, but the full range can be ordered at [www.realeasteregg.co.uk](http://www.realeasteregg.co.uk), or by calling 01925 877004. The Real Easter Egg is made by The Meaningful Chocolate Company which was 'crowd founded' in 2010 by thousands of churches and church schools which pre-paid for the manufacture of The Real Easter Egg. Since then more than two million eggs have been sold, and £420,000 raised for charitable causes.



# GOT QUESTIONS ABOUT LIFE



## #tryalpha

You're Invited!  
Hosted at St John's  
Church, Birkdale

Next Meeting on 23rd April at

7.30pm  
Relax, food, chat



Course runs for 11 weeks and  
includes one Saturday

For more info contact

Jennie:

07872 400718

[revjenniferhardy@gmail.com](mailto:revjenniferhardy@gmail.com)



# WHAT'S ON AT ST. JOHN'S



## Pray Together

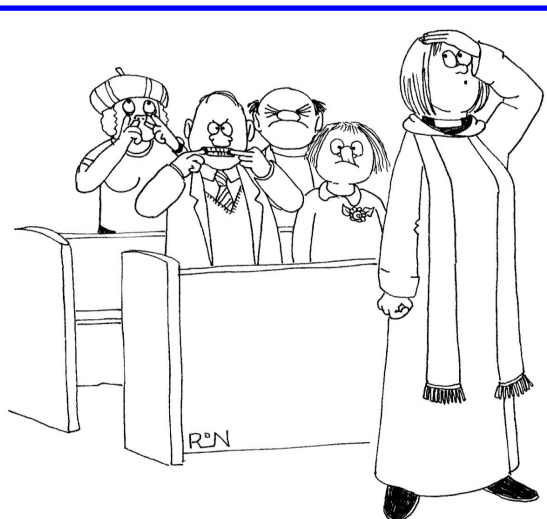
**Thursday @ 7.30pm**  
**on Zoom**  
**Meeting ID: 83550743780**  
**Passcode:**  
**7ehHEK**

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

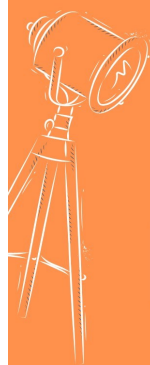
This month they will be on **3rd and 17th April**.

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 31 for details about logging in on zoom by computer or by telephone.



*Mary wished she'd never mentioned  
Fresh Expressions of Church*



## 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**



**NEXT MEETING:**  
**11th APRIL**

# WHAT'S ON WEDNESDAYS AT ST JOHN'S

## WEDNESDAYS 2ND & 16TH APRIL

### MIDWEEK COMMUNION SERVICE

There will be a Midweek traditional Communion service at 10.30am in church on **Wednesdays 2nd and 14th April**.

On 2nd April the service will be followed by Brunch: do stay and enjoy fellowship and a bite to eat.



## WEDNESDAY 23RD APRIL

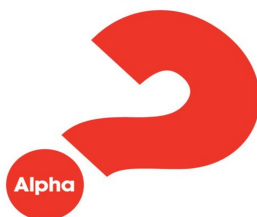
**ALPHA  
AT 7.30PM**



**ALPHA  
AT 7.30PM**



#tryalpha



**Please note:  
There will NOT  
be an Alpha  
meeting on  
Wednesday 9th  
April**

During April the Wednesday Bible Study Group led by Roy and the Growth Group led by Jennie will not meet because we have an Alpha course in the Church hall on Wednesday evenings.

**If you have been coming to the Bible Study or the Growth Group (or both!) do give Alpha a try, and bring a friend if you can.**

On 12th March we considered whether the New Testament accounts of the existence, death and resurrection of Jesus are reliable accounts or whether they have undergone revisions over the centuries to make them appear to be reliable.

On 19th March we discussed why the Cross is the symbol of Christianity in the context of the pollution of sin, the power of sin, the penalty for sin and the partition of sin.

Each meeting starts with a meal (donations are welcomed, but no charge is made) and we then hear a talk of the week's topic and follow it with a discussion in which we can all take part although nobody is obliged to speak. By hearing and by sharing our views we can all develop a deeper understanding of the meaning of life and our faith.

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



## Upcoming Events

<b>JAN 24</b> 7PM <i>"Cheese, Wine &amp; Quizzes"</i>	<b>FEB 22</b> 7PM <i>"Greek Night" with Abba &amp; Dancing</i>	<b>MAR 15</b> 7PM <i>"Games Night" classics with snacks</i>
<b>APR 18</b> 7PM <i>"Good Friday Film &amp; Fish Supper"</i>	<b>MAY 24</b> 7PM <i>"Indian Night" Food &amp; Activities</i>	<b>JUNE 13-15</b> 10AM - 3PM <i>"Summer Fair &amp; Flower Festival"</i>

stjohnsbirkdale.co.uk



# WHAT'S COMING TO ST. JOHN'S



## SATURDAY 14TH JUNE – 10 AM TO 3PM

With Spring in the air and Summer approaching, the team are now busy preparing for our Summer Fair, which will be held on **Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> June** from **10am until 3pm** with an assortment of stalls to suit everyone, or you may just prefer to enjoy a delicious afternoon tea in the cafe, or perhaps relax with a cup of tea or coffee and some delicious home-made cake.

There will be a huge selection of summer plants, a book stall, home-made fragranced candles, a variety of handmade wooden items, a bottle stall and not forgetting the raffle.

As if that's not enough, there will be activities for the children with a possible "surprise" activity, so bring the children to be "surprised".

Your generosity for these events is always very much appreciated, and once again, we are hoping you will be able to donate any items suitable for the raffle stall as well as any bottles for the bottle stall please. Boxes will be put at the back of church on Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> April for you to place your items but if you are unable to bring them to church please contact me either in church or on 564071 and I will be only too happy to collect them on your behalf

We are looking forward to making this another successful event but we can't do it without your help and support.

All that remains is for us to pray for the weather to be kind to us and send us a lovely summer's day.

Many thanks,

## ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

Our readers are reminded that this year's APCM will be held on **Sunday 27th April after the 10.30 morning service in church.**

Please attend if you are able to do so. It is so important for members of our church to support the Vicar, the Warden and the PCC by attending and showing interest in what St John's is doing.

## MIDWEEK TRADITIONAL COMMUNION SERVICE

Brunch will be served  
after the service



**WEDNESDAY**  
**2nd APRIL**  
**10.30am**  
**IN CHURCH**

## Worship on the Fifth Sunday of Lent

**SUNDAY 6th APRIL**  
**HOLY COMMUNION**  
**10.30am service IN CHURCH and via**  
**zoom & phone**

### Collect for the Fifth Sunday of Lent

Gracious Father, you gave up your Son out of love for the world: lead us to ponder the mysteries of his passion, that we may know eternal peace through the shedding of our Saviour's blood, Jesus Christ our Lord.

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

**Be Still.. And know that I am God**

### The Text: Psalm 46 verse 10

10 He says, "Be still, and know that I am God;  
I will be exalted among the nations,  
I will be exalted in the earth."

## Worship on Palm Sunday



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

### Collect for Palm Sunday

True and humble king, hailed by the crowd as Messiah: grant us the faith to know you and love you, that we may be found beside you on the way of the cross, which is the path of glory.

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

**Be Still.. And welcome King Jesus**

### The Text: Luke 19: 28-40

28 After Jesus had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem.  
29 As he approached Bethphage and Bethany at the hill called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples, saying to them,  
30 "Go to the village ahead of you, and as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here.  
31 If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' say, 'The Lord needs it.' "  
32 Those who were sent ahead went and found it just as he had told them.  
33 As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, "Why are you untying the colt?"  
34 They replied, "The Lord needs it."  
35 They brought it to Jesus, threw their cloaks on the colt and put Jesus on it.  
36 As he went along, people spread their cloaks on the road.  
37 When he came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen:  
38 "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord. Peace in heaven and glory in the highest."  
39 Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples!"  
40 "I tell you," he replied, "if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out."

**MIDWEEK TRADITIONAL  
COMMUNION SERVICE**  
Tea, coffee and biscuits  
will be served after the  
service



**WEDNESDAY  
16th APRIL  
10.30am  
IN CHURCH**

**MAUNDY THURSDAY**  
Holy Communion  
and Supper



**THURSDAY  
17th APRIL  
6.30pm  
IN THE HALL**

### **Collect for Maundy Thursday**

God our Father, your Son Jesus Christ was obedient to the end and drank the cup prepared for him: may we who share his table watch with him through the night of suffering and be faithful.

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

**Being Still..  
While receiving from Jesus**

### **The Text: John 13: 1-17, 31b-35**

1 It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

2 The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus.

3 Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God;

4 so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist.

5 After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

6 He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

7 Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand."

8 "No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me."

9 "Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!"

10 Jesus answered, "Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you."

11 For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean.

12 When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them.

13 "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am.

14 Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet.

15 I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.

16 Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him.

17 Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

31b Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man is glorified and God is glorified in him.

32 If God is glorified in him, God will glorify the Son in himself, and will glorify him at once.

33 "My children, I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and just as I told the Jews, so I tell you now: Where I am going, you cannot come.

34 "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.

35 By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."



## Worship on Good Friday



**FRIDAY 18th APRIL**

**There will not be a service at St John's today. We shall have a joint service with the congregation of Liverpool Road Methodist Church at 10.30 am at LRM.**

## Worship on Easter Day



**SUNDAY 20th APRIL**

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

### Collect for the Easter Day

God of glory, by the raising of your Son you have broken the chains of death and hell: fill your Church with faith and hope; for a new day has dawned and the way to life stands open in our Saviour Jesus Christ.

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

**Be Still.. Celebrating the Risen Lord**

### The Text: Luke 24: 1-12

- 1 On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb.
- 2 They found the stone rolled away from the tomb,
- 3 but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.
- 4 While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them.
- 5 In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead?"
- 6 He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee:
- 7 'The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.' "
- 8 Then they remembered his words.
- 9 When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others.
- 10 It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles.
- 11 But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense.
- 12 Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened.



## Worship on the Second of Easter

**SUNDAY 27th APRIL**  
**10.30am**  
**IN CHURCH**  
**and via zoom and phone**  
**SERVICE FOLLOWED BY APCM**

### Collect for the Second Sunday of Easter

Risen Christ, for whom no door is locked, no entrance barred: open the doors of our hearts, that we may seek the good of others and walk the joyful road of sacrifice and peace, to the praise of God the Father.

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

**Be Still.. And read the Word**

### The Text: Psalm 119: 105

105. Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.

## Last Chance to apply to join the new Church Electoral Roll

This is the year when a completely new Electoral Roll is prepared. It happens in the Church of England every six years. Whereas for five years the Electoral Roll is revised annually, **in this sixth year, the roll is dissolved, and we must all re-apply and re-commit ourselves.**

**If you wish to be on the new Electoral Roll please obtain an application form (there are some in church, but we can deliver one to you if you are not able to attend church in person), complete it, and return it to Stuart Harris by not later than Sunday 30th March.**



## An Introduction to the Books of the Old Testament: Proverbs

*By Canon Paul Hardingham*

The Book of Proverbs is an anthology of sayings ('*mishle*') that are generally attributed to Solomon (Proverbs 1:1), who uttered 3000 proverbs (1Kings 4:32). The purpose of these oracles is '*for attaining wisdom and discipline*' (1:2). Solomon was concerned that people, especially the young, would understand '*the sayings and riddles of the wise.*' (1:3-6). His guiding principle is that '*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.*' (1:7).

To give an idea of the recurring themes in the book, here are a few examples:

Knowing God: '*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding*' (9:10).

Guarding Our Speech: '*A word aptly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver*' (25:11).

Marital faithfulness: '*May your fountain be blessed and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth*' (5:15-20).

Our Work: '*Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise!*' (6:6-11).

Dangers of Strong Drink: '*Wine is a mocker and beer a brawler; whoever is led astray by them is not wise*' (20:1).

Justice and Honesty: '*The LORD abhors dishonest scales, but accurate weights are His delight*' (11:1).

Underlying these sayings is a conviction about God's omniscience, '*For a man's ways are in full view of the LORD, and He examines all his paths*' (5:21); providence, '*Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the LORD's purpose that prevails*' (19:21) and goodness, '*The LORD is far from the wicked but He hears the prayer of the righteous*' (15:29).

Proverbs reminds us that God is concerned with the way we live today. '*Wisdom is the art of living skilfully in whatever actual conditions we find ourselves*' (Eugene Peterson).





## Chocolate: “Food of the Gods”

Did you know that the botanical name for the cocoa bean is *Theobroma* – which is derived from the Greek for ‘food of the gods’? *[of course, as Christians we know that there is only ONE God, but the ancients thought otherwise so we shall let this pass! Ed.]*

Millions of us obviously think chocolate is special – on average, each of us consumes 8.1 kilograms of it a year!

Certainly, chocolate makes us feel better. Some scientists believe that this is due to the chemicals it contains. These trigger the release of endorphins, similar to those we naturally produce when we fall in love.

But nutritionists warn against using chocolate as a pick-me-up, especially in the evening. Chocolate eaten before bedtime can cause your blood glucose levels to plummet during the night, which will disrupt your sleep. Chocolate eaten in quantity every day can lead to mood and energy swings, weight gain and poor immunity. If you have mad cravings for it, you could have a problem with blood sugar, or a deficiency in magnesium, copper, zinc or iron.

But occasional consumption of cocoa can provide medical benefits. Chocolate containing 60 per cent or more cocoa solids is rich in essential trace elements and nutrients such as iron, calcium and potassium, and many vitamins. Cocoa is also the highest natural source of magnesium. Good as all this may be – most of us enjoy chocolate because of its high sugar and caffeine content. Chocolate simply gives you an instant sugar hit, providing a sudden burst in energy, unfortunately followed by a slump and then the desire for another sugar-fix.





JOIN US FOR OUR FILM NIGHT AS WE REFLECT ON THE

# The Passion of Christ

**GOOD FRIDAY 18TH APRIL**  
6pm

Fish Supper & Cake included  
Tickets £10  
[info@stjohnsbirkdale.co.uk](mailto:info@stjohnsbirkdale.co.uk)




# GODSPEED

## INDOOR CYCLING CLASSES

**LAUNCHING**  
**24/4/25**  
**6PM**





Scan to book!

# POTTERY PAINTING

open to adults and children  
accompanied by an adult

**A Space to potter, paint & talk**

- Every week @ St John's Hall on Tuesdays 2.30pm – 6pm
- Every 4th Saturday @ Liverpool Road Methodist 1.30pm – 4.30pm
- Drop in and Connect with others
- Take home your masterpiece

**STARTING @ LRMC ON**  
**22/3/25**  
Liverpool Road, PR8 4PD

**STARTING @ ST JOHN'S ON**  
**15/4/25**  
St John's Road, PR8 4JP





Refreshments available.  
Donations welcome

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For More Information [stjohnsbirkdale.co.uk](http://stjohnsbirkdale.co.uk) [Info@stjohnsbirkdale.co.uk](mailto:Info@stjohnsbirkdale.co.uk)

**Free for a limited time dependent on funding**

### Three new activities at St John's starting in April

On Tuesday 15th April an entirely new activity will start in the church hall. It will give an opportunity to children and adults to enjoy some quiet time doing a craft activity or just having a chat.

And on 24th April, for those who feel energetic, Rev Jennie will be starting an indoor spin-cycling class under the name Godspeed! It is envisaged that this will develop and will be held several times each week. Jennie has obtained funding for this and the classes will be held in the choir vestry.

Our monthly Film Night in April will be on Good Friday. Most of our films are not of a particularly religious nature, but on this Holy day we shall show one about the final days of our Lord Jesus Christ, His trial, His death and His resurrection. We shall be having a fish and chips supper at 6.00pm prior to the screening and we must ask that anyone who wishes to have the supper gives us advance notice as we shall have to order the meals from a local chippy. Please speak to Christine Baker or Rev Jennie about this.

# Starting in May



# Jolly Tots

Every Friday from 9th May  
1pm – 2.30pm

**For tots, babies & bumps**

St John's Hall, St John's Road, PR8 4JP

Connect with other parents  
and bring your little one for  
nursery rhymes, dancing, play,  
stories and more.



## CONTACT

[info@stjohnsbirkdale.co.uk](mailto:info@stjohnsbirkdale.co.uk)

[stjohnsbirkdale.co.uk](http://stjohnsbirkdale.co.uk)

07872 400718



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## St John's Prayers for those in need

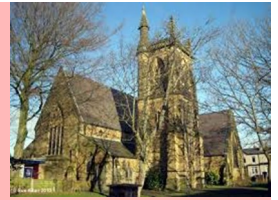
We believe in the power of prayer and we are eager to include as many people who currently need prayer in our twice monthly prayer meetings and on the screen on a Sunday. We aim to keep the prayer list current and to receive regular updates on people who need longer term prayer so that we can pray meaningfully 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 May **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 add someone else to the list, provided you have asked their permission, then pass their name, and any other information on why they would like prayer, to Jennie.



## Social Events Coming Soon at St Peter's Birkdale



23rd April: Easter Bingo

8th June: Annual Open Church and Garden

31st August: Family Fun Day

For more details about these events please contact [stpetersbirkdale@hotmail.com](mailto:stpetersbirkdale@hotmail.com)



## The Canterbury Tales

### The Summoner's Tale

Last month we looked at the Friar's Tale in which the Friar told a story discrediting Summoners who, as our readers will remember, were ecclesiastical court officials whose job it was to serve summonses on wrongdoers requiring them to attend courts to face justice for their offences. It was well known that many Summoners were corrupt and extorted money from people in different ways including tricking them into misdeeds and then threatening to summon them to court. The Friar's Tale bore some elements of truth.

So incensed was Chaucer's Summoner by the Friar's aspersions against Summoners that he launched into an equally hostile tale against Friars, some of whom were as corrupt as Summoners and lived well from the money given as charitable donations to the church in exchange for false promises of prayers and possible salvation (this was the Middle Ages sin of *simony*).

**The tale:** One day, a Friar went to the home of Thomas, a rich but uneducated old man who had

been ill for a long time. The Friar assured Thomas that he and his brother Friars had been praying for him. Thomas' wife entered the house and the Friar kissed and fondled her. She requested that he preach to Thomas about anger because Thomas was so unpleasant. Before leaving, the wife reminded the Friar that her baby died recently. The Friar pretended to know this because, he said, he and the other Friars had seen the child being carried upward, and they had prayed and fasted. He gave the wife a long sermon on the virtues of fasting and sins of gluttony.

The Friar then turned to Thomas and embarked upon a long sermon on the necessity of avoiding excessive wealth. He assured Thomas that the convent prayed for him every night and that Thomas should donate a portion of his gold to the convent. In fact, he said, Thomas should give everything to the Friars.

The Friar then preached on the sin of anger and quoted many classical examples. In so doing, he made Thomas more and more angry until Thomas finally said that he had a gift for the Friar, on the condition that the Friar must swear to share the gift with the other Friars. When the Friar agreed, Thomas told him to "reach down your hand beneath my buttocks, and there you are sure to find something I have hidden there." The Friar quickly ran his hand down the cleft of the old man's buttocks, and at that moment the old man broke wind extravagantly!

### Morals from this tale:

1. Beware of people who do not practise what they preach.
2. Do not be a hypocrite: at some time, and you know not when, you will be found out.
3. Sometimes, when you reap what you sow, your harvest will be a very unpleasant surprise!



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

## **On Why You Should Never Encourage Your Congregation**

The Rectory,  
St James the Least of All

My dear Nephew Darren,

There are times when I indulge you too much; why I ever let you run your course 'Taking Responsibility for your Church' among our congregation, I am now unable to understand. I had hopes that it might encourage a few more people to volunteer for the flower rota, or to give occasional help mowing the churchyard. I even had a vague fantasy that someone might turn detective, and discover who had been eating the chocolate biscuits between Sundays, condemning the rest of us to munch on Rich Tea after Services. Unfortunately, your course turned out to be inspirational, and it has fired up our members to take on all sorts of new initiatives. Enthusiasm in a congregation can be a very dangerous thing, especially if people start making decisions on their own.

Those who formed a welcoming group are admittedly well-meaning – although it was more than a little traumatic for those coming through the door the next Sunday to be greeted with frenzied handshakes, big toothy smiles, and even hymnbooks. That is unheard of in this church – we always ignore people and leave them to find hymnbooks – if they can.

Naturally, all those offering to take the prayers, produce new Orders of Service and even to give the occasional sermon have been booked on the appropriate training courses. By the time they have been completed, I can only hope they will have gone off the idea.

But it was the group which decided to "beautify" the church who have proved the most tiresome. Hanging the Christmas tree lights round the altar made it look as if I was standing behind a fairground stall, waiting to invite people to throw hoops round teddy bears – although I would have rather enjoyed making winners sit for the rest of the Service holding a polythene bag containing a goldfish.

Our pulpit has also been given a makeover, with the various panels painted in contrasting colours; I am sure the sixteenth century Flemish woodcarvers would be delighted with the result, although the next time any medieval historians come to view it, I shall take the day off – probably travelling abroad.

My dear Darren, your course took the stopper out of the bottle; would you please run another to put it back?

Your loving uncle,  
Eustace

### **Irrefutable logic...**

A Sunday School teacher had been explaining why Easter should matter to us, and wanted to make sure her group understood. So she asked, "Can anyone tell me what you must do before you can obtain forgiveness of sin?" There was a short pause and then, from the back of the room, a voice spoke: "Sin?"



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**

## Where Did Your Easter Egg Come From?

Your Easter egg can be traced back to the early Church in Mesopotamia.

Since ancient times, people had been giving each other eggs at pagan Spring festivals, as eggs were a symbol of the new life and rebirth in nature all around them. Then came Jesus and His death and resurrection, which made Easter the ultimate time for Christians to celebrate new life and rebirth. After that, it was only a matter of time before eggs found their way into commemorating Easter.

This seems to have first happened with the very early church in Mesopotamia, where those early Christians began dyeing their eggs after Easter, to celebrate the new birth that Jesus had given to them. The practise of using eggs in Easter celebrations then spread to the Orthodox Churches, and from there to the Western Churches across Europe.

*This year, why not buy an extra Easter egg or two, and join our church in donating them to our local food bank? You will make some local children very happy!*

## THE TIDES ARE TURNING

by Penny Candlin

The Tides are Turning

All that has been will be changed

All that has been will be swept and charged with power.

Too long have the waters been tranquil

Too long have the distant storms only produced ripples

The tides are turning

Make a decision to stand for what is right

Make a decision to trust more fully in the Lord

It is time to discard the old ways of self gratification and pride

It is time to put on the new cloak of service and love

The tides are turning

## 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

I'm giving up eating chocolate for a month.

Oh, wait, sorry, bad punctuation.

I meant, I'm giving up. Eating chocolate for a month.

# W CROSS R D

*Solution below*

The Bible version used in our crosswords is the NIV.

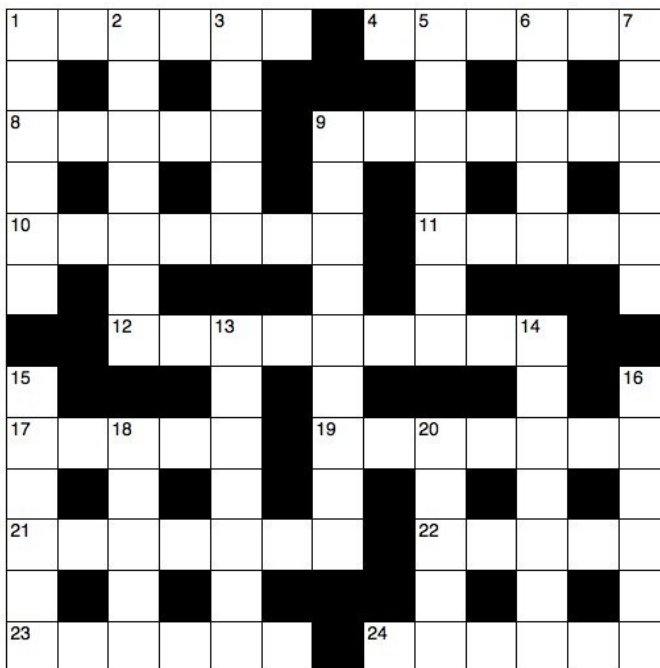
Crosswords reproduced by kind permission of BRF and John Capon, originally published in Three Down, Nine Across, by John Capon (£6.99 BRF).

## Across

- 1 Relating to the whole universe (6)  
 4 The disciple who made the remark in 8 Across (John 20:24) (6)  
 8 'Unless I see the nail marks — — hands, I will not believe it' (John 20:25) (2,3)  
 9 He urged King Jehoiakim not to burn the scroll containing Jeremiah's message (Jeremiah 36:25) (7)  
 10 Baptist minister and controversial founder of America's Moral Majority, Jerry — (7)  
 11 'Look, here is — . Why shouldn't I be baptized?' (Acts 8:36) (5)  
 12 Repossessed (Genesis 14:16) (9)  
 17 Port from which Paul sailed on his last journey to Rome (Acts 27:3-4) (5)  
 19 'Moses was not aware that his face was — because he had spoken with the Lord' (Exodus 34:29) (7)  
 21 Roonwit, C.S. Lewis's half-man, half-horse (7)  
 22 Grill (Luke 24:42) (5)  
 23 'The lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the — apostles' (Acts 1:26) (6)  
 24 'I was sick and you looked after me, I was in — and you came to visit me' (Matthew 25:36) (6)

## Down

- 1 Coastal rockfaces (Psalm 141:6) (6)  
 2 Academic (1 Corinthians 1:20) (7)



- 3 Publish (Daniel 6:26) (5)  
 5 For example, the Crusades (4,3)  
 6 11 Across is certainly this (5)  
 7 He reps (anag.) (6)  
 9 Liberator (Psalm 18:2) (9)  
 13 Man who asked the question in 11 Across was in charge of all her treasury (Acts 8:27) (7)  
 14 They must be 'worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine' (1 Timothy 3:8) (7)  
 15 The human mind or soul (6)  
 16 'O Lord, while precious children starve, the tools of war increase; their bread is — ' (Graham Kendrick) (6)  
 18 'We played the flute for you, and you did not — ' (Matthew 11:17) (5)  
 20 Bared (anag.) (5)

## In our Book of Remembrance In April

- 2nd Harry Tucker, 1986  
 Mark Harding, 2003  
 3rd Henry Prescott, 1988  
 6th Ralph Gregson MBE  
 8th John Hamer, 1972  
 9th Ruby Bennett, 2000  
 Harriet (Pat) Hind, 2007  
 12th James Canadine, 1986  
 Elizabeth Powney, 1990  
 William Baker, 2000  
 13th Eric Whitehead, 1983  
 15th Alan Short, 1977  
 17th Bernard Rimmer, 1996  
 18th Elizabeth Critchley, 1989

- 19th Annie Rimmer, 1986  
 20th Samuel Maguire, 1996  
 21st Dora Gott, 1987  
 George Hamer, 1983  
 22nd Robert Rimmer, 1974  
 23rd Aubrey Hanoman, 1997  
 24th Ruth Beaumont, 2009  
 26th Joyce Crosby, 2010  
 30th Ada Whitehead, 2013

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

## CROSSWORD SOLUTION

ACROSS: 1, Cosmic, 4, Thomas, 8, In his, 9, Delaiah, 10, Falwell, 11, Water, 12, Recovered, 17, Sidon, 19, Radiant, 21, Centaur, 22, Broil, 23, Eleven, 24, Prison.  
 DOWN: 1, Cliffs, 2, Scholar, 3, Issue, 5, Holy war, 6, Moist, 7, Sphere, 9, Deliverer, 13, Candace, 14, Deacons, 15, Psyche, 16, Stolen, 18, Dance, 20, Debar.

## God in the Arts

*The Revd Michael Burgess great works of music, based on various saints of the church.*

### 'In sweet music is such art': the Basilica of St Mark in Venice



In 828 the relics of St Mark the evangelist were seized from their resting place in Alexandria and brought by two adventurers to Venice. The Basilica of St Mark was built to house these relics, and it was this link between the saint and Venice that determined so much of the city's history through the Middle Ages.

Venetians would go to war under the banner of the winged lion, the symbol of St Mark, and through the centuries Venice established its independence, its own system of aristocratic government and commercial supremacy in the Mediterranean. The Basilica of St Mark is a vivid testimony to the grandeur of Venice and this amazing history. James Morris has described the church as descended from Byzantium: "a barbaric building, like a great Mongolian pleasure pavilion or a fortress in Turkestan."

We celebrate St Mark this year on 29<sup>th</sup> April, (usually 25<sup>th</sup>) but apart from his Gospel, we know little about the saint's life. He is mentioned by St Peter and St Paul as 'son' and missionary

companion. There are many traditions about St Mark: he might be the young man in Gethsemane in chapter 14 of the Gospel, and it is thought that he was martyred in the reign of Trajan. What we do have of St Mark is his Gospel, generally accepted as the earliest of the four to be written. Mark has no infancy narratives and no preparation for the life and ministry of Jesus. Instead, his Gospel begins with the strange, exotic character of St John the Baptist emerging from the wilderness to proclaim the Good News of the Son of God.

In the same way the Basilica of St Mark emerges from the lagoon as strange and as exotic as the Baptist in the Gospel. E V Lucas in 'A Wanderer in Venice' invites the visitor to this church to "let the walls and the floor and the pillars and the ceiling do their own magical work." And the visitor might be lucky enough to hear some of the music of Venetian composers sounding through the basilica. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century Adrian Willaert wrote music that enhanced the domes and mosaics and ceilings with works for two organs and two choirs sounding out from different parts of the building.

Giovanni Gabrieli, who died in 1612, built upon that tradition. His set of motets, 'Sacrae Symphoniae', were written for the special acoustics of this marbled basilica. He developed the antiphonal sounds of Willaert with glorious, harmonic colours, a boldness of modulation, and a variety of dynamics and timbres. We hear all of that in the motet 'In Ecclesiis,' which is regarded as his masterpiece. The choirs, brass and organ are divided into five groups that would have sounded out around the basilica: 'In churches bless the Lord, in every place bless the Lord, for God is my salvation and my glory. Alleluia.'

As we celebrate St Mark on his feast day, we can think of these threefold proclamations of his Good News: his Gospel, which, in its earthy realism, calls the disciple to follow Jesus wherever He goes; this Basilica that calls us to explore its mystery and marvels; and the music of Gabrieli that calls us to echo God's praises in our own lives.

### St. Mark, disciple, apostle, writer of the second gospel

Mark, whose home in Jerusalem became a place of rest for Jesus and His 12 apostles, is considered the traditional author of the second gospel. He is also usually identified as the young man, described in Mark 14:51, who followed Christ after his arrest and then escaped capture by leaving his clothes behind.

Papias, in 130, said that in later years Mark became Peter's interpreter. If so, then this close friendship would have been how Mark gathered so much information about Jesus' life. Peter referred to him affectionately as his 'son'.

Mark was also a companion to Paul on his journeys. When Paul was held captive at Rome, Mark was with him, helping him. Mark's Gospel, most likely written in Italy, perhaps in Rome, is the earliest account we have of the life of Jesus. Mark died about 74 AD.

Early in the 9th century Mark's body was brought to Venice, whose patron he became, and there it has remained to this day. The symbol of Mark as an evangelist is the lion, and is much in evidence in Venice.





## THE INFLUENCE OF RELIGION ON LAW

Reflections of Lord Denning, one of the foremost English Judges of the twentieth century.

### "PIOUS FRAUD"

Some theologians have argued that it is permissible to tell a lie for a just cause. A part of the Church itself did so at one time. For instance they invented legendary incidents relating to the life of Our Lord and the saints, and portrayed them as true. It was done with the best of motives so as to help people to believe, but nevertheless it was a fraud. Hence the phrase "pious fraud" which has become part of our language.

*[Editor's note: This should not be confused with the entirely dishonest and venal practices employed by the clergy in mediaeval times, such as selling bogus "relics" of pieces of the Cross or bones of "the saints". See the articles in recent issues of this magazine concerning the dishonesty of Pardoners, Friars and Summoners as depicted in The Canterbury Tales. This was not pious fraud but criminal deceit for their own benefit].*

A parallel in modern times is when doctors sometimes deceive their patients because they believe it is for their good to do so. I am not sure however that it is ever permissible for any man to tell a lie to his neighbour. St. Augustine held that the duty of truth is absolute and he would permit no exceptions to it: and he gave as a sufficient reason that, by lying, eternal life is lost. In modern time, Kant and other philosophers take the view that truth is absolute.

What then, you may ask, is to be said about stratagems made by our military men for deceiving the enemy? Some of them are downright lies, but no one sees any wrong in them. On the contrary, it is a matter for congratulation when they succeed. The answer for the Christian is, I suggest, that an enemy, who is seeking to destroy you, can hardly be considered your neighbour.

*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

## REVIVE

We have received this recent newsletter from the Revive Team concerning the excellent work which our Mission Partners carry out in Olinda in Brazil.

The month of January was filled with activities and achievements for the girls in our care. With the holiday season in full swing, we organised a special programme to provide moments of leisure and fun. Among the activities, we arranged trips to the ice cream parlour, visits to the beach, cinema outings, and excursions to Tamarineira Park, a lush and pleasant green space where the girls could play and connect with nature.

We also benefited from a partnership with a local pizzeria, which hosted an afternoon of pizza and fun, complete with a playground and plenty of joy. Additionally, the city welcomed a circus, and the girls had the opportunity to attend a delightful performance, further enriching their experiences.

On 30th January, we welcomed a new member to our home: B.V., an 11-year-old girl transferred from another shelter. A gentle and kind-hearted child, she is already being embraced with the care and attention she deserves.

The start of the year is always a busy period, marked by various demands such as medical appointments, school transitions, and adapting to new challenges. These situations require flexibility and dedication, but they also strengthen us as a team and help us refine our daily work.

In February, we held a concentrated hearing at our home, attended by the judge and their team. During the meeting, important steps were outlined for future family reintegrations and other potential outcomes. While we await the next steps, we continue to focus on strengthening the bonds between the girls and their families, as well as supporting those awaiting sponsorship or adoption.

We are deeply grateful for the support of each one of you, who help us transform the lives of these girls. Together, we continue to build a more welcoming and opportunity-filled future for them.

With gratitude, The REVIVE Team

# Sleeping Rough

When you encounter a rough sleeper or a homeless person in a shop doorway, do you stop and chat, buy the man a sandwich or just walk on by? Most people just say nothing and do nothing because they believe that homeless people are all drug addicts or alcoholics anyway.

Recently, a group from St. John's attended the premiere of a new film set in the world of rough sleeping. None of the group were homeless but there is a connection because *Down & Out*, the film being premiered on the big screen that night, had been created by Southport's award winning OMF crew and directed by Ian Bennett, who worships with his wife Janet at St. John's.

Although it's storyline is based on actual events and everything shown has happened to somebody somewhere, *Down & Out* is by no means a documentary.

Rather, it is an action packed, dynamic yet emotional movie packing in an eviction, a rape and even a death and brought to the screen by a talented, hand picked professional cast, many of whom travelled from as far away as Somerset, the Midlands or Yorkshire to play their roles.

OMF are again targeting Prime Video VOD streaming (Amazon Prime) to access the global audience already enjoyed by their previous feature movies. Last month, alongside features costing hundreds of thousands of pounds to produce by major studios and broadcasters worldwide, *Down & Out* became yet another OMF success, officially selected for inclusion in the northern Britain edition of the Global Lift-Off film network festival series.

The festival is currently running on-line until the 6<sup>th</sup> April and you can watch the festival in the comfort of your own home on your smart TV, a laptop or tablet. As with any physical festival you would attend in a cinema, access to the on-line Lift-Off is by online ticket.



# Down & Out



Purchase tickets at: [Checkout.liftoff.network/features-manchester-lift-off-2025/](https://checkout.liftoff.network/features-manchester-lift-off-2025/)





## WORD SEARCH *solution on page 27*

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Hallelujah! April brings us to Easter – the crucifixion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ - the triumphant highlight of the Christian year. As St Paul pointed out, unless Jesus really did rise again, our faith is useless, and we may as well forget any hope of heaven or eternal life. But because He does live, we have a sure and certain hope for our future.

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

PASSOVER  
BREAD  
WINE  
BODY  
BLOOD  
BETRAYAL

JERUSALEM  
PILATE  
JUDAS  
GETHSEMANE  
TRIAL  
CRUCIFIXION

SOLDIERS  
CROSS  
NAILS  
VINEGAR  
TEMPLE  
CURTAIN

TOMB  
ANGEL  
STONE  
RISEN  
GARDENER  
MARY

### The story behind "Stand up! Stand up for Jesus!"

Two notable hymnwriters of Irish ancestry were born in 1818. One was Cecil Frances Alexander (writer of "All Things Bright and Beautiful" and "There is a Green Hill Far Away"). The other was **George Duffield** (right) who was born in Pennsylvania in America. His father was a scholar and theologian who dedicated himself to the cause of the Northern States (the Union) in the American Civil War. "Uncle Tom's Cabin" by Harriet Beecher Stowe was published in 1852. Religious fervour was rife, and slavery (which was a principal cause of the war) was a burning issue of that time. Slaves were auctioned from church pulpits in order to guarantee their freedom.

Against this background an Episcopalian minister, Dudley Atkins Tyng, conducted a large mission for men in the summer heat. This attracted huge crowds. At one meeting 5,000 men crammed into a vast hall to hear him speak on Exodus 10:11, "Go now ye that are men, and serve the Lord", converting over 1,000 men listening in the crowd. He was removed from his ministry for speaking against slavery. Duffield was an associate of Tyng.

One evening Tyng was watching a donkey circling endlessly around a capstan machine and a sleeve on his clerical robes became entangled in the cogs which resulted in him sustaining a very serious injury from which he died. Before he drew his final breath he gave instructions to his friend Duffield to continue his mission. "Tell my brethren" he said

"wherever you meet them, to stand up for Jesus."

Duffield then composed the hymn based on those words which incorporated the phrase "Ye that are men now serve Him" from Tyng's memorable sermon the month before he died. At a memorial service for Tyng, Duffield gave a sermon based on Ephesians 6:14, "Stand firm, wearing the whole armour of God", and ended it by reciting the new hymn he had written as a tribute. The hymn was first brought into public knowledge through leaflets printed by the superintendent of the local Christian school containing the words of the hymn. One of these leaflets ended up being published in a Baptist newspaper, and "Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus" was published in The Church Psalmist in 1859. After first publication, the hymn was popular and was sung by both the Union and Confederate soldiers in the American Civil War. The hymn also became popular among British revivalists, and within public schools in England.

The hymn was excluded from a more politically correct volume of The Presbyterian Hymnal published in June 1990, in order not to offend handicapped people.

**Stuart Baker**

Primary Source: "Every Hymn Has a Story, Vol. 1", 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 Wonder and the Sorrow of those PCR Tests

PCR tests were a fact of life for most of us three years ago this month. As a biologist who was doing this procedure long before most people had heard of it, I take secret delight in people's use of the acronym. Let me open the laboratory door and share the wonders it conceals.

That swab that you, or someone else, poked down your throat and up your nose went into a tube containing a little liquid. That liquid was then heated or mixed with a chemical to kill any live virus particles, then purified to get rid of every part of the virus except RNA.

The test was actually RT-PCR, the first step being Reverse Transcription by an enzyme that converted any RNA present into DNA. Multiple copies of that DNA were then made, using the Polymerase Chain Reaction. Reverse transcription produced one half of a DNA helix, like one side of an unzipped zip.

The enzyme DNA Polymerase is a little like the zipper, except as well as zipping up, it also manufactures the other half of the zip using

DNA subunits that have been added to the tube. This process works because a bit like a zip, the two sides of the DNA helix are mirror images of each other. If that new helix is unzipped, DNA polymerase can then make a new strand on both sides.

The beauty of PCR is in its simplicity. Multiple rounds of heating (which melts the DNA helix strands apart) and cooling (which allows the enzyme to make new DNA) produce more and more mirror-image DNA strands.

Scientists often have stories to tell about the wonders they study, or make use of, in the lab. Sadly, if this particular process worked it meant that there was probably COVID-19 in the sample, and someone might have been about to become quite ill.

Do you live with similar tensions in your own life? Maybe you love taking care of people, but your role only exists because others live with great physical or mental challenges. For the Psalmists, a relationship with God was forged in the confusing space where the struggles of life mingled with praise for creation and trust in Him.

How can we learn from these inspired ancient writers, celebrating the wonders we experience in our day-to-day lives while also lamenting the world's brokenness, praying for healing and justice?

*This post is reproduced, with permission, from [licc.org.uk](https://www.licc.org.uk).*

*The Revd Dr Jo White considers*

### Reflecting Faith: Baptisms and Easter

What time of year were you baptised? For the first few centuries of the Early Church, baptisms were only held at Easter, with the preparation being taught in the few weeks beforehand.

Leo I, Bishop of Rome from 440 to 461 AD, was a strong advocate of holding baptisms solely at Easter.

He wrote: "... for in the baptismal office death ensues through the slaying of sin, and threefold immersion imitates the lying in the tomb three days, and the raising out of the water is like Him that rose again from the tomb."

But, as the years went by and more adults began seeking baptism for their children, the practice changed. The Church was keen to not put any obstacles in the way, and so baptisms became a sacrament to be freely given at any time of the year.

This was especially important because for many years it was mistakenly thought that unbaptised babies should not be buried in a churchyard, and, even more importantly, would not get into heaven.

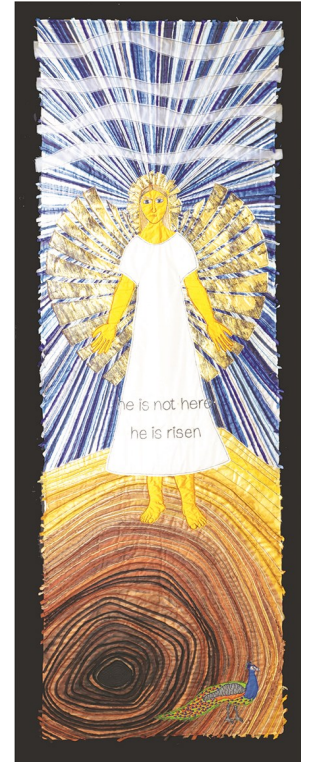
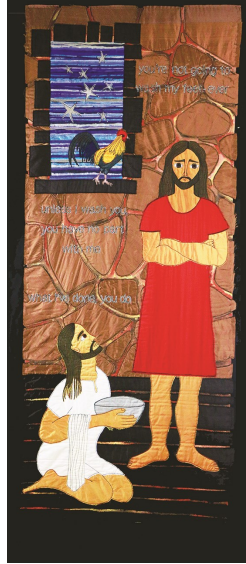
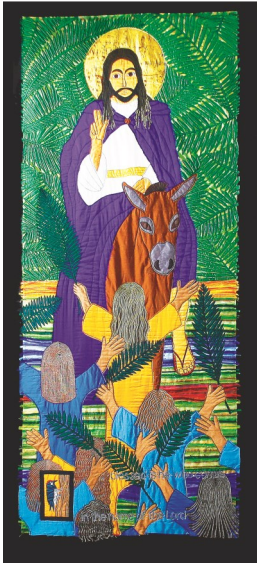
Thankfully the Church moved away from those wrong positions long ago. Now most of us were baptised when we were very young, often in our first few months of life, at any time of the year.

One thing is certain: baptising a child is not so that God will love them more. It is instead to say that the parents believe in God, and therefore intend to raise the child as part of the family of God.

**This month:** Have a think about your own Baptism. How old were you? Do you know – if you were a child at the time – why your parents chose that age?



## Threads Through The Cross: Holy Week



In the March edition of **THE WORD** we wrote about a display of textile art entitled Threads Through The Bible, an expansive tableau of very creative and imaginative representations of The Creation, The Cross and the Revelation. This exhibition was at the Liverpool Anglican Cathedral for several weeks and has now moved to another part of the country.

The section entitled Threads Through The Cross includes the six panels shown in this article: Jesus entering Jerusalem on a colt; Jesus overturning the moneylenders' tables in the Temple; Jesus washing the feet of his disciples; the Last Supper; the Crucifixion; and the Resurrection.

In May we shall include panels depicting some events which occurred after the Resurrection.

In previous years we have looked at some aspects of Holy Week and the Resurrection as portrayed in fine art by the Great Masters. In their own right these works of textile art are equally expressive as many of the well-known paintings and they depict the Gospel accounts with freshness. If any of our readers find themselves anywhere where this exhibition is displayed as it tours the country it is recommended that they should take the opportunity to see it for themselves.



## COMING SOON TO THE LIVERPOOL ANGLICAN CATHEDRAL



Experience the Sun Like Never Before... Luke Jerram's *Helios* at Liverpool Cathedral

Get ready to bask in the brilliance of *Helios*, the awe-inspiring illuminated sculpture of the Sun, premiering at Liverpool Cathedral from Friday 4th April to Friday 9th May 2025.

For the first time ever, the UK's largest Cathedral will host this dazzling masterpiece by world-renowned British artist Luke Jerram, after having also hosted Museum of the Moon and Gaia.

Prepare to be mesmerised by a breathtaking seven-meter sculpture of the Sun, offering a scale like no other. At **1:200 million**, every centimetre of *Helios* represents 2000km of the Sun's surface. Witness intricate details like sunspots, spicules, and solar flares—features that are usually millions of miles away!

## 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 GOOD KINGS AND BAD KINGS OF ENGLAND

By Dennis Davis

**Dennis continues his exploration of some of our Kings and finds that some were less good than some others. This month he looks at King John,** Tyrant and the most Evil King of England who spent much of his life in conflict with all he came across; he liked riches and fine trappings, this is his story.

John was born in the Tower of London late 1166 or early 1167, the youngest son of King Henry the 2nd and Queen Eleanor of Aquitaine. He was brought up as a spoilt and cosseted child, more like his sisters. He was cultured and literate and spoke in English, not the Norman French. He was sometimes genial and hospitable but at other times over sensitive, jealous and prone to fits of rage. He was a risk taker who liked hunting, and had the mind of a child. As the youngest of 4 sons he had little hope of any inheritance or estates and became known as Lackland. As a youth he was brought up by Ranulf of Glandville on brutality as an example of how to rule. He had difficulty in making friends. In 1176 he was betrothed to Isabella daughter of William of Gloucester. When John was 18 his eldest brother died. Richard, (Lion Heart) was named as the successor to the king and John was to become King of Ireland.

Richard had pledged himself to the Holy Land on crusades and John was left in charge of Normandy. He soon came into conflict with William Longchamps, the Chancellor. John allied himself with the French King in his attempt to seize control of England and he lost all of Richard's land in Normandy.

On Richard's return from the crusades John came back and threw himself weeping at Richard's feet and asked for forgiveness, but he was banished and deprived of all his lands. Richard later relented and gave him back some of his possessions and named him as his heir. In April 1199, upon the death of Richard, John came to the throne and after his marriage to Isabella of Gloucester was annulled he married Isabelle of Angouleme. He immediately put up taxes to renew war with France and was allowed to keep a third for himself. He soon got in conflict with the Barons and fell out with the Pope, being charged with tyranny, cruelty, sacrilege and being irreligious and was excommunicated.

He fell out with the settlers in Ireland, made fun of the local leaders and fell into open conflict with the Barons who made an unsuccessful attempt to have him murdered. His constant wars made high demands on taxes and manpower which led to warfare between the Barons and the King.

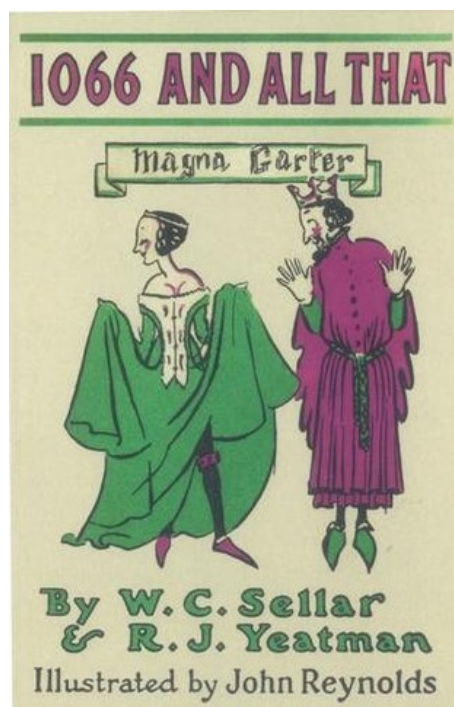


*King John by an unknown artist, oil on panel, 1597-1618  
National Portrait Gallery*

John was forced to meet the Barons at Runnymede and sign the Great Charter, "Magna Carta". John, while speaking peace, attempted to seek out the rebels who responded by marching on London. Magna Carta did not apply to the rebels who had their lands confiscated, causing open war with the Barons.

John fled from London to the north where he had more support, probably from the Sheriff of Nottingham and Derbyshire. He died at Newark on 19th of October 1216 from dysentery at which point the civil war ceased and the Magna Carta was at last enacted. He was buried at Worcester.

Foot note. There are many differing records of John both in facts and legend and it has been hard to condense this to a single page .



*Editor's note: King John was most definitely an Awful King. We know this because it says so in the finest history of England \* ever written "1066 and All That" by W.C. Sellar and R.J. Yeatman.*

*\* with apologies to Sir Winston Churchill and countless other serious historians!*

# THE VICTORIAN PERIOD

by John M. Shakespeare

The reign of Queen Victoria (1837-1901), was a developing era of Industrial and Political change, the British Empire, bigger than the Mogul or Roman Empire, reigned supreme in the world.

Victorian times saw extremes of successful behaviour in many areas, but also deprivation in the living standards of the working classes. No foreign army had set foot in Britain since the Norman Conquest, therefore our armed forces reigned supreme. We were world leaders in exploration, science, political and social reform, mechanical invention and literature.

Erudite writers of this era covered a wide range of works, from the philosophy of Utilitarianism of John Stuart Mill (1806-1873), who believed in the benefit of Capitalism, to the opposing works of Karl Marx (1813-1883), a crusader for Socialism. Charles Darwin (1813-1901), is famously known for his theory of the evolution of all life, in "The Origin of Species", and the belief in "the survival of the fittest". Charles Dickens (1812-1870), wrote about the class distinctions of Victorian Britain. This particular quote illustrates his ideas, "O let us have our occupations, bless the Squire and his relatives, and always know our proper stations". Can we ever forget stories such as "Oliver Twist"?

One of my favourite poets of the time is Emily Bronte (1818-1848). I give you the first and last lines of her poem, "Last Lines":  
"No coward soul of mine, no trembler in the world's storm-troubled sphere. I see heavens glories shine and faith shines equal arming me from fear".  
"There is not room for death, nor atom that his might could render void:  
Thou-Thou, are Being and Breath, and what thou art may never be destroyed".

The parable of the "Talents," as told in the Bible, I believe gives a picture of Victorian values. I quote

Matthew (Ch 25 verses 22-29), "Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return, I would have received what was my own with interest. So take the talent from him and give it to the one with ten talents. For to those who have will be given and they will have abundance. But for those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken from them".

I believe that the greatest driving force for industrial developments in this Victorian era was the growth of steam power. George Stephenson of the famous Stockton to Darlington Railway, is quite rightly regarded as the Father of Britain's Railways. With the growth of the railways, the public were able travel. Thomas Cooke, from 1841 developed the seaside holiday.

Isambard Kingdom Brunel (1806-1859), designed early steamships, but is perhaps best known for the planning and designing of the Clifton Suspension Bridge. Another famous building of the age, was the creation of the Crystal Palace in London's Hyde park, to house the Great Exhibition of 1851.

Mathew Arnold (1822-1886) was a driving force in the field of developing the appreciation of Art in all it's forms. John Ruskin (1819- 1900) praised the craftsmanship of art, made by loving human hands. This article has just been written as a taster of our great Victorian Age. There are many famous names, such as Florence Nightingale and others who we can take a justifiable pride in!

I would like to end with what I see as a fitting quote from a British diplomat called Cecil Spring Rice (1859-1928), "I vow to thee my country all earthly things above, entire, whole and perfect, the service of my love."



**Isambard Kingdom Brunel.**  
*From his stovepipe hat to his drainpipe trousers he was a credit to his ironmonger!*



## 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

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

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

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The Password every Thursday will be: 7ehHEK

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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?...

80 years ago, on 30<sup>th</sup> April 1945 Adolf Hitler, Austrian-born German Nazi Party Leader, Chancellor of Germany (1933-45) and dictator (1934-45) committed suicide along with his wife, Eva Braun.

70 years ago, on 5<sup>th</sup> April 1955 Prime Minister Winston Churchill announced his retirement because of failing health. He was succeeded by Anthony Eden on 7<sup>th</sup> April.

Also 70 years ago, on 10<sup>th</sup> April 1955 British nightclub hostess Ruth Ellis shot and killed her lover, David Blakely. On 13<sup>th</sup> July she was hanged at Holloway Prison, the last woman to be executed in the UK.

65 years ago, on 1<sup>st</sup> April 1960 Dr Martens boots went on sale in the UK.

50 years ago, on 4<sup>th</sup> April 1975 Microsoft, the computer software/hardware company, was founded by Bill Gates and Paul Allen in Albuquerque New Mexico.

Also 50 years ago, on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 1975 US President Gerald Ford gave a televised speech in which he announced that the USA's involvement in the Vietnam war was over, and all US aid to South Vietnam had ended. The war itself ended on 30<sup>th</sup> April, when North Vietnamese forces captured the South Vietnamese capital Saigon.

30 years ago, on 4<sup>th</sup> April 1995 Kenny Everett, DJ, comedian and TV entertainer, died. Known for his zany humour, characters and sketches.

25 years ago, on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2000 the 'The Big Number' change took place on the UK's telephone system. Many area codes were updated or replaced, and new ones created for mobile, freephone, local rate, national rate, and premium rate services.

20 years ago, on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2005 Pope John Paul II died. Succeeded by Pope Benedict XVI on 19<sup>th</sup> April.

Also 20 years ago, on 9<sup>th</sup> April 2005 Charles, Prince of Wales, married Camilla Parker Bowles, who gained the title the Duchess of Cornwall.



**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 April 2025**

Living Lord Jesus, We, your Easter People of today, thank You for the Easter People of the Gospel accounts.

For the women, who loved You so much that they went to the tomb, early in the morning, while it was still dark. Thank you especially for Mary, who wept, then rejoiced, then ran to tell the others, "I have seen the Lord!"

Thank you for Thomas, who doubted, then devoted his life to You, his Lord and his God; for the disciples who ate breakfast on the beach with You; for Peter, who was forgiven and re-commissioned by You.

Thank You for them and Your witnesses through all generations. Thank you for Your true and living written Word, proclaiming You, our true and living Lord, who lived and died and rose again to offer us forgiveness and life.

Thank you, Lord that because You live, we have hope and assurance, whatever challenges the world might bring.

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again. Hallelujah!,

By Daphne Kitching

**An after-Easter prayer**

Don't leave our Lord amidst the lilies

Within a hallowed sphere

Don't praise Him only in your churches

In Easter hymn and prayer...

Keep Him beside you through

The business of ordinary days,

In the common place encounters

Along the humdrum ways.

Our Master told us very simply

What He would have us do....

He taught: "Love one another

Even as I love you."

By Elsie Campbell

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To: Curtis Davey on 5th April  
 Rev. Jennie Hardy on 5th April  
 John Shakespeare on 13th April  
 Andy Dean on 21st April  
 Cath Whiteside on 26th April  
 Zak Downey on 27th April

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

## The Last Laughs

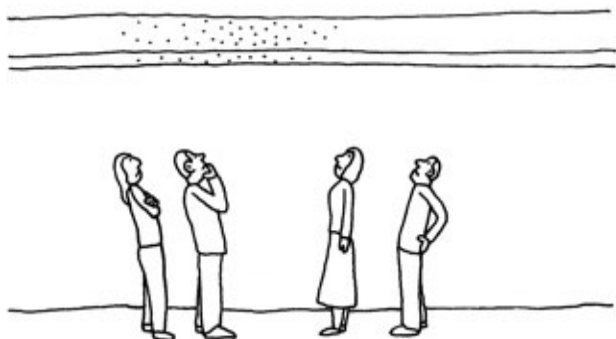
BBC reporter Tim Richards was once sent to cover the annual meeting of a society of psychics in Cardiff. On arrival he found a sign on the hall door that read "Postponed due to unforeseen circumstances."

This reminds the Editor of a joke told by Tim Brooke-Taylor on "I'm Sorry I Haven't A Clue"; he said "I received an invitation to the Annual Meeting of The Psychics Society which simply said 'You know the place, the date and the time; we know you are coming.'"

### It's a matter of degree...

Veteran broadcaster David Dimbleby was awarded a Third class degree in PPE at Oxford University. He says this was a good thing. Invoking cousin Jasper's advice to Charles Ryder in *Brideshead Revisited* that "time spent on a Second is time thrown away" Dimbleby opined that a Third showed promise. It meant that you hadn't worked but were bright enough for others to say "he would have got a First if he had."

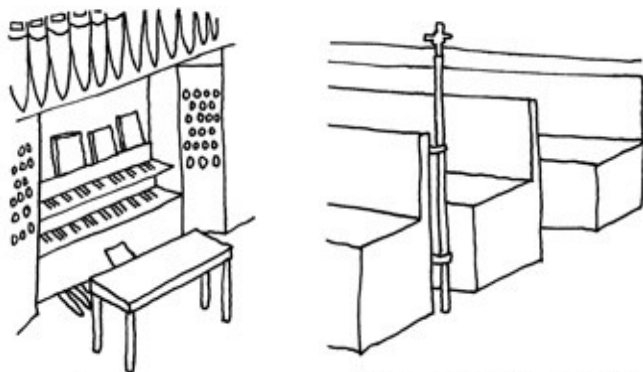
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