



THE WORD

Editor: Stuart Baker: stjohnbirkdaletheword@gmail.com



**THE PARISH MAGAZINE OF
ST. JOHN'S CHURCH
ST. JOHN'S ROAD, BIRKDALE. PR8 4JP
Charity Number 1128171
Vicar: Rev. Jennie Hardy**

St. John, Chapter 1, verses 1 and 14:

***"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...
The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us."***

ISSUE No. 270

JUNE 2025

ST. JOHN'S PARISH CHURCH

God Centred, Relationship Driven and Life Transforming



Are we Fit for Mission?

In the coming autumn St John's church, and all the other parishes in the North Meols Deanery, will have to make a decision: shall we stay as we are, as a single parish, or put a toe in the water and see what it would be like to be part of a larger parish in combination with another parish or parishes?

This will not be an easy decision to make. We have to face the stark reality of the facts: nationally there has been a 65% decline in church attendance in the past 30 years, plus a 38% reduction in clergy while maintaining 94% of the buildings we had thirty years ago. This can make it hard to focus on mission and ministry.

The Diocese of Liverpool has decided that our Deanery shall be one of the next Deaneries to consider whether the parishes are fit for mission on their own or whether they could make a bigger difference in Christian Mission by becoming legally part of a larger parish, which would mean working

more closely with other churches, potentially benefitting from streamlined governance and increased administration capabilities and skill-sharing.

A year ago Rev. Jennie became our Vicar and as a result of her energy and enthusiasm we now have more forms of ministry than we have had in many years. Some are completely new, such as SPACE, Jolly Tots and Godspeed and these are enabling St John's to reach out to the community in new ways. There are plans to start a new Sunday morning activity for children and a pastoral visiting team. These are vital to our being fit for mission but each of these activities requires willing volunteers to make them successful. It will be of help to our PCC to see how well all these activities are supported when the PCC has to decide if St John's is Fit for Mission on its own or if we should look at the possibility of working as part of a larger parish with others.

All of our parishioners are encouraged to consider how they can best help St John's to be fit for mission. Some can give more time and energy than others but almost everyone can help in some ways by volunteering to assist with some of our many forms of Mission in our church and in the community. Please contact Rev Jennie if you would like to help. **YOUR church needs YOU.**

Our Charitable Giving

The PCC recently decided that in addition to supporting Revive International (the children's refuge home in Olinda, Brazil) the charitable donations which have been received during the last year will be distributed to International Aid, Water Aid, Christian Aid and Tearfund.

Stuart Baker

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



Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.

Hello, me again!
What is faith? Well, Hebrews 11 verse 1 gives us a clear succinct definition and if you go

on to read the rest of Hebrews 11 you will read a lot more about faith in action throughout the lives of people who lived by faith. I was also struck by verse 13 which says, 'All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance'.

If I'm honest, my faith has grown a lot due to the fact that I have seen God do the things He has promised in my life. I praise God because of all He has done, a lot of the praise songs we sing acknowledge God's faithfulness and the things He does for us. But I have come to the realisation that in fact, our faith is strongest when we don't see God moving in situations we pray to be changed, especially personal situations.

We can have 'mountain top experiences' where we literally feel close to God, life is good, God is faithful, perhaps He has answered your prayers or you've had a breakthrough you've been praying for or your on a retreat or at a worship conference and you're fired up for Jesus. Those times are the best. But then we have times in the valley. The valley can be a dark place that can seem never-ending and lonely. It can feel boring, just putting one foot in front of the other and not having those feelings of excitement that the mountain top gives.

I quite like mountain climbing, I've climbed the three highest mountains in the UK, although it was over three years, not 24 hours like some people do! I've noticed that although I love climbing the mountain, it's actually not that much fun. My legs hurt, sometimes the weather is awful, I'm soaked through, there's no convenience stops. It's just one painful foot after the other. Usually, the nearer you get to the top the more difficult and painful it becomes. But you keep pushing, you know you can't give up now because you're so close, almost there. Just when you reach the point that you think, I just can't do it, I can't go on any further, the end comes into sight or perhaps a passerby on the walk back down says, "keep going, you're almost there". Somehow you find the strength within to continue and make it to the summit.

We're now back to that mountain top experience. That jubilee and excitement, "I made it, I did it". Suddenly, a little like childbirth, I suppose, all of the pain and the painful memories disappear and

you're in a state of elation and feel so accomplished. It even makes the walk back down a joy. That mountain top experience is what also leads us to doing it all over again!

I've acknowledged that my faith has grown a lot because of seeing God's faithfulness in my life. However, when I look back on my faith journey, I see something like those mountain journeys. Some really difficult and painful times, some lonely times, wondering at times, "where are you God?" Some boring or 'plodding' times. Some trials that we're painful, moments when I just wanted to give up and yet, that mountain top, was just around the corner and someone has come alongside me and encouraged me to keep going.

I don't believe this faith journey is unique to me. As Hebrews 11 does, we can see it in the lives of those heroes of the faith. They lived by faith that God would be faithful to His promises even while in the valley, even when there were promises they didn't get to see on the 'mountain top' accomplished. Like us, along our journey of faith, there are things that we want to see, such as our loved ones coming to know the Lord, or the day when Jesus returns and we see this new heaven and earth He has promised. But we live in faith, that God is faithful to His Word and while we might not see them even during our lifetime on earth, we will see them.

I encourage you to take a moment perhaps to read Hebrews 11 and then to reflect on your own journey of faith, perhaps creating a timeline and plotting significant moments along your journey would help you see those points on your journey more clearly. Perhaps reflect on where you are now on that journey, where would you like to be? How will you get there?

By making a decision to have faith and to trust that God will be faithful to His promises, you can keep plodding more happily. Perhaps you can rejoice at the mountain top right now. Maybe you are at that point where you've had enough and you want to give up, let this be your encouragement to keep going, your mountain top is just around the corner. Be blessed on the journey, the ups, downs, highs, lows, valleys, "keeping your eyes fixed on Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith" (Hebrews 12:2). Love, Jennie xx

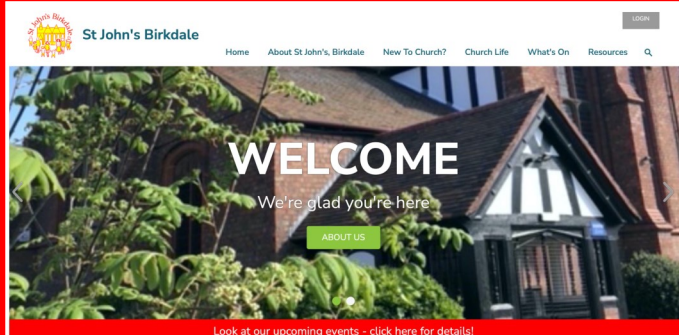


... is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.

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 (07530 950100)
PCC Secretary:	Mrs. Christine Baker (560518)
Gift Aid Secretary:	Mrs. Sylvia Kent (564071)
Parish Hall Secretary:	Mrs. Jean Morris (564206)
Electoral Roll Officer:	Stuart Harris (563789)
Deanery Synod Reps:	Clive Morris (564206) Stuart Baker (560518)
Lead Safeguarding Officer & Recruiter	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

- 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**



"Well, no, I'm not dressing like this to create common ground with today's youth culture – I've always worn a hoody."

Making Donations to our church 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

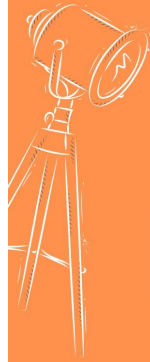
WHAT'S ON AT ST. JOHN'S



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 **5th and 19th June**. 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 27 for details about logging in on zoom by computer or by telephone.



FILM NIGHTS

January 10th
February 14th
March 14th
April 18th - Good Friday special with Fish Supper
£15 please book
May 9th
June 20th
July 4th



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

St John's Hall, PR8 4JP

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

STJOHNSBIRKDALE.CO.UK

UPCOMING EVENTS

14 JUNE SUMMER FAIR 10AM - 3PM	12 JULY STRAWBERRY TEA 3PM - 5PM	19 SEPTEMBER COUNTRY & WESTERN NIGHT 7PM	26 OCTOBER HARVEST CELEBRATION 12PM	15 NOVEMBER COLOUR PARTY 7PM
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5 - 6 DECEMBER
CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL & FAIR

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:
13th JUNE**

WHAT MORE IS ON AT ST. JOHN'S

POTTERY PAINTING

open to adults and children accompanied by an adult

A Space to potter, paint & talk

Drop in and Connect with others

Tuesdays 3pm - 5pm

Paint a pot & take it home

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

Refreshments available.
Donations welcome

COME AND JOIN US!

For More Information

stjohnsbirkdale.co.uk

info@stjohnsbirkdale.co.uk

Free for a limited time dependent on funding
suggested donation £2

GODSPEED

INDOOR CYCLING CLASSES

TUESDAY 7.30PM
THURSDAY 6PM
FRIDAY 9.30AM



Scan to book!

St John's
Birkdale

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

stjohnsbirkdale.co.uk

07872 400718

St John's
Birkdale

3rd Mondays at 7.30pm



Growth

HOME
GROUP

The Bible Course

Explore the BIG story

@ 34 Oxford Road PR8 2EQ

christinebaker178@outlook.com

WHAT'S ON WEDNESDAYS

AT ST JOHN'S

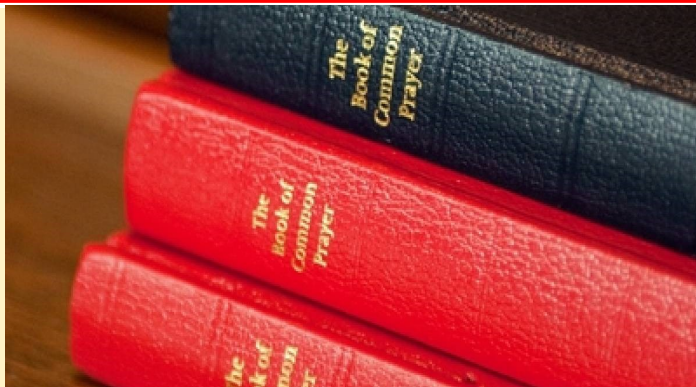
WEDNESDAYS 4th & 18th JUNE

MIDWEEK COMMUNION SERVICE

There will be a Midweek traditional Communion service at 10.30am in church on **Wednesdays 4th and 18th June**.

On 4th June the service will be followed by Brunch: do stay and enjoy fellowship and a bite to eat.

On 18th June the service will be followed by tea, coffee and biscuits.



WEDNESDAYS 11th & 25th JUNE



2nd & 4th Wednesdays
2pm

God's
Word

STUDY
GROUP

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

revroydoran@btinternet.com



2nd & 4th Wednesdays
7.30pm

Growth

HOME
GROUP

@ the vicarage - 17 Kirkstall
Road PR8 4RA

food. fellowship. fun.

revjenniferhardy@gmail.com

Crooked politicians

The editor of a small country newspaper, furious over several government bills that had recently been passed, printed a scathing editorial with an enormous headline: 'HALF THE LEGISLATORS ARE CROOKS.'

Many local politicians were outraged and exerted tremendous pressure on him to print a retraction. He finally gave in to the pressure and ran his apology with the headline: 'HALF OF OUR LEGISLATORS ARE NOT CROOKS.'



SATURDAY 14TH JUNE

Our Summer Fair is fast approaching and the team are busy, as always, preparing for our fantastic event, which is being held from 10 am until 3 pm when we will be serving an assortment of delicious sandwiches and cakes with tea or coffee.

There will also be some stalls selling books, plants, handmade fragranced candles, and not forgetting our usual raffle with fabulous prizes including a hamper, so please make a note in your diary and come along with family and friends and support it.

If you would normally donate items for the tombola, perhaps you would be kind enough to donate them towards raffle prizes instead, by putting them in the box at the back of church.

We would be grateful for any kind of bottles (i.e. cordials, juice, sauces, shampoo etc or the odd bottle of wine!) for the bottle stall, which can be left in the box at the back of church.

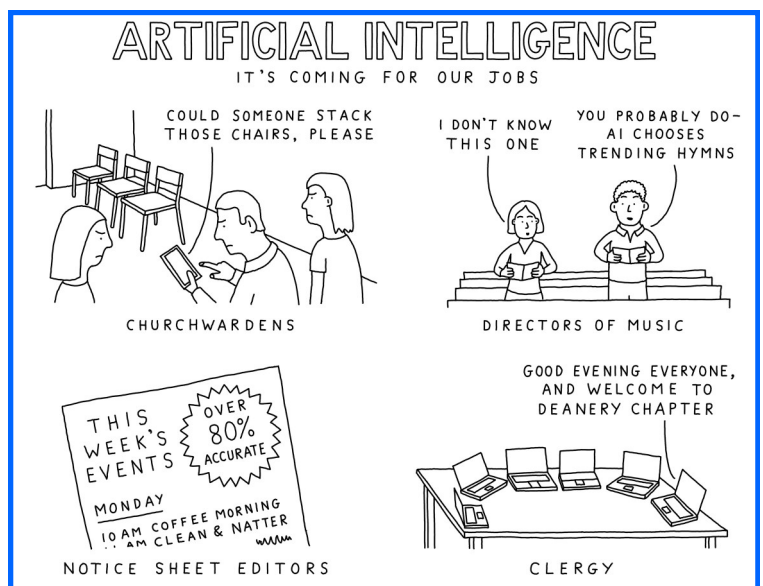
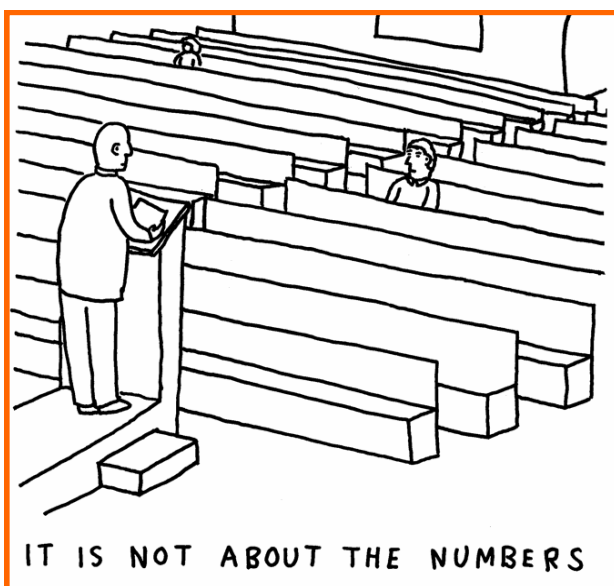
There will be a selection of children's activities **including Donkey Rides** so do bring the family and enjoy a fun day out.

Please sign the list at the back of church for any contributions towards the hamper ie tins, packet food, sweets, biscuits etc and bring your donation to church latest by **Sunday 8th June**.

If you have any difficulties in bringing your items to church, please do not hesitate to either speak to me in church or telephone me on 564071.

So why not come along for a couple of hours and enjoy spending time together, having some lunch and treating yourself (or a friend!) to something from one of the stalls.

Sylvia Kent



Worship on the Seventh Sunday
after Easter

SUNDAY 1st JUNE
HOLY COMMUNION
10.30am service **IN CHURCH** and via
zoom & phone

Collect for the Seventh Sunday after Easter

Risen, ascended Lord, as we rejoice at your triumph, fill your Church on earth with power and compassion, that all who are estranged by sin may find forgiveness and know your peace, to the glory of God the Father.

The subject of Clive's talk:

What does the Holy Spirit do?

The Text: John 3: 3-8

3 Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again."
4 "How can someone be born when they are old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother's womb to be born!"
5 Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. 6 Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.
7 You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.' 8 The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."

**MIDWEEK TRADITIONAL
COMMUNION SERVICE**

**Brunch will be served after
the service**



**WEDNESDAY
4th JUNE
10.30am
IN CHURCH**

Worship on Pentecost Sunday

SUNDAY 8th JUNE
10.30am service **IN CHURCH** and via
zoom & phone

Collect for Pentecost Sunday

Holy Spirit, sent by the Father, ignite in us your holy fire; strengthen your children with the gift of faith, revive your Church with the breath of love, and renew the face of the earth, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The subject of Roy's Talk:

**How can I be filled with
the Holy Spirit?**

The Text: Acts 2: 1-21

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.'

Worship on Trinity Sunday
FATHER'S DAY

SUNDAY 15th JUNE
10.30am
IN CHURCH and by zoom and phone

Collect for Trinity Sunday

Holy God, faithful and unchanging: enlarge our minds with the knowledge of your truth, and draw us more deeply into the mystery of your love, that we may truly worship you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

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

God as Father

The Text: Luke 15: 11-32 The Prodigal Son

11 Jesus continued: "There was a man who had two sons. 12 The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' So he divided his property between them. 13 "Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. 14 After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. 15 So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. 16 He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything. 17 When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! 18 I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. 19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.' 20 So he got up and went to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him. 21 The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' 22 "But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. 23 Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. 24 For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate. 25 Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. 26 So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. 27 'Your brother has come,' he replied, 'and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.' 28 The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. 29 But he answered his father, 'Look! All these years I've been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. 30 But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!' 31 'My son,' the father said, 'you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. 32 But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' "

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



**WEDNESDAY
18th JUNE
10.30am
IN CHURCH**

Worship on the First Sunday after
Trinity

SUNDAY 22nd JUNE
10.30am
IN CHURCH and via zoom & phone

Collect for the First Sunday after Trinity

God of truth, help us to keep your law of love and to walk in ways of wisdom, that we may find true life in Jesus Christ your Son.

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

**Fruits of the Spirit:
LOVE**

The Text: 1 John 4: 7-12

7 Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. 8 Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. 9 This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. 10 This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. 11 Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 12 No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

Worship on the Second Sunday
after Trinity

SUNDAY 29th JUNE

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

Collect for the Second Sunday after Trinity

Lord, you have taught us that all our doings without love are nothing worth: send your Holy Spirit and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of love, the true bond of peace and of all virtues, without which whoever lives is counted dead before you.

Grant this for your only Son Jesus Christ's sake, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

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

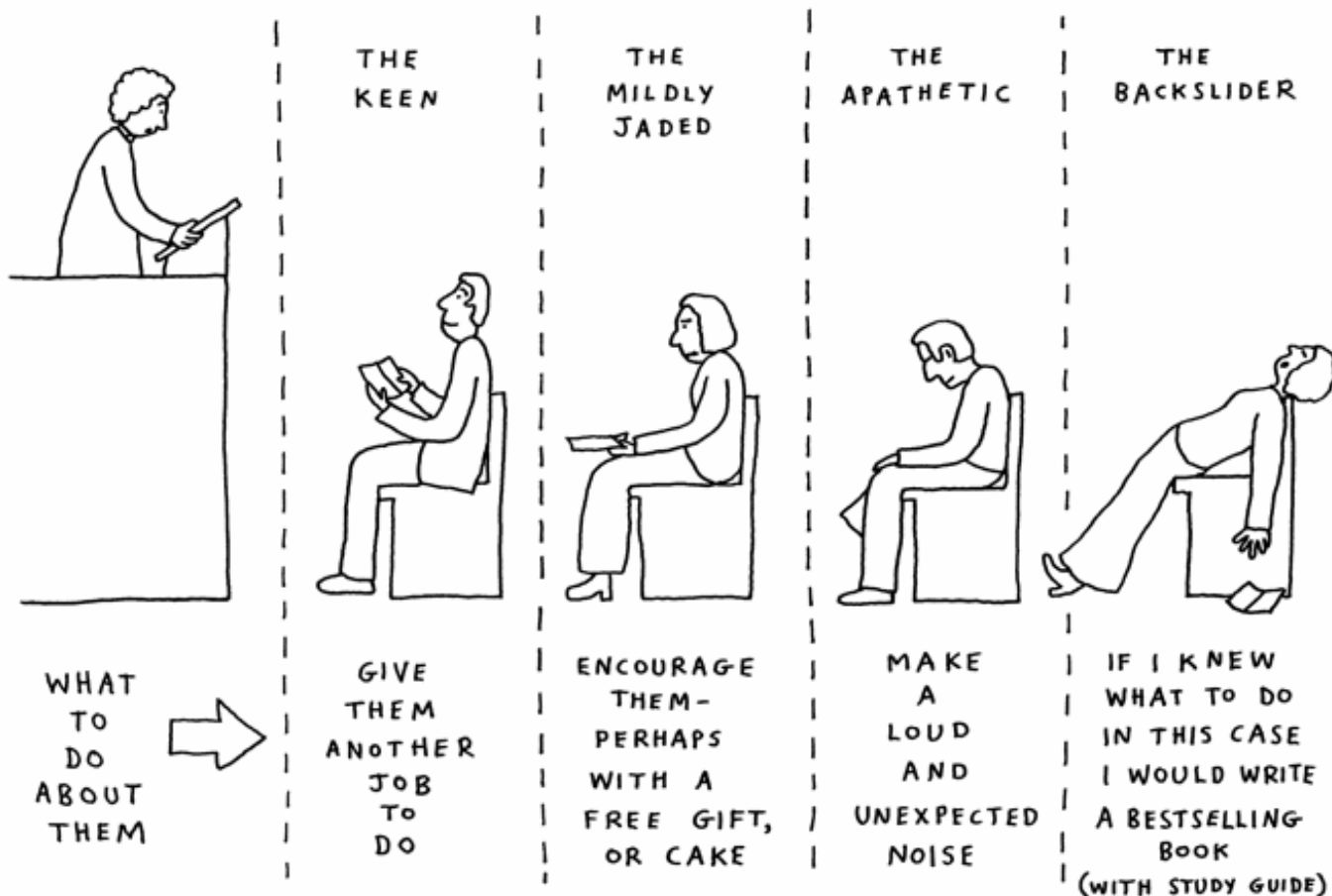
**Fruits of the Spirit:
JOY**

The Text: Hebrews 12: 1-2

1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, 2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

CHURCHGOERS

THE DIFFERENT SORTS



WHAT'S BEEN ON AT ST. JOHN'S

We have had a very encouraging start to the new forms of mission in recent weeks.

On Tuesday afternoons in the church hall we have **SPACE** which gives opportunities for children and adults to come and have a quiet time and, if they wish, to paint pottery models. This is run by Rev Jennie and Caroline Broadhurst from LRMC and they are helped by a few volunteers, Janet and Keith Trencher, Julie Dunning, Nicola Brodie-Brown and Wendy Hinds. The children all enjoy it and produce some really imaginatively coloured pieces! The weather has been very nice during May (until the Bank Holiday) and the children have been able to go out into the play area between the church and the hall and have enjoyed playing with the large playground toys. It's great to see those being used again. The toys have all been given a thorough cleaning with a jet hose and the artificial grass has been swept and hoovered so the area looks very presentable and the children really enjoy it.



On Friday afternoons we now have **Jolly Tots** for toddlers and babies and their mums. This started on 9th May and at the first session we were blessed with 16 small children and 20 adults. Lots of activities, food, chat and fun for the children. Jennie has been much assisted by Deborah Whittaker but could do with a few more willing helpers. If any of our readers could be available to help please contact Jennie.

There has been a flying start to **Godspeed**, a cycle exercise group led by Jennie and Karen Parkinson in (what used to be) the choir vestry. Sessions have to be booked in advance and it is proving to be popular. These athletes cycle furiously to the sound of upbeat religious music, a form of ministry which is very different from Sunday morning worship but it's another way of spreading the Word.



And on Saturday 24th May we held an **India-themed evening**. Clive (of Liverpool Road, not of India) started the evening with an entertaining game in which we had to think of ten different aspects of India or its culture and see if any of our ten matched the ten which he had thought of in advance. Surprisingly, Clive (of Liverpool Road) did not have the Taj Mahal on his list although almost everyone else did, and nobody thought of Clive (of India) but his Birkdale namesake had him on his list. There were many correct guesses and by a narrow margin the contest was won by Robin Rootes and others on her table. A highlight of the evening was Sari-dressing. Robin's sari was smashing (though not in quite the same way as her plate throwing at the Greek evening). Her sari and Bina's were Delightful. A variety of curries were prepared by Jennie, Christine and Bina with chapattis and bhajis and after the meal we attempted some bhangra dancing which was not Bollywood but was Jollygood fun.



There's a lot happening at St John's. Do come and join in with us if you can. On the afternoon of **Saturday 12th July** there will be a very much less energetic gathering: a **strawberry tea** in the garden at 34 Oxford Road, away from the excitement of Orange Day in town. Ask Christine (560518) about this and pray for a nice sunny afternoon. And do come and enjoy the **Summer Fair on 14th June** (see page 5 for details).

Happy 1700th Birthday, Nicene Creed!

By Canon Paul Hardingham

1700 years ago one of the most important meetings in the history of the Christian Church began in the Bithynian city of **Nicaea** (in the north of what is now Turkey). It began in May 325 and went on until the end of July 325. The Council of Nicaea was convened by the Roman Emperor Constantine, and he had an urgent job for the Christian bishops to do. He wanted them to spell out as exactly as they could the core beliefs of the Christian Church, especially with regard to the person of Christ.



Constantine had good reason to do this: a man called Arius of Alexandria was spreading the idea that Jesus Christ was not divine, but instead was a created being. Such a belief, if accepted, would have changed the very heart of Christianity.

After three months of hard work, the bishops at Nicaea had prayerfully and carefully written down as exactly as they could the core beliefs of Christianity. It became known as the Nicene Creed, and it has been the bedrock of orthodox Christianity ever since.

The Nicene Creed is unique in that it is the only Christian statement of faith that is accepted as authoritative by the Anglican, Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, and major Protestant Churches. It runs:

The Nicene Creed

We believe in one God, the Father, the almighty,
maker of heaven and earth, of all that is,
seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God,
begotten, not made, of one being with the Father.
Through Him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
He came down from heaven;
by the power of the Holy Spirit
He became incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and was made man.
For our sake He was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
He suffered death and was buried.
On the third day He rose again
in accordance with the scriptures;
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead,
and His kingdom will have no end.
We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.
With the Father and the Son He is worshipped and glorified.
He has spoken through the Prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come.
Amen.



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 July **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.



"Are you ever curious about what happens here between Easters?"



The Canterbury Tales

Stuart Baker revisits some of these stories in search of their moral lessons. This month we look at

The Miller's Tale

We probably all know something about the Miller's Tale. It is bawdy. To spare the delicate blushes of our readers we shall bowdlerise some of the more vulgar parts.

The Miller, who was very drunk, announced that he would tell a story about an old and jealous carpenter, John who was married to an 18-year-old girl named Alison. He rented a room to a young astrology student named Nicholas, who could supposedly forecast the likelihood of rain showers or drought. Nicholas fell in love with Alison and one day grasped her around the groins and cried, "Love me all-at-once or I shall die." At first Alison resisted, but he soon overcame her resistance, and together they conceived a plan to play a trick on the jealous husband.

Alison also had another admirer — Absalon, an effeminate incense swinger at the church. Absalon demonstrated his feelings for Alison by serenading her outside her bedroom window. She found him a nuisance and was interested only in Nicholas, who conceived an elaborate plan to get John out of the house for the night.

Nicholas convinced John that the town was soon to be visited with a flood like the one that visited Noah in the Bible and that, to survive, he must build and fasten three boat-like tubs to the rafters and store within them provisions. John followed Nicholas' instructions, and the evening before the predicted flood, John, Alison and Nicholas climbed into the boat. When the carpenter slept, Alison and Nicholas quickly descended to Alison's bed where they spent the night making love. Later that night, Absalon, discovering the Miller's absence, went to Alison's window. Denied access to her room, he begged for one kiss. Afraid that he might arouse the neighbours, Alison agreed to kiss him, but instead of her mouth, she extended her rear out the window. The fastidious Absalon kissed her naked bottom. As he left, Absalon overheard the young lovers laughing at him.

Cured of his love sickness, Absalon borrowed a red-hot poker from the blacksmith, returned to Alison's window, and told her he had a golden ring for her: "I'll give it to you for one more kiss." But Nicholas, trying to one-better Alison's treatment of Absalon, opened the window instead and broke wind in Absalon's face. Absalon recovered quickly and thrust the red-hot poker onto Nicholas' bottom. Nicholas shouted, "Water, help, Water, Water," startling John from his sleep. Thinking that the flood was coming, John cut the rope that held his boat suspended and crashed to the floor. The neighbours, hearing all the ruckus, rushed in and, when they heard of John's preparations for a flood, laughed at his lunacy.

Morality is hard to extract from this thoroughly amoral tale! But here goes:

- ***Don't be too clever for your own good! The clever Nicholas was branded and humiliated despite his scheming.***
- ***Lust and trickery bring chaos.***

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

On what security cameras in church will tell you

The Rectory,
St James the Least of All

My dear Nephew Darren,

Much against my better judgement, after a recent series of small thefts, we have installed security cameras here at St James the Least of All. Thank goodness the suggestion for trip wires that opened the gate to Mrs Poppleroy's garden next door, thereby setting loose her deranged Pekingese, was narrowly defeated – though I had to use my casting vote.

So now we have a complete record of everything that goes on when no one is about. It makes such interesting viewing that I have cancelled my television licence and spend every evening watching the antics of my parishioners. I wonder if there is some niche television channel which would be interested; it could help the tower restoration fund no end.

Miss Margison seems to imagine she is now part of some theatrical performance every time she cleans the church; her body language as she wields a feather duster is of operatic proportions, as is her final bow to the cameras as she leaves.

I have at last found the several hiding places where Mr Prentice secretes his bottle of whisky every week when he comes to wind the tower clock. Colonel Wainwright, who served for some time in the security services, is now worried that photographs of him cleaning the brass will be circulated in Russia. He fails to appreciate that his disguise as a French onion seller, with striped jersey, beret and waxed moustache does tend to make his presence rather more interesting than he imagines – to us, if not to the KGB.

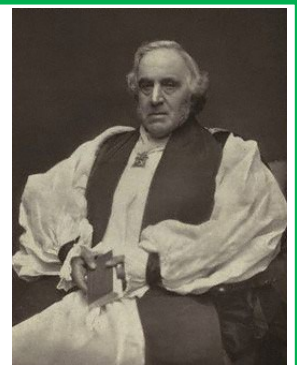
The flower arrangers seem to imagine that we are recording sound as well as pictures and so whenever they are in church together, all gossip is written down and passed round by hand as they work in total silence. So far, they have remembered to take their pieces of paper home with them. One slip and I shall probably learn more about my parishioners in five minutes than I have done in the last five years.

The cameras have also solved the mystery of who has been pilfering the items – and even the nest where they have hidden it. If only I could teach the magpies to extract money from pockets and place it on the collection plate.

Your loving uncle,
Eustace

Get a grip

It was said that Archbishop Tench of Dublin, in his later years, had a fear of sudden crippling paralysis. One night at a formal dinner he sat looking more and more forlorn. Finally, he confided to the guests around him: "Well, it's come at last – total lack of feeling in my right leg." Whereupon the lady sitting next to him said soothingly: "Not at all, your Grace. It will comfort you to know that during the whole of this meal it has been *my* leg that you have been pinching!"



Do you want to rent a space?

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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.

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- 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

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

FULLY ACCESSIBLE

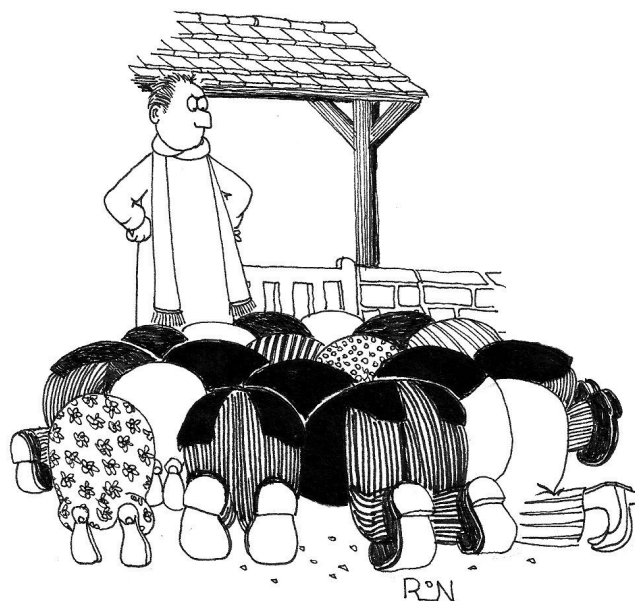
With disabled access, a large accessible lift and disabled toilet with baby changing facilities.

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

Despair A poem by Penny Candlin

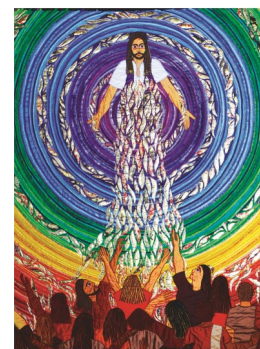
Time flies by and nothing gets done
Or so it seems
Hopes and dreams vanish into thin air
Because what we wanted is not what we needed
Despair
As we look at our world falling apart breaking at the seams
Then we look at ourselves broken and damaged by lies and deceit
Our beautiful world full of abundance and promise
We have squandered, abused and desolated our earth, our lives in tatters
Despair
When we try to do things our own way
When there is a better way when we allow God to take charge.
As we take upon ourselves the cross the suffering
The weight of it all
Despair
Hope
When prayer is put into action
Words are transformed into movement
Lives are enlightened as they come together as one engaging force
Hope
When we stand on a promise that we are not alone
Christ stands with us strengthening and protecting us
Hope
Gives way to faith as we trust in a loving father who will never leave or forsake us
Faith
When we trust in God more fully.



Keith was very strict about confetti in the churchyard

With Pentecost in mind:

To be filled with the Spirit is to have the Spirit fulfilling in us all that God intended Him to do when he placed Him there. – Lewis S Chafer





St Peter's Open Church and Quiet Garden

Sunday 22nd June

1.30pm to 4pm

Admission £5

Under 12's go free

Admission includes tea, coffee
and juice (and refills!) and a
delicious cake.

All welcome!

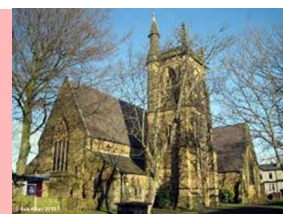


Fabulous Raffle.
Healthy home-grown
plants for sale

St Peter's Church
St Peter's Road
PR8 4BY



Social Events Coming Soon at St Peter's Birkdale (St Peter's Road)



22nd June: Open Church and Quiet Garden

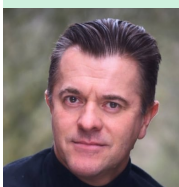
31st August: Family Fun Day

For more details about these events please
contact stpetersbirkdale@hotmail.com

Musical Evening at St James' Birkdale (Lulworth Road)



AN EVENING WITH ALISTAIR LEE



On Saturday 7th June at 7.00pm St James' will host an evening of Songs from the Shows performed by professional singer **Alistair Lee** who has a very impressive CV including West End productions and

entertaining on cruise ships.

Tickets cost £10 and will include canapés and desserts. (Bring own drinks, glasses, sparkle and dance shoes)

Contact Di Harrison on 07955004145 by 30 May

An Introduction to Books in the Old Testament: 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 *qoheleth*), 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.

W CROSS R D

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).

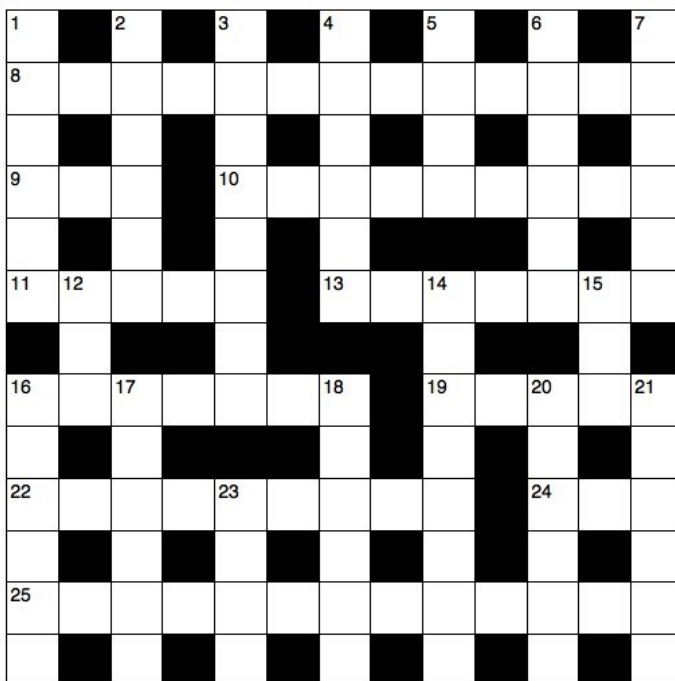
Solution below

Across

- 8 Laban complained he had not been allowed to kiss them when Jacob fled with his family (Genesis 31:28) (13)
9 In favour of (3)
10 'The child's father and mother — at what was said about him' (Luke 2:33) (9)
11 Swagger (Psalm 12:8) (5)
13 'Terrors — him on every side and dog his every step' (Job 18:11) (7)
16 Bay bits (anag.) (7)
19 Preach, address an audience, speak in public (5)
22 Holy Communion (9)
24 'On their way to — out the land, Joshua instructed them, "Go and make a survey of the land"' (Joshua 18:8) (3)
25 Joseph advised Pharaoh to appoint these to administer his grain storage plan (Genesis 41:34) (13)

Down

- 1 'Assyria's pride will be brought down and — sceptre will pass away' (Zechariah 10:11) (6)
2 'And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in — with God and men' (Luke 2:52) (6)
3 The descendants of Esau (Genesis 36:9) (8)
4 The components of the crown that Jesus was made to wear before his crucifixion (John 19:2) (6)
5 Colour of cloth which was to cover holy objects in the tabernacle when moving camp (Numbers 4:6–12) (4)
6 One of the gold articles plundered from the Midianites offered to the Lord by the Israelite army 'to make atonement' (Numbers 31:50) (6)



- 7 'The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set — — ' (Jeremiah 31:29) (2,4)
12 Ate (anag.) (3)
14 'We ourselves... groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our — as sons' (Romans 8:23) (8)
15 Abram's nephew (Genesis 14:12) (3)
16 Rupture (Job 30:14) (6)
17 'Yet to all who received him... he gave the right to — children of God' (John 1:12) (6)
18 'I... asked him the true meaning of all — . — he told me and gave me the interpretation of these things' (Daniel 7:16) (4,2)
20 Military units (Exodus 14:20) (6)
21 'Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to — her to public disgrace' (Matthew 1:19) (6)
23 Diva (anag.) (4)

In our Book of Remembrance In June

- 1st Gertrude Edmondson, 1974
Miriam Rigby, 2005
2nd Mary Moore, 1987
4th George Williams, 1985
6th Robert Hall, 1986
Roy Maguire, 1992
7th Ann Beeley, 1984
8th Stephen Tasker, 1977
9th Elsie Bredow, 1973
Maureen Burton, 2009

- 10th Ethel Marshall, 1969
Edna Marriner, 2002
11th Harry Lea, 1983
Jean Beeley, 2012
16th Montague Hare, 1999
17th Jeane Smith, 2022
18th Reginald Hughes, 2008
19th Ernest Gorton, 1967
20th Norman Hamer, 1988
24th Marion Coop, 2004

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:

8, Grandchildren. 9, Pro. 10, Marvelled. 11, Strut. 13, Startle. 16, Babysit. 19, Orate. 22, Eucharist. 24, Map. 25, Commissioners.

DOWN:

1, Egypt's. 2, Favour. 3, Edomites. 4, Thorns. 5, Blue. 6, Armlet. 7, On edge. 12, Tea. 14, Adoption. 15, Lot. 16, Breach. 17, Become. 18, This So. 20, Armies. 21, Expose. 23, Avid.

God in the Arts

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

He gave us eyes to see them.

El Greco's "The Tears of St Peter"

In the 19th century John Bowes, the 10th Earl of Strathmore, built a museum in the French style, with landscaped gardens, at Barnard Castle in Teesdale. He bequeathed it 800 paintings, including a previously unknown Van Dyck.

But visitors to the Bowes Museum often make a beeline for its amazing 18th century silver swan automaton. As the music plays, there is the illusion of flowing water: the swan preens itself, bends down and catches a fish in the water. It is a thrill and a joy to watch. At the other extreme and striking a different mood and emotion is El Greco's painting of 1580: 'The Tears of St Peter.' It was reluctantly purchased in 1869 for a price less than that paid for the monkey puzzle tree in the grounds outside.

The gospels tell us that St Peter wept bitterly when he heard the cock crow, as he had denied knowing Jesus three times. El Greco shows the saint, his eyes welling with those tears of betrayal, kneeling and turning to heaven for forgiveness. The sky is overcast, reflecting the sad scene below, and we can see ivy growing as a sign of the constancy so lacking in Peter's life.

At the Last Supper he had been the opposite: ready to follow, brave and generous with his words. But Peter leaves Jesus to drink the cup of sorrow alone in Gethsemane. In the courtyard of the high priest, warming himself by the fire, he utters that threefold denial. This was the lowest moment in his life, when instead of being solid rock, he showed that he was merely shifting sand.

And then the wonder and glory of Easter. We glimpse it in the background of the painting with the angel and Mary Magdalene at the tomb. And we know that everything changes for Peter by the shore of the Sea of Galilee. Like the silver swan in the Bowes Museum looking for fish, the disciples have returned to their old way of life.



But it is the risen Lord who directs them to a marvellous catch, and the charcoal fire of betrayal in the courtyard is now the charcoal fire of breakfast, a new day, and a new way of life for Peter. No denial now – he answers the three questions of our Lord positively and realises that he is loved by Jesus in his failure and weakness. It might have seemed the end for Peter in the courtyard, but the risen Lord comes to tell him 'I make all things new' and that includes you.

Peter is often known as the stumbling saint. Here, in El Greco's painting, he has stumbled and fallen to his knees in prayer. We celebrate St Peter at the end of this month. As we look at him, we know ourselves to be as weak and fearful. But the Lord comes to us as He comes to Peter. He lifts us up and puts us back on our feet again. With Peter, we know Him as our crucified and risen Lord.

The artist known as El Greco was Doménikos Theotokópoulos who lived from 1541 until 1614. He was born on Crete, trained in post-Byzantine art and worked in Venice, Rome and Toledo. He is regarded as one of the greatest artists of all time. He usually signed his paintings with his full birth name but this was difficult for some Spaniards to pronounce so they referred to him simply as "El Greco" (the Greek). (Ed.)

THE INFLUENCE OF RELIGION ON LAW

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

NO HALF TRUTHS

The law does not only insist on people telling the truth on oath, it insists on truth in all affairs of life where one person acts on the word of another. There is nothing on which the law is more strict. It allows no evasions. Half-truths are condemned as much as real falsehoods. If a statement is literally true but conveys a wrong impression because of what is left unsaid, that is fraud.

[Lord Denning referred to the case of Lord Kylsant, a British shipping magnate and Conservative politician, who was convicted and sent to prison in 1931 for issuing a prospectus for the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company in which, by "creative accounting practices", a false impression was created that the company was making profits whereas it was making losses. Some of the information was literally true but it was only partially true whilst misleadingly false.]

The principle underlying all the rules of the law on subjects including fraud and misrepresentation is this: no man shall get a benefit from a lie if the law can prevent him. No excuse or justification is permitted. It is not allowable to tell a lie in order to achieve a just result. A good end does not justify a bad means. The law is sound enough on this point,

but the law is not sufficient by itself. If the people have no religion then all the ordinances of the law are of little use. May not this be why honesty has declined in recent times? Many people do not seem nowadays to pay much regard to the sanctity of any oath. They say that which they think helps their cause, whether it be true or not.



Lord Denning,
drawn by Sallon

GOOD FAITH

Akin to truth is the requirement of good faith. Just as you must tell the truth so must you keep your promises. The just man in the Psalms is not only "he that hath used no deceit on his tongue" but also "he that sweareth unto his neighbour and disappointeth him not: though it were to his own hindrance." (Psalm 15: 3-5).

This precept finds its place in the law also. Our law of contract has passed through many phases. At one time promises were not binding unless they were made in the form of a covenant under seal. Later on they were not binding unless there was consideration for them (*ie a promise or commitment in return, a quid quo pro*). Nowadays nearly all formalities have been eliminated. If a man makes a promise which is intended to be binding and to be acted upon by the party to whom it is addressed then once that person has acted upon it, it is enforceable.

The Simple Pleasures of Ordinary Time

One great phrase of the Church of England, which is little-known but carries a wealth of rich meaning, is 'ordinary time'. While the seasons of Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter, Pentecost and Advent all have their fixtures and moments for focus and concentration, the bulk of the summer months is 'ordinary time'! A very evocative phase – nothing particularly to focus on or to celebrate.

Just because it is 'ordinary', it does not mean it is not important or of no significance to how God wants us to use our lives. For most of us life is lived between high and low points: we look forward to something on the horizon or we are seeking to recover from something. So, it should be no surprise that ordinary time is the

longest season in the Church calendar. Abraham Lincoln once said that: "God must love ordinary people because He made so many of them"!

Ordinary people, it seems to me, need 'ordinary time'. Sundays and weekdays in-between, to sense God's presence with us in the day-to-day mundane, and ordinary comings and goings of life. He is there in the heights of resurrection joy and celebration. He is with us in the vulnerability and frailty of human weakness, modelled in the incarnation. He is with us in our efforts to discipline ourselves and be moulded by him (Lent) but He is also with us whenever we are conscious of life just being ordinary. When our eyes are opened to these things, we will see what an extraordinary God we have!

By Rev. Mark Brown

WORD SEARCH

Solution on page 24

Pentecost

The story of Pentecost is found in Acts 2. After the Ascension of Jesus, the disciples had obeyed His command to stay in Jerusalem and to 'wait for the promise from the Father'. Jesus said this would be the 'baptism of the Holy Spirit', but the disciples had no idea what that meant. They soon found out! Acts tells us that at about 9 o'clock one morning, a sound like a rushing wind from heaven suddenly filled the house, and divided tongues as if of fire rested on each one of them. The Holy Spirit had come down and filled them with His divine power! Praise, preaching and witnessing followed that morning – and the Church was born.

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

PENTECOST
TRINITY
JERUSALEM
DISCIPLES
PRAYING

TONGUES
POWER
HIGH
FIRES
FLAMES

LANGUAGES
PRAISE
DRUNK
WINE
NINE

MORNING
GLORY
WAITING
PLACE
WIND

FATHER
SON
HOLY
SPIRIT
ETERNAL

The story behind "Lead, kindly light, amid the encircling gloom"

This hymn, written in 1833 by John Henry Newman, was a favourite in Victorian times. Newman, who had been ordained as a priest nine years previously, was on holiday in Sicily in the scorching heat of June when, during a heat haze, he became lost whilst walking. A violent thunderstorm followed which led to him suffering a serious fever which left him feeling weak and yearning for home. He and his servant took the next available means of transport which was an orange boat bound from Palermo to Marseilles. In the Straits of Bonifacio the boat became becalmed for a week during which he penned the memorable lines:

"Lead, kindly light, amid the encircling gloom,
Lead Thou me on;
The night is dark, and I am far from home,
Lead Thou me on.
Keep Thou my feet: I do not ask to see
The distant scene; one step enough for me."

The hymn was a favourite with Queen Victoria who had the words read to her as she lay on her death-bed at Osborne House on the Isle of Wight in 1901.

It has been quoted and sung in many pivotal moments in history:

- it was sung by passengers on RMS Titanic as it sank.
- Mahatma Gandhi referenced it during his campaigns for spiritual strength. The lines "Keep Thou my feet: I do not ask to see The distant scene; one step enough for me" are an expression of walking by faith, not by sight, which aligned with Gandhi's view of his own mission in life.
- It is used in both Catholic and Protestant liturgies.
- The hymn influenced the renowned Archbishop of Canterbury Cosmo Gordon Lang to seek ordination rather than to embark on a career at the Bar (undoubtedly the Law's loss and the Church's gain).

It was set to music composed by Dr J B Dykes, and also by Sir Edward Elgar.

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.

Help, my kids just asked me a question!

Why aren't dinosaurs in the Bible?

The Bible wasn't written to list all the animals on earth or tell us about science. It was written a long time before people started to use science to learn about the world.

When the Bible was written, people didn't even have a word for dinosaurs yet! But it's not just dinosaurs that aren't mentioned in the Bible, it doesn't talk about armadillos, kangaroos, sabre-toothed cats or penguins either!

That doesn't mean that the Bible is out of date or wrong, or that these animals aren't important. Rather than teaching us science, many Christians believe that the Bible was written to tell people about God, how much He loves them, and all the amazing things He has done.

The Bible says that God made everything, and loves everything He made, so that includes dinosaurs. It also encourages people to explore and find out all about the wonderful things it says God has made. Science is a part of this exploration.

Did God make the dinosaurs?

The Bible (the holy book that Christians read) says that God made everything. All the stars, the Earth and all the amazing plants and animals that have ever lived here. So yes, most Christians believe that God made the dinosaurs!

The Bible also teaches that God loves it when people explore His creation, and science is a great way of doing that. So, for many Christians, science is one of the fun things we can use to learn all about **how** God made everything, including all of the dinosaurs!

Were humans and dinosaurs ever living on earth at the same time?

Yes! But probably not the kind of dinosaur you're thinking of! Most of the dinosaurs died out a very, very long time ago, way before humans first lived. But some of the smaller, feathery dinosaurs survived and over a long time they have evolved into the animals we call birds.

So, from chickens and robins to penguins and ostriches, there are dinosaurs living all over our world today!

These questions and answers are taken from The Faraday Kids website (www.faradaykids.com). For even more science-faith Q&A's, check out 101 Great Big Questions About God and Science, Edited by L Henderson & S Bryant (Lion, 2022)

The Revd Dr Jo White considers

Reflecting Faith: An Offer you do not want to refuse

As late as the tenth century, only baptised people could stay in the church to watch, never mind actually consume, the celebration of the Eucharist. This tells me how highly regarded the consecration of the bread and wine actually were, and still are, within the Church. Even today this is still the 'highlight' of the main Sunday service.

Everything we do within the service leads up to this special moment, when the priest offers the bread and wine to the people.

Prior to this, we've said prayers of penitence and have been absolved. We have heard a reading from the Bible and had it expanded upon in a sermon.

We have stated our faith in response to this, and recognised God's awesome power by

saying prayers of intercession for ourselves and others.

We have acknowledged God's amazing gifts of love and peace by sharing this with those around us, and we responded by offering to Him our gifts as token of our whole lives. And then – finally we get to the Eucharistic Prayer.

As soon as this is concluded and the priest invites the congregation to come forward to receive the consecrated bread and wine, we are 'so overwhelmed' by the enormity of what is being offered to each of us that we 'fall on our knees' with the Prodigal Son and say, "Lord I am not worthy'.

This month: When you next go to a Communion Service, take note of the pattern of it as a whole and then 'think' about how you feel as you are invited to take the bread and wine.

the elderberries gardening club

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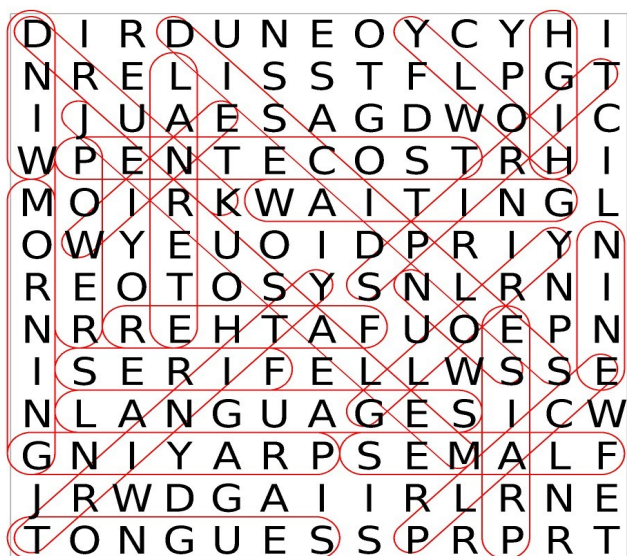


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Are bananas good for you?

On the one hand, bananas offer good things. They count as one of your five a day, carry only about 90 calories, and are packed with the essential mineral potassium (good in lowering blood pressure.) But they are not perfect...

So, here are some pros and cons of bananas:

Pro: High in potassium, good for heart health, lowers blood pressure, has Vitamin C, helps digestion, provides energy, full of fibre, cholesterol-free.

Cons: Can raise potassium levels too much (avoid them if you have kidney disease), can lead to wind and bloating, cause blood sugar spikes, weight gain, and disrupt sleep.

Overall, experts recommend eating no more than two bananas a day.



THE GOOD KINGS AND BAD KINGS (AND QUEENS) OF ENGLAND

By Dennis Davis

Dennis interrupts his research into our Kings and this month he looks at the Celtic queen Cartimandua

I deviate once more from the kings of England and travel back to AD43. England, Scotland and Wales did not exist. South of the so-called Highland Line at that time (sorry, Scotland) all were Britannic Celts. The Romans had occupied Britain but were still fighting the Welsh and the Scots above the Antonine wall. Britain was divided into many independent Celtic kingdoms: one of the largest was the Brigantes whose territory extended from Northern Yorkshire down to the south Pennines and across to the Irish Sea. Had we lived then we would possibly be part of the Brigantes tribe. Little is known about that period as there were no records except by the Roman historian Tacitus who, obviously, was biased towards the Roman conquest.

Cartimandua reigned from AD 43 to AD 69. It is not known how she became the ruler but it is thought that she could have been regarded as a Goddess and it was the Romans who called her Queen. She married Venutius and they ruled jointly. She went on to ally herself with the Romans which brought feuding in the Brigantes, but it was put down with Roman help. The Roman commander at Chester dispatched an army to free her when she had been imprisoned. She formed an alliance with the Romans which led to another rebellion.

Tacitus wrote that Cartimandua was treacherous in carrying out a serious deception by betraying Caradoc (Roman "Caratacus") who was the son of the leader of the Cornovi. He had fled to Wales where he fought the Romans for 8 years but was finally defeated in battle and sought refuge with the Brigantes. It is possible that at one time there had been some connection between the two tribes and possibly Caradoc thought that he would get sanctuary and aid. However, he was (says Tacitus) treacherously betrayed for money and was handed over to the Romans where he was taken in chains to Rome and paraded through the streets in one of Caesar's triumphs.

Cartimandua divorced Venutius and took up with Venutius's armour-bearer leading to the 3rd rebellion which lasted for several years



An 18th-century engraving by Francesco Bartolozzi depicting Cartimandua handing Caratacus over to the Romans. No description of Cartimandua's appearance exists, so imaginative portraits like this one reflect more on the artist than on history.

when Venutius was defeated and the territory was annexed. It is not known what became of Cartimandua or Venutius, whereas Caradoc was to live his life out in Rome.

Postscript.

Where I lived in the Peak district would have been part of the Brigantes territory and some of the place names indicate past battles long forgotten. Such as Rebellion Knoll, Win Hill, Lose Hill nearby to the Iron Age fort on top of Mam Tor; these places form a triangle with a Roman fort; "Anavio" in the middle. Could these have come from the events of that time? We will never know.

Editor's addendum:

Why was Caradoc's life spared by the Romans? He made this impassioned plea which was recorded by Tacitus:

"If the degree of my nobility and fortune had been matched by moderation in success, I would have come to this City as a friend rather than a captive, nor would you have disdained to receive with a treaty of peace one sprung from brilliant ancestors and commanding a great many nations. But my present lot, disfiguring as it is for me, is magnificent for you. I had horses, men, arms, and wealth: what wonder if I was unwilling to lose them? If you wish to command everyone, does it really follow that everyone should accept your slavery? If I were now being handed over as one who had surrendered immediately, neither my fortune nor your glory would have achieved brilliance. It is also true that in my case any reprisal will be followed by oblivion. On the other hand, if you preserve me safe and sound, I shall be an eternal example of your clemency."

*He made such an impression that he was pardoned and allowed to live in peace in Rome. A lesson for us all: when all else has failed, flattery **can** get you somewhere!*

BEHAVE YOURSELF

by John M. Shakespeare

Why we behave the way we do in our existence can be argued as being down to our nature or nurture, which form the cornerstones of our personal ethics. In this article I offer up some explanations, as to why I think we behave the way we do towards each other.

B. F. Skinner (1904-1990), an American psychologist, saw our minds as receptacles for informed inputs and outputs. He proposed that our learning comes from the consequences that ultimately follow our behaviours. The nature of that consequence, he suggested, would then govern our responsive behaviour to following incidents that took place. Today his theories are put to the question by cognitive science and functionalism.

Some pointers on how to Behave are given in a poem by Jenny Joseph, called "Warning", about becoming old. I quote only verses three and four to give a flavour of the advice given:

"You can wear terrible shirts and grow more fat
And eat three pounds of sausages at a go
Or only bread and pickle for a week
And hoard pens and pencils and beer mats and
Things in boxes.

But now we must have clothes that keep us dry
And pay our rent and not swear in the street
And set a good example for the children
We must have friends to dinner and read the papers."

For many years spent as a Training Officer both within and outside of

the Civil Service I taught people how to behave, in order to achieve the most favourable results with staff. Training is present in most occupations practised in the UK, hence the term used: "Learnt Behaviours". How people perform their occupational duties reflects both on colleagues and mentors, in how well they behave in carrying out their work.

The following quotation identifies the source of that well-known saying, 'When in Rome do as the Romans'. St. Ambrose (339-397), who was a French born Bishop of Milan, said "When I go to Rome, I fast on Saturday, but here (in Milan), I do not. Do you also follow the custom of whatever church you attend, if you do not want to give or receive scandal?" In other words, like I think the majority of us, it is easier to conform than to cause offence.

How we behave is, I propose, down to a series of tendencies that we have developed as we grew up. In my experience some people develop what may be described as Confrontational Bias. Such people love an argument. Then there are others who develop Consensual Bias. Such people appear to agree to anything and everything, rather than being assertive. A meaningful measure of how someone will behave can be by observing their reactions to a given circumstance.

Prefabricated tests of this sort are common practice with job interviewers and training officers, in taking measures of how we behave.

I leave you with the following proverbial saying for you to contemplate: "All actions have reactions, so if destiny doesn't fit, then fit yourself to your destiny!" A positive suggestion on how to behave?

Life in the Circus

A couple who worked at the circus wanted to adopt a child. Social workers had doubts about their suitability, but the couple produced photos of their large motorhome, which was equipped with a beautiful nursery. As for education, not only was there a nanny, but also a full-time tutor to teach the child all the usual subjects along with French, Mandarin and computer skills. Finally, the social workers were satisfied and had only one last question. "What age child are you hoping to adopt?"

"Oh, we don't mind at all," the couple assured them. "As long as he or she fits in the cannon."

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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The Password every Sunday will be: 201823.

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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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Was it really that long ago?...

75 years ago, on 3rd June 1950, the first successful ascent of Annapurna in the Himalayas was made. It was a French expedition and the first successful ascent of a mountain over 8,000 metres. Annapurna is the tenth highest mountain in the world.

70 years ago, on 11th June 1955 the Le Mans disaster took place. A car spun off the track during the Le Mans 24 Hour race in France, and the driver, Pierre Levegh, and 83 spectators were killed, with 100 more injured. It was the greatest loss of life in the history of motorsport, but bizarrely, the race was not stopped. The survivors carried on for the full 24 hours, while the dead and the injured were removed from the site.

57 years ago, on 5th June 1968, Senator Robert Kennedy (brother of President John F Kennedy) was fatally shot at the Ambassador Hotel, Los Angeles.

53 years ago, on 17th June 1972, following a seemingly routine burglary, five men were arrested at the National Democratic Headquarters in the Watergate complex in Washington, D.C.

Subsequent investigations revealed the burglars were actually agents hired by the Committee for the Re-election of President Richard Nixon.

50 years ago, on 7th June 1975, the first Cricket World Cup to be held in England began.

Also 50 years ago, on 18th June 1975, the first North Sea oil was pumped ashore to Britain.

40 years ago, on 2nd June 1985 UEFA banned all English football clubs from playing in European competitions following the Heysel Stadium disaster of 28th May. The ban was lifted after five years.

38 years ago, on 11th June 1987, Margaret Thatcher became the first Prime Minister to win a third consecutive term of office following a Conservative party general election victory.

36 years ago, on 4th June 1989, the Chinese authorities brutally attacked peaceful demonstrators in Tiananmen Square in Beijing killing an estimated 3000 demonstrators.

30 years ago, on 25th June 1995 Ernest Walton, Irish physicist died. He was the first person to split an atom.

25 years ago, on 10th June 2000, the Millenium Bridge opened in London. It closed for a while two days later, when it was found to sway uncomfortably when people walked in step.

Church Hall Users

Tuesday

3.00pm – 5.30pm *SPACE Pottery Painting (for details see page 7)*

Wednesday

10.30 – 12 noon

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

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

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

elderberriesgardening@gmail.com

Thursday

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

Contact: ageingwellmerseyside@outlook.com.

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

Contact: Janette Law 01704 565951

Friday

1.00pm–2.30pm *Jolly Tots for tots, babies and bums (see page 7 for details)*

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.

Surprising realizations! by Nigel Beeton

Sometimes the way we spell our words
May change from shore to shore
The structuring of nouns and verbs
Can sometimes be a chore!

Our friends across the pond delight
In colors, – splendors too!
The British think it's only right
By putting in a 'u'!

The New York man may mark his land
By putting in a 'fence';
But if you cross it, understand
That you will cause 'offense'!

Pedants may, perhaps surprised
With U.S. friends agree;
For both will spell out 'realized'
By dropping 's' for zee!

And neither nation's pundits wise
Will cease their harmony
Both will spell the word 'surprise'
With no sign of a zee!

(But Gentle Reader, we both know
That they will fight instead –
Their arguments will hotly flow –
Should it be 'zee', or 'zed'?)

A Sunday Traffic Jam by Nigel Beeton



It causes me quite some dismay
To be held up in traffic this way
"I want to get home!" I grumble and moan,
"Don't they know it is Sunday today?"

With the cars inching forward this morn
And somebody blaring their horn,
At length I could see what the problem must be,
And then I was not so forlorn!

No more was I needing to search
For the cause of this traffic-flow lurch!
For what they'd been doing, these motorists
queuing
Was attending a service in church!

The Merchants of Doom are confounded!
Their tales of decay are unfounded!
The story is graphic as told by this traffic –
Christ's Church is growing unbounded!

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To:

Stuart Baker on 1st June
Jan Ball on 15th June
Doris Brookfield on 23rd June

HAPPY
Anniversary

To:

Rev. Jennie Hardy, licensed as the Vicar of St John's
on 26th June 2024.
Rev. Roy Doran who on 29th June will celebrate 40
years since his Ordination.

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

The Last Laughs

In the 1980s a gamekeeper in a small Norfolk village requested in his will that the barrels of his .410 shotgun should be made to protrude heavenwards through the lid of his coffin. With the coffin, bedecked as requested, in front of him the vicar remarked to the congregation at the keeper's interment that he had never before officiated at a shotgun funeral.

A letter to The Times newspaper from Dr Ben Timmis of Hampshire reported that he suffers from Prosopagnosia, also known as face blindness, which is a neurological condition where individuals have difficulty recognizing faces, even familiar ones. He recounted how he had once been

shopping in a supermarket near to the hospital where he worked and came face to face with a woman whom he thought he recognised but who he could not place. He resorted to his well-honed technique of saying "... and what are you doing now?" to which he received the mortifying reply: "Oh, still working in the same department as you, as I have done for the last seven years."

Our next hymn

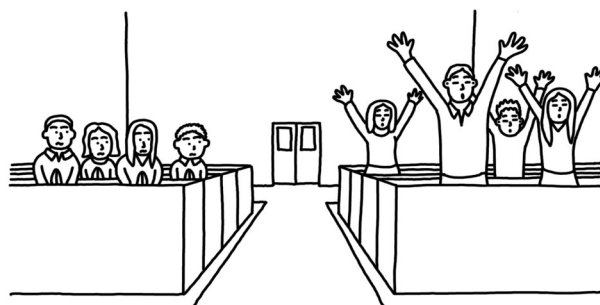
A visiting minister, seeing the list of hymns chosen for the Sunday service, sent a message to the organist to say that the last hymn (519) did not suit his sermon, and so he wanted it replaced by 213. The organist's message replied: 'In this church the organist chooses the hymns and I will play 519.' The minister shot back: 'At this service I announce the hymns and I shall still announce 213.'

THE NEIGHBOURING PARISH

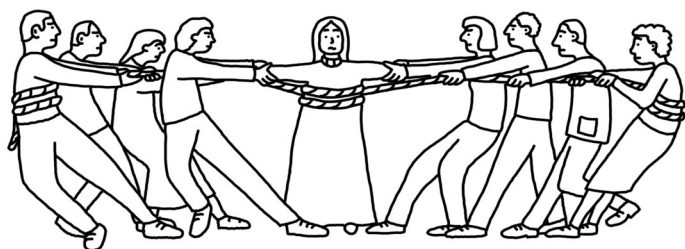
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