
THE WORD

MAGAZINE OF ST JOHN'S BIRKDALE

GOD CENTRED, RELATIONSHIP DRIVEN AND LIFE TRANSFORMING

MARCH 2026 ISSUE 279

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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

THE WAY OF DISCIPLESHIP

On Wednesday 25th February St John's commenced a 5-week *Lent course which will be held each Wednesday* until 25th March. In the first meeting we considered The Way of Discipleship in the context of why and how we worship God.

The meetings start at 7.30pm and are held in the small hall. Refreshments are provided.

This is a most valuable opportunity to look at ourselves as disciples, or ambassadors for Christ, as we proceed through Lent.

Do come to these meetings if you can. The next one is on 4th March.

FRESH ON THE MENU

We have a new feature in THE WORD this month: Gardeners' Corner by Tina Lloyd who provides advice about what we should be doing and looking out for in our gardens as we approach the start of Spring. Page 11.

And we shall have a men's afternoon on a trip to Liverpool Cathedral and an historic pub on 9th March. Contact Stuart Baker (07732 691542)

A PEACEFUL MIND IN LENT

Lent is a time of prayer and inward reflection, when we take stock of where we are with God...with this in mind, the following may be helpful.

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." Matthew 11: 28-30.

"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." John 16:33

"Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love Him." James 1:12

WHO'S WHAT AT ST. JOHN'S

| | | | |
|--|--|--|---|
| Vicar: | Rev. Jennie Hardy (07872 400718) | Girl Guides: | Mrs. Janette Law (565951) |
| Clergy (retired): | Rev. Roy Doran (572387) | St. John's Brownies: | Mrs. Helen Jones and |
| Reader: | Mrs. Christine Baker (560518) | Brownie Guiders: | Mrs. Lesley Scott |
| Churchwarden: | Clive Morris (564206) | St. John's Rainbows: | Mrs. Lesley Scott |
| PCC Treasurer: | Mrs. Amanda Potts (07530 950100) | Church Flowers: | Mrs. Cath Whiteside (07732 993025) |
| PCC Secretary: | Mrs. Christine Baker (560518) | Magazine Editor: | Stuart Baker (560518) |
| Giff Aid Secretary: | Mrs. Sylvia Kent (564071) | Front Cover design and artwork: | Ian Bennett MBKS |
| Parish Hall Secretary: | Mrs. Jean Morris (564206) | Magazine Printer: | Mrs. Christine Baker (560518) |
| Electoral Roll Officer: | Stuart Harris (563789) | Buildings Inspector: | David Halsall (07790 822343) |
| Deanery Synod Reps: | Clive Morris (564206) Stuart Baker (560518) | Eco Champions: | Mrs. Elizabeth Rothwell and Duncan Rothwell (564192) |
| Lead Safeguarding Officer & Recruiter | Stuart Baker (560518) | Leadership Team: | Rev. Jennie Hardy Rev. Roy Doran Mrs. Christine Baker Clive Morris |
| Transport Officer: | Mrs. Jean Morris (564206) | Contacts & information: | |
| Church of England Children's Society: | Mrs. Sylvia Kent (564071) | Editor's email: | stjohnbirkdaletheword@gmail.com |
| Mothers' Union: | Mrs. Linda Caton (564737) | Church email: | info@stjohnsbirkdale.co.uk |
| | | Website: | https://www.stjohnsbirkdale.co.uk |

MESSAGE FROM THE VICAR:

To The Word'stars!

At our Ash Wednesday Holy Communion Service I spoke about being ambassadors for Christ. It was an encouragement to the church during Lent to be good ambassadors for Christ whilst also looking inwardly and taking time in Lent to grow closer to God in discipline, perhaps through praying more, studying His Word or attending our Lent course on Wednesday evenings.

2 Corinthians 5:20 says, 'we are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.'

We have joined in with the Four Points Easter campaign this year. A campaign which uses four symbols to enable the church (you and me) to easily share the gospel while advertising the date for Easter, in the hope that it will draw people to Christ throughout Lent and Easter. You may have noticed the banner outside of church!

This is an opportunity for us to be equipped to be ambassadors for Christ this Lent. Jesus told us to, 'go and make disciples' (Mat 28:19) and so by using this resource and joining in with many other churches with the Four Points campaign we are fulfilling this role and are not only growing in our own reconciliation with Christ and in boldness but also we're empowered to invite others to be reconciled with God too.

Good ambassadors are those who work behind the scenes and are also outward

facing and doing. Searching out others to become part of a particular movement. But being ambassadors for Christ is so much more. It is obeying Jesus and growing the Kingdom of God. It has eternal results.



Rev'd Jennie Hardy

At times we may all make the mistake of thinking we should be 'growing the church'. In fact, throughout the New Testament through both Jesus, Paul and by the example of the early church we are instructed to grow and build the Kingdom of God as *the church*, to make disciples and to love and in Jesus' final prayer for us before His ascension, He prayed that we (the church) may be one. In Matthew 16:18 Jesus clearly states that He will build His church, us.

Of course we want our church communities to grow, but more importantly we should want the kingdom of God to grow. This means enabling more people to hear the gospel and to have

the opportunity to accept Christ for themselves.

Using the Four Points (THE4POINTS) small booklet and arm band resources is a great way to get the message out. It can be a conversation point where you might like to share your own faith journey and invite someone to a service or if for whatever reason you don't have time to chat you can leave them in places for people to pick up! I tend to pray and then hide them around the gym for people to find and give them away with the arm bands in our Godspeed spin class and other church events and services. There is a basket at the back of church where you can take some to share with others the life transforming message of Christ this Lent.

God loves me! I mess up (sin). Jesus died for me. Will I decide to live for God...

The booklets are small and compact and include a more in-depth explanation along with a prayer people can say if they answer yes to the last point.

So, this Lent let us not only grow in our personal walk with God, let's grow in obedience and in doing so grow the Kingdom of God!

Be blessed,
Love Jennie xx

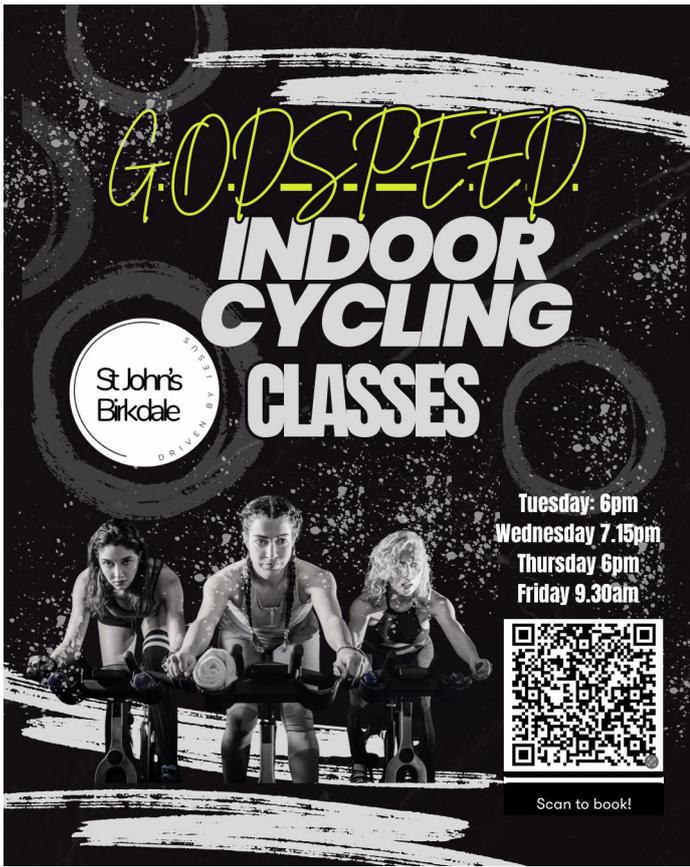
THE4POINTS Ministry Logo (below) is used by permission the4points.com Website:

<http://www.the4points.com>



Easter Sunday 5th APRIL

WHAT'S ON AT ST. JOHN'S

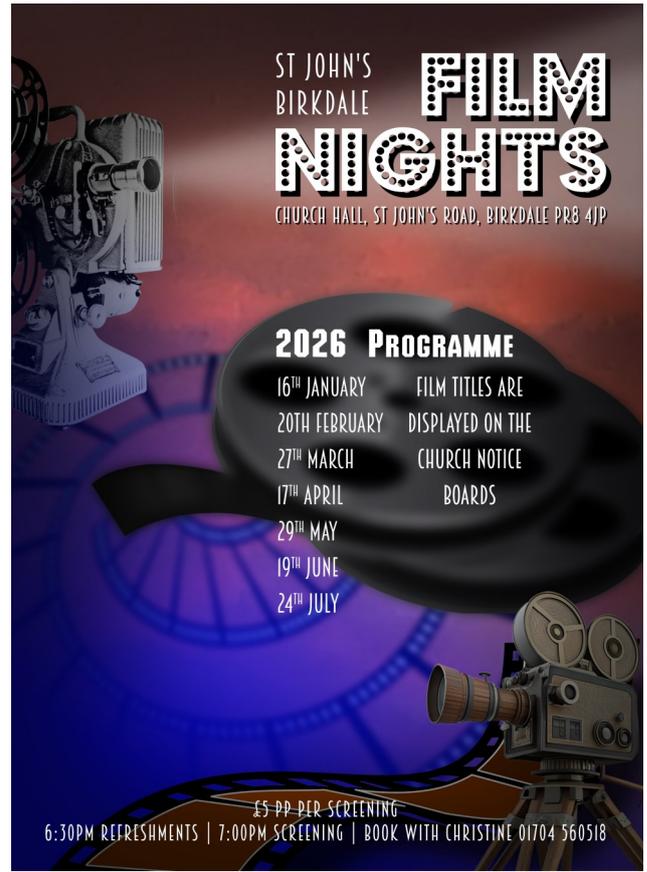


G.O.D.S.P.E.E.D.
INDOOR CYCLING CLASSES

St John's Birkdale
DRIVEN BY

Tuesday: 6pm
Wednesday 7.15pm
Thursday 6pm
Friday 9.30am

Scan to book!

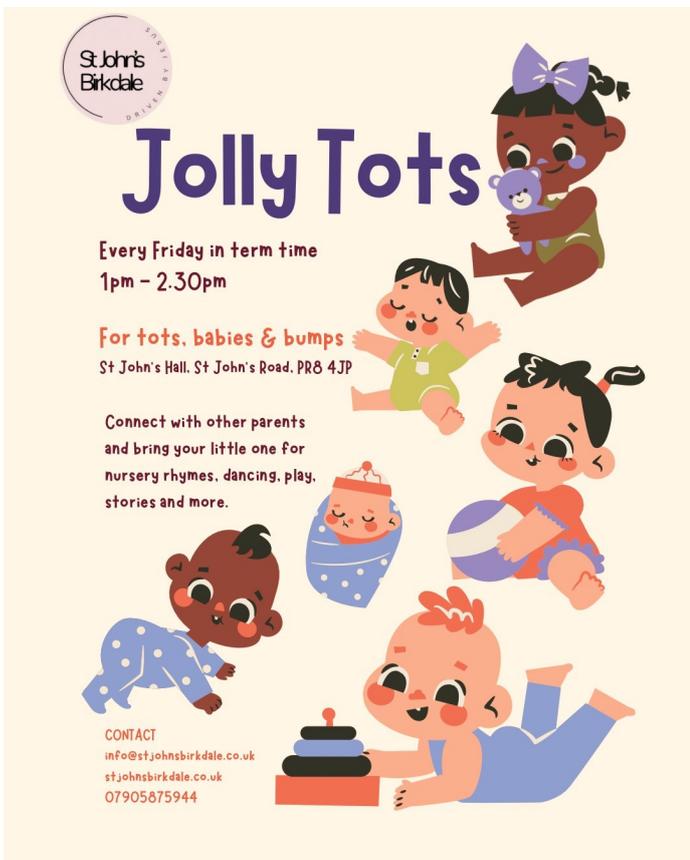


ST JOHN'S BIRKDALE **FILM NIGHTS**
CHURCH HALL, ST JOHN'S ROAD, BIRKDALE PR8 4JP

2026 PROGRAMME

| | |
|---------------------------|------------------|
| 16 TH JANUARY | FILM TITLES ARE |
| 20 TH FEBRUARY | DISPLAYED ON THE |
| 27 TH MARCH | CHURCH NOTICE |
| 17 TH APRIL | BOARDS |
| 29 TH MAY | |
| 19 TH JUNE | |
| 24 TH JULY | |

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



St John's Birkdale
DRIVEN BY

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

Growth

DISCIPLESHIP
EXPLORED

@ Stuart & Christines
food. fellowship. fun.

info@stjohnsbirkdale.co.uk

Adam and Eve's true nationality

A Brit, a Frenchman and a Russian were viewing a painting of Adam and Eve frolicking in the Garden of Eden. "Look at that garden they are maintaining so well," mused the Brit. "They must be British." "Nonsense," the Frenchman disagreed. "They're naked, and so beautiful. Clearly, they are French." "Ah, but no clothes, no shoes, no shelter," the Russian pointed out, "they have only an apple to eat, and they're being told this is Paradise. They are Russian."

WHAT'S COMING TO ST. JOHN'S

St John's Birkdale

EVENT 2026 SCHEDULE

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| 3 FEB | 3.30pm - 5.30pm MESSY CHURCH MESSY PLAY & CRAFTS FOR FAMILIES |
| 7 MAR | 7pm BARN DANCE DO-SI-DO-ING & CHILLI |
| 3 APRIL | 2pm MESSY EASTER 6.30pm FISH SUPPER & FILM A FILM TO HELP US REFLECT ON GOOD FRIDAY |
| 15 MAY | 7pm PAINTING WORKSHOP 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

TUESDAY 3RD MARCH
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

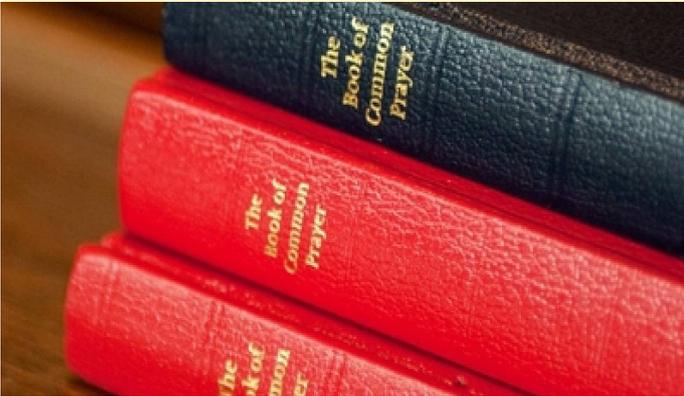
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March 5th and 19th.
If there is anything which readers would like to be included in the prayers please contact Jennie Hardy, Roy Doran, Christine Baker or Clive Morris. Do join us if you can.

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 March**.

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

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

2nd & 4th Wednesdays
7.30pm



Growth

HOME
GROUP

@ Clive & Queen Jeans

food. fellowship. fun.

info@stjohnsbirkdale.co.uk



2nd & 4th Wednesdays
2pm

God's Word

STUDY
GROUP

THIS GROUP WILL NOT MEET IN MARCH. PLEASE CONSIDER ATTENDING THE LENT COURSE ON WEDNESDAY EVENINGS INSTEAD. See page 9.

revroydor@btinternet.com

St John's Birkdale logo with the tagline 'DRIVEN BY SPIRITS'.

JOIN OUR KNIT & KNATTER GROUP

The 4th Wednesday, monthly
2:30pm
In the vicar's vestry

Refreshments provided

Fee: Just £1

Contact: info@stjohnsbirkdale.co.uk
Call: Christine on: 01704 560518

CHURCH SERVICES IN MARCH

Worship on the Second Sunday of Lent

SUNDAY 1st MARCH

08.30: NO SERVICE TODAY AT THIS HOUR

10.30am Holy Communion in church and via zoom and phone

Collect for the Second Sunday of Lent

Almighty God, by the prayer and discipline of Lent may we enter into the mystery of Christ's sufferings, and by following in his Way come to share in his glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The subject of Clive's talk:

Why We Share the Bread and Wine

The Text: Mark 14: 12-26 NIV

12 On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, when it was customary to sacrifice the Passover lamb, Jesus' disciples asked him, "Where do you want us to go and make preparations for you to eat the Passover?"

13 So he sent two of his disciples, telling them, "Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him.

14 Say to the owner of the house he enters, 'The Teacher asks: Where is my guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?'

15 He will show you a large room upstairs, furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there."

16 The disciples left, went into the city and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover.

17 When evening came, Jesus arrived with the Twelve.

18 While they were reclining at the table eating, he said, "Truly I tell you, one of you will betray

me—one who is eating with me."

19 They were saddened, and one by one they said to him, "Surely you don't mean me?"

20 "It is one of the Twelve," he replied, "one who dips bread into the bowl with me.

21 The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born."

22 While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take it; this is my body."

23 Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and they all drank from it.

24 "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many," he said to them.

25 "Truly I tell you, I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."

26 When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

MIDWEEK TRADITIONAL COMMUNION SERVICE
Followed by Brunch in the small hall



WEDNESDAY 4th MARCH
10.30am
IN CHURCH

The proverb "March comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb" signifies that the month often starts with stormy, harsh, wintry weather (a lion) and ends with mild, gentle spring weather (a lamb). Dating back to at least the 18th century, it describes the seasonal transition from winter to spring.

Origin Theories:

Astronomy: Some believe it refers to the constellations, as the month begins with Leo (the Lion) and ends with Aries (the Ram/Lamb).

Folklore: Ancestors used it to represent a balance in nature, hoping that a rough start to the month would lead to a peaceful, warm conclusion.

Usage: While often true, it is not a guaranteed meteorological forecast but rather a reflection of the expected seasonal change.

The phrase is sometimes used to describe life, implying that a challenging beginning can lead to a calm, gentle outcome.



CHURCH SERVICES IN MARCH

Worship on the Third Sunday of Lent

SUNDAY 8th MARCH

8.30am Holy Communion in church only

10.30am Service of Praise & Prayer in church and via zoom and phone

Collect for the Third Sunday of Lent

Eternal God, give us insight to discern your will for us, to give up what harms us, and to seek the perfection we are promised in Jesus Christ our Lord.

The subject of Jennie's talks:

The Meanings of Bread and Wine

The Text: 1 Corinthians 11: 17-26

17 In the following directives I have no praise for you, for your meetings do more harm than good. 18 In the first place, I hear that when you come together as a church, there are divisions among you, and to some extent I believe it. 19 No doubt there have to be differences among you to show which of you have God's approval. 20 So then, when you come together, it is not the Lord's Supper you eat, 21 for when you are eating, some of you go ahead with your own private suppers. As a result, one person remains hungry and another gets drunk. 22 Don't you have homes to eat and drink in? Or

do you despise the church of God by humiliating those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you? Certainly not in this matter! 23 For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, 24 and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." 25 In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." 26 For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Worship on the Fourth Sunday of Lent

SUNDAY 15th MARCH

8.30am Holy Communion in church only

10.30am Service of Praise & Prayer in church and via zoom and phone

MOTHERING SUNDAY

Collect for the Fourth Sunday of Lent

Merciful Lord, you know our struggle to serve you: when sin spoils our lives and overshadows our hearts, come to our aid and turn us back to you again; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Collect for Mothering Sunday

God of love, passionate and strong, tender and careful: watch over us and hold us all the days of our life; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The subject of Christine's talks:

Christian Character—What is it?

The Text: Luke 6: 27-36 NIV

27 "But to you who are listening I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, 28 bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. 29 If someone slaps you on one cheek, turn to them the other also. If someone takes your coat, do not withhold your shirt from them. 30 Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. 31 Do to others as you would have them do to you. 32 "If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners

love those who love them. 33 And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do that. 34 And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, expecting to be repaid in full. 35 But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. 36 Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

CHURCH SERVICES IN MARCH

MIDWEEK TRADITIONAL COMMUNION SERVICE

Tea, coffee and biscuits will be served after the service



WEDNESDAY 18TH MARCH

10.30am
IN CHURCH

The Fifth Sunday of Lent



SUNDAY 22nd MARCH

8.30am Holy Communion in church only
10.30am Service of Praise & Prayer in church and via zoom and phone

Collect for the Fifth Sunday of Lent

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

The subject of Jennie's talks:

Christlike Relationships

The Text: Romans 12: 9-21 NIV

9 Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. 10 Be devoted to one another in love. Honour one another above yourselves. 11 Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervour, serving the Lord. 12 Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. 13 Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality. 14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. 16 Live in harmony with one another. Do not be

proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. 17 Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. 18 If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. 19 Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. 20 On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.



SUNDAY 29th MARCH

8.30am Holy Communion in church only
10.30am Holy Communion in church and via zoom and phone

Collect for Palm Sunday

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

The subject of Jennie's talks:

How Does God Change Me?

The Text: Galatians 5: 13-26

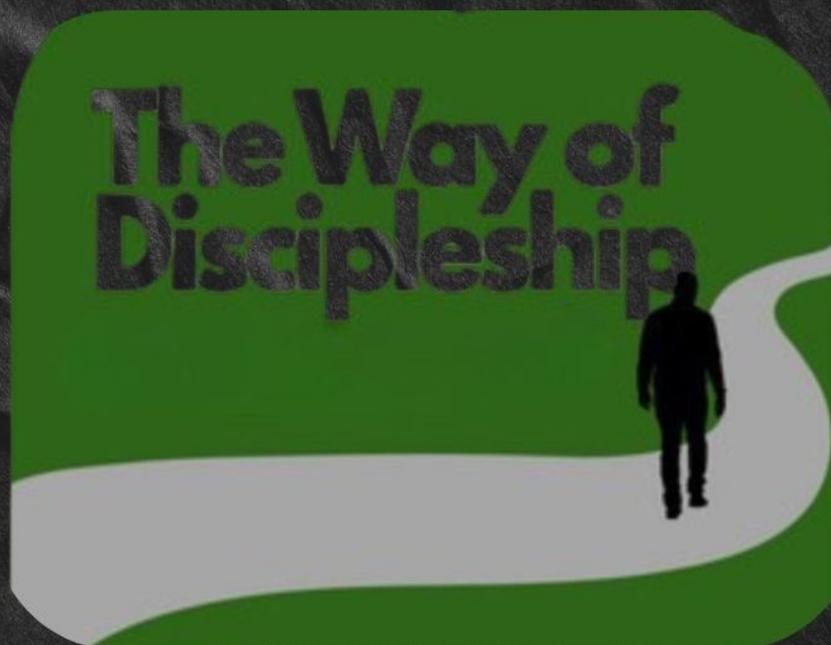
13 You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love. 14 For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: "Love your neighbour as yourself." 15 If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other. 16 So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. 17 For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. 19 The acts of

the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; 20 idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions 21 and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. 24 Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. 26 Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

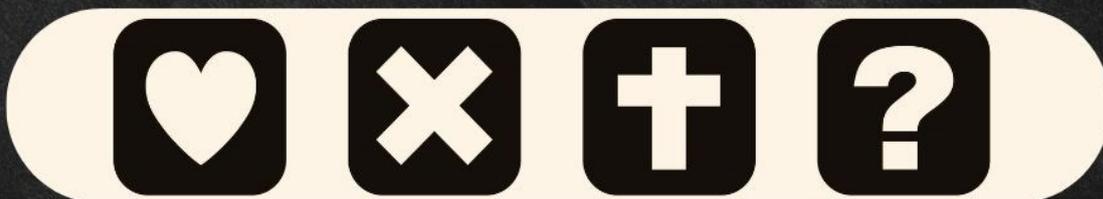


LENT COURSE

Running for 5 weeks on Wednesdays in Lent



**Begins on Wednesday 25th February
7.30pm**



info@stjohnsbirkdale.co.uk

LENT COURSE DATES IN MARCH

Wednesdays 4th, 11th, 18th and 25th

GARDENERS' CORNER

“The kiss of the sun for pardon,
The song of the birds for mirth,
You are nearer to God in the garden
Than anywhere else on earth”

This old verse reminds us of the benefit of getting out into our gardens when the cold winter months soften into spring.

We are very pleased to include in these pages a new feature, Gardener's Corner, with helpful and timely advice from keen gardener **Tina Lloyd**.

In march, the days become longer, the ground is warming up, and the woods are starting to grow! The gardening season starts here- March is all go. Happy Gardening.

At-a-glance checklist

- Spring clean the garden
- Fork over soil in the garden
- Weed and mulch
- Dig up and divide overgrown perennials
- Remove weeds and moss on paths

Trees, Shrubs and climbers

- Plant pot-grown shrubs, roses, and climbers
- Make the first cut if it is dry enough
- Redefine lawn edges
- Lay any new turf before the end of the month
- Tidy up patio roses and ground cover roses
- Move deciduous trees and shrubs
- Plant new bare-root plants
- Renovate overgrown climbers

Flowers

- Tidy up rock gardens, alpine sink gardens
- Top up with new stone
- Sow wild flowers and hardy annuals.
- Divide snowdrops 'in the green'

Patios and Containers

- Scrub or pressure-wash patio pots and paving
- Replant and freshen up pots and containers
- Plant some Spring bedding or flowering Spring bulbs

Under Cover

- Clean and tidy the greenhouse
- Sow tomatoes, chillies, sweet peppers, aubergines and half-hardy annuals
- Sow sweet peas in pots
- Start dormant begonia and dahlia tubers



Fruit

- Spring clean the fruit garden
- Weed and mulch
- Plant rhubarb
- Plant pot grown fruit trees
- Plant new strawberry plants
- Water pot-grown fruit trees and bushes
- Hand-pollinate peaches and apricots
- Protect any blossom with horticultural fleece

Water Garden

- Clear any netting from ponds
- Clear away leaves
- Feed fish if weather is warm and fish are active

Watch out for

- Slugs, snails and woodlice under surfaces
- Watch out for frosts and cover vulnerable plants with horticultural fleece

Bulbs and Plants in March

- Shrubs: Daphne, Prunus, Ribes, Spiraea, Viburnum.
- Evergreens: Erica, Garrya, Mahonia, Skimmia, Viburnum
- Climbers : Clematis 'Freckles', Jasmine
- Bulbs : Cyclamen coum, Scilla, Iris reticulata
- Perennials: Bergenia, Hellebores, Primula, Viola adorata

Spring Pots and Containers

- Plant with early spring bulbs, hardy bedding plants, hardy perennials,

THE INFLUENCE OF RELIGION ON LAW

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

THE PERILS OF INDIVIDUALISM

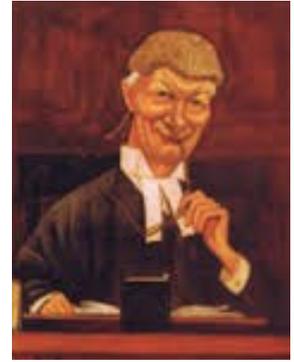
In noticing the evils of the totalitarian system, let us also remember that individualism has its perils. The Puritans, who insisted that the King was under God and the law, carried their individualism too far, or at any rate, some of their successors did. On the one hand they had a great sense of the supreme importance of the individual soul and a vital instinct for setting bounds to the State: but on the other hand they held that there was a natural law which gave every man a right of property in all that he could acquire by his own labour, and once having acquired it, he could amass it, increase it and dispose of it as he willed, without any obligation to account to anybody for his stewardship.

The great exponent of this individualism was our own philosopher John Locke, who has had more influence on American thought even than he had on England. The Constitution of the United States shows one side of the Puritan outlook. It imposes strict limits on the action of those who wield power

in the land. The extreme importance attached to the ownership of property in the United States shows another side of Puritanism.

No one doubts now that it is wrong to treat rights of property as sacred. As Sir Ernest Barker has well said, the individualism of the Puritans "based on religion was made to trail clouds of ingloriousness."

There have been many people who, having amassed or inherited property, have only too often forgotten that it is only through society that they have acquired it. They have failed to realise that they are under a duty to use it for the benefit of society as a whole and not for their own material advantage. When rights of property are carried to these lengths they are contrary to all Christian teaching. They disregarded the high duty of unselfishness. As it is said in the Epistle of St. John "But Whoso hath this world's good and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up... his compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" (1 John 3:17).



Lord Denning,
drawn by Sallon

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Water/Wine Bottle Stall

At the **Summer Fair on June 6th** we shall have a Water/Wine Bottle Stall, but to make this possible we need your help.

Please can you donate the following:

- Full bottles of wine—any type
- Empty screw-top wine bottles with the screw tops on
- Bottle bags

There will be boxes at the back of church for these items.

Thank you in advance for your help.





The Church of England still retains some singular parish clergy. Take the parish of St James-the-Least-of-All, for example. Here the elderly Anglo-Catholic vicar, Eustace, continues his correspondence to Darren, his nephew, a low-church curate recently ordained... by the Revd Dr Gary Bowness.

ON HOW TO RUN A CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING

The Rectory,
St James the Least of All

My dear Nephew Darren,

Clearly, the sight of your vicar running out of the room halfway through your last church council meeting, saying he should have stayed as a traffic warden, where he was universally liked, has unnerved you. It would have unnerved me too, since a universally popular traffic warden is an exceptional creature.

But perhaps it is necessary to give you some advice for the day when you do have to chair your first church council meeting.

1. Consider every agenda issue carefully beforehand and decide what you would like to do. Then, at the meeting, consult widely, listen to every opinion, weigh all the arguments, and then do precisely what you had decided before the meeting ever took place.
2. Never, ever, let council members discuss hymns, which avoids getting blood on the carpets.
3. Arrange the seating in rows, all facing the front, so that everyone must respond directly to you. The last thing you want is for council members to be able to discuss matters freely with one another.
4. Start smoking a pipe. At those times when you are faced with an issue when you really are unsure of how to respond, taking out your pipe, dismantling it, searching for a pipe cleaner, squinting down the stem to see if it is clean, mopping out the goo in the bowl, searching for your tobacco pouch, filling the pipe, tamping it down, asking if you can borrow matches and attempting to light it several times over, will give you more than sufficient time to formulate a reply. Once you have perfected the routine, the silence will have been so protracted, that most of the committee will have long forgotten what the question was anyway.
5. If someone is talking too long, consult your diary, noisily and obsessively, about next month's appointments, or write a note to a committee member who is at the back of the room and get it passed to him. The speaker should soon get the message.

These are the simpler techniques of committee management. The advanced procedures must wait until you are strong enough to bear them.

Your loving uncle, Eustace

Share the Easter Story– with an Egg

Out of the 80 million Easter eggs sold in the UK, The Real Easter Egg is the only one which has a copy of the Easter story in the box, is made of Fairtrade chocolate and which supports charitable projects. There are six types of eggs to choose from. Each Real Easter Egg comes with an Easter story in the box, the stories range from simple guides to 24-page activity book versions. So, buy a 2026 edition Real Easter Egg this spring and encourage others to give one to their loved ones, a school or sponsor a food bank donation.

The 2026 Real Easter Egg will not be available in any supermarkets, but the full range can be ordered at www.realeasteregg.co.uk or by calling 01925 877004.

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

This month we look into the life of a *bon viveur* who was one of the most colourful figures in the English clergy in the 20th century:

Reverend Brian Dominick Frederick Titus Leo Brindley

He was born in 1931, the son of an electrical engineer who successfully ran a small specialist firm in north London that helped to evolve television. After leaving school he underwent National Service in Germany and then went up to Exeter College, Oxford where he became known as a very fine wit. He wrote a mock 17th century masque entitled *Porci Anti Margarita* ("swine before a pearl") which was produced in the open air for an official visit to the university of Princess Margaret in 1954. It caused royal pleasure but Brindley was prevented from attending himself by examinations.

He tried his hand at being a disc jockey and a lawyer before being ordained as an Anglican priest and becoming the Vicar at Holy Trinity church in Reading which was marked for closure. He indulged his interest in historical religious furniture and artefacts by travelling around Europe gathering discarded church ornamentation including Pugin's screen from St Chad's, Birmingham, altars and a door case from St Paul's, Oxford, the magnificent c17 pulpit from All Saints, Oxford, a sarcophagus-shaped altar from Nashdom Abbey, and one of the finest collections of antique vestments in the country, many bought for a song. Every piece of altar plate was gilded. Brindley wanted to make the church look as if it had evolved through time. Nothing was made to look temporary. Holy Trinity could not be too high and the music and ceremonial were carried out with Continental style and racy perfection. It was transformed into a gilded Anglo-Catholic confection of Gothic and baroque.

Brindley reputedly became a "camp" figure in his church and in locality. He is said to have carried the holy sacraments around in his church whilst being fanned by ostrich feathers and became instantly recognisable



by combing his hair in the style of a Georgian periwig and wearing hand-painted red high-heeled shoes under his cassock when doing his supermarket shopping.

In addition to those characteristics he had a passion for food and was an excellent cook. He wrote recipe articles for "The Church Times." And this proved to be his downfall. He was enormously fat and modelled himself on an 18th century monsignor. Few could have had a more symbolically appropriate death.

His Own Last Supper

On 1 August he anticipated his 70th birthday by holding a dinner party in the North Library of the Athenaeum. Present were guests who represented every strand of his life, from boyhood, school and university, his clerical career in the Church of England, his later life as a Roman Catholic layman and journalist, and others on whom he had exercised a profound influence.

In that small, densely furnished, candlelit room, with the low light gleaming in the silver and glass, he died suddenly, after the third of eight epicurean courses, between the 'Drest Crab' and the Boeuf en Daube, having received absolution from a Jesuit priest. Earlier that week he had been warned that if he went ahead with the celebrations he might die. "What a way to go," he replied. Perhaps his only regret was that he did not have the flambeaux lighted outside nor have the opportunity to open his birthday presents.

There was no question of continuing, of course; the only person who might conceivably have carried on eating in these circumstances had himself just died. The Athenaeum later refused to accept any payment for the dinner.

It later emerged that he had seen a chiropodist earlier on that day who took one look at his ulcerated foot and told him that if he did not go to hospital immediately he would lose his toes. 'You could even die at your own dinner,' he said. 'Then so be it,' replied Brian. 'I shall go down in flames.' And so it came to pass.

Sources: Anthony Symondson in *The Independent* 4.8.2001; Damian Thompson in *The Spectator* 11.8.2001; Fergus Butler-Gallie "A Field Guide to the English Clergy."

Another Amazing Technicolour Blanket

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



Come along to Knit & Knatter we meet on the fourth Wednesday each month at 2.30pm in the vestry.

We knit and we knatter. If you would like to learn how to do crochet or knitting one of the regulars will be able to show you how to do it.

Our next meeting will be on Wednesday 25th March.

Cost £1.00 to include refreshments!

One Life

A poem by Penny Candlin

One life to live
One life to make your mark
One life to make a difference
One life to love and to share that love
One life that matters
One life to show kindness
One life to care
One life to share
One life to help others
One life to bring joy into the world
One life to forgive
One life to pray
One life to truly say you are sorry
One life to say thank you
One life to seal your relationship with God.

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 April **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.

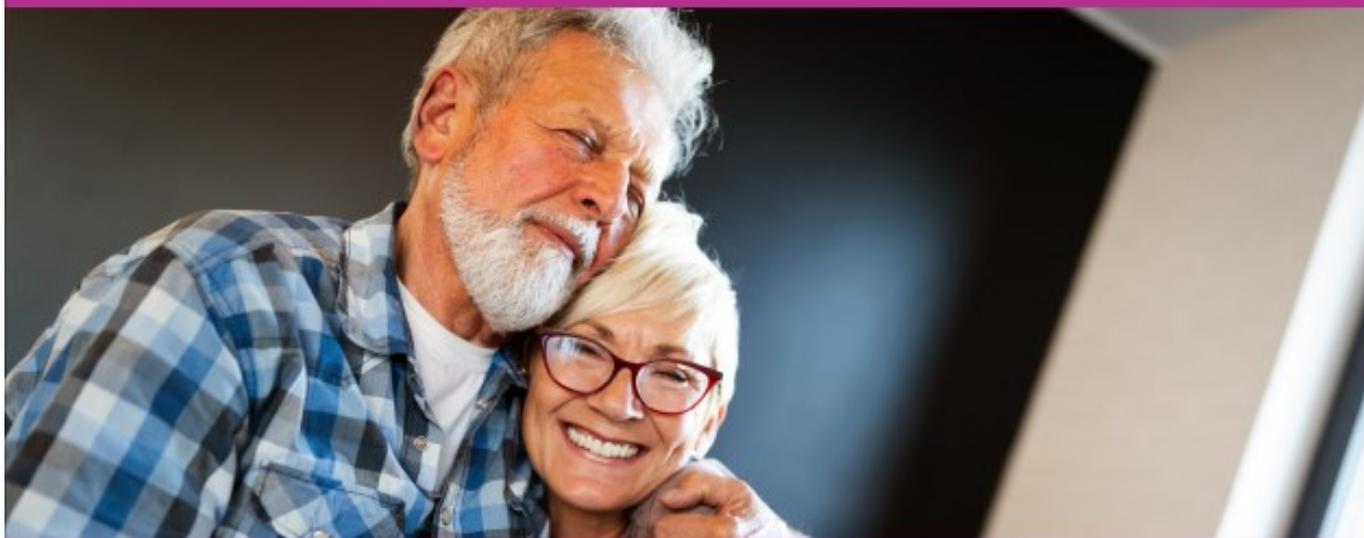
If none of them is available there are two points of contact: Clive Morris and Stuart Baker. They are not trained First Aiders but if they are available they can be contacted and they will contact the

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

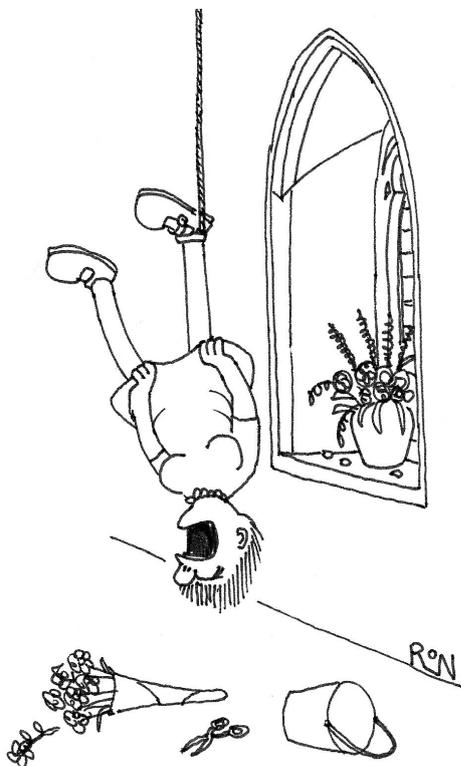
Stuart Baker revisits these ancient stories in search of the morals or truisms which they contained. This month he looks at

The Ant and the Dove

An Ant went to the bank of a river to quench its thirst, and being carried away by the rush of the stream, was on the point of drowning. A Dove sitting on a tree overhanging the water plucked a leaf and let it fall into the stream close to her. The Ant climbed onto it and floated in safety to the bank. Shortly afterwards a birdcatcher came and stood under the tree, and laid his lime-twigs for the Dove, which sat in the branches. The Ant, perceiving his design, stung him in the foot. In pain the birdcatcher threw down the twigs, and the noise made the Dove take wing.



The moral: One good turn deserves another



Mrs Stebbings always did the flowers in the South Window, as Mrs Todger soon learned



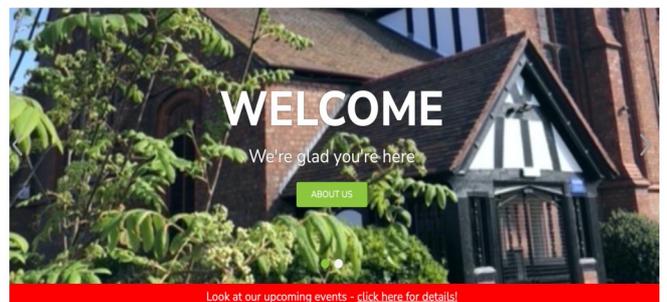
On Saturday 25th April at St James' Church, Lulworth Road the churches in the North Meols Deanery which have a Mothers' Union membership, which includes our church, will celebrate the 150th anniversary of the MU by holding a coffee morning between 10.00am and 12.00.

Judith Foster and Linda Caton invite our congregation at St John's to come to support this event. There will be cakes and refreshments and stalls selling plants, cakes, books, cards and gifts.

Photos from the last 150 years of the MU in Southport will be on display. These will include some from the St John's branch from the last 40 years during which Linda, the current Secretary, has been a member. These include some current members of our church.

If you need transport to get there please contact Judith.

There is a £2.00 entry fee.



Visit our website
stjohnsbirkdale.co.uk

Do you want to rent a space?

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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

Dementia: Can the risk of developing it be reduced?

There is currently no cure for this disease which sadly affects so many people in later life. And there is no lifestyle which can be guaranteed to delay its onset or to diminish the risk of developing it.

However, a number of scientific reports have recently been summarised in the national newspapers and these suggest that there may be some benefit in adopting these choices and strategies:

'Caffeine cuts risk of dementia' (reported in "The Times")

A long-term study carried out by Harvard University has revealed that drinking three cups of tea or coffee a day appears to lower the risk of developing dementia, as caffeine can help to protect the brain.

Researchers looked at data from 131,000 people in the United States, who recorded their intake of caffeinated hot drinks and had their memory and health tracked for four decades.

Having at least two or three cups of coffee per day was linked to an 18 per cent lower risk of dementia, while one to two cups of tea each day cut the risk by 16 per cent, compared with those who had few hot drinks. More tea and coffee than this had "no additional advantages", although it did not do harm.

Scientists believe that caffeine is "neuroprotective"

and may slow the degeneration of brain cells by reducing inflammation and prevent the build-up of toxic proteins linked to dementia.

The research is only observational and therefore cannot prove cause and effect - other factors, such as people who drink coffee being healthier in general, could also explain the results.

Learning a language 'suggests cut dementia risk by 38%' (reported in "The Guardian")

Reading, writing and learning a language or two can lower your risk of dementia by almost 40%, according to a study that suggests millions of people could prevent or delay the condition. US researchers found that engaging in intellectually stimulating activities throughout life, such as reading, writing or learning a new language, was associated with a lower risk of Alzheimer's disease, the most common form of dementia, and slower cognitive decline.

The study author Andrea Zammit, of Rush University Medical Center in Chicago, said the discovery suggested cognitive health in later life was "strongly influenced" by lifelong exposure to intellectually stimulating environments. "Our findings are encouraging, suggesting that consistently engaging in a variety of mentally stimulating activities throughout life may make a difference in cognition.

Brushing teeth up to three times a day could fend off dementia (reported in "The Times")

Taking better care of your teeth and gums can cut the risk of developing more than 50 conditions and diseases including dementia and arthritis, a science conference has been told.

Experts recommended brushing your teeth up to three times a day to maintain oral hygiene and warned that those who did not exacerbated the risk of developing harmful conditions around the body, including in their brains and joints.

One expert claimed that British people had "third world" levels of tooth and gum health because of our sugary, processed diets.

Bacteria from infected gums could spread around the body and may be able to cross the barrier between the blood and the brain, potentially increasing the risk of cognitive decline and dementia, said Alpdogan Kantarci, a professor of dentistry at the University of Minnesota, at a meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) in Phoenix, Arizona.

He said that people should brush at least two, and even three, times a day. The most important was the pre-bedtime brushing, and those who struggled should turn to electric toothbrushes.

They should also make sure to brush their tongues.

W CROSS R D

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

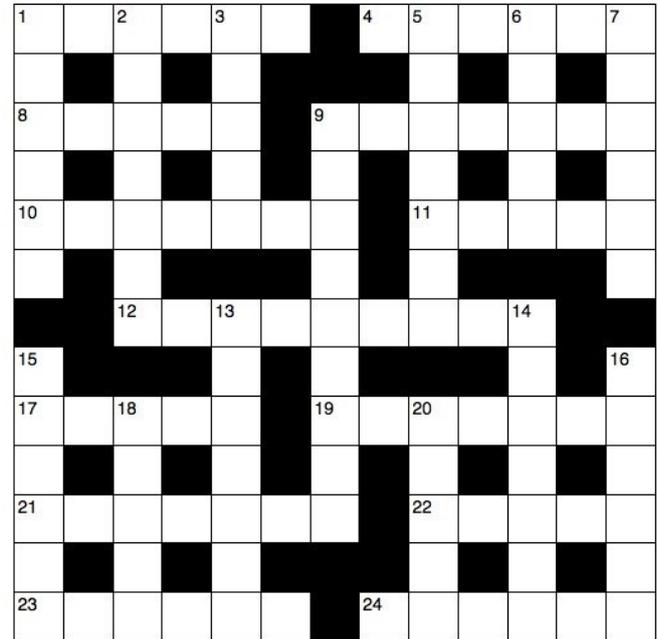
Solution below

Across

- 1 Arouse (Song of Songs 2:7) (6)
- 4 Extinguish (Isaiah 1:31) (6)
- 8 "They — —," you will say, "but I'm not hurt!" (Proverbs 23:35) (3,2)
- 9 Unhappiness (Nehemiah 2:2) (7)
- 10 Jewish (7)
- 11 Dirge (anag.) (5)
- 12 'A truthful witness gives honest — , but a false witness tells lies' (Proverbs 12:17) (9)
- 17 Paul quoted from the second one in his address in the synagogue at Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:33) (5)
- 19 'Do not use your freedom to — the sinful nature' (Galatians 5:13) (7)
- 21 'As you can see, he has done nothing to — death' (Luke 23:15) (7)
- 22 Name applied by Isaiah to Jerusalem (Isaiah 29:1) (5)
- 23 'All the people — — one man, saying, "None of us will go home"' (Judges 20:8) (4,2)
- 24 Lazarus, who was carried by angels to Abraham's side when he died, was one (Luke 16:20) (6)

Down

- 1 Appalled (Job 26:11) (6)
- 2 'In an — to escape from the ship, the sailors let the lifeboat down into the sea' (Acts 27:30) (7)
- 3 Expel (Acts 18:16) (5)
- 5 'But I have a baptism to — , and how distressed I am until it is completed!' (Luke 12:50) (7)



- 6 'Of the increase of his government and peace there will be — — ' (Isaiah 9:7) (2,3)
- 7 Hurry (Psalm 119:60) (6)
- 9 'For I desire mercy, not — , and acknowledgement of God rather than burnt offerings' (Hosea 6:6) (9)
- 13 One of its towns was Sychar, where Jesus met a woman at Jacob's well (John 4:5) (7)
- 14 Shouting (Acts 7:57) (7)
- 15 Arachnid (Isaiah 59:5) (6)
- 16 One of Paul's first converts in Philippi was Lydia, a — in purple cloth (Acts 16:14) (6)
- 18 Donkeys (5)
- 20 Raked (anag.) (5)

In our Book of Remembrance In March

- 3rd Winifred Hare, 2005
- 5th Gladys Whipp, 1994
- 7th John Hamer, 1930
- 8th Elsie Leather, 2011
- 9th Harry Pickering, 1985
- 10th Ethel Street, 1994
- 11th Doreen Pennington, 2023
- 13th Doris Ashworth, 1982
- 14th Isaac Bell, 1974
- 15th John Crosby, 2005

- 18th William Sawyer, 1979
- Arthur Short, 1961
- 25th Elizabeth Pacey, 2007
- 27th Margaret Fitton, 2010
- Joan Fawbert, 2018
- 29th George Hind, 1996
- 30th Dorothea Wignall, 2004
- 31st Margaret Pierce-Jones, 1984

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, Awaken. 4, Quench. 8, Hit me. 9, Sadness. 10, Semitic. 11, Ridge. 12, Testimony. 17, Psalm. 19, Indulge. 21, Deserve. 22, Ariel. 23, Rose as. 24, Beggar.

DOWN: 1, Aghast. 2, Attempt. 3, Eject. 5, Undergo. 6, No end. 7, Hasten. 9, Sacrifice. 13, Samaria. 14, Yelling. 15, Spider. 16, Dealer. 18, Asses. 20, Drake.

GOD IN THE ARTS

The Revd Michael Burgess surveys great works of sacred art.

'He gave us eyes to see them': railings and kneelers

This month we visit St Nicholas' Church, Compton in Surrey. It is a very fine building with an unusual double sanctuary on two floors at the east end.

Our eyes look up to see a gallery and an altar, and then at ground level is another altar surrounded by a glorious Norman arch with Jacobean railings and kneelers. As we enter this church, we realise with T S Eliot in *Little Gidding* that we are here 'to kneel where prayer has been valid.'

With the liturgical reform of the last century, it is customary in many churches to stand to receive Holy Communion. Sitting and standing seem the norms now for worship, in spite of all the beautifully embroidered kneelers that many churches boast. But open the *Book of Common Prayer*, and there is a multitude of rubrics on kneeling, whenever people gather for services. It is a posture that takes us back to

those vivid images of Jesus praying on His knees in St Luke's Gospel, Peter kneeling to pray in Lydda, and the people kneeling on the beach with Paul in Acts 21.

The Psalmist invites us to kneel before the Lord our Maker, and Paul wrote to the Philippians, 'At the name of Jesus every knee should bend.' As we kneel at the Jacobean railings of St Nicholas, Compton or in our own churches, we are heirs to that tradition.

Cranmer in the Prayer Book said that kneeling was a sign of gratitude for benefits received. But it is more than that. Buildings like Compton church bring us to our knees quite naturally as we gaze and wonder at the beauty and majesty of the building. Kneeling is a sign of reverence and adoration of the God who inspired such architecture of old and who feeds us now in the sacraments.



Photo: Colin Smith, St Nicholas, Compton

REFLECTED FAITH– TOGETHERNESS

by Revd. Dr. Jo White

Last month we began our Lenten journey with ashes on Ash Wednesday, reminding us of our beginning and our ending; soon we will conclude that time with Christ's resurrection on Easter Sunday.

Such a relatively short time for so great a distance. I'm reminded of this by the opening words used in Church of England services at the Palm Sunday services:

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, during Lent we have been preparing by works of love and self-sacrifice for the celebration of our Lord's death and resurrection. Today we come together to begin this solemn celebration in union with the Church throughout the world. Christ enters His own city to complete His work as our Saviour, to suffer, to die, and to rise again. Let us go with Him in faith and love, so that, united with Him in His sufferings, we may share His risen life.

It's all about togetherness. Together as a small group of people in that one church where we worship. Together with 'the' Church across all

denominations and throughout the world. Together with Christ Himself.

It's one of the reasons why some process on Palm Sunday. Ideally it will be a joyful and noisy procession with banners and rejoicing – reminding us of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem as much as into our own lives.

It's in this joy wherein lies the contrast with our solemn and silent procession on Good Friday. We need them both. One on its own doesn't tell the full story. Just like a play on Good Friday without its follow-up on Easter Sunday leaves you hanging.

We all know that social media tends to only show happy occasions but that underneath all those meals and holidays and smiling faces there can be great heartaches and sorrows.

It's the togetherness of both of those emotions where the true depth of joy is to be found and not on the surfaces.

How do we greet Christ anew on Resurrection Sunday without the devastating loss of Good Friday, or that long week travelling in and out of the city walls? May you find real joy in togetherness this Eastertide!

Granny Retired– You’ve Got to be Kidding!

The idea that grandmothers retire into an unburdened world of gardening and tea-drinking, golf and knitting is no more than a pleasant fantasy these days.

Instead, nearly 63% of grandparents provide some sort of childcare to their under-16-year-old grandchildren. That amounts to around seven million older people, aged mostly between 55 – 74.

As many as one in three is doing the school run. Nearly one in five is spending more than 10 hours a week giving other childcare. America has a nickname name for them: the ‘granny nannies.’

Granny nannies do it for good reason: to enable their own children to be able to work longer hours. But granny nannies not only care for their grandchildren, they may also be providing comfort for elderly relatives of their own – and hold down a part-time job at the same time.

Perhaps Super-Granny-Nannies is the correct name for them!



THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS

Our series looks at the Seven Deadly Sins, a list compiled by Pope Gregory 1 in AD 590 to describe the nature of sin. This month Canon Paul Hardingham considers

ANGER

‘‘Anger is never without a reason, but seldom with a good one.’ (Benjamin Franklin).

Who or what makes you angry? In the third of our 7 Deadly Sins, we are looking at *anger* (or *wrath*).

It describes uncontrolled feelings of hatred and resentment, and it can lead to resentment and grudges, quarrelling and damaged relationships. Jesus warns us about the consequence of anger: ‘I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment.’ (Matt 5:22).

Jesus Himself got angry, notably when He saw the Temple being exploited by the money changers (Matt 21:12-13).

Such *righteous anger* is a measured response to injustice or evil, motivated by love not vengeance.

However, it is important for us to deal with unrighteous anger in our lives: ‘In your anger do not sin: do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold.’ (Ephesians 4:26,27). What practical steps can we take to do this?

Acknowledge your anger: What are the root causes of our anger? Often it comes from deeper feelings, like fear, inadequacy or the desire to control.

Control your anger: Stepping back before reacting can prevent anger from controlling us: ‘everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry’ (James 1:19,20).

Seek to forgive: Practising forgiveness, not seeking revenge or holding grudges, will enable us to overcome anger: ‘Clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone.’ (Colossians 3:12,13). Christ died to take the wrath of God we deserve, that we might know God’s forgiveness.

‘People who fly into a rage always make a bad landing’ (Will Rogers).

CHURCH NOTICE BOARDS

THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS



WRATH (DIRECTED AT
INVALID ADDITIONS)

WORD SEARCH

Solution on page 24

Love and serve one another

On Maundy Thursday we recall the final command that Jesus gave to his disciples before his death. After the Last Supper, He rose and washed his disciples' feet. This was astonishing for a 'teacher' to do, but He had a firm purpose in mind: "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another." His disciples were to love through service, not domination, of one another. In Latin, the opening phrase of this sentence is 'mandatum novum do vobis'. The word 'mundy' is thus a corruption of the Latin 'mandatum' (or command). The 'washing of the feet' ceremony was an important part of the medieval church's liturgy, symbolising the humility of the clergy, in obedience to the example of Christ.



MAUNDY
THURSDAY
FINAL
COMMAND
JESUS

DISCIPLES
DEATH
LAST
SUPPER
WASHED

FEET
ASTONISHING
PURPOSE
TEACHER
AS

LOVED
YOU
MUST
ONE
ANOTHER
SERVICE

DOMINATION
LATIN
CEREMONY
MEDIEVAL
HUMILITY
OBEDIENCE

An Introduction to Books in the Old Testament: Jeremiah

By Canon Paul Hardingham

Jeremiah is described as 'a true, honest, and God-revealing companion for the worst of times.' (Eugene Peterson). He was a priest from the village of Anathoth, near Jerusalem. His ministry to Judah began in 626 B.C. and continued until after the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C.

Jeremiah brought a message of judgment and hope: 'See, I have set you this day over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out and to pull down, to destroy and to throw down, to build and to plant.' (1:10). During Jeremiah's ministry, Judah had rejected the Lord for idols (2:13). They claimed to be God's people, yet they refused to heed God's word by refusing to be corrected and following false prophets who spoke what the people wanted to hear. Therefore, Jeremiah was the prophet of

judgement. He called Judah to repent, but they refused (6:16-17). However, he also brought a message of hope. He preached that they should trust God (9:23-24) and that a faithful remnant would be restored to the land (23:3; 31:7-9).

Jeremiah was a reluctant prophet, who felt compelled to speak God's word (20:9). His life was characterised by sorrow, 'O my Comforter in sorrow, my heart is faint within me.' (8: 18). His people continually refused to listen to him, rewarding his labour with rejection and persecution.

Much of Jeremiah's message remains relevant today, because we still fall into idolatry, whether it is wealth, talents or social standing. Sin requires repentance and restoration; obedience brings blessings and joy with it. However, Jeremiah also points to Christ, as the one who makes this possible. He showed great compassion for His people and shed tears for them. He suffered their ingratitude, but still forgave them.

the elderberries gardening club

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



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

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



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Birkdale
Southport
Telephone: 565059**

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FOR ALL
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WORD SEARCH solution



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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.

A Bucket of Tadpoles: Springtime, Curiosity, and the Theology of Science

When I was nearly three, I knocked a bucket of tadpoles all over the patio. Those unfortunate creatures must have been collected to educate my brother and I on where frogs came from, but a toddler can't just stand by and watch. Can I see up close? Or maybe I was 'helpfully' moving it to another place. I just remember doing something I shouldn't have done, and tadpoles on the ground. I was sad that I wouldn't get to see those creatures grow up.

I might have been great at destroying things when I was a child (my family would probably say I still am), but I absolutely love watching living things up close. The more I learn, the more my sense of wonder grows. For a tadpole to become a frog, large sections of its gut, salivary glands and muscles must die, as well as the gills. The cells in those tissues are programmed to curl up and disintegrate, and are then swallowed up

by a specialised kind of white blood cell. Legs grow from small sacs of cells on the tadpole's body, and one of my textbooks says that 'The nervous system is also remodelled' – which I suspect is a bit of an understatement.

This knowledge removes a little of the mystery of how a tadpole turns into a frog, but there is plenty more to discover. These few details also reveal the cleverness of the process. Metamorphosis is surprisingly common in the animal kingdom. How is that an efficient way to grow up, or is efficiency not the most important thing for an animal? Scientists are essentially grown-ups who are still very much in touch with their inner two-year-old. They refuse to stop asking questions, even when finding an answer becomes decidedly more awkward than opening a textbook.

Many scientists are people of faith, and this also drives their questioning. They believe that God created a world that was very good, that the purpose of all Creation is to praise Him, that we are made in God's image, and that we are tasked with looking after Creation. So Christians, of all people, should be enjoying and investigating our surroundings. These are the bones of a theology of science which serves some of us very well, and keeps us looking into things like buckets of frogs – that is, until a two-year-old comes and knocks them over.

The Story Behind..

“Rock of Ages, cleft for me”

Many of us will know the names Mrs C F Alexander, Charles Wesley and John Henry Newman who were the authors of many of the hymns which we have known since childhood, but it is a fair bet that not many will be familiar with the name Augustus Toplady. Yet he was the author of a hymn which has frequently been high in the list of favourite hymns: “Rock of Ages.”

Toplady was the son of an Army Major and a doctor's daughter. After his father's death in action Toplady and his mother lived with her brother, the rector of St Paul's in Deptford. Toplady was a precocious child who spent time composing sermons and farces.

He was ordained at the age of 22 and after a couple of years he bought the patronage of a benefice in Devon, which was illegal. Not long after he moved away from it the vicarage burnt down which he declared to be an act of God.

He and John Wesley engaged in vitriolic quarrels (which may have been contributed to by Toplady's tuberculosis from which he died at the age of only 37) about criticisms of the Church of England.

“Rock of Ages” first appeared in 1776 and is said to have been written on a playing card which Toplady found at his feet when he was sheltering from a thunderstorm in a cave in Somerset. The story (first told in 1898) goes that a bird also sought refuge in the same cave and that the rock of ages was their shelter. There is no evidence to support this charming story. It is more likely that the “Rock” was a figurative reference to the strength, solidity, power, majesty and permanence of God who is referred to in the Old Testament more than twenty times as a rock.

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 Canute (or Cnut)

1016 to 1035

Undisputed King of England and King of Norway, Denmark and part of Sweden.

In my school days we learned about the Legend of King Canute and how he was said to have ordered the tide not to come in when some of his flattering courtiers told him that he had the power to do so. Maybe it was just a lesson to them that nobody had power over nature. So who is this Viking King who came to rule England?

Canute, was born about 985/95, the son of Sweyn Forkbeard, King of Denmark, who was described as a fierce very tall Viking warrior, being a strong man with fair complexion with a crooked nose and noted for his very keen sight. He joined his father who took advantage of King Ethelred the Unready of England's ineptitude to begin the conquest of England. This conquest was later completed by Canute. The English Ethelred, took refuge in Normandy and in 1016 returned to England, causing Canute flee to

Denmark where he raised an army and returned to conquer most of England except London, which he besieged.

Ethelred died and the people of London chose his son Edmond (Ironsides) to be king, but the Witan selected Canute resulting in war. Edmund won the battle of Pen and the battle of Shenstone which was indecisive, but it drove Canute from London. Canute went on to win the later battle of Asandun. This resulted in a treaty which led to partition: Canute North and Edmund South.



*nobody has
power over
nature*

Edmond died a month later and Canute claimed the throne of England, Denmark, Norway and part of Sweden. To strengthen his claim he married Emma, the widow of Ethelred, who was the daughter of King Richard the 1st of Normandy. This led to warfare because he was already married to Elgiver whom he now repudiated on marrying Emma. He converted to Christianity, the first Viking King to do so, and he became an avid protector of the Church.

He divided England into 4 administrative areas, Wessex, East Anglia, Mercia and Northumbria. He allowed the English laws and customs to be kept and was one of the last Vikings to receive the payment of Danegelt. Because he spent so much time in ruling his other Kingdoms he established both Anglo Saxon and Norse leaders to govern in his absence. It is claimed he was the most effective King of the Anglo-Saxon era. He fought the Scots and they accepted him as overlord. He died at the age of 40 The cause of death was unknown but it was thought to have been from natural causes.

Information from Encyclopaedia of Military History by RW &TN Dupay. And various websites.

Earth Hour 2026—A Time to Turn Off Your Lights

The Earth Hour 2026 takes place on Saturday 28th March, when at 8.30pm in their local time millions of people worldwide will turn off their non-essential lights for one hour.

Organised by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), the 20th anniversary of this global initiative will aim to raise awareness of the earth's climate crisis, and to encourage environmental action through sustainable,

actionable lifestyle changes.

The first Earth Hour was held in Sydney, Australia, on 31st March 2007, and has since become a global movement. The 2025/26 theme, 'Giving an Hour for Earth,' encourages people to adapt sustainable habits in their daily lives.

And while our lights are off for an hour, Earth Hour will encourage us to spend the time in nature, or stargazing, or engaging in environmental, educational, or sustainable activities.

More info at: <https://www.earthhour.org>



by John M.
Shakespeare

I am no scientist. If anything, I lean more towards the arts. There is little doubt however that our lives have been transformed by science. Cures have been found against devastating diseases and, though they have not necessarily been eradicated, at least they have been combated. Transport inventions have opened up the world, including space! All the above and much more can be credited to advances in science.

Thomas S. Kahn (1922-1996), an American philosopher of science, was a believer in the progress of science as appreciated through novel ideas, being followed through with free thinking agendas when considering the work. He maintained that scientific evidence did not in itself prove theories, since more than one conclusion may be arrived at from a random collection of data.

Yes, science matters. Whether it is biology, chemistry, physics or astronomy, it has its effect in countless ways, and through various fields of advancement that may affect our everyday lives. But as with all things, there are dangers in what has become referred to as pseudo-sciences. Some of these forms of science, such as Spiritualism or Astrology can be both dangerous and misleading to those individuals that are taken in by them.

Science is often pitted against the Bible, but everything depends on what we mean by science. Science is based on careful observation and precise descriptions of natural events and phenomena. Scientific conclusions are based solely on reasoning from factual evidence. Some people have tried to use science against the Bible, saying that science refutes faith. But this is far from the truth! A number of discovered scientific facts certainly support the Bible's authenticity e.g. 1,500 years before Christ, many people believed that the Earth sat on a large animal or giant. However, before science discovered the truth in 1650, the Bible had already spoken of the Earth free floating in space. To quote Job (26:7), "He stretches out the north over empty space: He hangs the Earth upon nothing".

Alexander Pope (1688-1744), a philosophical poet, demonstrated in his works such as "An Essay on Man" a prevailing interest in man's place in the universe, and of his relationship with God. To quote a couplet of his, 'Nature's and Nurture's laws hid in the night. God said, "Let Newton be" and all was light'. His view intended as an epitaph to Isaac Newton, reflected the idea of an ordered and structured universe. Pope asserted that God intended that man should be a rational responsible being, and as too often he was not, he took on the duty of showing man the error of his ways.

We all know that just by taking a blood sample, a doctor can evaluate the health issues and condition of a person, and the discovery of healing through blood transfusions was a game changer. A blood transfusion replenishes lost blood. But long before science discovered about this biological truth, the Bible had already spoken of it. To quote Leviticus (17:11), "For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement"

It was the Greek Philosophers who first concluded that the Earth was round. Eratosthenes, Aristotle and Pythagoras all wrote about this theory as early as 500 BC. However, many years earlier, the Bible had already commented about this truth, because the Book of Isaiah was written between 740 and 680 BC. To quote Isaiah (40:22), "It is He who sits above the circle of the Earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers, who stretch out the heavens like a curtain, and spread them out like a tent to dwell in".

Before medical science found out about the importance of isolating a person with an infectious disease, God taught His people about this in the Bible. In the 14C, 70 million lives were taken by the plague, because they failed to separate the sick from the healthy. It was not until the 17C that the laws of quarantine were instigated. However, before modern medicine God instructed his people to do this with their sick. To quote Leviticus again (13:46), "As long as he has the infection, he remains unclean. He must live alone in a place outside the camp".

I finish this article with a few pithy thoughts that I have picked up from others. Science belongs to no specific race or country, it is universal to humanity; nothing is too wonderful not to be true. For if we end up, not believing, then in my opinion we might as well finish living, therefore have Faith in what is to come!

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One of my churchwardens is a stickler for 'Health and Safety'...



My sermon today comes from
Apps Chapter 1 beginning at verse 2...

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 14th March 2026, 7:30pm
Christ Church, Southport, Lord Street, PR8 1AA

Humperdinck - Hansel and Gretel Overture
Rachmaninov - Piano Concerto No2 with soloist Tom Kimmance
Dvořák - Symphony No5 in F Major

Tickets available now at southportorchestra.co.uk
email admin@southportorchestra.co.uk, call 07795 662245 or buy on the door
Adults £12 | Under 18s £6

Sports Events for Southport Churches

Calling all Southport Christian Churches looking to engage with people through Sport

13th April 2026
£15 per person



Driving range & Putting Competition
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Buy your own drink but buffet provided
6pm @ Formby Driving Range

11th May 2026
£5 a table

Sports Quiz

Hosted by Christians in Sport
short talk on Christian faith
7pm @ Christ Church, Lord Street



Faith & Football

Hot Buffet with after dinner speaker
Bill Bygroves, LFC Chaplain
7pm @ Southport FC, Haigh Ave

10th June 2026
£25 per person

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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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Heart Beats! - 12 Weeks to a Stronger Heart

Selected Mondays until 1st June (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.



The poster features the title 'Heart-Beats' in a purple, cursive font, with a green heart rate line graphic underneath. Below the title is the subtitle '12 weeks to a stronger heart'. A central photograph shows a group of older adults sitting around a table, using colorful drumsticks to play large, colorful drums. The text 'FULLY FUNDED' appears in purple boxes on either side of the photo. Below the photo is a red heart icon with a white heart rate line. The main text describes the project as a fun, interactive project demonstrating how movement, food, and lifestyle can work together to improve heart health. It includes details about the first session on Monday 16th February from 10.00 am to 11.30 am, limited spaces available, and the venue at Ainsdale Lunch and Leisure, Ainsdale Methodist Church, Liverpool Road, Southport PR8 3NQ. At the bottom, it states the project is fully funded by Living Well Sefton.

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 **Living Well Sefton**

REVELATION REVEALED



The vision from God as imagined by Jacqui Parkinson

Last month we looked at John's vision of the Son of Man who told John to write to the Christian communities (the 'churches') in what we now refer to as Asia Minor (modern day Turkey). They were in Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea. As is illustrated on the map, below, starting from where John lived on the

island of Patmos and arriving first at Ephesus the seven churches were in a roughly circular route, so it is not hard to understand why the letters were to be delivered in that order.

Inspired by the vision of Jesus, John wrote to each of these Christian communities with a message for each one. Each message was different.

This is the letter to Ephesus: **"I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked people, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false. You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary. Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first. Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place. But you have this in your favour: You hate the practices of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God."**

Ephesus was a thriving city which claimed for itself the title "the first and greatest metropolis of Asia." Many roads converged in it and it was a seaport and the gateway to Asia. It was very wealthy and a free city within the Roman empire, and it was the centre of worship of the Roman goddess Artemis. But it

was also a notorious centre of pagan superstition and had a cosmopolitan population. As William Barclay wrote: "such was Ephesus; a more unpromising soil for sowing the seeds of Christianity can scarcely be imagined; and yet it was there that Christianity had some of its greatest triumphs." Archbishop Richard Trench wrote: "Nowhere did the word of God find a kindlier soil, strike root more deeply or bear fairer fruits of faith and love."

The letter to the Christians at Ephesus started by recognising and praising them for the work that they were doing in living by Christian values and by resisting the challenges created by wicked people and false apostles (wolves in sheep's clothing). There were evil men of many kinds. Some were Jewish emissaries who sought to entangle Christians again in the Law. Some tried to turn their freedoms into licentiousness. Professional beggars preyed upon Christian congregations.

The church at Ephesus had faithfully weeded out evil and misguided people but, as the letter continues, something had become lost in the process: "you have forsaken the love you had at first." This could have meant that their initial enthusiasm had worn off or that their love for their Christian brotherhood had diminished. The letter continued partly as a rebuke and partly as an encouragement. It commanded the congregations to reflect on how far they had drifted from their original ideals and

to repent. They were congratulated for their antipathy to the Nicolaitans, heretics who, according the 2nd century AD Greek Bishop Irenaeus, "lived lives of unrestrained indulgence."

This letter, to the foremost of the seven churches, exhorted the Christians in Ephesus to return to the strength and love of their original fellowship with the promise of the greatest reward: entry into the paradise of God.

Stuart Baker

Sources include William Barclay "The Daily Study Bible" The Revelation of John



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 (#)

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

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

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Meeting Identification Number: 835 5074 3780.

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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 25th March 1946, London's Heathrow Airport first opened as London Airport. It was renamed Heathrow Airport in 1966.

75 years ago, on 15th March 1951, **Dennis the Menace** first appeared in the British children's comic, *The Beano*.

70 years ago, on 23rd March 1956, Pakistan became the world's first Islamic Republic.

65 years ago, on 6th March 1961, George Formby, the 'Ukulele King,' comedian, singer and actor died. Known for his comic songs.

Also 65 years ago, on 8th March 1961, Sir Thomas Beecham, British conductor and impresario, died. He had founded several major orchestras and transformed the operative and orchestral scene in Britain.

40 years ago, on 3rd March 1986, Queen Elizabeth II signed the Australia Act, severing Australia's remaining legal ties with Britain and granting it full independence.

30 years ago, on 13th March 1996, the Dunblane Massacre took place in Scotland. Thomas Hamilton, a former Scout leader, entered Dunblane Primary School, shot dead 16 children and a teacher, wounded 15 more, and then committed suicide. As a result, the private ownership of handguns was banned in the UK.

25 years ago, on 26th March 2001, the UK Post Office was rebranded as Consignia, at a cost of around £2million. The name was so unpopular that the following year it was renamed The Royal Mail Group.

20 years ago, on 1st March 2006, the Senedd – the National Assembly for Wales's debating chamber – was officially opened by Queen Elizabeth II in Cardiff.

Also 20 years ago, on 21st March 2006, Twitter, the online social networking/micro-blogging service, was founded. Its website went live on 15th July that year.

15 years ago, on 11th March 2011, the Fukushima nuclear disaster occurred. The largest earthquake in Japan's history struck off the country's eastern coast, triggering a 46ft high tsunami destroying the seawall defences around the Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant. This led to a nuclear meltdown in three of the plant's reactors.

10 years ago, on 31st March 2016, **Ronnie Corbett**, Scottish films and tv comedian, actor, screenwriter and broadcaster (*The Two Ronnies*) died.



Church Hall Users

Wednesday

10.30 – 12 noon 2nd Wednesday of the month only. **Elderberries Gardening Club**

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

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

elderberriesgardening@gmail.com

Thursday

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

Contact: ageingwellmerseyside@outlook.com.

6.00-9.00pm:

St John's Rainbows (6.00-7.00pm)

St John's Brownies (6.00-7.15pm)

and Girl Guides (7.15-9.00pm).

Contact: Janette Law 01704 565951

Friday

1.00pm-2.30pm **Jolly Tots for tots, babies and 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 for March 2026

(based on Jn3:21, Jn 14:6, Jn 8:12, Jn 16:33, Heb 13:5)

Lord,

In these weeks leading up to Easter, many of us spend time reflecting on what Jesus has done for us and how he can help us live our lives.

But we live in a harsh, confusing world, where traditional values are upended and we can hardly believe some of the things we hear from powerful world leaders. Truth seems to be lost in the darkness.

Lord, your word tells us that, **whoever lives by the truth comes into the light.**

Jesus says He is **the Truth**. He also says He is the **Light of the world**. Help us to hold fast to these facts. Help us to remember that Jesus said that in this world we will have trouble – so we shouldn't be surprised – but that He has overcome the world – so we should be encouraged.

Whatever is going on in the troubled world around us – we can live by the real Truth – and in the real Light – Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour, who will never leave us or forsake us.

Thank you so much.

In Jesus name. Amen. *by Daphne Kitching*

The mystery of suffering

Why is there suffering, who can know
When all is well and free from strife?
Job also thought upon these things
Then tragedy struck, upturning his life.
A curtain in heaven was drawn aside,
A spiritual battle was all around
Bringing death, destruction, sickness and woe
As Satan attempted to bring Job down.
Job's friends arrived to sit and pray,
To fathom out the reason why,
But all their wisdom came to nought,
Even his wife said: 'curse God and die'.
Unseen forces inhabit our world,
But God is faithful, His word is true,
Hold fast to God, He never fails
For God in Christ will see us through.

By Megan Carter

£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 Emily Potts on 4th March
 Denise Davey on 5th march
 Doreen Morris on 13th March
 Mary Ball on 18th March
 Irene Wray on 22nd March
 Richard Rothwell on 26th March



To Ian and Janet Bennett on 23rd March

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

The Last Laughs

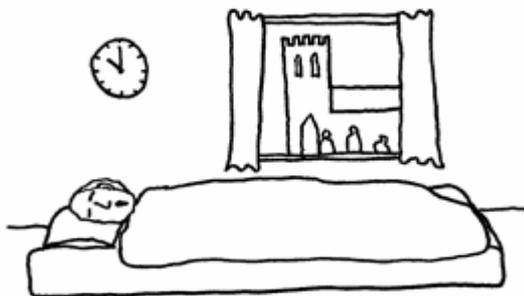
LENT



LENT IS A TIME FOR QUIET REFLECTION AND CONTEMPLATION



IT IS A SEASON OF ABSTINENCE AND FASTING



SOME CHRISTIANS GIVE SOMETHING UP DURING LENT



OTHERS CHOOSE TO CARRY OUT ACTS OF PENANCE

CartoonChurch.com

How many words does it take?

Pythagorean Theorem – 24 words
 Lord's Prayer – 66 words
 Archimedes' Principle – 67 words
 Ten Commandments – 179 words
 Shakespeare's 'To be, or not to be' soliloquy – 260 words

Churchill's speech 'We Shall Fight on the Beaches' - 308 words
 US Constitution with all 27 Amendments – 7,818 words
 EU regulations on the sale of **cabbages – 26,911 words**
 Puts things into perspective, doesn't it?



Keep Moving Club

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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