

# THE WORD

MAGAZINE OF ST JOHN'S BIRKDALE

GOD CENTRED, RELATIONSHIP DRIVEN AND LIFE TRANSFORMING

FEBRUARY 2026 ISSUE 278

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*John 1:1 & 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*

St John's Church, St John's Road, Birkdale, PR8 4JP  
Vicar: Rev. Jennie Hardy Charity number 1128171



## WHERE THERE'S A WILL...

We spend our lives working and providing for ourselves, our families and our retirement. Thinking about what shall happen to what we have accumulated during our lives is not a jolly pastime but probably many of us make a Will and leave most if not all of our estate to our families. That is entirely understandable, and everyone is free to choose how to dispose of their assets and how to benefit those whom they love.

But it is worth reflecting that the diminishing reserve assets which St John's possesses are the residue of what generous parishioners gave to the church many years ago. One such was George Hussey (see page 22) who may have been this church's largest single benefactor a century ago.

If we want to ensure that St John's is here in our own lifetimes **and** will continue in its ministry to the people of Birkdale for a long time ahead it may be that a bequest in our Wills would commend itself to our readers as an expression of our thanks to God for His love and the work of His church in our lifetimes and a prayer to Him to bless this parish in the future.

*Stuart Baker*

## ... IT CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE



"No matter how large or small, every gift in every will makes a difference"

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 THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND  
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## WHO'S WHAT AT ST. JOHN'S

<b>Vicar:</b>	Rev. Jennie Hardy (07872 400718)	<b>Girl Guides:</b>	Mrs. Janette Law (565951)
<b>Clergy (retired):</b>	Rev. Roy Doran (572387)	<b>St. John's Brownies:</b>	Mrs. Helen Jones and
<b>Reader:</b>	Mrs. Christine Baker (560518)	<b>Brownie Guiders:</b>	Mrs. Lesley Scott
<b>Churchwarden:</b>	Clive Morris (564206)	<b>St. John's Rainbows:</b>	Mrs. Lesley Scott
<b>PCC Treasurer:</b>	Mrs. Amanda Potts (07530 950100)	<b>Church Flowers:</b>	Mrs. Cath Whiteside (07732 993025)
<b>PCC Secretary:</b>	Mrs. Christine Baker (560518)	<b>Magazine Editor:</b>	Stuart Baker (560518)
<b>Gift Aid Secretary:</b>	Mrs. Sylvia Kent (564071)	<b>Front Cover design and artwork:</b>	Ian Bennett MBKS
<b>Parish Hall Secretary:</b>	Mrs. Jean Morris (564206)	<b>Magazine Printer:</b>	Mrs. Christine Baker (560518)
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<b>Lead Safeguarding Officer &amp; Recruiter</b>	Stuart Baker (560518)	<b>Leadership Team:</b>	Rev. Jennie Hardy Rev. Roy Doran Mrs. Christine Baker Clive Morris
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## MESSAGE FROM THE VICAR:

**G**reetings Word Readers! In one of our recent mid-week Holy Communion services, I spoke about David & Goliath, one of my favourite Old Testament stories. It's a story that encourages us in our daily walk with God to be brave and to trust in God, no matter how big the battles are that we may be facing.

1 Samuel 17:37 recounts some of David and Saul's words, 'The Lord who rescued me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will rescue me from the hand of this Philistine.' Saul said to David, "Go, and the Lord be with you."

David had just explained to Saul why he was qualified to fight Goliath the giant Philistine on enemy lines who tormented and challenged the Israelite army daily, but none felt able to accept his challenges.

Because David, a small shepherd boy, had faced lesser battles and had overcome and because he trusted in the Lord, he had such faith that he would be enabled to defeat this giant that none of the soldiers in the army would even dare step forward to fight.

I wonder, during your walk with the Lord, what battles have you faced? What challenges have you overcome? What answers to prayer are you currently living in?

The Christian walk is not an easy one. We are not exempt from troubles, pain and loss. In fact, sometimes our faith causes more



**Rev'd Jennie Hardy**

**“... The Lord will go before you and will strengthen you as you put your trust in Him...”**

troubles as some, perhaps even our own families, don't understand or agree with it. Jesus told us to take up our cross and follow Him.

Our 'cross' can never truly emulate the cross that Jesus carried to calvary. But by looking both to the Lord and to our past victories we too, like little David, can be brave and step forward toward whatever 'giant' is causing us trouble.

The Lord will go before you and will strengthen you as you put your trust in Him. So be encouraged, be brave and remember that you are an overcomer.

The One who is in you is greater than He who is in the world (1 John 4:4) and He helps us to overcome our battles and challenges not by violence but by faith, trust and love.

Romans 12:21 commands us not to be overcome by evil, but to overcome evil with good.

So let the scriptures encourage you today, whether you battle illness, relationship problems, financial issues, injustice or whatever your challenge is, first, pray, talk to God and as you tell Him your worries, put your trust in Him. Then, be bold, be brave, for the Lord your God is with you and He has already overcome the world.

Even when things seem out of control, be calm, persevere and have faith that with God, all things are possible for one who believes (Mark 9:23).

Love, Jennie xx



# WHAT'S ON AT ST. JOHN'S



**GODSPEED**  
**INDOOR CYCLING CLASSES**  
 St John's Birkdale  
 TUESDAY 7.30PM  
 THURSDAY 6PM  
 FRIDAY 9.30AM

Scan to book!



ST JOHN'S BIRKDALE **FILM NIGHTS**  
 CHURCH HALL, ST JOHN'S ROAD, BIRKDALE PR8 4JP

**2026 PROGRAMME**

DATE	FILM TITLES ARE DISPLAYED ON THE CHURCH NOTICE BOARDS
16 <sup>TH</sup> JANUARY	
20 <sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY	
27 <sup>TH</sup> MARCH	
17 <sup>TH</sup> APRIL	
29 <sup>TH</sup> MAY	
19 <sup>TH</sup> JUNE	
24 <sup>TH</sup> JULY	

£5 PP PER SCREENING  
 6:30PM REFRESHMENTS | 7:00PM SCREENING | BOOK WITH CHRISTINE 01704 560518



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**Jolly Tots**  
 Every Friday in term time  
 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  
 07905875944



3rd Monday of the month  
 7.30pm

St John's Birkdale  
 DRIVEN BY JESUS

**Growth**

**DISCIPLESHIP**

@ Stuart & Christines  
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# WHAT'S COMING TO ST. JOHN'S

St John's  
Birkdale

## EVENT 2026 SCHEDULE

<b>3</b> FEB	<b>3.30pm - 5.30pm</b> <b>MESSY CHURCH</b> MESSY PLAY & CRAFTS FOR FAMILIES
<b>7</b> MAR	<b>7pm</b> <b>BARN DANCE</b> DO-SI-DO-ING & CHILLI
<b>3</b> APRIL	<b>2pm</b> <b>MESSY EASTER</b> <b>6.30pm</b> <b>FISH SUPPER &amp; FILM</b> A FILM TO HELP US REFLECT ON GOOD FRIDAY
<b>15</b> MAY	<b>7pm</b> <b>PAINTING WORKSHOP</b> A BLANK CANVAS - ARTIST JULIE WILL INSTRUCT US HOW TO PAINT A MASTERPIECE CREATIVELY

INFO@STJOHNSBIRKDALE.CO.UK

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

St John's  
Birkdale

**MARCH 7 7:00 PM**

## KICK UP YOUR HEELS AT OUR BARN DANCE



**Fun • Food • Dancing**

All welcome. Tickets £10.  
Bring your own drink & a glass!

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

Info@stjohnsbirkdale.co.uk

St John's  
Birkdale

ST JOHN'S

# Messy Church

## FOR FAMILIES

FOOD - CRAFTS - SINGING - DANCING

**TUE 3<sup>RD</sup> FEBRUARY**  
**3.30PM - 5.30PM**

**ST JOHN'S HALL, ST JOHN'S  
ROAD, PR8 4JP**

PLEASE TELL US ABOUT ANY  
SPECIAL DIETARY NEEDS

INFO@STJOHNSBIRKDALE.CO.UK

St John's  
Birkdale



# Pray Together

**Thursday @ 7.30pm**

**In the vestry and on zoom**

**Meeting ID: 83550743780**

**Passcode:**  
**7ehHEK**

February 5th and 19th.  
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.

# WHAT'S ON WEDNESDAYS AT ST JOHN'S

## MIDWEEK COMMUNION SERVICE

1st & 3rd Wednesdays at 10.30am



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

On 4th February the service will be followed by Brunch.

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

2nd & 4th Wednesdays  
7.30pm



# Growth

HOME  
GROUP

@ Clive & Queen Jeans

**food. fellowship. fun.**

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2nd & 4th Wednesdays  
2pm

# God's Word

STUDY  
GROUP

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

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

St John's Birkdale  
DRIVEN BY SPIRITS

## JOIN OUR KNIT & KNATTER GROUP

The 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday, monthly  
**2:30pm**  
In the vicar's vestry

**Refreshments provided**

**Fee: Just £1**

Contact: [info@stjohnsbirkdale.co.uk](mailto:info@stjohnsbirkdale.co.uk)  
Call: Christine on: 01704 560518



## CHURCH SERVICES IN FEBRUARY

### Worship on the Fourth Sunday of Epiphany

**SUNDAY 1st FEBRUARY**

**08.30 Holy Communion, in church only**

**10.30am Holy Communion in church and via  
zoom and phone**

#### Collect for the Fourth Sunday of Epiphany

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

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

**Great Power and Great Grace**

#### The Text: Acts 4: 32-37 NIV

**32** All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had. **33** With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God's grace was so powerfully at work in them all **34** that there were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those

who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales **35** and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need. **36** Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means "son of encouragement"), **37** sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles' feet.

**MIDWEEK TRADITIONAL  
COMMUNION SERVICE**  
Followed by Brunch



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

### Worship on the Second Sunday before Lent

**SUNDAY 8th FEBRUARY**

**8.30am Holy Communion in church only**

**10.30am Service of the Word in church and  
via zoom and phone**

#### Collect for the Second Sunday before Lent

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

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

**Discipleship: Why Worship?**

#### The Text: Psalm 8 NIV

**1** Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory in the heavens.

**2** Through the praise of children and infants you have established a stronghold against your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger.

b When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place,

**4** what is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them?

**5** You have made them a little lower than the angels and crowned them with glory and honour.

**6** You made them rulers over the works of your hands; you put everything under their feet:

**7** all flocks and herds, and the animals of the wild,

**8** the birds in the sky, and the fish in the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas.

**9** Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

# CHURCH SERVICES IN FEBRUARY

## Worship on the Sunday next before Lent

**SUNDAY 15th FEBRUARY**

**8.30am Holy Communion in church only**

**10.30am Service of the Word in church and via zoom and phone**

## Collect for the Sunday next before Lent

Holy God, you know the disorder of our sinful lives: set straight our crooked hearts, and bend our wills to love your goodness and your glory in Jesus Christ our Lord.

### The subject of Christine's talks:

### Personal Worship

#### The Text: Romans 12 NIV

*[This is quite a long chapter, and we cannot reproduce it all here. We include some of the central messages from that text]*

**4** For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function,

**5** so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.

**6** We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith;

**7** if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach;

**8** if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

## MIDWEEK TRADITIONAL COMMUNION SERVICE

Tea, coffee and biscuits will be served after the service



## ASH WEDNESDAY

**18th FEBRUARY**

**10.30am  
IN CHURCH**

## Worship on the First Sunday of Lent

**SUNDAY 22nd FEBRUARY**

**8.30am Holy Communion in church only**

**10.30am Service of The Word in church and via zoom and phone**

## Collect for the First Sunday of Lent

Heavenly Father, your Son battled with the powers of darkness, and grew closer to you in the desert: help us to use these days to grow in wisdom and prayer that we may witness to your saving love in Jesus Christ our Lord.

### The subject of Jennie's talks:

### Worshipping Together

#### The Text: Luke 7: 36-50 NIV

*[This is quite a long reading. We include an extract from the text]*

**40** Jesus said, "Simon, I have something to tell you." "Tell me, teacher," he said.

**41** "Two people owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. **42** Neither of

them had the money to pay him back, so he forgave the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?" **43** Simon replied, "I suppose the one who had the bigger debt forgiven." "You have judged correctly" Jesus said.

**47** Therefore, I tell you ... whoever has been forgiven little, loves little."



## Archbishop backs £100m fund to atone for slave trade

There is a "gospel imperative" for the Church of England to spend £100 million to atone for its historic support of the slave trade, but it will not divert cash away from parishes, the Archbishop of Canterbury has told MPs.

A group of MPs and peers wrote to the Right Rev Dame Sarah Mullally last month urging her to scrap Project Spire, a scheme that will hand £100 million in grants to projects from black communities, calling it a "legally dubious vanity project".

The Archbishop defended the fund, telling the MPs: "Our calling to confront historic injustice and our commitment to sustaining parish life... flow from the same gospel imperative: to love our neighbour as ourselves and enable all to flourish." She said that while the church had set aside £100 million as "repentance" for its investment in slave-trading, it had committed £1.6 billion to support its parishes over the next three years.

She said: "Project Spire does not diminish the church's support of or investment in parish ministry or clergy. Far from it; the church commissioners' support for dioceses and parishes continues to increase."

The church established Project Spire after finding that much of its £11.1 billion wealth could be traced back to investments in slave-trading companies. The fund will not give payouts to descendants of enslaved people, but will be an "investment fund" providing "seed capital" for businesses and community projects that are run by or benefit black communities.

In their letter to her, MPs alleged that the fund would divert cash from struggling parishes and suggested the church had a legal duty to spend its money only on its local churches and priests. The Church Commissioners, who control the church's assets, said the money invested in parishes and priests over three-yearly periods had increased from £790 million in 2019 to £1.6 billion today.

*Source: Kaya Burgess, "The Times" newspaper*

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## CHURCH AND SLAVERY

The Church of England's intention to devote £100 million to Project Spire is controversial. Letters have been written to The Times newspaper explaining some of the objections to the project. Here are a few extracts from some of them:

Sir, Instead of focusing on "sins" of the past she should be looking to returning to the Church's central purpose: preaching the good news of Jesus Christ for all.

Paul Rendell, Licensed lay minister, Somerset

Sir, You report that Project Spire, the proposed £100 million Church of England investment fund, was established because much of the Church's £11.1 billion wealth can be traced back to investments in slave trading companies. In fact the Church made no profits whatsoever from investments in the slave trade. The South Sea Company in which it made a one-off investment made consistent losses and the Church's predominant investment, South Sea Annuities, were effectively government bonds that had nothing to do with the slave trade.

The Church Commissioners' report on the Church's links to slavery, on which the Spire Project is based, failed to recognise these key facts. That is why many of us are urging the Church Commissioners to review this project.

Richard Dale, FRHS

Sir, An accurate reading of the evidence shows that the Church made no profit from slave trading, which is why the Church Commissioners have quietly downgraded the claim, now asserting only that the Church had "links" with slavery. Yet given that slavery was practised throughout history on every continent by peoples of every skin colour, that shouldn't surprise. What was extraordinary is that the British, including many Anglicans, were one of the first peoples in the world to repudiate the trade and the institution, abolishing them in the Empire before spending lives and money suppressing them the world over for a century and a half. That, surely, was repentance. The Church's obsession with guilt over slavery two centuries ago is historically out of proportion, racially divisive and does not do justice to the heroic endeavours of Anglican abolitionists.

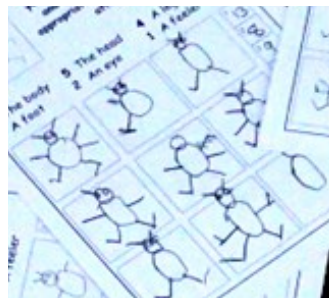
Lord Biggar, House of Lords

THE WORD is not a political journal and the Editor is not in these pages expressing or promoting a view on this controversial topic. Our intention is only to inform our readers of developments and to present various views for their consideration. Whatever views we may each hold it is at least of some comfort that the Church Commissioners will allocate £1.6 billion to parishes over a three year period. So many parishes, including ours, are in urgent need of financial relief.

# BEETLEMANIA HITS BIRKDALE

On 23rd January 44 people, most of whom were old enough to remember Beatlemania. joined for an evening of frenzied excitement in a packed church hall playing Beetle. To those who are unfamiliar with its rules it is a game requiring no skill, and certainly no ability to draw, and is played by throwing dice and using the number to identify which part of a beetle shall be drawn on a card. You can see how that would be fun!

This extract from one of the completed cards shows the level of artistry required. Perhaps its creator studied at the L S Lowry school of Art.



At the end of nine frenetic rounds Rev. Jennie was the winner. Was this due, as footballer Diego Maradona said of his World Cup goal, to "the hand of God"? We shall never know but the Vicar was singularly dextrous with the dice and was the runaway victor.

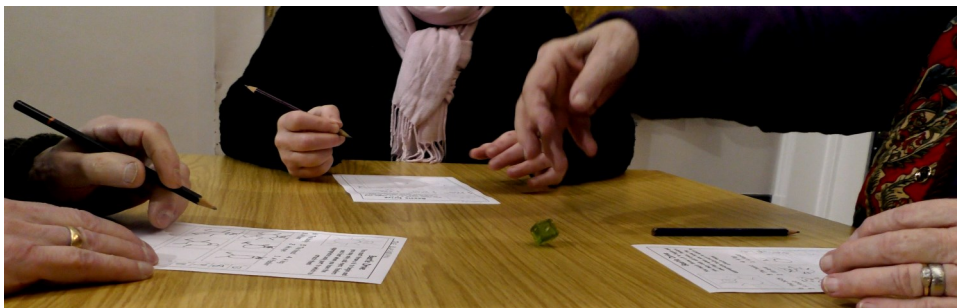


Beetle was followed by several rounds of Bingo, or Bongos as some now call it. In the picture above Christine giving us our instructions. Many contestants despaired that their cards had been printed without any winning numbers. But every round produced winners.

It was a very convivial evening and it was good to see some new faces and a few from neighbouring churches. Many thanks to Christine for organising this fun evening.

Our next social evening will be **a Barn Dance on Saturday 7th March**. So come and mosey down to the old corral (church hall) and join in the dancing to live music played by The Canty Band. See page 5.

*Stuart Baker (photos: Ian Bennett)*



How do you do that?  
Getting dice to stand on one corner is quite a trick!  
The camera does not lie...

## On behalf of the **Church of England Children's Society** Sylvia Kent writes: **CHRISTINGLE SERVICE**

What must seem like WEEKS ago since we held our Christingle service in aid of the Children's Society on 14th December, I am pleased to be able to share with you a paragraph from their recent "thank you" letter.

**"Dear St John's, I want to extend my sincere thanks for your incredible support during this year's Christingle celebrations and for your amazing donation of £137.66. The money raised by everyone at St John's Birkdale makes a significant difference in the lives of countless children facing abuse, exploitation or neglect. Together, we're bringing the warmth and light of Christingle to those who need it most! None of this would be possible without the compassion of people like you."**



## COLLECTION BOXES

Many of you will still be using the blue Children's Society collection boxes for donating your change to this very worthy cause, and having recently held our Christingle to support them, it is now time for me to collect any contributions you may have made throughout the year.

Since Covid, some of you have chosen to empty your own box and let me have a cheque for that amount made payable to The Children's Society. If you prefer that method, it is perfectly fine as the Children's Society are happy to accept your donation in this way.

However, if you would prefer me to empty your box on your behalf, please telephone me on 564071 and I will be only too pleased to arrange to collect it from you.



## WHO WAS ST.CYNGAR?

The first feature in an occasional series highlighting churches where we have worshipped and uncovered interesting anecdotes

**HAVING LIVED AND WORKED IN THE MIDDLE EAST** for more than two decades, Janet and I have enjoyed more than our fair share of sun and sand writes Ian Bennett. But these days our pleasure tends to be derived from regular short breaks exploring villages and countryside that are not on the tourist map.

High on our list of favourites is North Wales where for almost a decade we have explored Snowdonia and the Llyn Peninsular, particularly around Porthmadog.

Only a few minutes away from Portmerion, Sir Clough Williams-Ellis's Italianate village, and with cafe's galore and two heritage railways terminating in the town, in no way can Porthmadog be considered off the beaten track. But just one mile out of town towards the west is the charismatic little village of Borth-y-Gest. Once an offshore island in the estuary but now a coastal headland, Borth-y-Gest is located at the mouth of the Afon Glaslyn river.

Approached down a steep curving road, the view of this tiny village is stunning, clinging as it does to a small bay guarded by headlands, with St Cyngar's Church majestically topping one. Nowhere is flat and going anywhere in this tiny village requires a climb up (or a slither down), so much so that a steep staircase links two of its streets and if driving, hill starts are the order of the day (but I usually cheat and park our car facing down the hill).

So who was St. Cyngar?

St. Cyngar was the 6<sup>th</sup> century son of King Gerren Llyngesog of Dunmonia and spent a number of years building churches in South Wales, as well as locally and in Ireland, then establishing a monastery on Anglesey before settling in nearby Cricieth. We always visit St Cyngar's on a Tuesday for mid-week eucharist, joining regular worshippers in the hall afterwards for refreshments. Even that is different at St Cyngar's for thanks to the gradient, although the hall is beneath the church, this Crypt even has windows!





## THE INFLUENCE OF RELIGION ON LAW

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

### MAN AND THE STATE: THE CASE OF JAMES I

**A** celebrated instance occurred when James I claimed the right to rule in England as an absolute sovereign. He claimed that he could judge whatever he pleased in his own person, free from all risks of prohibition or appeal. He called in aid the authority of Archbishop Bancroft who declared that it was clear in divinity that he could try cases himself. Such power, said the Archbishop, doubtless belongs to the King by the word of God in the scriptures.

But there was a great Lord Chief Justice in those days, Lord Coke, who made it a rule of his life to spend one-fourth of each day in prayer: though I must say I do not know how he managed it, considering the vast amount of other things that he did. Lord Coke told the King that he had no power to try cases himself, and that all cases ought to be determined in a Court of Justice. King James replied: "I always thought and I often heard the boast that your English law is founded upon reason. If that be so, why have not I and others reason as well as you the Judges?"

The Lord Chief Justice replied: "True it is, please your Majesty, that God has endowed your Majesty with excellent science as well as great gifts of nature: but your Majesty will allow me to say, with all reverence, that you are not learned in the laws of this your Realm of England... which is an art which requires a long study and

experience before a man can attain to the cognizance of it. The law is the golden measure to try the causes of your Majesty's subjects, and it is by that law that your Majesty is protected in safety and peace."

King James, in a great rage, said "Then I am to be under the law—which it's treason to affirm." The Chief Justice replied "Thus wrote Bracton, 'The King is under no man, save under God and the law.'"

Those words of Bracton quoted by Coke "The King is under God and the law" epitomise in one sentence the great contribution made by the common lawyers to the constitution of England. They insisted that the executive power in the land was under the law.

In insisting upon this they were really insisting on the Christian principles. If we forget these principles, where shall we finish? You have only to look to the totalitarian systems of government to see what happens. The society is primary, not the person. The citizen exists for the State, not the State for the citizen. The rulers are not under God and the law. They are a law unto themselves. All law, all courts are simply part of the state machine. The freedom of the individual, as we know it, no longer exists. It is against that terrible despotism, that overwhelming domination of human life, that Christianity has protested with all the energy at its command.



Lord Denning,  
drawn by Sallon

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## Rotary Christmas Toy Appeal

Thank you so much for your generous contribution to the Toy Appeal which Southport Rotary Club were helping with this Christmas. Together with your donations we were able to collect, sort and distribute toys, chocolates and food vouchers to many families in need in our community over the Christmas period. It was very much appreciated and I can assure you that the toys were very gratefully received. Thank you.  
*Liz Downham on behalf of Southport Rotary Club.*







*Historically, the Church of England has had its share of eccentric clergy. Even nowadays, hiding away in remote parishes, there are still some colourful clergy about. Clergy such as the elderly, Anglo-Catholic Uncle Eustace, who is incumbent in the small parish of St James-the-Least-of All, somewhere in Very Rural England. Eustace despairs of his nephew, Darren, who has become an Evangelical curate in a busy urban parish... and so he writes letters, to try and properly 'educate' Darren in parish life. By the Revd Dr Gary Bowness.*

## ON THE ART OF DRINKING WELL

The Rectory,  
St James the Least of All

My dear Nephew Darren,

You closed your last letter with the remark that it was time to retire to bed with a cup of cocoa. That may be all very well for the pious intensity of a theological college – although a stiff whisky was always acceptable in my day – but it is not a style to continue once in the parish. I do feel obliged to give you a few hints about what should and should not be drunk in public as a parish priest.

Morning visits are to be discouraged, but if one is unavoidable, and you are invited to have a drink, then it has to be coffee. It is the only time of day when a mug is acceptable – provided, of course, that it is bone china or porcelain. In the afternoons one changes to tea, but only from cups. Blended varieties may be all very well for Curates in their first year, but it should be Darjeeling for an incumbent. And fruit teas are for Quakers only.

If an inappropriate vessel is offered, then the drink should be accepted, but left untouched. Since the visit will be discussed in the finest detail throughout the parish the moment you have left, your host will soon learn why and not make the same error a second time. It is for the same reason that if you ever want to circulate a piece of news round the parish as quickly as possible, never put it in the parish magazine, just mention it casually during one of your visits. Everyone will know by teatime.

Alcoholic drinks must be carefully judged. A sherry – dry, naturally – is probably best if you are invited to lunch. In the early evening, a gin and tonic would be the drink of choice. To ask for whisky would indicate that you are about to go over to Rome, and a mineral water that you have your roots in non-conformity. Beer is never, ever drunk in someone's house unless you suffer from some personal tragedy, such as being the diocesan youth chaplain.

However, an occasional beer in the pub with the bell-ringers (who will be real ale fanatics to a man) or after choir practice – which seems to be the real purpose of holding practices anyway – or as a treat for the sacristan, will show you are a man of the people. It is some years since I visited the pub.

Understanding wine should be taught at every theological college as an essential part of the ministry. Develop a taste for claret, dear boy, and you will be starting your journey towards high office.

And perhaps you should give that tin of cocoa to the vergers.

Your loving uncle, Eustace



*...er...apart from this little hiccup... it was an excellent church pancake supper*

### Easter Lilies

If readers would like to assist with the cost of Easter Lilies for



church in memory of loved ones please contact Cath Whiteside (07732 993025) or Judith Foster (01704 564990).

## COLOURFUL CLERGYMEN

Uncle Eustace's letters to his nephew Darren always make me smile. His old-world values are a delightful antidote to the seemingly unstoppable move away from church life as we may have known it generations ago. This month (see page 13) he is described as colourful. But he is essentially a nice old chap. However, there have been some for whom the words "eccentric" and "colourful" understate their unmeritorious characters. This month Stuart Baker reflects on another very colourful clergyman of the past:

### **The Honourable and Reverend William Capel,**

**N**epotism can be very helpful to those who might otherwise not merit elevation to high office or rank. The Hon. William Capel was a younger brother of the 5th Earl of Essex. Capel was born in 1775 and ordained in 1799 whereupon his elder brother arranged for him to become the Vicar of St Mary's Church in Watford, and later the Rector of Raine, both of those positions being within his gift.

Capel had a reputation as a huntsman, sportsman and drinker. He also acquired a reputation for neglecting his parish, preferring to spend time foxhunting and playing cricket for the recently formed Marylebone Cricket Club (the MCC).

In 1809 he was sued by his elder brother for trespass and causing damage. During a foxhunt, when Capel was leading the field, he ignored a locked gate to his brother's lands and jumped a fence, and caused the chasing hounds to force their way through a fence. He lost the case, in the course of which it was alleged that he had tried unsuccessfully to bribe the Earl's gamekeeper with a barrel of ale.

In his ministry he frequently cancelled communion services and cut other services short, reducing one to only nine minutes.

In 1829 he double booked a funeral and a lunch. The mourners and the coffin were kept waiting, and when a churchwarden went to the vicarage to inform him Capel said that he would not leave his dinner even if the deceased was a saint. Unhappily for Capel the deceased who was no saint, had been

the mistress of a Cabinet Minister who reported Capel to his Bishop. The following account is taken from "The Greville Memoirs, Part 2: A Journal of the Reign of Queen Victoria": 8th October 1842:

"William Capel, brother of the late Lord Essex, a disreputable, good-for-nothing parson, and Rector of Watford, neglected his clerical duties, and incurred the displeasure of the Bishop, who insisted on Capel's appointing a curate, which he refused to do, on which the Bishop, who became very angry, appointed one himself, and sent him down there. Capel resisted stoutly, and on one occasion the rector and the curate had a race for the

reading-desk in church. He refused to receive the curate or to pay him, and forbid him at his peril to execute any clerical function. The end of it was a trial at the Hertford Assizes, when the parson beat the Bishop, who in his angry haste had failed to comply with all the forms which the law requires. The trial cost the Bishop near a thousand pounds [the equivalent of about £145,000 in 2026], and Capel was triumphant. I don't know what happened in the interim, but a few years afterwards they had become such good friends that

the Bishop came down to preach a charity sermon at Watford, when he was the guest of William Capel, dining and sleeping at his house. Upon that occasion such was his want of common decency, that, having the Bishop for his guest, and under circumstances which demanded more than ordinary respect and attention, he came down to breakfast in an old grey dressing-gown and red slippers, much to the surprise and something to the discomposure of his Diocesan. Nobody would believe Capel when he told them that the Bishop was going to be his guest. 'The Bishop of London!' said Clarendon to him, when he told him, 'how on earth did you contrive to get the Bishop of London to come to your house?' 'How,' said the other, 'why I gave him a good licking and that made him civil. We are very good friends now.'

It looks like Capel and the Bishop did indeed become lasting friends: sixty years later Capel's great granddaughter married the Bishop's grandson.

“...a race  
to the  
reading  
desk...”



## Another Amazing Technicolour Blanket

The third Knit & Knatter blanket is complete and ready to be used in church!



This lovely blanket was knitted by Judith Foster.

If you'd like to come along to Knit & Knatter we meet on the fourth Wednesday each month at 2.30pm in the vestry. After putting our needles down for Christmas we have started again and our next meeting will be on Wednesday 25th February.

Cost £1.00 to include refreshments!  
Contact: Christine Baker (560518)

## How Can God Use Me

A poem by Penny Candlin

How can God use me?  
What talents have I got?  
What time can I give?  
What advice can I give?  
How can God use me?  
What imprint on the world will I leave?  
What impression do I give to others?  
What can I give?  
How can God use me?  
A mountain is moved by one stone at a time  
The impossible is chipped away at until it  
becomes possible  
Prayers are answered when we are aligned with  
God's will.  
How can God use me?

## 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. 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 January or February **please let Rev. Jennie know** with a current update of why you would like prayer so that we can use that information on a Thursday. If you would like to 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.



## In the event of Medical Emergency at St John's

We have three trained First Aiders:  
**Rev. Jennie, Janette Law and Jayne Parkinson.**

If none of them is available there are two points of contact: Clive Morris and Stuart Baker. They are not trained First Aiders but if they are available they can be contacted and they will contact the

emergency services if necessary or give access to the First Aid kit which is kept in the church hall kitchen. We have a defibrillator which is in the entrance lobby in the church hall next to the door which opens into the corridor leading to the church. Instructions for use of the Defibrillator are contained in the machine. We recommend that worshippers and other visitors to our church should carry a mobile phone with them.



Our defibrillator (outlined in red)

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## AESOP'S FABLES

Stuart Baker revisits these ancient stories in search of the morals or truisms which they contained. This month he looks at

### The Fox and the Grapes

A hungry fox saw some fine bunches of grapes hanging from a vine that was trained along a high trellis, and did his best to reach them by jumping as high as he could into the air. But it was all in vain, for they were just out of reach: so he gave up trying, and walked away with an air of dignity and unconcern, remarking, "I thought those grapes were ripe, but I see now they are quite sour."



#### The moral:

It is easy to be dismissive about what you cannot get.

[This fable gave rise to the idiom "a case of sour grapes" which appeared in English literature as early as the 16th century.]

## IT'S GOOD TO KNOW...

### A RELIGIOUS UPBRINGING HELPS YOUR HEALTH IN LATER LIFE

Elderly people who had a religious upbringing have been found to be physically healthier, according to a recent study.

Scientists believe that one reason may be that they did not use drugs, cigarettes or alcohol when they were young. The data found that such people are reporting fewer difficulties with daily activities such as dressing or washing.

The study looked at older people across Europe, and the results were published in the Journal Social Science and Medicine.

Many children in Europe who grew up after the Second World War had families who attended church on a regular basis, and who had Christian moral beliefs and values. For many children, this provided a sense of meaning in life, and a sense of belonging. They felt more 'connected', and hence more mentally and physically stable.

No man ever said, at the end of his days, 'I have read my Bible too much, I have thought of God too much, I have prayed too much, I have been too careful with my soul.'  
— J C Ryle

## THAT TOOK THE BISCUIT

On Saturday 10th January a team of six hopefully smart Cookies from St. John's Hobnobbed together and took part in a very enjoyable Quiz organised by St. Peter's. The quizmaster was Revd. Sam and some of the rounds contained questions which put almost all contestants in a Whirl, but mostly it was a test of general knowledge.

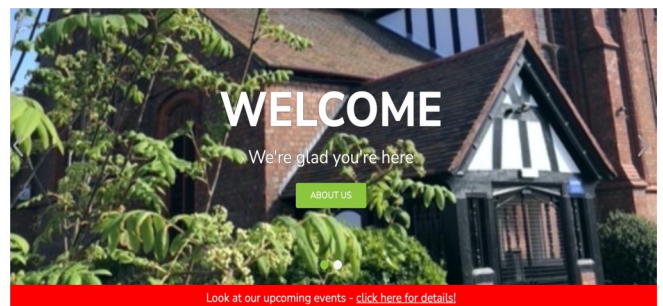
After a close contest the scores were announced: it was Crunch time. The Finger pointed at our team (no Jammie Dodgers these: Cheryl and Andy Dean, Jean and Clive Morris, and Christine and Stuart Baker) who emerged victorious by a Wafer thin margin and organiser Robin Rootes awarded them the winners' prizes of Extremely Chocolatey Biscuits. Sadly, the Deans, our team's Crackers, had to leave before the presentation and disappeared in a Puff.



Thanks go to Robin, Rev. Sam and all who organised and took part in this quiz. It was a nice way to spend a chilly winter's afternoon. It is to be hoped that our churches will join each other more often if we are to work effectively in spreading the Gospel in Birkdale.

Our next social event at St. John's is a Barn Dance on 7th March to which St. Peter's and St. James' are most cordially invited.

Stuart Baker



Visit our website  
[stjohnsbirkdale.co.uk](http://stjohnsbirkdale.co.uk)

Do you want to rent a space?

# CHURCH & HALL AVAILABLE TO RENT FOR CONCERTS, PARTIES, MEETINGS...

## ST JOHN'S CHURCH BIRKDALE



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

### Large Hall

- 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**



## INTRODUCING DAME SARAH MULLALLY – THE 106TH ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

The Rt Revd and Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE officially became Archbishop of Canterbury on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2026, when she was legally confirmed at St Paul's Cathedral.

Most people know that she had been Bishop of London for several years, and that she is the first woman to ever become Archbishop of Canterbury. But what else do you know about her?

1. She was born in Woking in 1962, and is one of four children, with two sisters and one brother.
2. She attended Winston Churchill Comprehensive School and Woking Sixth Form College. She went on to South Bank Polytechnic and Heythrop College, University of London
3. She worked as a nurse in the National Health Service, which she has described as "an opportunity to reflect the love of God". She specialised as a cancer nurse and became a ward sister at Westminster Hospital, before being made Director of Nursing at Chelsea and Westminster Hospital.
4. In 1999, at the age of 37, she was appointed the Government's Chief Nursing Officer for England in the Department of Health. She was the youngest person ever to be appointed to the post. Bishop Sarah was made a Dame Commander of the British Empire in 2005 in recognition of her outstanding contribution to nursing.
5. She had become a Christian at the age of 16. While working as the Chief Nursing Officer for England, she discerned a call to ordination and entered training ministry at the South East Institute for Theological Education.
6. She was ordained in 2001 and served her curacy in St Saviour's Battersea Fields, initially as a self-supporting minister, before leaving her government post in 2004, which she has described at the time as "the biggest decision I have ever made".
7. In 2012 she was installed as Canon Treasurer at Salisbury Cathedral and three years later took the role as Suffragan Bishop of Crediton in the Diocese of Exeter, the fourth woman to become a Bishop in the Church of England.
8. On 12<sup>th</sup> May 2018, Bishop Sarah was

installed as the 133rd Bishop of London at St Paul's Cathedral, the first woman to hold the role.

9. Bishop Sarah sits in the House of Lords as one of the Lords Spiritual, having been introduced on



24<sup>th</sup> May 2018. Her maiden speech paid tribute to the NHS on its 70th anniversary, telling the Lords: "I am the Bishop I am today because of that first vocation to nursing, and compassion and healing are constants at the heart of who I am."

10. She was sworn in as a member of the Privy Council in March 2018 and became Dean of Her Majesty's Chapels Royal in July 2019.

11. As Bishop of London, she led the Church of England's Living in Love and Faith process from 2020 to 2023. This included the formative stages of discernment and decision making which saw the introduction of the Prayers of Love and Faith for same-sex couples.

12. She has served on the Church's National Safeguarding Steering Group and is also Lead Bishop for Health and Social Care issues.

13. As a Lord Spiritual, she has drawn from both her pastoral experience and her background in nursing and healthcare and has played a key role in the ongoing debates on assisted dying.

14. This year, she chaired the Triennium Funding Working Group that developed the Church of England's three-year spending plan that led to significant investments in local churches and parish clergy.

15. Archbishop Sarah is married to Eamonn, an Irish-born IT and Enterprise Architect who enjoys beekeeping and volunteering as a London tourist guide.

16. The couple have two grown-up children, Liam and Grace.

17. Archbishop Sarah has continued her interest in the health service having been a non-executive director at the Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust then at Salisbury NHS Foundation Hospital.

18. She is Chair of Christian Aid.

19. She has spoken openly about her dyslexia, describing her difficulties with writing and reading.

20. In her spare time, she loves cooking, walking and pottery.

# W CROSS R D

The Bible version used in our crosswords is the NIV. Reproduced by permission of BRF and John Capon.

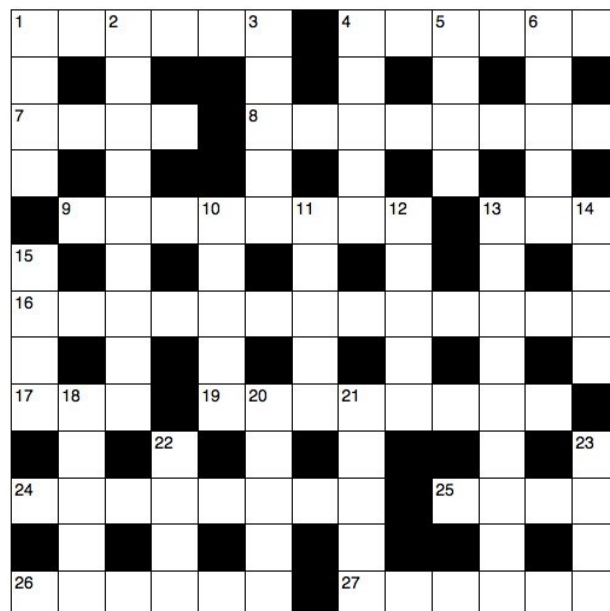
*Solution below*

## Across

- 1 'If you love those who love you, what — is that to you?' (Luke 6:32) (6)  
 4 'They threw the ship's — overboard' (Acts 27:19) (6)  
 7 The first murderer (Genesis 4:8) (4)  
 8 He was the head Levite in charge of the singing when the ark of God was brought back to Jerusalem (1 Chronicles 15:22) (8)  
 9 Samson was noted for this (Judges 16:6) (8)  
 13 Solicit money or food from passers by (Acts 3:2) (3)  
 16 What William Booth's Christian Mission became in 1878 (9,4)  
 17 Alliance of Religions and Conservation (1,1,1)  
 19 'I will praise your name for ever and ever. — — I will praise you' (Psalm 145:1-2) (5,3)  
 24 Simon had (anag.) (8)  
 25 Desperate (Deuteronomy 28:48) (4)  
 26 Elisha witnessed the boy he was seeking to resuscitate do this seven times before opening his eyes (2 Kings 4:35) (6)  
 27 The belly and thighs of the statue in Nebuchadnezzar's dream were made of this (Daniel 2:32) (6)

## Down

- 1 'Before the — crows, you will disown me three times' (Matthew 26:75) (4)  
 2 Relating to the books of the Bible between Acts and Revelation (9)  
 3 'They have — the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!' (John 20:2) (5)  
 4 Belief (5)  
 5 'Take the following fine spices: ... 250 shekels of fragrant — ' (Exodus 30:23) (4)  
 6 'Do not — Jerusalem, but wait for the gift' (Acts 1:4) (5)  
 10 A seer (anag.) (5)



- 11 'Even there your hand will — me' (Psalm 139:10) (5)  
 12 The wild variety was part of John the Baptist's diet (Mark 1:6) (5)  
 13 A non-Greek speaker who was looked down on by civilized people (Colossians 3:11) (9)  
 14 Famous 1950s musical whose characters included members of 16 Across, — and Dolls (4)  
 15 The province from which Paul wrote to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 16:19) (4)  
 18 'He was standing in the gateway with a linen cord and a measuring — — his hand' (Ezekiel 40:3) (3,2)  
 20 'Today, if you hear his — , do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion' (Hebrews 3:15) (5)  
 21 The Jericho prostitute who hid two Israelite spies on the roof of her house (Hebrews 11:31) (5)  
 22 'And now these three remain: faith, — and love. But the greatest of these is love' (1 Corinthians 13:13) (4)  
 23 'God has numbered the days of your reign and brought it to an end' (Daniel 5:26) (4)

## In our Book of Remembrance In February

- 2 Howard Stoner, 1986  
 6 Maud Whaite-Chapman, 1944  
 7 Arthur Hignett, 1989  
 9 Ivy Sinnott, 1988  
 11 Simon Owens, 1990  
 Ann McCann, 1995  
 12 Jean Arnold, 2021  
 13 William Whaite, 1982  
 14 Susan Halsall, 2019  
 15 Ernest Bennett, 1999  
 17 Joseph Pritchard, 1981

- 19 Stephen Rigby, 1986  
 20 Winifred Beeley, 1951  
 21 Edith Smith, 1966  
 22 Ernest Ball, 1963  
 24 Lucy Leather, 1987  
 25 Elizabeth Clegg, 1978  
 27 Harry Campion, 1984  
 Barbara Hughes, 1996  
 28 Harry Beckingham, 2014

**If any of our readers wish to have the name of a deceased relative inscribed in the Book of Remembrance please contact Stuart Baker on 01704 560518**

## CROSSWORD SOLUTION

ACROSS: 1, Credit. 4, Tackle. 7, Cain. 8, Kenanilah. 9, Strength. 13, Beg. 16, Salvation Army. 17, ARC. 19, Every day. 24, Admonish. 25, Dire. 26, Sneeze. 27, Bronze.  
 DOWN: 1, Cock. 2, Epistollic. 3, Taken. 4, Tenet. 5, Cane. 6, Leave. 10, Erase. 11, Guide. 12, Honey. 13, Barbarian. 14, Guys. 15, Asia. 18, Rod in. 20, Voice. 21, Rahab. 22, Hope. 23, Mene.



## GOD IN THE ARTS

*The Revd Michael Burgess surveys great works of sacred art.*

### **'He gave us eyes to see them':**

Last month we stood at the doorway of a church in West Yorkshire. Open the door of that church or any church and the first thing to greet our eyes is the font. It marks the beginning of Christian life in the church. Many fonts have fine carvings of the seven sacraments that nourish the Christian. Others are octagonal in shape: a reminder of Noah and his seven family members saved in the ark from the Flood.

This month's font is a symbol of the ship sailing the seas of life. It is in St George's Church, Anstey, in Hertfordshire. Around the font are carved mermen – mythical, pagan creatures that belong to a pre-Christian age which the newly baptised is called on to renounce. When it was carved in the 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> centuries, baptism occurred within eight days of birth. Babies would be immersed three times into the waters of the font: dying to the old life symbolised by the mermen, and rising to new life, to be clothed in a white robe and given a lighted candle as a

guide through life. They would then grow up in the church, moving from that west end through the upturned boat of the nave to the altar at the east end.

That movement is a sign of the pilgrimage we are all called to make. Like a journey on the seas of this world, we may sail through tranquil waters and peaceful days. There may be times when the skies are cloudy and the waters stormy. Martin Luther, when he was faced by struggles like that in his life, would say the words 'I am baptised' to strengthen and reassure himself. 'I am baptised' we can say as we travel in faith, knowing that there is always a light to guide and a goal that is sure and eternal.



***'The famous mermen font at St George's Church, Anstey, by Michael Garlick, via Wikimedia Commons'***

## BREAKING THE WORD

by Revd. Dr. Jo White

For the last few months, we've been looking at the way that church services are put together. Last time we looked at the reading of the gospel, and how we honour that in our own body language (by standing up).

This month we will move on to 'The Sermon' which is often known as 'Breaking the Word'. This parallels, if you like, the 'Breaking of the Bread' which follows later in the service.

The Sermon is intended to be an expansion and perhaps an explanation of the Bible readings that have been used in the service. Often it sets the scene and context for the verses which sometimes seem quite random and disconnected.

This is particularly true of the Old Testament reading, where not only the verses may be unconnected to readings from previous services, but often they are taken from totally different books; Isaiah one week and Jeremiah another.

So what is the preacher's task here? It was once described to me as: to comfort the disturbed and to disturb the comfortable! That sounds a bit harsh, but when you think about it, isn't that what we really need from our God? When we are in difficulties, whatever the cause, we need to know He's there, and that He has our back, so to speak. When things are going well for us, then that's a good time to be working on recognising another weakness in ourselves and working towards lessening it. There's no sitting back on our laurels when we work for the Lord.

### ***This month***

As we start Lent this month, have a good listen to a few sermons. You can catch ours in our church services or on zoom or by telephone. Most cathedrals have a website where they record their Sunday service in whole or in part, which you can listen to and take part wherever you are.

## GEORGE CHEETHAM HUSSEY

### a very generous giver

In our recent series of Sunday sermons we have been addressing the topic of Giving. It is hoped that nobody will feel that they are under pressure to give more than they can afford but we have to face the fact that the costs of maintaining our church and its ministry in Birkdale, and contributing to the work of the Diocese, are remorselessly increasing.

Observant readers of THE WORD may have noticed a memorial tablet on the west wall of the church, next to the Roll of Honour. It recites that "George Cheetham Hussey Esq., formerly of Staley House, Birkdale, departed this life on January 6th 1903 and bequeathed £2,000 to the Vicar and Wardens for the endowment and enlargement of the church." The enlargement (the construction of the north aisle and the clergy and choir vestries) was carried out and completed in 1909. £2,000 in 1903 would be worth over £300,000 in 2026.

George Hussey was a retired grocers'

provisions dealer. He died at the age of 78 after collapsing in the street. He was born in Staley, Cheshire in 1824, which no doubt explains the name which he gave to his house on what is now the site of flats at 124 Liverpool Road. He was a wealthy man. In addition to the large bequest to our church he left £1,000 to the Royal National Lifeboat Institution. His estate was assessed as £25,846 which would now be worth about £4 million.

There was a problem with the bequest to St John's. In 1903 St John's was not a separate parish and there was doubt about whether, as a Chapel of Ease to St James' parish, it actually had its own Vicar and wardens. The money was lodged with the Chancery Court and a scheme for the formation of the parish of St John's was created. The church was consecrated in August 1904, the money was released, and the enlargement proceeded.

We probably do not have such wealthy members of our congregation now, but his generosity is a reminder that some of us may be able to remember St John's with a bequest.

Stuart Baker

## THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS

Our new series looks at the Seven Deadly Sins, a list compiled by Pope Gregory I in AD 590 to describe the nature of sin. This month Canon Paul Hardingham considers

### GREED

*'How much money is enough? Just a little bit more.'* (John D Rockefeller).

Greed is the overwhelming desire for *more and more* in our lives. In our consumer culture it can be hard to tell the difference between needs and wants – e.g. buying a new laptop or shoes for different occasions? We need to ask the question: *How much is enough?*

Jesus was approached by a man who wanted Him to settle a dispute about family inheritance. He said, *'Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions.'* (Luke 12:15). Jesus goes on to tell the story of a rich farmer who builds bigger and bigger barns, but whose life is unexpectedly cut short by death. He concludes: *'This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich towards God.'* (21).

How do we overcome greed and become 'rich towards God'? Paul writes: *'I have learned the secret of being content in*

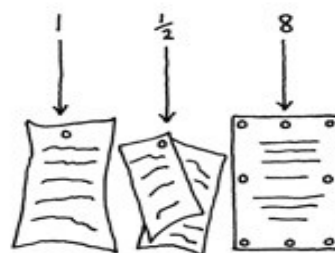
*any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.'* (Philippians 4:13). Overcoming greed involves learning to be content in whatever situation we find ourselves, in need or plenty.

Paul is not saying that there is anything wrong with having food, money or possessions, but these cannot be the primary source of our contentment. The secret of contentment is found in a transforming relationship with Jesus: *'I can do all this through Him who gives me strength.'* (13). He is the one who enables us to overcome greed and know riches.

*'Contentment makes poor men rich; discontent makes rich men poor.'* (Benjamin Franklin).

## CHURCH NOTICE BOARDS

THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS



**GREED** (USING TOO MANY OF THE PARISH PINS)



# WORD SEARCH

**Solution on page 24**

## The Presentation of Christ in the Temple/ Candlemas

Candlemas, 2<sup>nd</sup> February, comes exactly 40 days after Christmas. In New Testament times 40 days old was an important age for a baby boy: it was when they made their first 'public appearance'. Mary, like all good Jewish mothers, went to the Temple with Jesus, her first male child - to 'present Him to the Lord'. Thus, we have the Festival of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple (Luke 2: 22-40). So where does the Candlemas bit come in? Jesus is described in the New Testament as the Light of the World, and early Christians developed the tradition of lighting many candles in celebration of this day.



CANDLEMAS

FORTY

DAYS

AFTER

CHRISTMAS

NEW

TESTAMENT

IMPORTANT

AGE

BABY

BOY

FIRST

PUBLIC

APPEARANCE

MARY

JEWISH

TEMPLE

FESTIVAL

PRESENTATION

DESCRIBED

LIGHT

WORLD

CANDLES

LIGHTING

EARLY

## An Introduction to Books in the Old Testament: Isaiah

By Canon Paul Hardingham

Isaiah is often regarded as the greatest of the prophets. His name means '*The Lord saves*' and he began his 50-year ministry in 740 BC when King Uzziah died (6:1). Many scholars challenge the claim that Isaiah wrote the entire book, however there are striking verbal parallels between chapters 1–39 and 40–66.

Isaiah spoke during the stormy period marking the expansion of the Assyrian empire and the decline of Israel. The Assyrians destroyed the northern kingdom in 721. Judah was left to decide whether they would make alliances with other kingdoms or rely on God to protect them. Isaiah warns Judah that her sin would bring captivity in Babylon, which eventually took place in 586.

Isaiah sees the Messiah coming from the line of David. He speaks of a new temple being established (ch2); a child born with a new kingdom (ch9) and judging differently to other kings (ch11) as well as the nature of His suffering (ch53). The '*suffering servant*' (chapters 42–53) also applies to Israel as a nation, who are called to be a '*light for the Gentiles*' (42:6). Not surprisingly Jesus applies Isaiah's words to His own life and ministry. eg Is 61:1 quoted in Luke 4:18. Throughout his book Isaiah presents the full dimensions of God's judgment and salvation as '*the Holy One of Israel*' (6:1), as well as the '*Sovereign Lord*' far above all nations (40:15–24).

Isaiah looks forward to the promise of a new city of Zion (chs 60–66), in which the people offer praise to the Holy One of Israel. '*Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind.*' (65:17).

## the elderberries gardening club

The group meet from 10.30am-noon on the **second Wednesday of every month** at **St. John's Church** on St. John's Road in Birkdale.



The club offers talks from guest speakers, trips to historical houses and gardens, and social events. To find out more, email:

[elderberriesgardening@gmail.com](mailto:elderberriesgardening@gmail.com) or call Shelley Lewis-Lavender on [01704 560690](tel:01704560690).



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## 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.*

### Fearfully and Wonderfully Made

Every person who ever lived was once a sperm and an egg. Those two cells fused together, and in nine months they turned into a living, breathing, human being. Each of us emerged from this same embryonic development process, which is highly complex and organised, but variable enough to turn out a unique individual every time.

If you like order – such as neat piles of stationery, or tidy colour-coded files – you will enjoy this story. One of the most important stages of an embryo's development is when each section of the body, from head to rump, takes on its identity. Each part is told what shape to take, and which limbs or internal organs to grow: legs or arms, lungs or kidneys, and so on.

The most beautiful part of this body-patterning process is that it brings the dimensions of time and space together in such a neat way. The DNA instructions for the procedure, known as genes, are organised in the order in which they are needed during development which is also the order in which

they appear on the body. No other sets of genes are known to be arranged in such a tidy pattern.

So, as the embryo develops, the tissues near the head end activate the first sets of genes. Those active genes then make all the proteins needed for that part of the body to grow and develop in the right way. The tissues just below the head then switch on the second set of genes, and so on. A wave of activation passes down the embryo, specifying each section of the trunk in turn.

The Wisconsin-based developmental biologist Jeff Hardin often quotes Psalm 139 to express the wonder of embryonic development.

The Psalmist did not understand how this process happened, but he knew that it was a marvellous thing. *"For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb...your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth."*

The story of the tidy genes brings out the hidden beauty in the very early stages of embryonic development. The more biologists get to find out about how we came to be born, the more we can say, *"I am fearfully and wonderfully made"*!



### The Story Behind..

*"As with gladness men of old..."*

This Epiphany hymn was written on 6th January 1859 by William Chatterton Dix. Unlike most Victorian hymn writers he was not a clergyman.

At his birth in 1837 he was named, in part, after the poet Thomas Chatterton who had committed suicide at the age of only 17 in 1770. After leaving school Dix was employed in Bristol in marine insurance and became quite a prolific hymnist, publishing four volumes of his own works and translating others from overseas.

*"As with gladness..."* was written when he was recovering in bed from a long illness and was unable to attend a morning Epiphany service. After reading Matthew's Gospel account of the Epiphany he reflected on the text and wrote his own thoughts. The Gospel account seemed to him to be full of practical teaching for his own time from the example of the Wise Men.

He kept the text private for a year before it was published in *"Hymns for Public Worship and Private Devotion"* and it was added to what was a trial version of *"Hymns Ancient and Modern."*

The hymn is sung to two tunes, each of which is also used as the tune for other hymns. It was originally sung to a tune titled *"Dix"* which was ironic because Dix did not like it, but the hymn and the tune (which is also used on *"For the Beauty of the Earth"*) became popular. It is also often sung to *Hyfrydol* which is also the tune of *"Love Divine, All Loves Excelling"* and another of Dix's hymns *"Alleluya, Sing to Jesus!"*

Although written as an Epiphany hymn *"As with gladness..."* features in many hymn books in the Christmas carols section.

Stuart Baker

*Sources, various, including "Every Hymn has a story" by John Large; Hymnary.org*

## THE GOOD AND BAD KINGS OF ENGLAND

By Dennis Davis

### King Richard I: Coeur De Lyon

Richard, Duke of Normandy, Aquitaine and other French states was born in Oxford on 8th Sept. 1157, third son of Henry II and Eleanor of Aquitaine, over lord of Brittany. He became noted as the Lion Heart. At 16 years of age, he had his own army. He spent most of his life in putting down rebellions in his French dependencies, on Crusade or captivity. He was not destined to be king, but on the death of his elder brother he became heir to the throne. His life was one of constant strife and warfare. He joined a rebellion against his father who wanted Aquitaine to go to the youngest son, John. He also joined forces with the French King Philip, which is said to have hounded his father to an early death.

Richard was said to have had considerable political and military skills. His greatest ambition was to go on a Crusade to the Holy Land. He joined the 3rd Crusade in 1187 when Saladin had captured Jerusalem, and it was his exploits here that gave him the name of "The Lion Heart".

He stopped in Cyprus where he married Berengaria, daughter of the King of Navarre. He arrived in the Holy Land in June 1191 and took part in the capture of Acre and Joppa capturing 2700 prisoners, but Jerusalem was to elude him.

It was here that an act which has earned the eternal enmity of the Moslems took place. As Richards's army marched towards Jerusalem with the sea on one side and Saladin's army on the other he feared the prisoners would revolt and join Saladin if Saladin was to attack, so he ordered their execution. He spent a year of stalemate and quarrels with the French and Germans, so he made a truce with Saladin and set out for England.

**"...a life of constant  
strife and warfare..."**



*Richard I, from a 12th century codex*

**...Legal memory starts  
in 1189AD...**

In Austria, Richard was taken prisoner by Leopold of Austria who handed him over to Henry VI of the Holy Roman Empire who held him to ransom for 150,000 Marks. Prince John who was ruling England during Richard's absence in the Holy Land, offered only 80,000 which was paid and Richard was released. Phillip of France warned John to "look to yourself, the Devil is loose".

Richard returned to England where he only reigned for six months before going back to Normandy. On 6th April 1199 Richard died from a crossbow bolt wound which became gangrenous. He died in his mother's arms. His remains are said to have been buried in various places with his heart buried in Rouen cathedral.

The story of Richards's image has been romanticized in the Robin Hood tales and the folklore surrounding the minstrel Blondell who toured from castle to castle singing a song that he and Richard had composed together until he found where Richard was held.

Some saw Richard as a very model of an English King, but I think it would need longer than a six months reign on which to make this decision.

(Editor's note: we have probably all heard the expression "time immemorial." From mediaeval times onwards this has meant before 1189AD. English common law adopted the principle that any custom, right or usage claimed as legally binding must be shown to have continued continuously since 1189. This legal fiction was created to coincide with Richard's accession to the crown which was about the time when royal court record-keeping developed).



## THE ROUND TABLE by John M. Shakespeare

I was taught to read on stories about King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table.

They were tales of chivalry, honour and betrayal and their influence would probably explain much of who I am today, eighty years later.

In terms of place names and stories of King Arthur, his origins range from the county of Cornwall to the country of Wales and beyond. Legends of King Arthur are varied and complex in origin.

They maybe interpreted as mystic, esoteric and even spiritual in the ethics described.

The first four lines of the hymn, "Onward Christian Soldiers", by Sabine Baring-Gould. (1834-1924) reads, "Onward Christian soldiers marching as to war, With the Cross of Jesus going on before". These lines conjure up for me a picture of Arthur's Knights facing up to the King's enemies, both foreign and native to these shores.

According to some sources King Arthur was born around 480AD at Tintagel Castle in Cornwall. Uther Pendragon, King of the Britons, called a meeting of his nobles, amongst which was the Duke of Cornwall and his wife Ygerne, the fairest lady in all the kingdom. Uther took a desire for Ygerne and when the Duke of Cornwall took her back with him to Tintagel Castle he used the magical powers of his court wizard Merlin to gain access to her bed as a semblance of her husband, conceiving Arthur as his own. Arthur took his father Uther Pendragon's place as King of the Britons, and was crowned at either Winchester or at Caerlan.

Rights to the succession, so the legend goes, were confirmed by his possession of Excalibur, a sword only he could draw from a remote rock on the Cornish moors.

In thinking about the sword Excalibur, it may be as well to keep in mind the following. "A good sword keeps others in their scabbard, for he who lives by the sword, dies by the sword".

The Holy Grail (or chalice), is shrouded in mystery, some say that it was the cup of Christ at the "Last Supper", and contained the blood of Christ. It is claimed that Joseph of Arimathea brought the Grail with him, when he later visited the shores of England, as an apostle from the Holy Land, To drink from the Holy Grail (or chalice), it was said, gave healing to any wounds suffered in honourable combat.

I interpret the poem "Jerusalem", by William Blake (1757-1827), as telling the fable of Joseph of Arimathea's visit to England. The lines "And did those feet in ancient times, walk upon England's mountains green" link the delivery of the Holy Grail to Glastonbury, the resting place where, rumour suggests, it lies buried.

Arthur married Guinevere, and as his Queen she is said to have presented him with the famous Round Table. The table was circular, as all the King's knights were considered equally noble and honourable. This however sadly

proved not to be the case, when considering the behaviour of Sir Lancelot for example.

The following lines are from Shakespeare (1564-1616), in his play Henry IV, Part 2, Act 3, Scene 1. Henry finishes his speech to his nobles with the words, "Uneasy lies the head that wears a Crown." I believe that King Arthur must have had those feelings when challenged by noble claimants from Mercia, Wessex and Cumbria, to name but a few.

As a magician, wizard and sorcerer, Merlin is an enigma in the stories of King Arthur. From the time of Arthur's birth to his death in battle, Merlin appears to have played a mystical role in the life of the King. Rather like the figure of Gandalf in "The Lord of the Rings", Merlin it seems had magical powers. His greatest adversary during the reign of Arthur was Morgan le Fay a sorceress and a Queen in her own right, or so it is claimed.

Arthur's reign came to an end when he faced his nephew Mordred at the battle of Comlann, also referred to as Slaughter Ridge. The leaders' fates seem in doubt. The legend goes that some of Arthur's knights managed to escape to the Scilly Isles, aided by Merlin's magic.

When King Arthur lay dying from his battle wounds, he was carried to a lake on Bodmin Moor in Cornwall. Once there, tended by his most faithful of knights, Sir Bedivere, he ordered the knight to throw his great sword Excalibur far out into the lake. Reluctant at first to do so, Sir Bedivere did eventually comply. The story goes that a hand came out of the water to grasp it, and so it was returned to The Lady of the Lake.

On a more cheerful note, it is foretold that in the future, any critical threat to the British Isles will be met by Arthur and his knights, suitably armed to defend us, having been aroused from their sleep somewhere in Snowdonia.

**[We must hope that President Putin will be deterred by fear of our knights in armour! Ed.]**



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- Greek yoghurt boosts your gut health. Its natural probiotics encourage a wider array of beneficial bugs to live in your gut. That means less inflammation, and probably fewer cancer-causing chemicals.
- Greek yoghurt contains the minerals potassium and magnesium, which can help to both support and regulate blood pressure.
- Greek yoghurt provides calcium. This can contribute to greater bone density and even re-build bone tissue if we are older or have been injured.
- Greek yoghurt includes the B vitamins – thiamine (B1), riboflavin (B2) and cobalamin (B12). These help support memory, critical thinking, and our problem-solving skills.



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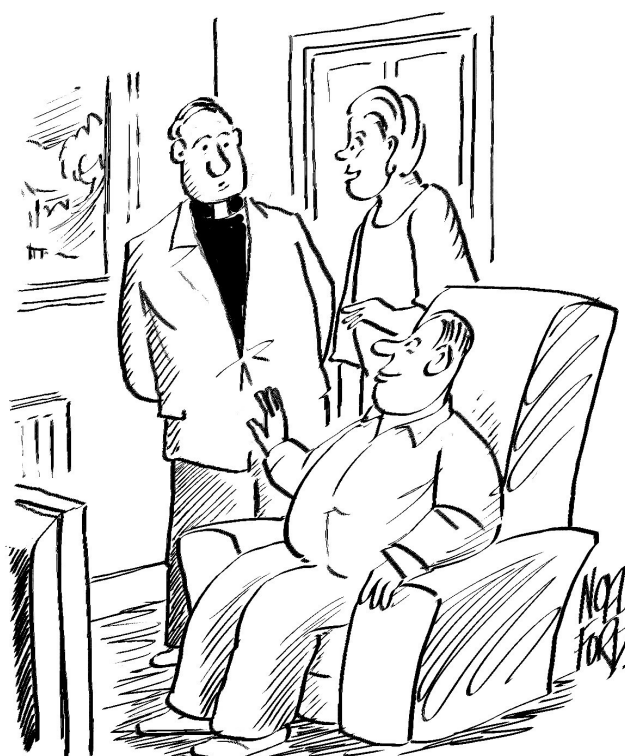
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Henry is making a real effort for Lent – he's giving up the remote control and walking to the TV



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## St. John's Parish Registers

### Holy Baptism

4th January Remy Anderson



# WHAT'S ON IN OUR NEIGHBOURING CHURCHES

## Social Events at St James' Birkdale (Lulworth Road)



### First Tuesday of each month:

Games Afternoon in the church hall.  
1.00pm for lunch (pre-book at St James' church office 01704 564907 the week before) or 1.30-3.00pm for games.

### Third Sunday of each month:

Afternoon Tea in Welcome Area 2.30-4.00pm. Open to anyone who would like some company along with tea/coffee and homemade cakes.

## Social Event Coming in June at St Peter's Birkdale Open Church Garden Afternoon on Sunday 14th June

"amazing plant sale and delicious refreshments"

Further details nearer to the time, but please put the date in your diaries.

**At Christ Church**

**SOUTHPORT ORCHESTRA**

# Springtime Celebrations

**Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> March 2026, 7:30pm**  
**Christ Church, Southport, Lord Street, PR8 1AA**

Humperdinck - Hansel and Gretel Overture  
Rachmaninov - Piano Concerto No2 with soloist Tom Kimmance  
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# Warm Space

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### MONEY

We can help with benefit checks, general advice, debt, and money management.

Call **01704 264505** to speak to our **Welfare Team** and we'll do our best to support you (if you're calling on behalf of someone else, please have them with you when you call).

### WELLBEING

#### **WARM SPACE** - A welcoming, free drop-in space for all.

Wednesday: 1 - 3pm @ Victoria Centre, 197a Sussex Road, PR8 6DG  
Thursday: 11am - 1pm @ Our Lady of Compassion Parish Centre, Formby, L37 3NG  
Friday: 10:30am - 1:30pm @ Ainsdale Village Church, Station Road, PR8 3HW  
Saturday: 10 - 12pm @ Victoria Centre, 197a Sussex Road, PR8 6DG

**FAMILY SPACE** - Free after school club for children year 4 - year 7 (siblings welcome and adults must attend). For initial referral please call or email Compassion Acts team.  
Thursday 3:30 - 5:30pm - Lighthouse Church, Church Road, Formby, L37 3NG  
Thursday 3:30 - 5:30pm - St James Church, Lulworth Road, Birkdale, PR8 2BQ

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COMPASSION ACTS

## Heart Beats! - 12 Weeks to a Stronger Heart

**Starts - Monday February 16th** (10am to 11.30am in the Memorial Hall – run by Kaz Parkinson).

We are launching Heart Beats! – 12 Weeks to a Stronger Heart, a fun, interactive project helping older adults in Ainsdale, Woodvale and surrounds to improve heart health and understand how movement, food and lifestyle work together.

Each week will include gentle to moderate exercise, from rhythmic movement and drumming to balance, strength and breathing activities, alongside a practical focus on a different aspect of heart health, such as blood pressure, salt, healthy fats, circulation or hydration. Participants will see how the physical activity connects with that week's topic, gaining both fitness and understanding.

### Each 90-minute session includes:

- A 30 to 40-minute exercise element, combining rhythmic movement, stretching, light resistance work and controlled breathing to improve circulation and heart strength.
- A short, themed discussion or demonstration on a key heart-health topic, such as salt, fats, blood pressure or hydration, showing how that week's activity supports the topic.
- A brief reflection and goal-setting section where participants set small, achievable SMART goals.

Over 12 weeks, participants will learn how the heart works and how everyday choices influence it, seeing that moving more, eating wisely and managing stress are all part of the same picture. We will demonstrate how looking after your heart, has many benefits beyond the health of the heart itself, benefits that open up opportunity for a happier, more connected, enjoyable life.

12 sessions taking place Mondays at 10am, across a period of 16 weeks, starting Feb 16th  
14 fully funded places available across the whole project.

### Eligibility criteria:

Participants must be willing to commit to attending all 12 sessions (allowance will be made for unavoidable illness/emergencies). Session dates are:

Feb: 16th, 23rd

Mar: 2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd

Apr: 13th, 20th, 27th

May: 11th, 18th

Jun: 1st

Be aware blood pressure and pulse monitoring will take place across the sessions as part of the project. Participants are required to complete pre and post project surveys relating to health & wellbeing.

# Heart-Beats

12 weeks to a stronger heart

A fun, interactive project demonstrating how movement, food and lifestyle can work together to improve heart health.



**FULLY FUNDED**

**FULLY FUNDED**

Join us, and discover how looking after your heart can open up opportunity for a happier, more connected, enjoyable life.

Each week will include gentle to moderate exercise, from rhythmic movement and drumming to balance, strength and breathing activities, alongside a practical focus on a different aspect of heart health, such as blood pressure, salt, healthy fats, circulation or hydration.

**FIRST SESSION:**  
**Monday 16th February - 10.00 am to 11.30 am**

Limited spaces available. For eligibility information and to secure your spot pop in to the Ainsdale Lunch and Leisure office or call 01704 574838

**VENUE:**  
 **Ainsdale Lunch and Leisure**  
Ainsdale Methodist Church, Liverpool Road, Southport PR8 3NQ

This project is FULLY FUNDED by 



## REVELATION REVEALED

The last book in the New Testament is Revelation. It is one which we read infrequently, which may be because it contains a lot of imagery which is difficult to understand or to explain.

It was written by John, one of the 12 disciples of Jesus and it takes the form of a letter to the seven "churches" (ie Christian communities, not church buildings as we know them today) giving a vision given to him by God of what will be the last days of the world. The earth will experience great tribulation and come to an end, and Jesus will establish a new heaven and earth where all those who have been faithful to Him will live forever in peace and harmony.

The seven "churches" were all in the Roman province of Asia (which is now in modern Turkey) at Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea. They were real historical locations which formed a roughly circular route such a messenger might follow if travelling to each of them in turn. They were all influential and wealthy cities.

The message to each Christian community was different. During this year we shall look at what was written and why it was relevant to each church. After reading each of those messages we shall explore the much more difficult parts of the Revelation. But before we do that I shall endeavour to set the scene.

Having been exiled to Patmos for preaching the word of God and speaking about Jesus, John was praying when he heard a loud voice which sounded like the blast of a trumpet and which told him to write what he saw and send it to the seven churches,

John saw the Son of Man (a glorified and symbolic manifestation of Jesus) was standing before him, dressed in a long white robe with a gold sash and with white hair, bright eyes, and burnished feet, surrounded by seven lampstands and carrying seven stars in his right hand and a sword in his mouth.

John, who was by then a very old man, fainted at the sight. Jesus laid a hand on him and said "I am the first and the last (the Alpha and the Omega) and hold the keys of death and the grave." The seven stars represented the angels of the seven churches and the seven lampstands represented the seven churches.



*The vision from God as imagined by Jacqui Parkinson in her major embroidery work "Threads through Revelation"*

Lampstands do not create or generate light but bear light. The seven churches, represented by lampstands, symbolically bore God's light which shines in the world. Jesus in the midst of the lampstands conveys the message that he was present with those churches.

The seven stars represent angels which could be heavenly or human messengers (the word "angel" is derived from Greek and the Latin *angelos*, which literally means messenger).

The sword represents speech, not violence. Hebrews 4:12 "the word of God is alive and active, sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart." It exposes truth and cuts through deception.

Each of the seven letters conveyed a very important message. In the March issue we shall look at what John wrote for the church at Ephesus which at that time was a very important sea port and cultured city but whose Christian believers had lost their passion for Christ and love for one another.

Stuart Baker

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

To join the **weekly Sunday morning services at 10.30am** by **ZOOM**:

Identification Number: 812 3403 0688 Password: 201823

To join the **weekly Sunday morning services at 10.30am** by **TELEPHONE**:

Telephone number: 0203 481 5240

Meeting Identification Number: 812 3403 0688

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

Password: 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**:

Identification Number: 835 5074 3780 Password: 7ehHEK

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

Telephone number: 0203 481 5240

Meeting Identification Number: 835 5074 3780.

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

Password: 7ehHEK. When prompted to do so, enter that number and then press HASH (#)

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

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

80 years ago, on 11<sup>th</sup> February 1946, the Revised Standard Version of the New Testament was published. It was the first major English-language update of the Bible since the King James version was published in 1611.

Also 80 years ago, on 14<sup>th</sup> February 1946, the Bank of England was nationalised.

Also 80 years ago, on 19<sup>th</sup> February 1946, mathematician and cryptanalyst Alan Turing presented a detailed paper for the national Physical Laboratory that gave the first reasonably complete design of a stored-programme computer.

70 years ago, on 11<sup>th</sup> February 1956, two members of the Cambridge spy ring, British diplomats Guy Burgess and Donald Maclean, announced that they had defected to the Soviet Union. They had both vanished in mysterious circumstances in 1951.

65 years ago, on 9<sup>th</sup> February 1961, the Beatles played at the Cavern Club in Liverpool for the first time.

50 years ago, on 11<sup>th</sup> February 1976, John Curry won Britain's first-ever Olympic gold medal in figure skating.

Also 50 years ago, on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 1976, the artist L S Lowry died. Known for his bleak industrial landscapes of north-west England, populated with matchstick men.

40 years ago, on 12<sup>th</sup> February 1986, the Treaty of Canterbury was signed by Britain and France. It was the agreement to construct the Channel Tunnel linking the two countries. The tunnel opened in 1994.

30 years ago, on 1<sup>st</sup> February 1996, US President Bill Clinton met Sinn Fein President Gerry Adams at the White House, to discuss the Northern Ireland Peace Process.

Also 30 years ago, on 15<sup>th</sup> February 1996, the oil tanker Sea Empress ran aground near Milford Haven in Wales, causing a major oil spill along the coastlines of Wales and Ireland.

25 years ago, on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2001, the Human Genome Project announced the publication of the first complete working draft of the human genome.

Also 25 years ago, on 19<sup>th</sup> February 2001, the first case of foot-and-mouth disease in the 2001 UK outbreak was detected at an abattoir in Essex.

20 years ago, on 18<sup>th</sup> February 2006, the Rolling Stones played the world's largest free rock concert on Copacabana beach, Rio de Janeiro. An estimated 2 million people attended.



## Church Hall Users

### 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

**1.00pm-2.30pm Jolly Tots for tots, babies and bumps**

**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 of thanks for Candlemas and the Presentation at the Temple

Dear Lord,

The shortest month, the snowdrop month! February brings those beautiful, hopeful little flowers, also called Candlemas Bells. Thank You, Lord, for the beauty and the hope.

Thank You for the reminder of when Jesus was presented at the Temple as a baby. Thank You, for Simeon recognising in that vulnerable baby the promised Saviour of all the world.

Oh Lord, how this world needs to hear afresh that message of salvation. Open eyes to see You and to know You. Open ears to hear Your message of hope and reconciliation. Open hearts to receive Your love and to share it, for the sake of all the suffering people of the world. In Jesus' name, Amen.

*By Daphne Kitching*

### Come reign in me

Oh God, who made the world so fair,  
And formed the earth, the sky, the sea;  
Who gave us ears, and eyes, and minds,  
To hear, to see, to know all love is thee.  
Oh God, who in the Lord Jesus,  
Gave us a light to light our way;  
Let our life's lamp be lit by Him  
Whose strength will see us safely through each day.  
Oh God, whose Spirit gave us birth,  
And holds all life secure, e'en mine;  
Take all I am, and all I have,  
Bless and redeem them for they both are Thine.  
Oh God the Father, God the Son,  
And God the Spirit, Three in One;  
Blessed be Thy name, come reign in me,  
And in me let Thy will be done.

*By Sam Doubtfire*

### £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 Judith Harris on 2nd February  
Cheryl Dean on 6th February  
Judith Foster on 24th February  
Barbara Heyworth on 24th February  
Dennis Davis on 25th February (95 today!)

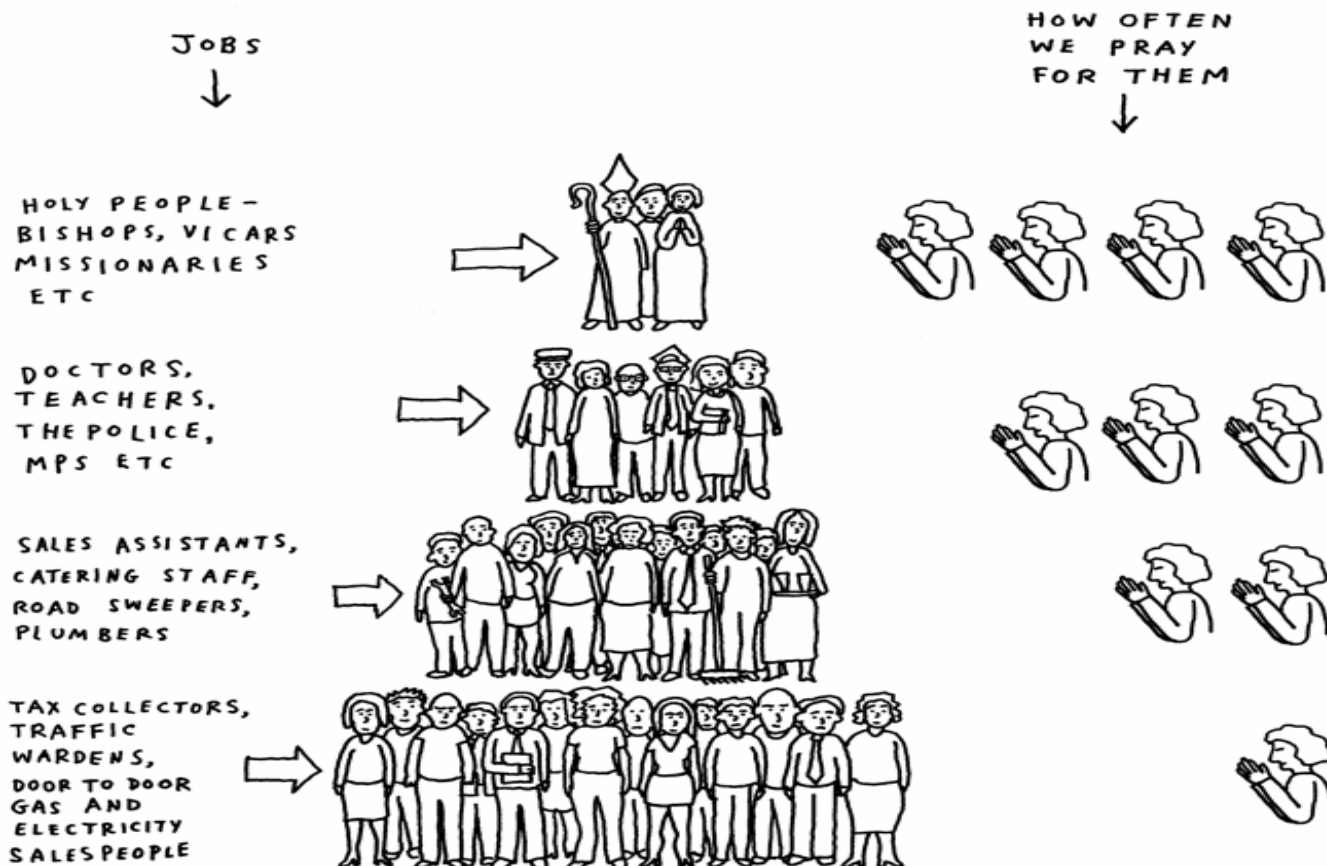
If there are any birthdays, anniversaries or other reasons to celebrate which our readers would like to share with others **DURING MARCH** please let the Editor know by email to [stjohnbirkdaletheword@gmail.com](mailto:stjohnbirkdaletheword@gmail.com)

## The Last Laughs

A Vicar went to the dentist for a set of false teeth. The first Sunday after he got his new teeth, he talked for only eight minutes. The second Sunday, he talked for only ten minutes. The following Sunday, he talked for 2 hours and 48 minutes. The congregation had to pull him down from the pulpit and they asked him what happened. The Vicar explained that on the first Sunday his gums hurt so badly he couldn't talk for more than 8 minutes. On the second Sunday his gums hurt too much to talk for more than 10 minutes. But on the third Sunday, he put his wife's teeth in by mistake and he couldn't shut up. (submitted by one of our female readers; no man would dare to!)



## A HIERARCHY OF VOCATIONS







## Low Impact Exercise Classes

### Liverpool Road Methodist Church Fridays

**10:15am – 11am Low Impact Dance Fitness – £4.00**

A mixture of aerobics and dance to help you have fun and lose your tum!

Good music and lots of laughs.

Ideal if you are first on the dance floor or have two left feet – if you're having fun you're doing it right!!

**11:05am – 11:35am Balance Improver – £3.00**

Using a variety of proven balance techniques to help improve your balance, confidence and coordination.

These can be done seated, standing whilst holding on or unsupported if you're feeling like showing off!

**11:45am – 12:15pm Seated Dance Exercise – £3.00**

Using a mixture of exercise and dance moves – to a background of sing along tracks to help you have fun and keep moving.

Ideal for those who find a standing session uncomfortable

## Beginners Very Welcome

## Work at your own Pace

For more information please call Kaz Parkinson on 07540 369942.

Or come along and try us out – first session free



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