



# 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. 269**

**MAY 2025**

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

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



On Easter Monday, only a day after addressing the world from the balcony of St Peter's and calling for a ceasefire in Gaza, Pope Francis died at the age of 88 years. The Roman Catholic Church will soon embark on a Conclave in which 135 Cardinal-electors from across the world will meet in the Sistine Chapel in order to elect a new pontiff. The conclave will commence on 7th May. There is no timescale for how long this process will take, but the previous two conclaves lasted just two days. The news that a new pontiff has been elected will be conveyed by white smoke emanating from the chimney of the Chapel.

On Friday 9th May at St John's we shall watch the film "Conclave" in our church hall. The film was made last year and it stars Ralph Fiennes and Stanley Tucci. It lasts two hours. There will be refreshments and cake from 6.30pm onwards and we shall start to watch the film at 7.00pm. If any of our readers wish to watch the film with us please contact Christine on 01704 560518.

May will see the start of a new Toddler Group entitled Jolly Tots. See page 15 for details about that.

Rev. Jennie's spin-cycling classes, "Godspeed," have commenced in what was our church's choir vestry. The music which is played to accompany the exercise does not sound like anything from Hymns Ancient & Modern but it is Christian themed. It is necessary to pre-book for these sessions which in their early days are proving to be very popular.

After the Alpha course ends on 14th May we shall resume Rev. Roy's Bible Studies and Rev. Jennie's Growth Groups in late May, and a new Growth Group looking at how all the books of the Bible connect to each other will start on 19th May. Details of all these activities are contained herein: read on...!

**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**

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



Hello readers of **THE WORD!** I hope you have enjoyed the recent celebrations of Jesus' resurrection and have felt blessed by the memorial of all that Jesus accomplished for us and that your faith has been encouraged and deepened

as you have reflected on the simple, powerful gospel message.

The word gospel, you may be aware, simply means, when translated from Greek, 'good news.' Good news, it's powerful. It has the ability to enthuse, encourage, inspire and produce faith. That's one of the reasons we like to share good news in all of our church services at St John's. We love to share in the good things that have happened in our lives and that's why we share the gospel of Jesus too. What Jesus did over two thousand years ago when He died on a cross and rose on the third day is still good news for us today. It is current and will remain current for us. It's a daily occurrence of good news in our lives and that's why we are called to share it with others, to enthuse, encourage, inspire and produce faith.

The Bible's teaching on good news can seem to be a juxtaposition. It's good news that our saviour endured torture and died on a cross? It's good news that Paul was imprisoned (on multiple occasions) for his faith? It's good news when people persecute you? It's good news when you are martyred for your faith?

In honesty, none of this, in the eyes of the world, seems like good news. In fact, it seems like bad news, or perhaps even the worst news that you could ever receive. We have to look at the end result of these things to come to an understanding of the good news. In John 16.33 Jesus is recorded as saying, "in the world you will have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world".

Though we endure untold difficulties, pain, hurt and ultimately the death of our earthly bodies, this is not the focus of our faith and should not be the focus of our lives. This 'world' is only temporary, when we are in relationship with Jesus, or 'in' Jesus, we have overcome the world too and we are not defined by the struggle, we are defined by victory, by good news.

And we do this a lot at church when we share good news too don't we? For example, someone might share that their grandchild has graduated from university with a good result, but they don't share the pain, the worry, the anguish, the late nights and the hard work that it took for them to get there! We may share that the health of us or others has improved, but we don't share the gruelling and painful details of the illness that came before. We share what is good because we are grateful and we look for the best and we share it to rejoice with one another and we encourage, enthuse, inspire and build faith. We share the victory.

We are reminded in 1 John 5:4 that 'for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. And Paul declares in 1 Corinthians 15:57 'But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.' This is why we share the gospel, the good news, the victory.

On Good Friday we had a fish supper at church and watched "The Passion of Christ" movie produced by Mel Gibson. It's a factual re-telling of the Passion of Christ. It's uncomfortable watching. It could even be described as painful to watch. People often wonder and ask, why we call this day, 'good', surely it's the worst day in the Christian calendar and yet it's the only one named as good! We don't like to focus on the pain and the process of what becomes victory. Any victory is hard won (perhaps not in the case of Liverpool FC this season who have just won the Premiere League with four games still to play as I write!), and my explanation of good Friday is always: Friday's good, because Sunday is coming.

We rejoice at the cross because we know it is the means of victory over sin, over death and over separation between us and God.

This is the good news that we have celebrated, this is the victory we have won through Christ and it's a victory we don't just remember once a year, it should be a daily celebration and a reason that each day we can share good news, even while we may be in the middle of our own battles, we know ultimately, we have the victory, our story is not finished, it is only finished when we reach our forever home in Heaven, but, in the meantime, we are called to declare the good news of Christ by what we say and what we do.

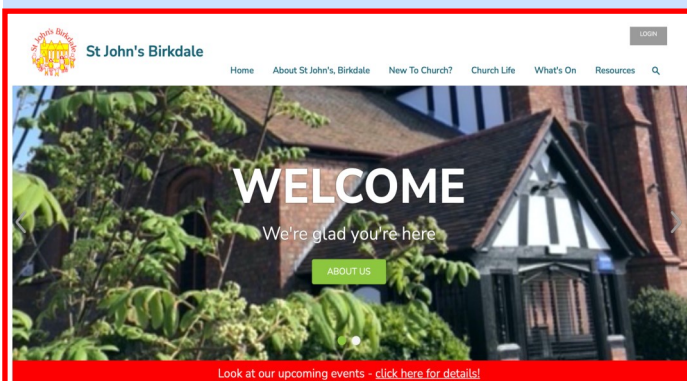
He says, "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth".

Be blessed. 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. Amanda Potts
PCC Secretary:	Mrs. Christine Baker (560518)
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)

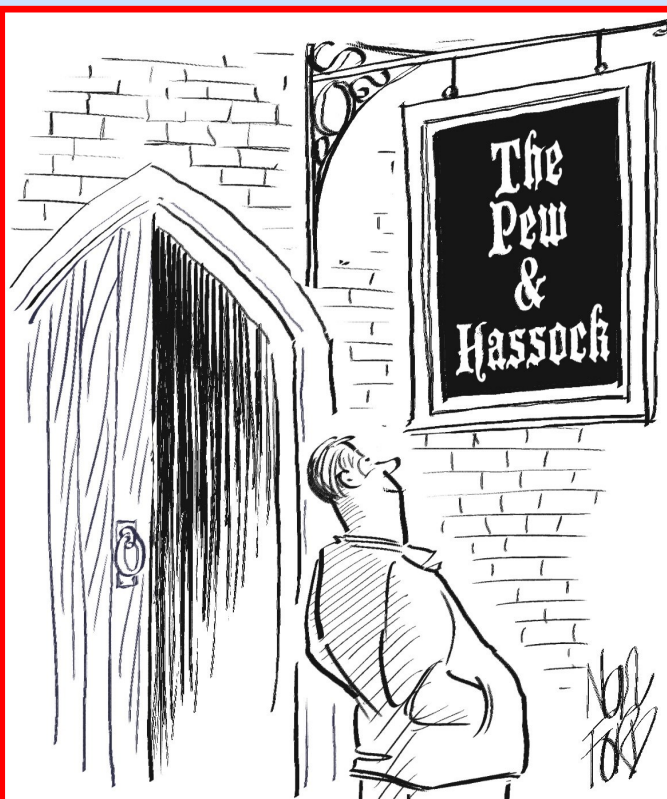


## Visit our website

[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**



Changing the name from 'St Mark's Parish Church', resulted in a big increase in the number of men attending services

## Measuring success

After the local Churches Together meetings had concluded, the four ministers were discussing the results with one another.

The Methodist minister said, "What a success! We gained two new families."

The Baptist minister said, "We did better – we gained three new families."

The URC minister said: "That's nothing – we gained five new families!"

The Anglican vicar smiled gently. "And we just said goodbye to our 10 biggest troublemakers."

# GOT QUESTIONS ABOUT LIFE



## #tryalpha

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

**Next Meetings on 7th and 14th May**  
**at**

**7.30pm**  
**Relax, food, chat**



**The course will end on**  
**14th May**

**For more info contact**  
**Jennie:**  
**07872 400718**  
**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.

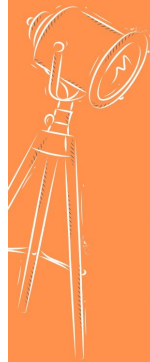
This month they will be on **1st and 15th May**.

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.



*When the solar panels weren't working,  
there was Plan B*



## 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:**  
**9th MAY**

# WHAT'S ON WEDNESDAYS

## AT ST JOHN'S

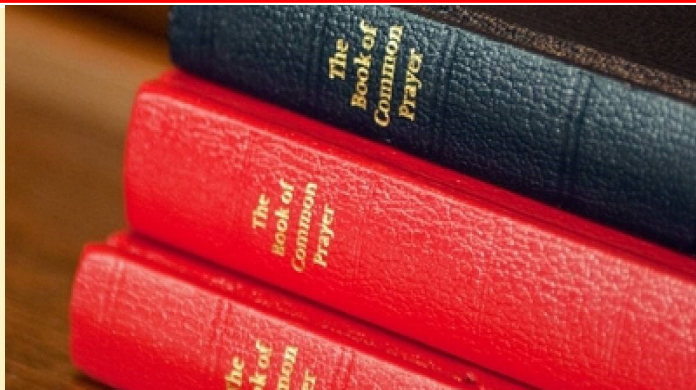
### WEDNESDAYS 7th & 21st MAY

#### MIDWEEK COMMUNION SERVICE

There will be a Midweek traditional Communion service at 10.30am in church on [Wednesdays 7th and 21st May](#).

On 7th May the service will be followed by Brunch: do stay and enjoy fellowship and a bite to eat.

On 21st May the service will be followed by tea, coffee and biscuits.



### WEDNESDAYS 7th & 14th MAY

**ALPHA**  
**AT 7.30PM**



**ALPHA**  
**AT 7.30PM**

### WEDNESDAY 28th MAY



*2nd & 4th Wednesdays*  
*2pm*

  
**God's  
Word**

STUDY  
GROUP

@ the small hall, St John's  
Church PR8 4JP

[revroydoran@btinternet.com](mailto:revroydoran@btinternet.com)



*2nd & 4th Wednesdays*  
*7.30pm*

  
**Growth**

HOME  
GROUP

@ the vicarage - 17 Kirkstall  
Road PR8 4RA

**food. fellowship. fun.**

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

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



## Upcoming Events

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

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 are at the back of church 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, Sylvia Kent

### ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

The meeting was held on Sunday 27 April.

Reverend Jennie was in the Chair.

Christine Baker was re-elected to serve on the PCC, and two new members were elected: Mandy Potts (who will become the PCC Treasurer) and Colin Jackson.

Clive Morris was re-elected as Churchwarden.

Jonathan Lawson was elected as the Independent Examiner of the PCC's accounts and financial statements. He replaces Andy Dean who has carried out that task for several years and to whom

those present at the meeting showed their appreciation with a round of applause.

Sylvia Kent stood down as PCC Treasurer after serving in that role for eight years. She was thanked by those present at the meeting and was given a bouquet of flowers by Rev. Jennie as a token of thanks.

Christine Baker (PCC Secretary) reported on the meetings of the PCC during 2024. Stuart Harris (Electoral Roll Officer) reported that we have 54 members on our new electoral roll, of whom 35 live in the parish and 19 outside the parish. Reports were also given by the Vicar and by the Churchwarden.

Worship on the Third Sunday  
of Easter

**SUNDAY 4TH MAY**  
**HOLY COMMUNION**  
10.30am service **IN CHURCH** and via  
zoom & phone

**Collect for the Third Sunday of Easter**

Risen Christ, you filled your disciples with boldness and fresh hope: strengthen us to proclaim your risen life and fill us with your peace, to the glory of God the Father.

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

**Be Still.. And Wonder**

**The Text: Genesis 1: 31**

God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.

**MIDWEEK TRADITIONAL  
COMMUNION SERVICE**

**Brunch will be served  
after the service**



**WEDNESDAY  
7th MAY  
10.30am  
IN CHURCH**

Worship on the Fourth  
Sunday of Easter

**SUNDAY 11TH MAY**  
10.30am service **IN CHURCH** and via  
zoom & phone

**Collect for the Fourth Sunday of Easter**

Risen Christ, faithful shepherd of your Father's sheep: teach us to hear your voice and to follow your command, that all your people may be gathered into one flock, to the glory of God the Father.

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

**Be Still.. And Hidden**

**The Text: 1 Kings 17: 2-6**

- 2 Then the word of the Lord came to Elijah:
- 3 "Leave here, turn eastward and hide in the Kerith Ravine, east of the Jordan.
- 4 You will drink from the brook, and I have directed the ravens to supply you with food there."
- 5 So he did what the Lord had told him. He went to the Kerith Ravine, east of the Jordan, and stayed there.
- 6 The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning and bread and meat in the evening, and he drank from the brook.



### Collect for the Fifth Sunday of Easter

Risen Christ, your wounds declare your love for the world and the wonder of your risen life: give us compassion and courage to risk ourselves for those we serve, to the glory of God the Father.

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

**Being Still.. And Being Empowered To  
Go And Make Disciples**

#### **The Text: Acts 2: 1-41**

**1** When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. **2** Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. **3** They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. **4** All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. **5** Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. **6** When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. **7** Utterly amazed, they asked: "Aren't all these who are speaking Galileans? **8** Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? **9** Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, **10** Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome **11** (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!" **12** Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?" **13** Some, however, made fun of them and said, "They have had too much wine." **14** Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. **15** These people are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning! **16** No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: **17** 'In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. **18** Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. **19** I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke. **20** The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord. **21** And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.' **22** "Fellow Israelites, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did

among you through him, as you yourselves know. **23** This man was handed over to you by God's deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. **24** But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him. **25** David said about him: " 'I saw the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. **26** Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest in hope, **27** because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead, you will not let your holy one see decay. **28** You have made known to me the paths of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence. **29** "Fellow Israelites, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. **30** But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. **31** Seeing what was to come, he spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, that he was not abandoned to the realm of the dead, nor did his body see decay. **32** God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it. **33** Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. **34** For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said, "The Lord said to my Lord 'Sit at my right hand **35** until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet." **36** "Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah." **37** When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" **38** Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. **39** The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call." **40** With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." **41** Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

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



**WEDNESDAY  
21ST MAY  
10.30am  
IN CHURCH**

Worship on the Sixth Sunday of  
Easter

**SUNDAY 25TH MAY**

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

### Collect for the Sixth Sunday of Easter

Risen Christ, by the lakeside you renewed your call to your disciples: help your Church to obey your command and draw the nations to the fire of your love, to the glory of God the Father.

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

**Who Is The Holy Spirit?**

### The Text: Isaiah 61: 1-3

1 The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners,

2 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn,

3 and provide for those who grieve in Zion— to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of his splendour.

## 60s Quiz

It is said that if you can remember the 60s you weren't there! Many of our readers definitely **were** there but, even so, this quiz will be a challenge. And for our younger readers, this quiz will be educational! We thank the editor of Southport U3A magazine for kindly permitting us to reproduce the quiz which first appeared in their recent magazine, and to Judith Foster for providing it to us. Answers (if you need them) on page 23.



- 1 Which US prison closed in March 1963?
- 2 Born with the real name Leonard, who in 1961 became the first of the Marx Brothers to die?
- 3 Where did Martin Luther King Jnr deliver his "I Have a Dream" speech in August 1963?
- 4 What was televised for the first time in April 1966?
- 5 Which 100-1 outsider won the 1967 Grand National after numerous other horses fell?
- 6 The Russian author Boris Pasternak died in May 1960, with which novel is he most associated?
- 7 Released in October 1962 what was the title of the first official James Bond movie?
- 8 Which TV station commenced broadcasting in the UK on April 20th 1964?
- 9 What name was given to the followers of the Communist Party of Kampuchea, who fought a civil war in Cambodia from 1967 to 1975?
- 10 Which BBC series of 1962 gave Brian Blessed his first big TV break?
- 11 On which motor racing circuit did Jim Clark crash to his death in 1968?
- 12 Who in March 1965 became the first man to walk in space?
- 13 Which zany comedy series was first broadcast on BBC television in October 1969?
- 14 Which ocean liner made its final journey in September 1967?
- 15 Who in June 1961 was enthroned to become the 100th Archbishop of Canterbury?
- 16 In which year was the 70mph speed limit introduced on UK roads?
- 17 Who was the U2 spy plane pilot shot down over Russia in May 1960?
- 18 Which two African nations merged in 1964 to form Tanzania?
- 19 On whose farm did the legendary Woodstock festival of 1969 take place?
- 20 Geoff Hurst scored a hat trick in England's 4-2 World Cup win over West Germany in 1966. Who scored the other goal?

## COLOURFUL CLERGYMEN

### Blackburne or Blackbeard?

Continuing in our series of occasional vignettes of clergymen with interesting, some might say bizarre, histories we look this month at **Lancelot Blackburne** who became Archbishop of York after having been, according to popular belief, a pirate!



He was quite an astonishing figure who achieved promotion to very high office but not because of great holiness or administrative skills or inspirational leadership: he possessed none of those qualities.

Born in 1658 in London and receiving education at Westminster School he was ordained as a Deacon in 1681 but instead of devoting himself to Christian ministry he decided to go to the West Indies where he settled on the island of Nevis which was known to be a haven for pirates operating against Spanish and French galleons. Although it is not known exactly what he did, either as a buccaneer or as a chaplain to pirates, it is recorded that he received payments from the British Crown for "secret services" which was a euphemism for privateering (piracy). One record is of a payment of £20 (worth about £4,000 in today's money) in 1681.

After three years he returned to England and after ordination as a priest he took up a series of sinecures in parishes in the Diocese of Exeter, far from the oversight of higher authorities in London. He was briefly suspended from his ministry as the Canon of Exeter after it was found that he had employed builders to construct a tunnel from his deanery to a neighbouring canon's house through which he could visit and enjoy trysts with his neighbour's wife. Blackburne: a Blackbeard and a Bluebeard!

His rise to the Archbishopric of York was assisted by King George I who wanted to be married bigamously to his (the King's) mistress and required an unscrupulous clergyman to officiate. Lancelot Blackburne was willing to oblige. He was soon thereafter elevated to the office of Bishop of Exeter and later elevated as the Archbishop of York, a position which he held for nineteen years.

He was not fastidious in devotion to his duties. After a few years he ceased conducting ordinations and he refused to conduct confirmations after an incident in Nottingham. During a service at St Mary's church he became bored and sent his servant to collect his pipe, tobacco, and a flagon of ale. The vicar, Rev. John Disney, was outraged and expelled him from the church, saying "no Bishop or Archbishop shall make a tippling house out of St Mary's so long as I am its vicar." This was a remarkable act of courage and propriety by Rev. Disney who was such a humble and modest man that on his gravestone the only inscription is "J.D"

The Dictionary for National Biography records that he had a "reputation for carnality" and "laxity of his moral precepts." It is reported that although his Archdiocese was the See of York he rarely visited that city, but it was rumoured that when he did go there he once employed the notorious highwayman Dick Turpin as his butler and enjoyed what the tabloid newspapers would now describe as a "romp" with a milkmaid.

He was described by writer and politician Horace Walpole as "a gentleman to the last, although a man of this world." A contemporary satirist, William Donaldson, said of him more aptly: "his behaviour was seldom of a standard to be expected of an Archbishop. In many respects his behaviour was seldom of a standard to be expected of a pirate!"

**Sources:** *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*; *Westminster Abbey*; *Fergus Butler-Gallie "A Field Guide to the English Clergy"*; *Robert Mellors "Nottingham and Nottinghamshire"*; *The Rt. Rev. David Wilbourne (letter to The Times)*; *Wikipedia*.

## An Introduction to Book in the Bible: Ecclesiastes

By Canon Paul Hardingham

*'Meaningless! Meaningless!'* This is how the book of Ecclesiastes begins (1:2), as it examines the futility of human experience *'under the sun'*. The author is named as *'The Teacher'* (1:1, Hebrew *qohelah*), traditionally identified with King Solomon. Although focusing on life in the physical world, the book ends with, *'Fear God and keep his commandments'* (12:13).

Ecclesiastes reminds us of the limitation of human wisdom, which cannot find meaning and purpose without God:

Our strivings *'under the sun'* can only lead to disillusionment (1:5–11). Therefore, we need to accept the life God gives us and enjoy it to the full.

Wisdom is given to those who please God (2:26). Such wisdom cannot solve all problems (1:16–18), or secure enduring reward (2:12–17). We cannot control our immediate future,

resulting in uncertainty (6:12), and there are difficult questions about life and death itself (9:1–3). In response, we need to understand our human limitations before God.

God has ordered all things in their time; things we cannot change or fully anticipate: *'There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven'* (3:1–15).

However, the world is not fundamentally chaotic or irrational, as it is ordered by God: *'He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end.'* (3:11).

We should remember our Creator when we are young before the infirmities of advanced age stop us from enjoying the good things of life (12: 1-8).

In summary, Ecclesiastes shows us how to live meaningfully and joyfully by placing God at the centre of our life, while trusting and obeying our Creator.

## Apply to join the new Church Electoral Roll

A new Electoral Roll has been created which will last for six years with annual revisions.

If any of our readers missed the opportunity to be added to the new Roll they may apply to be added to it **at any time**. It is very straightforward: simply ask the Electoral Roll Officer Stuart Harris to provide an application form, complete it and return it to him. What could be more simple than that? If you are entitled to have your name on the roll (the criteria are set out on the form) you will then be added to it.

Being on the Roll does not bring any special privileges, but it shows that you are committed to being part of our Church Family at St John's and it gives you the right to vote on any matters arising at the Annual Meeting.



## The most dangerous countries in which to be a Christian

After North Korea and Somalia, where in the world is it most dangerous to be a Christian? The World Watch List puts Yemen in third place.

Yemen lies just south of Saudi Arabia and just east of Ethiopia. Torn apart by civil war, the extremist Islamist Houthi group are increasing in power, and both they and al-Qaeda and Islamic State are determined to uphold strict Sharia (Islamic law).

All Christians are in danger in Yemen. No one knows their exact numbers, but it is probably between 3,000 and 20,000.

The main threats are from clan oppression and Islamic oppression. Their families disown and disinherit them. They are divorced, lose custody of their children, are banished, and often murdered. The government puts Christians in detention, where they face torture, ill-treatment and often murder.

Open Doors helps Christians in Yemen through prayer, some relief aid, secret training for pastors, and livelihood support. To help, please go to: <https://www.opendoorsuk.org>



# 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

**COME AND JOIN US!**

Refreshments  
available.  
Donations  
welcome

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**



# GODSPEED

## INDOOR CYCLING CLASSES

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




Scan to book!

**SEE OUR WEBSITE FOR  
MORE DETAILS OF  
GODSPEED CLASSES. PRE-  
BOOKING IS ESSENTIAL.**

## A new Growth Group

Starting on **Monday 19th May at 7.30pm** at **34 Oxford Road** there will be a new Growth Group in addition to those held on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays at the Vicarage.

This new group will **aim to meet on the third Monday of each month** and will embark on a complete Bible Course devised by The Bible Society.

If you have ever wondered where all the books of the Bible came from and how they all fit together, from the Creation and the downfall of man to our redemption by the

life, death and resurrection of Jesus, this course will help to explain all of that.

We shall look at how the Bible was formed, whether the texts are reliable, and why there are so many translations. Each meeting will involve a video talk scripted by Dr Andrew Ollerton, an ordained pastor and theologian, and there will be time for discussion and reflection.

Light refreshments will be provided.

This is a new course. Do join us if you would like to see the BIG story of the Bible in its context. The best story ever told!



*3rd Mondays at 7.30pm*



# Growth

HOME GROUP

## The Bible Course

Explore the BIG story

@ 34 Oxford Road PR8 2EQ

[christinebaker178@outlook.com](mailto:christinebaker178@outlook.com)

# 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

# Plan ahead and you could get peace of mind



## Choice Funeral Plans from just £1,795

With our Choice Funeral Plans you could get peace of mind for you and your family.

Record your personal wishes and pay for professional Funeral Director Services in advance, which could otherwise change in the future.

**To discuss our different plans or to request a brochure visit your local branch, call us or go to [howardsfuneraldirectors.co.uk/choice](https://howardsfuneraldirectors.co.uk/choice)**

*A life well remembered lives on*

**Southport**

☎ 01704 500 086

**Ainsdale**

☎ 01704 577 786



T&Cs apply. Howard's Funeral Directors is a trading name of Funeral Partners which distribute Choice Funeral Plans, which are provided by Alternative Planning Company Limited (APCL). Funeral Partners is an appointed representative of APCL. APCL is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority with firm reference number 965282. Both APCL and Funeral Partners are part of the Funeral Partners Group. The price of an Unattended Cremation Plan is £1,795. The equivalent price for an unattended funeral purchased today at Howard's Funeral Directors is £1,775 (exc. doctor's fees). These prices are correct as of Jan 2024. APCL incurs costs in order to provide this Funeral Plan to you. APCL typically retains around £475 of the price you pay for each Funeral Plan to cover our costs.

## 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 June **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



**22nd June:** Annual Open Church and Garden event from 1.30pm–4.00pm.

Admission costs £5 (free for under 12s) which includes delicious homemade cake and a hot drink with refills. There will be a vast array of homegrown plants at reasonable prices.

**31st August:** Family Fun Day

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



## The Canterbury Tales

### *The Manciple's Tale*

A manciple is a person in charge of the purchase and storage of food at an institution such as a college, monastery, or court of law. Manciples were sometimes also in charge of catering more generally, including food preparation. Perhaps it is no surprise that he was riding his horse close to the Cook who was drunk, asleep, and swaying in his saddle. The Host, Harry Bailey (the landlord of The Tabard Inn from where the pilgrimage commenced) tried to awaken the Cook in order to demand a tale from him. But in spite of the Host's efforts, the Cook fell from his horse. The pilgrims halted and, with great effort, restored the Cook to his saddle.

The Manciple offered to tell a tale instead:

In a faraway land, Phoebus was the ideal man: a great warrior, a skilled musician, and very handsome and kind. He had a wife whom he loved more than life itself and he bestowed upon her all the kindness and love at his command, but he was extremely jealous.

In Phoebus' magnificent household was a marvellous, pure white crow that could repeat the words of anything it heard. While Phoebus was away, his wife's secret lover came to the home and made passionate love to her. Upon Phoebus' return, the crow told him the scandalous sight he had seen. In a rage, Phoebus killed his wife. As his rage cooled, the sight of his wife's dead body brought great remorse. In anger, he pulled out the crow's white feathers and replaced them with black ones. Then before throwing him out, Phoebus removed the crow's ability to sing and speak.

The Manciple ended his tale by admonishing all people to restrain their tongues.

**The moral** he appended to the tale is clear:

**Repeating scandal is a dangerous business, so one should restrain one's tongue and think upon the crow.**



Our readers may remember that this series of articles about The Canterbury Tales was prompted by a report that a University's undergraduate students of English Literature were given a "trigger warning" that these stories contain "Christian themes." One might reflect that students of a delicate disposition might have had greater need to be warned that this story is about adultery, murder of a wife, and the harm which can be done by gossiping which, one might think, are more disturbing than references to Christian themes.

What times we live in! *O tempora, o mores*, (Oh the times! Oh the customs!) as the Roman orator Cicero said. Or as Michael Flanders and Donald Swan translated: O Times. O Daily Mirror!



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

## **On Why People Should ALWAYS Sit in the Same Pew**

The Rectory,  
St James the Least of All

My dear Nephew Darren,

I have to say that the couple who complained that you never noticed they had been missing from church for a month had a point. There is a simple way of noticing when someone is absent: everyone sits in the same pew. Every Sunday. Always.

Little Miss Margison sits in the pew after the third pillar on the right here at St James the Least. As she walks up the aisle, you can sense her counting the pillars until she reaches the right one, which then allows her to sit in front of it. I have speculated that if I ever had that pillar removed, then the following Sunday, she would have a complete mental collapse.

One Sunday a visiting family arrived early and sat down; three people in an empty church seating 200. Colonel Wainwright and his wife were the first of our regulars to arrive and froze in horror. The Colonel said in a deafening whisper to his wife: "There's someone sitting in our pew."

At least they had the grace – no matter how reluctant – for one week, to sit somewhere else. Unlike the Prentice family of husband, wife and three children, who arrived to discover that a visiting family of husband, wife and four children were sitting in their pew; six people in a pew that held eight. Or, it normally holds eight. That Sunday, it held thirteen.

We at least have one iconoclast in Miss Pemberton, who makes a point of sitting in a different place every week. This thoroughly unsettles the rest of the congregation, who fear she may sit in their seats during her nomadic wanderings. I sometimes wonder if she has a chart at home with all the pew spaces marked on it and she strikes one off each week as she returns home after Mattins.

Occasionally the unexpected can happen. Mrs Cholmondeley arrived one week in good time, settled herself in her accustomed place, but half-way through the Service suddenly ran out of the building. Ten minutes later, she was back and in her usual place once again. It was only when the church filled with the smell of burned bacon that we understood.

That is why replacing pews with chairs in your church was a mistake. Pews can never be moved. You know where everybody is – or should be!

Your loving uncle,  
Eustace

### **Why you should be careful**

The owner of a new sports car was reluctant to allow his wife drive it, even to the local shops. After she insisted, he finally relented, cautioning her as she departed, "Remember, if you have an accident, the newspaper will print your age!"

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.**

St John's  
Birkdale  
DRIVEN BY SPIRIT



# 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**



...and the theme of this morning's service is... 'Preaching a Gospel of Simplicity'...

## PROCLAIM

by Penny Candlin

Proclaim this is the day of the Lord  
 Proclaim captives are set free  
 Proclaim the blind now see  
 Proclaim the lame leap for joy  
 Proclaim the broken-hearted rejoice  
 Proclaim this is the year of the Lord's favour  
 Proclaim the Word of the Lord to all that will hear  
 Proclaim that sins are forgiven when repented to the Lord  
 Proclaim the grace and mercy of Christ Jesus  
 Proclaim the generosity of God when we hand all things over to Him  
 Proclaim that our life on earth is short and we must spend it doing the Lord's will  
 The Lord's will is to act justly walk humbly and proclaim the love of Christ.

## 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

# Culture Vulture?

*By Sheila Matthews, our trans-Pennine correspondent*

You may know that 2025 is Bradford City of Culture year, so there's plenty going on hereabouts. Having had Liverpool's European City of Culture 2008 when we lived in Birkdale and dipped into Hull's City of Culture in 2017 when we moved here (that was a pleasant weekend's escape from the unpacking), we now have another year's worth of events on our doorstep.

One of the benefits of being selected as a City of Culture, whether national or European, is that it attracts national events that would normally take place further afield, usually in the capital.

Being slightly on the periphery in 2008 many of the events passed me by, but I do remember the Open Golf coming to Birkdale and the annual Girlguiding Thinking Day celebrations, normally held in London, coming to Liverpool. We took the Brownies to workshops during the day with our newest recruits making their Promise in a location of their own choosing, one in the Metropolitan Cathedral and one on a Mersey ferry. The climax was at the Liverpool Arena, completed in the nick of time, which we filled. The rainbow Mexican wave was something else!

This year, Bradford is attracting the Turner prize and one of the Proms, performed by the BBC Philharmonic orchestra, among other events.

Not to be without a UNESCO World Heritage Site, we exchanged Liverpool's waterfront for Saltaire, just a 12-minute walk from our house. Salt's Mills is home to many exhibitions, including work of local lad, **David Hockney** (*right*). This year there's even more, both locally and across the area, with the City of Culture bid succeeding because it embraced the whole area. Ilkley has a strong literary festival, and Haworth was home to the Bronte sisters.

Bradford is multicultural. Whereas Liverpool has its Irish and Chinese communities, Bradford's wealth was founded on German weavers escaping the political instability of their homeland (we still have a 'Little Germany'), and several generations of immigrants from the Indian sub-continent have made their home here.



The year began with **RISE!** The opening ceremony was held outdoors in the city centre in freezing conditions. Keith and I

reluctantly decided it wasn't sensible at our age. However, we were well represented. Anna had the best seat. Playing oboe with the Airedale Symphony Orchestra, she had prime position in an upstairs office space overlooking the proceedings. They played a new composition by Ben Crick, their conductor. You can see a clip on their website: Airedale - Home. Hilary and Zoe were there to support her, kept warm by multiple layers of thermals and a curry beforehand – Bradford has award-winning Asian restaurants.

There's so much going on, we have to be selective, but I've picked out a few treats, and more events are being posted all the time. Having moved on from Brownies, I'm organising trips for our local Trefoil Guild, several of whom have limited mobility. We're looking forward to a trip on the **Keighley and Worth Valley Railway** on a steam train to Haworth where we are to see a performance of *The Railway Children* in a specially converted engine shed. Very soon we'll be boarding a canal boat at 5-Rise Locks for a production, repeated later at an accessible location for those unable to board.

The Leeds-Liverpool canal is one of our favourite local walks, as it was around Burscough before we moved. Only 110 miles to Liverpool!

When I have time, one of my interests is calligraphy. Having attended a brief Chinese calligraphy workshop in Manchester over Chinese New Year, I was delighted to get the very last ticket for an Islamic calligraphy workshop at the University of Bradford. This will be conducted by a modern, local calligrapher (who trained in London!), some of whose work was on display alongside precious documents on loan from the British Library.

If you think you might be tempted, details of all events can be found online at <https://bradford2025.co.uk/whats-on/>.

We're just the other side of the Pennines!



# W CROSS R D

*Solution below*

The Bible version used in our crosswords is the NIV.

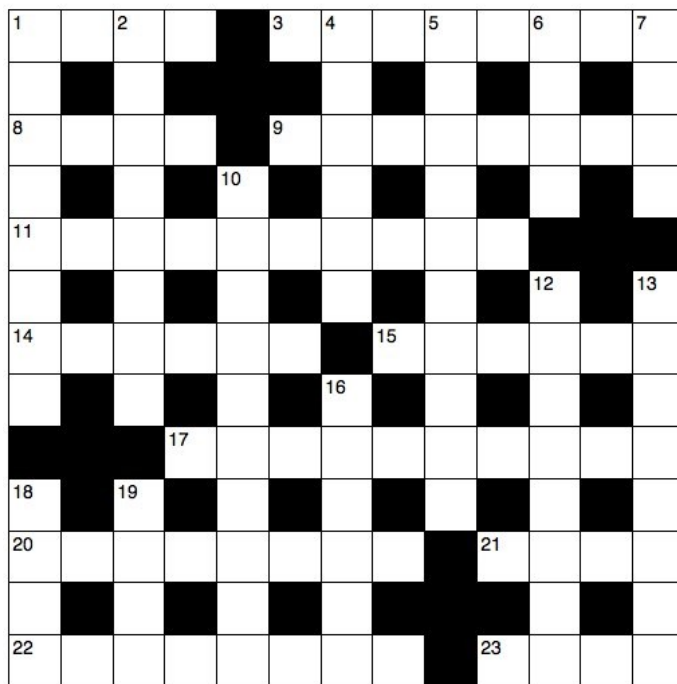
Crosswords reproduced by kind permission of BRF and John Capon, originally published in Three Down, Nine Across, by John Capon (£6.99 BRF).

## Across

- 1 Infant (Luke 2:12) (4)  
 3 Luis must (anag.) (8)  
 8 What Jesus called the devil (John 8:44) (4)  
 9 'My God, my God, why have you — me?' (Matthew 27:46) (8)  
 11 Anglican form of church government (10)  
 14 'Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like —' (Isaiah 40:31) (6)  
 15 Ministers of religion (6)  
 17 Make stronger (1 Thessalonians 3:13) (10)  
 20 Devoutness (1 Timothy 2:2) (8)  
 21 The father of Jesse (Ruth 4:22) (4)  
 22 Pool where Jesus healed a man who had been an invalid for 38 years (John 5:2) (8)  
 23 '[Jesus] said to them, " — here and keep watch"' (Mark 14:34) (4)

## Down

- 1 Follower of Christ (Acts 16:1) (8)  
 2 One of the punishments endured by Paul (2 Corinthians 6:5) (8)



- 4 Soldiers (Exodus 14:9) (6)  
 5 Scholarly study of melody, harmony and rhythm (10)  
 6 'I am God, and there is none — me' (Isaiah 46:9) (4)  
 7 'And how can they preach unless they are -?' (Romans 10:15) (4)  
 10 Favourable reception (1 Timothy 1:15) (10)  
 12 Hip orbit (anag.) (8)  
 13 End of life (Isaiah 22:14) (5,3)  
 16 'About midnight the sailors — they were approaching land' (Acts 27:27) (6)  
 18 He married Jezebel (1 Kings 16:30–31) (4)  
 19 'According to your great compassion — out my transgressions' (Psalm 51:1) (4)

## In our Book of Remembrance In May

- 2nd Mary Lockie, 1990  
 Leslie Duffield, 2011  
 3rd Elizabeth Boon, 1977  
 Amy Bell, 1987  
 4th Gerald Rimmer, 1977  
 7th David Astley, 2001  
 Barbara Brown, 2002  
 8th Robert Brookfield, 2020  
 9th David Jones, 1986  
 10th Clarissa Roberts, 1958  
 Wilfred Gott, 1968

- 12th George Williams, 2011  
 15th Kathleen Hiley, 2021  
 Mary Bailey, 2022  
 16th Dorothy Hall, 2013  
 18th Ian Stuart, 2010  
 20th Alan Livesley, 1985  
 29th William Bullen, 1997  
 30th Florence Boswell-Reid, 1993

*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, Baby, 3, Stimulus, 8, Liar, 9, Forsaken, 11, Episcopacy, 14, Eagles, 15, Clergy, 17, Strengthen, 20, Holiness, 21, Obed, 22, Bethesda, 23, Stay.  
**DOWN:** 1, Believer, 2, Beatings, 4, Troops, 5, MusicoLOGY, 6, like, 7, Sent, 10, Acceptance, 12, Prohibit, 13, Dying day, 16, Sensed, 18, Ahab, 19, Blot.

## God in the Arts

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

### He gave us eyes to see them: 'The Death of the Virgin' by Bruegel

Upton House in Warwickshire was the home of a millionaire oil magnate, Walter Samuel, in the 1920s and 30s. The origin of that fortune is displayed in the collection of early Shell posters, but the house is now owned by the National Trust.

The interiors still breathe the art deco atmosphere of that earlier lifestyle. Outside there are beautiful terraced gardens, imposing cedar trees, and spectacular asters. Inside there is a remarkable art collection with works by Bosch, Holbein, El Greco, Canaletto and Stubbs. And two paintings by Pieter Bruegel the Elder (1525-69) – 'The Massacre of the Innocents' and 'The Death of the Virgin.' Bruegel's works are full of movement and colour as he depicts the peasant life and landscapes of his day. The mood for 'The Death of the Virgin' is very different. It is a grisaille, painted in grey tones that suit the theme of life ending.

This month of May is often known as Mary's month, with May Queen celebrations and the feast of the Visitation on the 31st. On that day we give thanks for the beginning of new life in the womb of our Lady as she goes to share that good news with her cousin, Elizabeth. In Bruegel's painting in Upton House, it is the ending of her life that is the theme. Local villagers gather around her bed which is set in a typical Flemish room of the period.

The source of this story is the Golden Legend. In the Gospels we hear of Mary at the Incarnation and Cana. We know Mary was with the disciples at the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, and, as the Golden Legend relates, here they are with her at her death. John, the beloved disciple, seems to be dozing by the fireside, perhaps dreaming of



that special moment at the crucifixion when he was entrusted with the care of the mother of Jesus.

Mary holds a candle and is praying as she looks at the crucifix on the pillow at the end of the bed. For all the figures gathered around, Bruegel has depicted the scene as a special, intimate moment, when she is about to be reunited with her son. We can think of Mary praying the Magnificat and Mary praying with the disciples at Pentecost. And prayer suffuses this scene as she commends her life to God's grace. The light that shines forth faintly around the bed will blaze out in resurrection glory as she is welcomed into the heavenly courts.

In the Orthodox Church this moment is known as the falling asleep of Mary. If so, it is a falling asleep to wake into the realm of life eternal. She whose words to the angels began the great gospel of salvation in Jesus; she who told the servants at Cana to do what Jesus asks; she who followed Jesus to the foot of the cross – now in this painting, she places her hope and trust in that same son who showed that death was not the end, but birth into new life. Mary's Yes to the angel is a lesson and example for all of us as we try to follow God's will. As we ponder this scene of Bruegel in her month of May, we can echo the angel's words to our Lady: 'Hail, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you' – now and eternally.

14 RMS Queen Mary  
15 Michael Ramsey  
16 1965  
17 Gary Powers  
18 Tanganyika &  
Zanzibar  
19 Max Yasgur's  
20 Martin Peters

6 Dr Zhivago  
7 Dr No  
8 BBC2  
9 The Khmer Rouge  
10 Z-Cars  
11 Hockenheim  
12 Alexey Leonov  
13 Monty Python

60s Quiz Answers  
1 Alcatraz  
2 Chico  
3 Lincoln Memorial,  
Washington DC  
4 State Opening of  
Parliament  
5 Foinavon

## THE INFLUENCE OF RELIGION ON LAW

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

### THE TAKING OF AN OATH

The law has insisted upon the truth being told on all occasions without exception. It is not difficult to see the reason why. Justice cannot be done unless the truth be known. The Judges have to rely on the statements of witnesses. If it were permissible for a witness to tell a lie to help his friend, it would be the end of any attempt to do justice. I must remark, however, in parenthesis, that this reasoning assumes that the law itself is just, and that Judges decide the cases justly. If the law is harsh and unjust, or is unjustly administered, then witnesses may be tempted to permit themselves "a pious fraud". In the old days when stealing anything worth more than forty shillings was punishable with death, a jury solemnly found that a £5 bank note was only worth £1.95 and no one thought it reprehensible. Hence the importance of seeing that the law is not only certain, but only that it is just.

On the assumption that the law is just, the Judges insist on absolute truth: and to emphasise its importance, they require the witness to take an oath that he will tell the truth.

There is nothing perhaps, in our legal procedure which so clearly shows the influence of religion as the taking of an oath.

Ever since there has been a system of law in this country, it has proceeded on the footing that everyone believes in God. And it still proceeds on that footing. When a witness goes into the witness box the first thing he or she has to do is to take the oath. Silence is demanded in Court to emphasise the solemnity of what he is about to do. The witness takes the book in his hand and says these words: "I swear by Almighty God that the evidence I shall give shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth." That book is the New Testament unless a different book is requested. By the oath the witness is not merely making a solemn affirmation to the Judge, but is binding the witness to God to tell the truth: and there is no room for half-truths or pious frauds. This is well known to ordinary folk who come to give evidence. Some of the more emphatic sort have been known to protest too much the truth of their answer by adding "May God strike me dead if I have told a lie." It is recorded that on one occasion on the Western Circuit a witness who had made such an exclamation, did fall down dead, and a stone is set up in the market place at Devizes to note the fact! Witnesses of other religious faiths take the oath according to the form of their own religion, but it must always be an oath which is binding on their conscience.

*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



Every coin given and every collection made support young people to tackle the struggles they're facing. A future of hope and happiness belongs to every child. Boxholders help to raise more than £1 million in vital funds to make that happen.

If any readers of **THE WORD** would like to have a collector's box please contact our Children's Society Coordinator **Sylvia Kent (564071)**.

### Christian dog

A strong Baptist family decided to buy a Christian dog. The local animal home brought out a dog to the family and the family decided to test the dog.

The father said: "Go to my car and get the Bible." Obediently, the dog trotted to the car, grabbed the Bible off the front seat and laid it at the feet of the man. "Ah," said the father, "he may know what the Bible is, but does he read it?" He instructed the dog to turn to Psalm 23. The dog opened the Bible with his nose and pawed through the pages to Psalm 23. "Ah," said the father, "he may read the Bible, but is he baptised?" At once the dog trotted over to the nearby stream, where it jumped in, went under, and jumped out again. "Ah," said the father, "It may be baptised, but does it pray?" The dog immediately sat down, closed its eyes and waved its front paws in the air. "Wait a minute!" exclaimed the mother, outraged, "this dog is no Baptist – he is Pentecostal!"

# WORD SEARCH

*Solution on page 28*

The Nicene Creed is one of the most important documents in the world. It has shaped Christian belief for the past 1700 years, affecting hundreds of millions of lives. So here is a bigger Wordsearch than normal, in honour of the brave man who gave it to the Church!

This year is the 1700 anniversary of the Nicene Creed. Athanasius is the theologian behind that creed, and his feast day falls on 2<sup>nd</sup> May.

Athanasius (296-373) was born into a prosperous family in Alexandria in Egypt, and entered the ministry. He was 29 years old when he accompanied Alexander, the bishop of Alexandria, to the Church's first great ecumenical Council, at Nicaea in 325. There he saw the Council debate the Person of Christ. How was He the Son of God and also Man? Did He really exist before He was born? If we worship Him, does that mean that we are worshipping two Gods?

When the heresy of Arius, which taught that Christ was not divine, and not eternal, later threatened the church, Athanasius worked with his bishop, Alexander, in framing what became known as the Nicene Creed. Our Lord's full divinity was safeguarded in the words, 'eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one substance with the Father.'

For the next 45 years Athanasius' devotion, scholarship, and forceful leadership established the Nicene Creed in the Christian Church. His enemies, both in Church and state, conspired against him, and he was exiled five times from the See of Alexandria and spent a total of 17 years in flight and hiding.

Athanasius' name will always be linked with the triumph of New Testament Christology over every form of reductionism (lessening of the Person of Christ.)

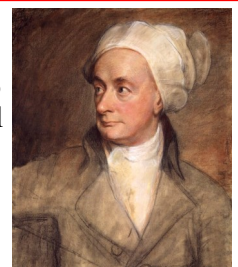
ATHANASIUS	COUNCIL	WORSHIP	FROM	DEVOTION	FLIGHT
NICENE	BISHOP	DIVINE	LIGHT	SCHOLARSHIP	HIDING
CREED	DEBATE	ETERNAL	TRUE	CHURCH	TRIUMPH
THEOLOGIAN	CHRIST	BEGOTTEN	ONE	STATE	CHRISTOLOGY
EGYPT	PERSON	GOD	SUBSTANCE	EXILED	ALEXANDRIA

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

## The story behind "God Moves in a Mysterious Way"

This often used expression comes from the opening verse of a hymn, written in 1773, by poet and hymnist William Cowper which has been described as the greatest hymn ever written on the subject of divine providence. The text which Cowper attached to it was Jesus' words to Peter in John 13 verse 7: "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter." Cowper suffered from what was then known as melancholia, which would probably now be diagnosed as depression. He made several attempts to take his own life and spent about a year in what was then called a lunatic asylum after which he became an enthusiastic evangelist. In 1767 he was invited to reside with John Newton (the former slave ship commander and writer of "Amazing Grace") and the two men collaborated in producing nearly 350 hymns one of which was "God Moves in a Mysterious Way, His Wonders to Perform." There is a story that during a depression in the cotton industry (known as the Cotton Panic) in Lancashire in 1865 which was caused by a shortage of supplies as a

result of the American Civil War a mill owner called his workers together and told them that he had no option but to close the mill. The local community was faced with poverty and hunger. A girl who taught in the local Sunday School started to sing the third verse "Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take/ the clouds ye so much dread/ are big with mercy, and will break/ in blessings in your head" which struck hope into the hearts of the millworkers who took up the refrain. Such is the power of a great hymn. Cowper was of the firm view that God has a divine purpose that causes all human tribulations and suffering to pale into insignificance. To Cowper, trouble and mystery were essential parts of God's plan for this present life. God's love, mercy and wisdom should give us courage amid life's mysteries.



William Cowper,  
by George Romney  
(National Portrait Gallery)

**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.*

### Humility

A few years ago I visited the Smithsonian Museum's Hall of Human Origins. Our guide, the curator of anthropology, was keen to help Christians understand his research. Whatever you make of the evidence for human evolution, the fact remains that other species a bit like us were around before we came on the scene – or in the case of Neanderthals, at the same time.

Part of the exhibit included lifelike reconstructions of the face and hair of several different hominins, displayed on pillars at the right height for each species. So I could crouch down to 'meet' *Homo floresiensis* or stand tall to look into the eyes of *Homo heidelbergensis*. Most of these – beings? creatures? – were on other branches of the evolutionary tree to us, and we share a common ancestor much further back. I did, however, feel as if I was meeting my forebears.

As I walked between the statues I asked myself, "Why us?" There's evidence that Neanderthals used symbolism as we do, and also buried their dead. Did they have the potential to evolve to a point where they could do similar things to us?

The curator explained how, as the ice ages came and went, human beings moved around but other species appear to have stayed put and suffered the consequences – they just weren't ready yet for that big change. As I took in the displays about how we began to gather socially around a fire, make music or write, I felt humbled. We managed to adapt, but we could so easily have disappeared with the rest.

In his book *The Message of Creation*, theologian David Wilkinson shares his view that being made in the image of God has nothing to do with our own cleverness or abilities, but is a gift. God created us on purpose (I believe through the long slow process of evolution) and chose to enter into a relationship with us, making us His representatives on earth.

Thankfully I don't have to figure out how to interact with other human-like hominins today. I do, however, have an equal share in humankind's God-given commission to tend and keep creation. Am I ready to go further than ensuring my own species' survival - not necessarily because we have evolved further than our ice-age ancestors, but because I have one of the 'new hearts' promised in Ezekiel 11:19? Can I work together, in a true spirit of humility, with people from all over the world to ensure the full diversity of life can flourish?

*The Revd Dr Jo White considers*

### Reflecting Faith: Where to hold a Baptism

Let's look at the font where baptisms usually take place.

Over the years Christians have used a wide variety of 'fonts': the sea accessed from the beach, a swimming pool (hired for the occasion), an especially built permanent baptistry, many varied stone fonts, a stainless steel portable font and even the beach in Philippi, Greece where Paul is said to have baptised Lydia and her household. Imagine the sunshine, warmth, flowing clean water and a gathering of your family and friends from your local church who have all travelled there together to celebrate this special moment, and themselves renewed their baptismal vows!

Baptism is not only a personal acceptance of Christ, but a huge celebration for Christian family and friends. Think back to a time of success in your life such as passing an exam or getting a new

job. Didn't everyone around you also celebrate? So it is when a new person wants to follow Jesus.

Baptism for older children and adults have always followed a period of instruction.

People as far back as the 3<sup>rd</sup> century weren't just grabbed off the street and immediately baptised and able to join in all the services. Rather, they were carefully taught about Jesus and what being a Christian means.

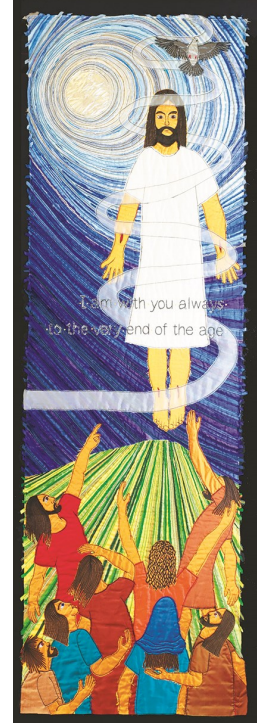
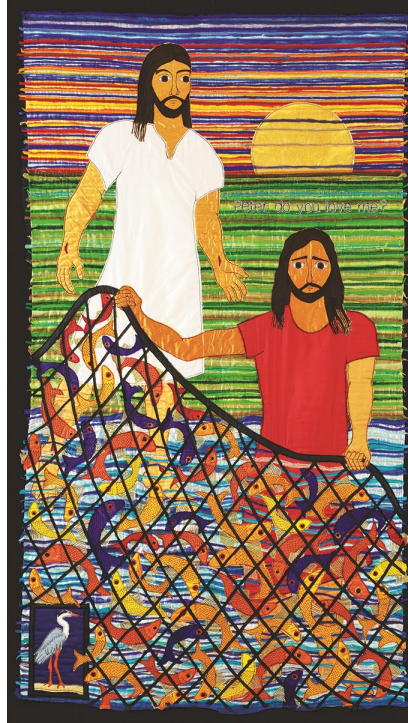
They were allowed to take part in the Sunday service up to the 'Peace' and then they had to leave and went to a separate building for teaching. In other words, they couldn't even watch the Holy Communion part of the service until they had been baptised.

Baptism symbolised their public acceptance of the Christian faith, and it was quite literally their first step in their life as a member of the church, as the actual baptism was carried out in a special building, outside but attached to the main church building. Baptisms were done by the Bishop on a certain day or days each year.

## Threads Through The Cross: From The Cross to The Great Commission

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 four panels shown below in this article:



the body of Jesus being carried away from the Cross;  
the Angel outside the tomb saying that Jesus was not inside it, that he had risen;  
Jesus meeting his disciples at the Sea of Galilee and telling them to cast their fishing nets on the other side of their boat;  
Jesus giving the Great Commission to his disciples to go and baptise all nations in the name of the Father.

# THE CHURCH KITCHEN CUPBOARD

## A REVIEW OF THE CONTENTS

THE ARGUMENT FOR RETENTION		THE CASE FOR DISPOSAL
<p>↓</p> <p>WE NEED THEM FOR CHURCH LUNCHES</p>	<p>AT LEAST SIX HUNDRED FORKS</p>	<p>↓</p> <p>LAST TIME THERE WERE 14 OF US</p>
<p>IT'S PRETTY</p>	<p>VASE (HEAVILY-PATTERNED)</p>	<p>IT'S PRETTY HIDEOUS</p>
<p>OH, WE NEED THAT FOR SOUP</p>	<p>HUGE SOUP VAT</p>	<p>WE DON'T SERVE SOUP</p>
<p>THEY MIGHT BELONG TO SOMEONE</p>	<p>APPROX 47 PLASTIC CONTAINERS</p>	<p>UNCLAIMED FOR DECADES AND NONE OF THE LIDS MATCH</p>
<p>WHAT IF THE BISHOP VISITS?</p>	<p>IMPOSING EQUESTRIAN-THEMED PLATTER</p>	<p>WOULD HE BE THAT IMPRESSED BY A MASSIVE HORSE?</p>

## CURRENTLY AT 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 until **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).



**214, Liverpool Road  
Birkdale  
Southport  
Telephone: 565059**

**HAIRDRESSING  
FOR ALL  
THE FAMILY**

**Tuesdays : O.A.P rates by Diane**

## WORD SEARCH solution



## J. E. ALVEY

VERMIN AND INSECT CONTROL



Domestic and Industrial Contracts

Rats · Mice · Moles · Pigeons · Ants · Fleas · Wasps etc.

13 VICARAGE LANE,  
BANKS. PR9 8ES

Tel: 01704 213025

[www.jalveypestcontrol.co.uk](http://www.jalveypestcontrol.co.uk)

# THE GOOD KINGS AND BAD KINGS OF ENGLAND

By Dennis Davis

Dennis continues his research into our Kings and finds that some were less good than some others. This month he looks at **King Henry VIII**

## BLUFF KING HAL

More has been written about Henry the 8th than of any other king, mainly due to the way he treated his wives, I would describe him as being a good and a bad king; I will concentrate on him as a man.

He was born on 28th June 1491 the 2nd son of Henry 7th and Elizabeth of York at Greenwich Palace. He has been described as being charismatic, witty, highly educated, lover of the arts and culture, fond of music, and he wrote some songs which in the past have been played on the radio, but not lately.

He liked having his own way. He played tennis and he had a bowling alley. He liked archery and jousting. He went on to own many palaces and built a new one greater than the others and called it "Nonesuch" which no longer exists.

He was envisaged as becoming a high ranking church official but on the death of his brother Prince Arthur he came to the throne aged 17. He was good natured, but he liked his own way and people soon learnt to bow to his wishes.

Two days after his coronation he had two ministers executed. At the start of his reign he used Advisors such as Cardinal Wolsely and later Thomas Cromwell, but both were to fall foul to Henry's wrath. Wolsley died in the tower and Cromwell was beheaded for treason. Sir Thomas More was also another person who was accused of treason because he would not agree to the divorce of Henry's first wife. Later he was to make his own decisions.

Henry hated Martin Luther. For his attacks on Lutherism, in 1521, the Pope bestowed on him the title Defender of The Faith; this is still one of the monarch's titles today. He later turned against the Pope, encouraged by Cranmer and Cromwell. Henry was instrumental in founding the reform of the Church in England by making himself head of the church, replacing the Pope, but he did not abandon the fundamentals of the Roman Catholic Church.

Henry was constantly at war with France and Scotland, who were invoking the Auld Alliance. Being constantly at war, this and his other



projects left him short of money. Henry built up the naval strength of England establishing the Royal Navy; however, The Mary Rose, the largest ship built was top heavy due to too many cannons and a large crew and marines. It turned turtle and sank at its launch losing not only the ship but most of those aboard.

Henry wanted to be a peace maker so he arranged meetings with the heads of other European states. The greatest of these was in France between Calais and Paris, known as the Field of the Cloth of Gold due to many tents being of a golden colour. Henry had a large Pavilion tent. Each side tried to show off and out do the other, games and sports took place over a week. It all turned sour when Henry and Francis had a wrestling match and Henry lost and shortly after they returned to war.

As Henry grew older he experienced a physical and mental decline and he died on 28th January 1547. The cause of his death is unclear. Some claim it was an ulcer that did not heal. Gout was also suggested but seems unlikely. Another possible cause could have been General Paralysis of the Insane\*, a condition that does not manifest itself for over 20 years after infection. His later build, symptoms and physical condition are typical of that condition. To have suggested this would have led to imprisonment in the tower and execution. So if I am absent from church after this is printed you might guess where I am.

\*a severe neuropsychiatric disorder caused by the late-stages of a sexually transmitted bacterial disease. *Ed.*

## CARPE DIEM

by John M. Shakespeare

Make good use of the present, is the sentiment that is expressed here. Being honest about the way we feel, is not a sign of weakness. We all struggle against situations which tend to discourage us, it is a mark of maturity. The realistic Christian relies not only on their own strengths, but the strengths of God, whose justice is real, even if it is not always obvious.

When we say make good use of the present it should be to enable us to use the opportunity to perform some worthwhile action. Yes, it may be an action to help someone else, but equally it may be our choice to do something for ourselves. I do not believe it is selfish to satisfy a need we may have, so long as no one else is harmed. So, I say, go out there, do it, grasp the nettle.

We all feel under pressure from time to time and need strength to cope. Psalm 118 (verses 5-6), helps in the following way, "Out of my distress I called on the Lord, The Lord answered me and set me in a broad place. With the Lord by my side, I do not fear. What can mortals do to me." With this sort of endorsement we can proceed with our daily lives, we can make good what we intend to do, grabbing our lives with larger hands. Our confidence and commitment can bring to others, with God's help, the ability to meet their own challenges, and thus move forward in their daily lives.

I would like to quote here from, "A Psalm of Life"- what the heart of the young man said to the Psalmist. The final verse, I feel, epitomises the sentiment expressed in "Carpe Diem". "Let us be up and doing, with a heart for any fate, still achieving, still pursuing, learn to labour and to wait", by H. W. Longfellow (1807-82).

There are many proverbs urging us to "Seize the day" such as "Put your best foot forward", or "If your destiny doesn't fit, then fit yourself to your destiny". The Bible itself gives a selection of proverbs to encourage us, such as Proverbs (Ch 2 verses 20-22): "Therefore walk in the way of the good, and keep to the paths of the just. For the upright will abide in the land and the innocent remain in it, but the wicked will be cut off from the land, and the treacherous will be rooted out of it".

If this guidance does not meet your needs, try Proverbs (Ch 20 verses 12-13), "The hearing ear and the seeing eye, the Lord has made both of them. Do not love sleep, or else you will come to poverty, open your eyes and you will have plenty of bread".

I will end with a quotation from William Shakespeare (1564-1616), attributed to King Henry V at the battle of Agincourt: "Once more unto the breach dear friends once more, or close the wall up with our English dead. In peace there's nothing so becomes a man as modest stillness and humility. But when the blast of war blows in our ears, then imitate the actions of a Tiger."

20<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> May brings us the RHS Chelsea Flower Show. The most prestigious gardening show in the world, it attracts about 168,000 visitors a year. Its cutting-edge garden designs have been called the 'haute couture' or 'World Cup' of gardening.

Here are some interesting facts about the Show:

The RHS Chelsea Flower Show is organised by the Royal Horticultural Society.

The Show began in 1913, with about 250 exhibitors in a large single tent. Today the Show covers more than 23 acres with more than 550 exhibitors and gardens, not to mention the Great Pavillion.

The Great Pavillion is HUGE – it covers 2.90 acres, with enough room to park 500 London buses. The Show has been held in the grounds of the Royal Hospital Chelsea in London every year since 1913, excepts for gaps during the two World Wars and Covid.

It takes just under three weeks to build a Show Garden, and five days to take it down.

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

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

The Identification Number every Sunday will be: 812 3403 0688

The Password every Sunday will be: 201823

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

The telephone number you must ring is: 0203 481 5240

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

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

The Password every Sunday will be: 201823.

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

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

The Identification Number every Thursday will be: 835 5074 3780

The Password every Thursday will be: 7ehHEK

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

The telephone number you must ring is: 0203 481 5240

The Meeting Identification Number every Thursday will be: 835 5074 3780.

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

The Password every Thursday will be 7ehHEK. **SUBJECT TO BEING CHANGED.**

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 Rev. Jennie for any further details you require.

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

40 years ago, on 29<sup>th</sup> May 1985 the Heysel Stadium Disaster took place in Brussels. 39 football fans were crushed to death during rioting at the European Cup Final between Liverpool and Juventus.

30 years ago, on 10<sup>th</sup> May 1995 the British Minister for Northern Ireland, Michael Ancram, met representatives of Sinn Fein. It was their first formal meeting in 23 years, after a ban was lifted.

Also 30 years ago, on 13<sup>th</sup> May 1995 British mountaineer Alison Hargreaves became the first woman to reach the summit of Mount Everest unaided (without bottled oxygen or Sherpas.) She died later that year, in August, in a storm, while attempting to climb K2.

25 years ago, on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2000 Ken Livingstone became the first Mayor of London.

Also 25 years ago, on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2000 Vladimir Putin was inaugurated as President of Russia.

15 years ago, on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2010 during the Greek debt crisis, the European Union, European Central Bank and International Monetary Fund authorised a three-year 110 billion Euro bailout loan to Greece.

Also 15 years ago, on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2010 the British General Election resulted in a hung parliament. A coalition government was formed on 11<sup>th</sup> May by the Conservative Party leader, David Cameron, and the Liberal Democrat party leader, Nick Clegg.

10 years ago, on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2015, the Republic of Ireland became the first country to hold a referendum on whether same-sex marriage should be legalised. It voted to approve, and same-sex marriage became legal in Ireland from that November.

## Don't look back

A Sunday School teacher was telling the story of how Lot's wife turned into a pillar of salt when she looked back at Sodom and Gomorrah. One youngster nodded in a knowing fashion. "My mummy looked back once while she was driving," he confided, "and she turned into a lamp post."



**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 Ascension Day**

Dear God, our loving, sending and almighty Father,

Thank you that because Jesus died, rose and ascended into heaven, You were able to send your Holy Spirit to empower Your disciples then and today. That, equipped by that same Spirit, we can confidently work for Your kingdom to come on earth, as in heaven.

Lord, in these strange, topsy- turvy days, where earthly rulers terrify and destroy and disappoint, we rejoice that You are the Sovereign Lord of all things, and all times, and all places.

You, our God and Father, truly reign. We are Your people. We are secure within Your love and protection. Thank you that at the name of Jesus every knee shall ultimately bow – and we pray, thankfully in His name, Amen.

By Daphne Kitching

**Artificial Opponents?**

Wordles and Quordles and Octordles too,  
Who can be bored with so much to do?  
Puzzles online, and less now in print  
Is it surprising that I'm starting to squint?

Crosswords and lost words in a grid you must find  
Sudoku, Kakuro for the numerate mind,  
Backgammon or chess, if that is your sport  
And card games of every conceivable sort!

Deep in my cupboard is a box full of games  
And a beautiful chess set, abandoned – a shame!  
But do you remember (long ago as it seems),  
When we played games with people, and not these machines?

By Nigel Beeton

**£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.

**For a price quotation ring 0345 777 3322**





To: Ann Shakespeare on 9th May  
Clive Morris on 13th May  
David Halsall on 21st May  
Mandy Potts on 26th May  
Beverley Cummins on 29th May  
Sue Paterson on 31st May

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

## The Last Laughs

### Author's Fantasy Tour

The author and Booker Prize winner Douglas Stuart was surprised to learn that Scottish taxi drivers are profiting from the success of his first novel "Shuggie Bain." On a visit to Glasgow a cabbie told him that he was offering *Shuggie Bain* tours of the city for £20. The author was horrified because most of the book is fictional and the places do not exist!

### Hair-raising

Our readers may be amused by President Donald Trump's elaborate hairstyle which protrudes like the peak of a cap above his forehead but to him it is no laughing matter. The Canadian journalist Graydon

Carter recounts in his memoir "When the Going Was Good" that at a *Vanity Fair* photoshoot Trump was asked to remove his jumper. He refused because he did not want to "muss his elaborately assembled confection of hair. In the end, they had to use scissors to cut off his cashmere pullover.

### Already well connected

The telephone rang in the church office of the church that the MP attended when visiting his constituency. An eager voice inquired: "Do you expect the MP to be in church on Sunday? If so, I was thinking of coming along."

"That," said the clergyman, "I cannot promise. But we do expect that God will be there, and we fancy that that should be incentive enough for a reasonably large attendance."

# THE ECCLESIASTICAL DETECTIVE

## THE DETECTIVE



THE  
VICAR

## THE SIDEKICK



THE  
PARISH  
ADMINISTRATOR

## THE NEMESIS



THE  
ORGANIST

## THIS WEEK'S CRIME SCENE



THE CHURCH HALL:  
SOMEONE  
HAS BEEN  
LARKING AROUND  
WITH THE  
TODDLER-GROUP  
TOYS

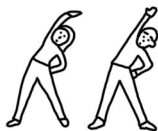
## SUSPECTS



THE  
YOUNG  
PEOPLE



THE  
FLOWER  
ARRANGERS

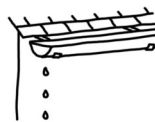


THE  
KEEP FIT  
GROUP

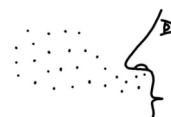


THE  
CHURCH  
CAT

## CLUES



A CONSTANT  
DRIPPING FROM  
THE GUTTERING



A MUSTY  
HYMN BOOK  
AROMA



THE AGENDA  
FROM A RECENT  
P.C.C. MEETING



THE LID  
REMOVED FROM  
THE PARISH  
BISCUIT TIN



# MASSAM & MARSHALL

INDEPENDENT FUNERAL DIRECTORS



Golden Charter  
Funeral Plans



## Our Services

- ✓ 24 hour professional service
- ✓ Bereavement Support
- ✓ Stonemasonry
- ✓ Funeral Plans

## Why Choose Us?

We're a professional, Local, family run business dedicated to supporting our community when you need it most

## Contact us

Southport and Birkdale  
01704 549222

Parbold - 01257 462222

Scarisbrick - 01704 321234

Covering all surrounding areas

[www.massamandmarshall.co.uk](http://www.massamandmarshall.co.uk)

[Funerals@massamandmarshall.co.uk](mailto:Funerals@massamandmarshall.co.uk)