
THE WORD

MAGAZINE OF ST JOHN'S BIRKDALE

GOD CENTRED, RELATIONSHIP DRIVEN AND LIFE TRANSFORMING

APRIL 2026 ISSUE 280

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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

HOLY WEEK

SERVICES & ACTIVITIES

Palm Sunday 29 March

8.30 AM Holy Communion • 10.30 AM Praise & Prayer

Tuesday 31 March

2 - 4 PM Messy Easter

Wednesday 1 April

10:30 AM Holy Communion followed by brunch

Maundy Thursday 2 April

7.30 PM Holy Communion & Stripping of the Altar

Good Friday 3 April

2 PM Hour at the Cross

6.30 PM Fish Supper & Film

Holy Saturday 4 April

1.30 PM 4POINTS Outreach - Birkdale Village

7.30 PM Sunset Service on the Beach

Easter Sunday 5 April

8.30 AM Holy Communion • 10:30AM Baptisms & Holy Communion

12.30 PM Easter Egg Hunt



Easter Sunday 5th APRIL

**St John's Church
Birkdale
PR8 4RA**



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)
Gift Aid Secretary:	Mrs. Sylvia Kent (564071)	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)	Vergers:	Anthony Guy
Lead Safeguarding Officer & Recruiter	Stuart Baker (560518)	Eco Champions:	Mrs. Elizabeth Rothwell and Duncan Rothwell (564192)
Transport Officer:	Mrs. Jean Morris (564206)	Leadership Team:	Rev. Jennie Hardy Rev. Roy Doran Mrs. Christine Baker Clive Morris
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MESSAGE FROM THE VICAR:

Easter greetings Word Readers!
He is risen, Hallelujah!
As we enter spring, Holy Week and our Easter Sunday service which will include around 6 people being baptised or renewing their baptismal vows to reaffirm their commitment to Christ, I am reminded that God is making all things new! (Rev 21:5) So, in this edition I would like to write to you about the new life offered to us in Christ.

In John 3:5 Jesus answers Nicodemus, saying, "Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit."

Baptism was a Jewish religious ritual before followers of Jesus adopted the custom. In Judaism the mikveh full immersion pool was used in the ritual of purification which also signified repentance and admission into the community of Messiah.

Nicodemus was a Pharisee and knew the law well. Jesus was surprised that he was not aware of the significance of Jesus' words about being 'born again' in John 3. He was referring to repentance and to new life in the community of the Messiah, who was standing before him.

There are many ways we show our commitment to Christ, whether you enter the waters of full immersion baptism as an adult or affirm your baptism vows through confirmation which is common in the Church of England,



Rev'd Jennie Hardy

'We are called to newness of life in Christ, not just at Easter but at all times'

We all share the story of new life within the community of believers as Christians, followers of Christ.

Throughout the scriptures from the book of Genesis to the Book of Revelation God is always doing new and exciting things. This did not end with the completion of the scriptures, God is working in new and exciting ways through His spirit in His church in and through the people who follow Christ. Those renewing their vows or being baptised on Easter Sunday are declaring their commitment to Christ and the church as they enter new seasons of their lives and faith journeys.

But God's commitment to us and His church has never halted, veered or changed. As we enter this new season together, I wonder, in what ways might God be doing new things in your life and in the life of our church.

In our Godspeed cycle class at the moment we sprint to a song called Waymaker. The sprint ends while saying, 'He never stops working.' I like to say, 'God is going to carry on working now, but we can have a break'.

The journey of faith is marked by ups and downs, mountain tops and valleys, but no matter where we are or what is happening in our own lives and corporately in the life of our church, we can be assured that God is at work.

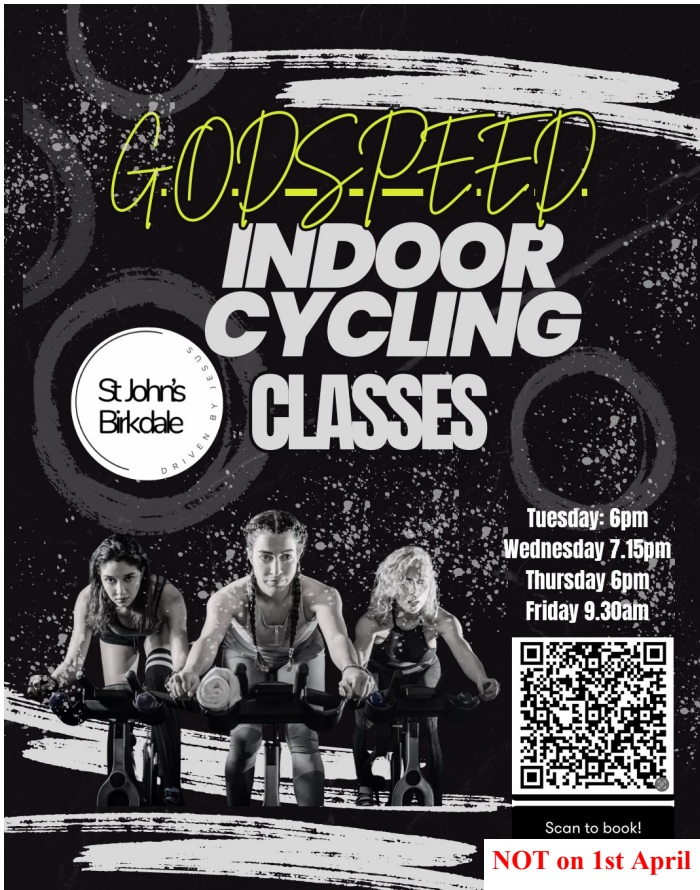
He provides, he brings the right people at the right time, He provides resources, encouragement and hope along the way.

We are called to newness of life in Christ, not just at Easter or in spring or during mountain top moments such as baptisms, but at all times, whether we recognise or feel it or not, God is at work bringing His plans and purposes to fruition for the good of those who love Him (Romans 8:28).

So, whether you are celebrating now or struggling, know that God is with you and is working for your good. Trust in Him through every season, He will not let you down. He is faithful.
Love, Jennie xx

On Easter Sunday there will be Holy Baptisms in our main service at 10.30am. These will be by Full Immersion in a temporary pool in the area in front of the St Nicolas Chapel. If our readers are able to attend please come and welcome those who will be baptised into the family of Christ.

WHAT'S ON AT ST. JOHN'S



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

St John's Birkdale

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

Scan to book!

NOT on 1st April



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

2026 PROGRAMME

16TH JANUARY
20TH FEBRUARY
27TH MARCH
17TH APRIL
29TH MAY
26TH JUNE
24TH JULY

FILM TITLES ARE DISPLAYED ON THE CHURCH NOTICE BOARDS

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



St John's Birkdale

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

Growth

DISCIPLESHIP
EXPLORED

@ Stuart & Christines
food. fellowship. fun.

info@stjohnsbirkdale.co.uk

"The trouble with quotes on the Internet is that you can never be sure they are genuine." – Winston Churchill.

WHAT'S COMING TO ST. JOHN'S

St. John's Birkdale

EVENT SCHEDULE 2026

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

Godspeed

1ST YEAR PARTY

@ MeCycle
Station Road
Ainsdale
Sat 25th April
6.30pm

Fizz on arrival, food,
bangin' Godspeed Playlist!

Scan to book!
Tickets £10

GODSPEED COCKTAIL MENU!

St. John's Birkdale

Messy Church

FOR FAMILIES

FOOD - CRAFTS - SINGING - DANCING

TUESDAY 7th APRIL

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

April 16th.

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 COMING TO ST. JOHN'S ON GOOD FRIDAY

St. John's Birkdale

JOIN US FOR OUR FILM NIGHT AS WE REFLECT ON THE

The Temptation of Christ

GOOD FRIDAY 3RD APRIL
6.30pm

Fish Supper & Cake included
Tickets £15

info@stjohnsbirkdale.co.uk

WHAT'S COMING TO ST. JOHN'S ON EASTER SUNDAY

St. John's Birkdale

EASTER DAY CELEBRATION

EASTER EGG HUNT

FUN, GAMES & HUNT

SUNDAY 5TH APRIL 2025

SERVICE 10.30
HUNT BEGINS 12:30PM

FREE

Join us for both or either - all welcome!

info@stjohnsbirkdale.co.uk stjohnsbirkdale.co.uk

EASTER

THE MOST JOYFUL DAY OF THE YEAR

Easter is the most joyful day of the year for Christians. Christ has died for our sins. We are forgiven. Christ has risen! We are redeemed! We can look forward to an eternity in His joy! Hallelujah! The Good News of Jesus Christ is a message so simple that you can explain it to someone in a few minutes. It is so profound that for the rest of their lives they will still be 'growing' in their Christian walk with God.

Why does the date move around so much? Because the date of Passover moves around, and according to the biblical account, Easter is tied to the Passover. Passover celebrates the Israelites' exodus from Egypt, and it lasts for seven days, from the middle of the Hebrew month of Nisan, which equates to late March or early April.

Why the name, 'Easter'? In almost every European language, the festival's name comes from 'Pesach', the Hebrew word for Passover. The Germanic word 'Easter', however, seems to come from *Eostre*, a Saxon fertility goddess mentioned by the Venerable Bede. He thought that the Saxons worshipped her in 'Eostur month,' but may have confused her with the classical dawn goddesses like *Eos* and *Aurora*, whose names mean 'shining in the east'. So, Easter might have meant simply 'beginning month' – a good time for starting up again after a long winter.

Finally, why Easter eggs? On one hand, they are an ancient symbol of birth in most European cultures. On the other hand, hens start laying regularly again each Spring. Since eggs were forbidden during Lent, it's easy to see how decorating and eating them became a practical way to celebrate Easter.

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 1st & 15th April**.

On 1st April the service will be followed by Brunch.

On 15th April 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

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

revroydoran@btinternet.com

St John's Birkdale
DRIVEN BY JESUS

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 APRIL

**MIDWEEK TRADITIONAL
COMMUNION SERVICE**
Followed by Brunch in the
small hall



WEDNESDAY 1st APRIL
10.30am
IN CHURCH

Worship on Easter Day



SUNDAY 5th APRIL

08.30: Traditional Holy Communion
**10.30am Holy Communion in church and via zoom
and phone.**
Holy Baptisms with full immersion

Collect for Easter Day

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

The subject of Jennie's talks:

Jesus is Risen!

The Text: Matthew 28: 1-10 NIV

1 After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. **2** There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. **3** His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. **4** The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men. **5** The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who

was crucified. **6** He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay.

7 Then go quickly and tell his disciples: 'He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.' Now I have told you." **8** So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. **9** Suddenly Jesus met them. "Greetings," he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. **10** Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me."

Worship on the Second Sunday of Easter

SUNDAY 12th APRIL

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

Collect for the Second Sunday of Easter

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

The subject of Christine's talks:

Lower Your Nets

The Text: Luke 5: 1-11 NIV

1 One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret, the people were crowding around him and listening to the word of God. **2** He saw at the water's edge two boats, left there by the fishermen, who were washing their nets. **3** He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat. **4** When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch." **5** Simon answered, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you

say so, I will let down the nets." **6** When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. **7** So they signalled their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink. **8** When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!" **9** For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken, **10** and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon's partners. Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will fish for people." **11** So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.

CHURCH SERVICES IN APRIL

MIDWEEK TRADITIONAL COMMUNION SERVICE

Tea, coffee and biscuits will be served after the service



WEDNESDAY 15TH APRIL
10.30am
IN CHURCH

Worship on the Third Sunday of Easter

SUNDAY 19th APRIL

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 Easter

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

The subject of Roy's talks:

The Power of Yes!

The Text: Acts 9: 10-19 NIV

10 In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, "Ananias!" "Yes, Lord," he answered. 11 The Lord told him, "Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. 12 In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight." 13 "Lord," Ananias answered, "I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your holy people in Jerusalem. 14 And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your

name." 15 But the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel. 16 I will show him how much he must suffer for my name." 17 Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord—Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here—has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit." 18 Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized, 19 and after taking some food, he regained his strength. Saul spent several days with the disciples in Damascus.

Worship on the Fourth Sunday of Easter

SUNDAY 26th APRIL

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

Collect for the Fourth Sunday of Easter

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

The subject of Jennie's talks:

Walking in the Dark

The Text: Isaiah 9: 1-7 NIV

1 Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honour Galilee of the nations, by the Way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan— 2 The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned. 3 You have enlarged the nation and increased their joy; they rejoice before you as people rejoice at the harvest, as warriors rejoice when dividing the plunder. 4 For as in the day of Midian's defeat, you have shattered the yoke that burdens them, the bar across their

shoulders, the rod of their oppressor. 5 Every warrior's boot used in battle and every garment rolled in blood will be destined for burning, will be fuel for the fire. 6 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 7 Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.

THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

More than 2000 people were in Canterbury Cathedral on 25th March to attend the installation of the Most Revd Sarah Mullally as the 106th Archbishop of Canterbury. The service, the Feast of the Annunciation, was attended by the Prince and Princess of Wales, the Prime Minister, and the Leader of the Opposition, as well as Anglican clergy from across the Church of England and Anglican Communion. Other guests included the Archbishop's family and friends, faith leaders, charities, health-care workers (representing Archbishop Mullally's nursing background), and schoolchildren. The new Archbishop was greeted at the great west door by pupils from the John Wallis Academy, Ashford, at the beginning of the service.

Archbishop Mullally is the first woman to hold the office of Archbishop of Canterbury in its 1400-year history. Although she became Archbishop of Canterbury in January her installation marked the start of her public ministry, and provides the opportunity to deliver her inaugural sermon as Archbishop of Canterbury.



The service was intended to reflect the diversity of the Church of England and the Anglican Communion. At least 32 provinces of the Anglican Communion were represented.

The service included choral music led by the Cathedral Choir, and music from around the Communion, such as a Kyrie sung in Urdu. There were readings and prayers in five other languages besides English. No one from the churches of Rwanda, Uganda or Nigeria, whose leaders oppose women bishops, attended.

The hymns — including “Tell out, my soul” and “Praise, my soul, the King of heaven” — were personally chosen by Archbishop Mullally. The contribution of women musicians and writers was reflected in the anthem “All Shall Be Well” by the British composer Joanna Marsh, which set texts by Mother Julian of Norwich.

Archbishop Mullally said: “Our world today needs the love, healing, and hope that we find in Jesus Christ. I continue to pray that we renew our confidence in this good news, and recommit ourselves to sharing the joy of the gospel.”

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT BIRKDALE COMMUNITY LIBRARY?

Local information published in Birkdale BUZZ

Groups that meet at the Library on a regular basis include: Rhyme Time, Story Time, Shared Reading, Knit & Natter, Lego Club, Computer Club, and Junior Chess Club, most of which are free to join. They also host drop-in sessions for you to meet local councillors and Merseyside police officers.

The library charity organises fundraising events every few weeks with all profits helping to support their activities, including a music evening in April and regular quiz nights and special events around Birkdale during the year such as an Easter Open Morning on Saturday 4th April (books, cakes and children's knits for sale). See the information board, just inside the library, displaying posters of what is happening in the library and elsewhere in the area, eg U3a meetings, singing groups, talks, walking groups, etc.

READERS AT HOME

The Library runs a Books at Home visiting service for local residents who are unable to get to a library and would like to borrow from an extensive range of books. The service is free and working well. At the moment, six volunteers visit around 70 readers, some at home but most in residential care homes. Volunteers find out what type of books are of interest and provide a selection from which to choose. The readers like a mixture of large print and regular print. One client is an avid reader and, so far, has borrowed well over 300 books. Some readers are asking for audio books too as their eyesight starts to fail and the Library is planning to lend CD players for listeners in the near future.

If you are living on your own, or know someone living on their own or in a care home who would like to receive a visit from a Library volunteer please send an email to: homevisit@thestationmastershouse.co.uk or call the library on 01704 566992.



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 THE PERILS OF SMALL STUDY GROUPS

The Rectory,
St James the Least of All

My dear Nephew Darren,

So, you are about to run an Alpha course in your parish; I am sure your bishop will be delighted. I remember him from my Oxford days. He was just starting his course as a gangly undergraduate when I was finishing my doctorate on Eusebius.

I recall him as a keen rugby player who took early morning dips in the Isis, who led intense discussions on Saint Paul's theology of 'the body' over cups of cocoa in the evenings in his rooms and who spent his holidays laying paths for the National Trust in the Lake District while lodging in Youth Hostels. He's exactly the sort of person who will empathise with your ministry – hearty, enthusiastic and overflowing with compassionate intensity. We were not close friends.

We tend not to go in for those sort of things, here at St James the Least of All, preferring matters a little more relaxed and understated. If we ever do hold discussion groups (and they are a regrettable necessity during Lent), they always start with a good lunch, finishing with coffee and one of Mrs French's excellent Madeira cakes. Once we have removed from the table, those who manage to stay awake will start to tackle the chosen topic.

However, we always seem to veer off to discussing more interesting matters, such as why Colonel Chorley is never allowed to sing solos in the choir anymore, or who moved Mrs Cholmondeley's flower arrangement from the font the previous week. Apparently, she has given notice that her weekly contributions on the plate will be much reduced unless an appropriate apology is received.

These matters may not seem as important to you as deciding what the 'white stone' in Revelation 4 is all about, but let me assure you that to members of our congregation, knowing why the second verse of the National Anthem is no longer sung at our Remembrance Services is of pivotal importance.

At 2.30pm we wake up those who have enjoyed an hour's slumber and totter off home, knowing we have once again done our bit for faith in the parish.

I am sure your own group will also return home after your sessions – even if a digestive biscuit and weak tea is all that has been offered – invigorated and braced to tackle the heathen in the parish. We all take our pleasures in different ways.

Your loving uncle, Eustace

Peaceful Mind in Eastertide

This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. – 1 John 4:9

You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us – Romans 5:6-8
But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of His Spirit who lives in you. – Romans 8:10,11

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).

MEN'S GROUP VISIT TO LIVERPOOL CATHEDRAL

It has been a long time since St John's had a Men's Group, but on Monday 9th March nine of us, and a friend from St James', went into Liverpool to enjoy the choral evensong at the Cathedral.



The service was held in the Presbytery. A choir of young schoolboys was conducted by the cathedral's deputy organist Ian Wells.

We combined the outing with a visit to the Roscoe Head tavern, in the interests of refreshing ourselves and extending our knowledge of Liverpool's rich history. The premises were opened as long ago as 1830 and were named after William Roscoe (1753–1831), a prominent Liverpool historian, poet, lawyer, and MP who was a leading campaigner for the abolition of the slave trade. Readers will immediately understand how educational this visit was.

After evensong had finished a few of our group sought further historical enlightenment and pies in Ye Cracke, which dates back to 1852 and was frequented by John Lennon in the 1950s. This visit was entirely in keeping with the spirit of the outing because many years ago the inn was famous for the singing sessions when groups of choristers met there.



We have not yet planned another men's event but if you would like to be informed of what we shall do please contact **Stuart Baker (560518)**.

NEVER FAR AWAY

by Lester Amman

We can only imagine how the two travellers to Emmaus felt, knowing that Jesus had died. Gone were their hopes for a bright future. They thought God had let them down. They had suffered a cruel blow and were bewildered and upset.

In their grief, the risen Jesus came alongside them and spoke with them at length, but somehow, they didn't recognise Him. Why was this, and why did Jesus intend to leave them at Emmaus without first revealing who He was?

The answers may be found by looking back at the encounters Jesus had with people. He never forced His true nature onto anyone. Every individual had to make up their own mind as to who He was, and to decide if the things He said were true.

Today, Jesus does not 'gate-crash' into our lives. In a number of ways, He gently and persuasively reveals Himself. So, the story of the walk to Emmaus should encourage us each time we feel His absence; at those times when we thought He would step in and immediately solve our problems! On our journey of life, we can have times of sadness, and it can seem as though God is far away.

But while we are thinking that Jesus has left us alone, He is actually with us. He knows where we are and what we are feeling. He can quietly draw alongside us. Surprisingly, it can sometimes be in situations of sadness and solitude that Jesus 'speaks' to us more clearly.

We don't have to go off in search of some 'religious experience' or to a special 'holy place'. He is present in the here and now. Jesus is the unseen companion on every journey and the unseen guest at every meal. In His way and in His time, our Lord reveals Himself to us in different situations. We may be aware of His presence in surprising circumstances and on unexpected occasions.

How important it is that we stay alert. There will be times when we will be like those two men on the Emmaus Road, searching for answers. We will earnestly desire clear and direct answers to our questions and the knowledge, understanding or revelation may be slow to come. But, with Jesus, there are many lessons to be learnt along our Emmaus Road that would not have been discovered any other way.

Further reading: Luke 24:13-35

COULD STAINED GLASS HAVE A ROLE IN MODERN-DAY MISSION?

By the Revd Peter Crumpler, a Church of England priest in St Albans, Herts, and a former communications director for the CofE.

Millions of people visit cathedrals and historic churches in the UK and around the world every year. St Paul's Cathedral and Westminster Abbey are among London's most popular tourist attractions.

In many English cities, it's the cathedral that tops the TripAdvisor list for ratings and reviews. Local churches that remain open through the week often find visitors drawn to them – to look around, pray, reflect, or simply pause amid busy lives.

When the Bible Society's Quiet Revival report was published last year, the headlines rightly focussed on the numbers of young people being drawn to church.

But, within the report's pages was another, perhaps surprising, finding. It was that one of the top three places for people with no religion, or non-practising Christians to encounter the Bible was while sightseeing in a cathedral or church.

This underlines the importance of churches making available good, printed material and displays explaining the Christian gospel.

Yet it also may show the importance of a form of Christian communication that many modern-day evangelists may have ignored. The enduring appeal of stained glass. Historian Janet Gough has recently produced 'Divine Light,' a survey of some of the best stained glass in England's cathedrals. She explained, "The stained-glass windows of England's cathedrals illuminate interior spaces, communicate religious, historical and political messages, and perhaps offer us a glimpse of heaven."

Earlier examples of stained glass often depicted biblical scenes, illustrating scripture for those unable to read the accounts themselves. In today's society, dominated as it is by the visual image – from Instagram to YouTube, TikTok and Facebook – these colourful windows could help introduce contemporary people to Bible narratives and gospel truths.

There is much biblical truth to be found in stained glass windows for those who look with an inquiring mind. In many cases, some knowledge of scripture may help decipher the stories being told. In others, the viewer is invited into an encounter with the divine: to look in awe and wonder at the artistry, and to feel an emotional – perhaps spiritual – response to what they see.

In our supremely visual age, these works of art – both ancient and modern – can capture the attention and imagination of the millions who are drawn to our cathedrals and historic churches.

THE INFLUENCE OF RELIGION ON LAW

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

THE INFLUENCE OF CHRISTIANITY

This brings me to the latest and most important influence of Christianity on our law. The preaching of many divines and notably of William Temple brought home the evils of the excessive accumulation of wealth and opportunity in few hands. This has played a considerable part in the great changes in the law.

The most important, no doubt, have been made by Parliament which turned us into a Welfare State which recognises that the State has a duty to secure for every citizen so far as possible full freedom and opportunity for the development of his talents, unhampered by poverty or ill-health. And this action by Parliament was reflected in decisions of the Judges, notable in cases relating to employers and workmen.

The Courts repeatedly emphasised the responsibility of employers to provide safe conditions of work for their workmen and, in the case of accident, to compensate them for their injuries. Now this trend has gained further legislative force in recent statutes



Lord Denning,
drawn by Sallon

such as the Health and Safety at Work, etc., Act of 1974.

But this new state of society has its dangers. It has brought in its train a great increase in the powers of the central government and a lessening in the authority of Parliament and of the Courts: so much so that there are fears that the initiative and enterprise of the individual has been hampered too much.

We must hope that this danger can be overcome: but it can, I suggest, only be done if we recognise that Christianity is not only a personal religion but, also, that it has much to teach society itself.

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Water/Wine Bottle Stall

At the **Summer Fair on June 20th** 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.



WHAT'S ORANGE, STICKY AND WORTH PRESERVING?

This month sees National Marmalade Week (18th – 25th April). If you really want to celebrate, go to Dalemain Mansion and Gardens in Cumbria, where they hold the World Marmalade Awards & Festival. It celebrates, preserves and promotes artisanal marmalades, with thousands of entries. (Even Paddington Bear will be in attendance!)



If you like marmalade, do you ever wonder where it comes from? One tradition traces it to a storm-damaged Spanish ship which took refuge in Dundee Harbour in 1700. It was full of Seville oranges that the captain was desperate to sell before they went mouldy. A local down-on-luck merchant, one James Keiller, bought the lot. He didn't know what to do with the oranges either, but fortunately he had a resourceful wife. She set about turning a shipload of Seville oranges into a preserve, and so the first marmalade factory was born.

Marmalade has been at the heart of British breakfasts for centuries. Winston Churchill fought the Second World War on it (washed down with a flute of Pol Roger each morning). DH Lawrence wrote novels on it. Paddington Bear's sandwiches were all marmalade. If you also want to get your fingers sticky, visit:

www.marmaladeawards.com.

In the event of Medical Emergency at St John's

We have three trained First Aiders:
Revd. 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.

Bitter Sweet

A poem by Penny Candlin

Sunshine after storm
Strength out of the weak
Healing after suffering
Tears before laughter
Mending what is broken
Darkness before the light
Holy Spirit after abandonment
Death before new life
Joy out of the sadness
Sins that are forgiven
Water to replenish a dry and barren land
Salt to bring out the taste
Honey to take away the bitterness
Waiting to test our faith
Hope to test our perseverance
Repentance before forgiveness
Giving of oneself to reap a harvest that cannot be seen.

St John's Prayers for those in need

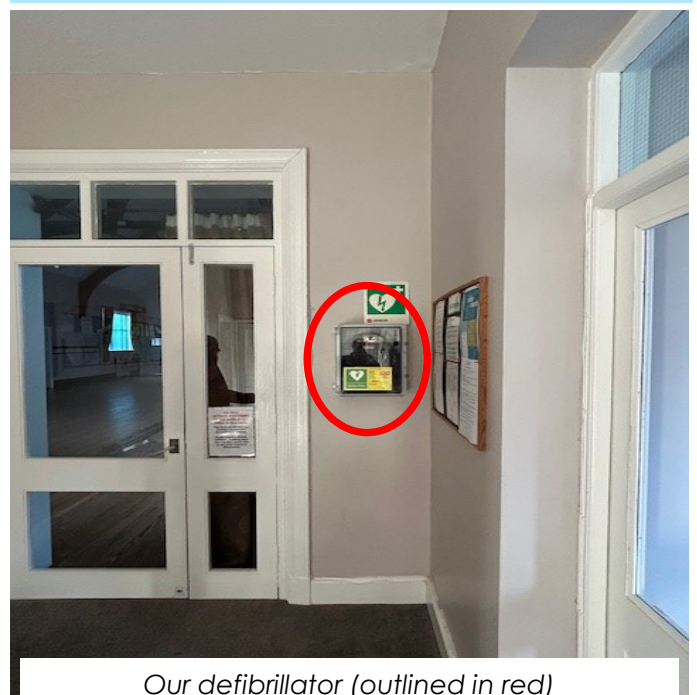


We believe in the power of prayer and we are eager to include as

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.



Our defibrillator (outlined in red)

COLOURFUL CLERGYMEN

In this issue we look back to the early 18th century Georgian England when smuggling contraband from France was a profitable business. It might be expected that an Anglican priest would not have condoned such nefarious activity, but the **Reverend Thomas Patten** held no such scruples and he is our colourful clergyman this month.

Seasalter is a village near Whitstable on the north coast of Kent, in the Diocese of Canterbury. Much of the village was swept away into the sea by a storm in 1099 and it suffered an uncongenial climate. The Archbishop found it difficult to fill the frequently occurring vacancy in the parish. Few incumbents remained there for more than about a year but one who did was the Reverend Thomas Patten who, after service as a Royal Navy chaplain, accepted the position at St Alphege, Seasalter in 1711 and he remained there until his death in 1764.

In common with some of the other colourful clergy whose lives we have examined in previous issues Patten had a prodigious appetite for food and drink. He preached deliberately dull and long sermons so that a member of the congregation would eventually hold up a lemon, which was a coded message for "I will pay for your drinks for the evening", at which point Patten's sermon would draw to a swift conclusion and he would repair to the nearby Blue Anchor Inn.

He seems to have gone out of his way to be at odds with the Archbishop. If he was required to attend an event in Canterbury he would dress in the shabbiest of clothes and complain that he was in need of an immediate increase in his stipend. He falsely referred to himself as the Bishop of Whitstable, and when the Archbishop asked him if it was true that he called himself a Bishop he cuttingly replied "if it were true, would you be such a fool as to take any notice?"

No doubt in order to supplement his income he assisted local smugglers to avoid detection by the Excisemen and evade paying duty on brandy and tobacco.

When one gang of smugglers failed to give him a share of their ill-gotten gains he tricked them into being arrested.

This priest was a scoundrel. He once ordered a new wig (horsehair periwigs were still in fashion in those days) and the wigmaker found him to be such an agreeable customer that he treated him to dinner. After enjoying his host's hospitality Patten cancelled the order for the wig and when he was asked why he said that he had had no intention of paying for the wig and because he had enjoyed his host's company he would take his swindling elsewhere.

He once ventured into the field of ghost-laying. A long-running dispute between a farmer's widow and her stepson concerning the widow's home caused the disgruntled stepson to pretend, with much clanking of chains and hideous groans at night, that the farmhouse was haunted by his father's ghost. The widow, who must have been a gullible soul, asked Reverend Patten to lay the ghost to



rest. He agreed to do so, saying that "to lay a ghost, besides demanding a good stock of courage, required much learning as the whole form must necessarily be pronounced in Latin; wherefore I could not afford to do it under a guinea". One night he lay in wait for the "ghost" and upon catching the stepson in his act he belaboured him with a stout stick. The following morning he told the woman that he had been engaged in a terrible conflict, the ghost being one of the most obstinate and fierce spirits he had ever met with; but that he had at length, with great difficulty and experience of Latin, laid him. He persuaded her that because this would resolve her conflict with her stepson it was necessary to pay him an extra thirty shillings which the deceased farmer had owned to him in unpaid tithes. And so he duly received the guinea and thirty shillings for laying to rest a non-existent ghost.

Patten was a man with a frosty nature, a sharp tongue, and little charm or manners. The Church records are full of belligerent personal observations concerning his parishioners. Notwithstanding (or perhaps because of) his many unattractive foibles Patten was liked by many of his parishioners who, after his demise, erected a memorial to him which is still present today.

Stuart Baker *Sources include Philip Atherton "A note on the Parish and church of St Alphege, Seasalter" and "Reverend Patten lays a ghost to rest" inspired by Francis Grose "Antiquities of England and Wales". Fergus Butler-Gallie "A Field Guide to the English Clergy."*

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 Wolf & the Crane

A Wolf had been feasting too greedily, and a bone had become stuck in his throat. He could get it neither up nor down, and of course he could not eat a thing. Naturally that was an awful state of affairs for a greedy Wolf.

So away he hurried to the Crane. He was sure that she, with her long neck and bill, would easily be able to reach the bone and pull it out.

"I will reward you very handsomely," said the Wolf, "if you pull that bone out for me."



The Crane, as you can imagine, was very uneasy about putting her head in a Wolf's throat. But she was grasping in nature, so she did what the Wolf asked her to do.

When the Wolf felt that the bone was gone, he started to walk away. "But what about my reward!" called the Crane anxiously.

"What!" snarled the Wolf, whirling around. "Haven't you got it? Isn't it enough that I let you take your head out of my mouth without snapping it off?"

The moral: Expect no reward for serving the wicked.

Another (5th) Blanket by our Knitters and Knatters



Our K&Ks meet on the 4th Wednesday each month at 2.30pm.

Do come and join us as we make more blankets to keep us warm in church.



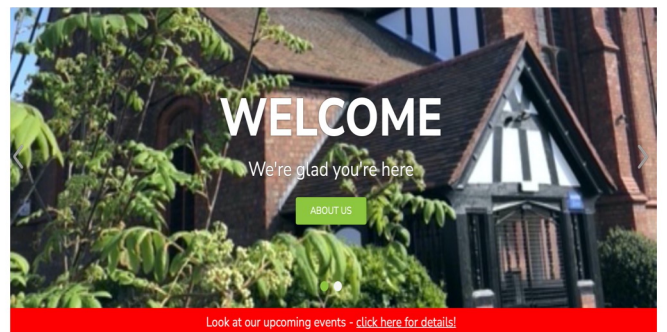
On Saturday 25th April at St James' Church, Lulworth Road the churches in the North Meols Deanery which have a Mothers' Union membership, which includes our church, will celebrate the 150th anniversary of the MU by holding a coffee morning between 10.00am and 12.00.

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.



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GARDENERS' CORNER

By Tina Lloyd

The glory of gardening: hands in the dirt, head in the sun, heart with nature.....

In April, mild sunny weather can make you think summer is here already but short sharp frosts can catch you out. On those perfect spring days, when the air is clear, the blackbird is trilling away in the treetops, get out in the garden and enjoy it. Happy Gardening!

At-a-glance-check list

- Spring clean borders, keep on top of weeding & mowing
- Feed roses, borders, hedges, trees, shrubs & spring bulbs

Lawns

- Treat moss & weeds & reseed bare patches
- Sow grass seed to make new lawns if not done last autumn
- Mow lawns once a fortnight or once a week in mild weather

Trees, shrubs & climbers

- Plant or move evergreen shrubs
- Feed acid loving plants
- Prune winter jasmine & hydrangea
- Tidy hedges & clip if required

Flowers

- Wait six weeks after flowers of spring bulbs are over before cutting foliage
- Plant new borders with hardy perennials
- Towards the end of the month, plant dormant dahlia tubers outside

Vegetables & Herbs

- Sow broad beans, summer cabbage, Brussels sprouts, early peas,
- Sprouting broccoli, leeks, beetroot, radish, spring onions, lettuce
- Plant first early, second early & maincrop potatoes
- Earth up shoots of early potatoes to protect them from frost
- Plant asparagus crowns
- Sow hardy herbs

Fruit

- Plant strawberries
- Check & harvest forced rhubarb
- Prune stone fruit trees if necessary

Key Plants blooming in April



Bleeding Heart (Perennial)

This hardy perennial starts to push up new growth in March & April. It has heart-shaped Pink or white flowers along graceful arching stems in

spring. Thrives in part shade or full sun. Cut back old foliage after flowering or when it turns yellow.

Grows to a height of 60-110cm/24-39 ins
A good traditional garden plant

Shrub- Camellia

This is an evergreen shrub with lovely dark green leaves & rose-like winter to spring blooms. Thrives in dappled shade. Prune after flowering if required.



Clematis 'Freckles' Fragrant & Evergreen

This is a lovely winter to late spring flowering clematis with an RHS Award of Garden Merit. It produces lovely creamy-pink, bell-shaped flowers spotted with

maroon. Flowers

from late autumn to mid to late spring. Perfect for walls & fences. Prune Immediately after flowering if required.

Other Plants in Their Prime

Flowering cherries. Crab apples. Fruit trees. Magnolia. Spirea. Ribes. Berberis. Pulmonaria. Rosa 'Canary Bird' Pieris. Tulips. Fritillaria. Primula. Viburnum. Oxalis. Brunnera. Hellebores. Lamium. Muscari. Anemone blanda. Arabis. Aubrieta. Pulsatilla. Saxifraga. Winter flowering pansies. Viola.

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

GOD IN THE ARTS

The Revd Michael Burgess surveys great works of sacred art.

'He gave us eyes to see them': The Screen at The East End:

"I am the light of the world," our Lord says in St John's Gospel. He is the One who can bring sight and insight to those born blind, and vision to those who feel they live in a world of darkness. In Him is the glory of God and life for all people. That radiant glory greets those who visit Wymondham Abbey in Norfolk and look down the main aisle to see the wondrous screen at the east end depicting Christ in majesty surrounded by our Lady and the saints.

Ironically, the history of the Abbey in the Middle Ages was one of darkness and conflict, where disagreement severed the harmony of monks and townspeople. The Abbey was dissolved in the 16th century, but then restored to its former glory in the early 20th century. Ninian Comper began working on the screen in 1922, and it was completed in 1934.

In front of the screen is a large altar with a crucifix and six tall, stately candlesticks. Their lights are signs of Jesus the Light proclaimed by the dazzling central figure on the screen behind. Originally candlesticks would have stood on the ground before the altar, or lamps were hung above. In the 14th century candles were placed on the altar.

Aesthetic judgement will vary from person to person, and some may find tall candlesticks like these obtrusive, detracting from the



Credit: Wikimedia Commons: Evelyn Simak / Wymondham Abbey – the chancel

sacrament of the altar. Whatever their size, when lit they announce that Jesus is the true light, who welcomes everyone to find nourishment and guidance for life's pilgrimage in communion at that table. Here at Wymondham Abbey I think the pilgrim visitor will find that the beauty and grace of these altar furnishings complement the great mystery of divine light celebrated in Ninian Comper's masterpiece.

REFLECTED FAITH— SAME OLD, SAME OLD by Revd. Dr. Jo White

Well, here we are at Easter – and guess what the sermon subject is likely to be?
Christ is risen – He is risen indeed!

In so many ways it really could be 'same old, same old' and the preacher could just repeat last year's sermon. Let's face it, nothing will have changed in the Easter story in the last 12 months.

Or has it? For me, and I suspect for most folks, 12 months can be a 'long' time; and things change in our lives. Babies are born, youngsters change school, teenagers leave school, young people move out, friends die, accidents happen, and pains and sorrows come and go.

Around all of that personal business the world turns: there are holidays, seasons, catastrophes, people hurting people, people caring for others and

on and on it goes.

Things might repeat but they are never truly 'the same'.

So it is with the Easter story. Christ is risen – He is risen indeed! Really? In the midst of my life and the world around me? In the centre of your life and your community?

Is it any less amazing today than it was last year, or the year before, or a decade previously or when the women went to the tomb that first Resurrection Day?

In so many ways I need to hear this story again – but anew. New, not just because the preacher will (hopefully) have made it register with what's happening around my small community today and new because I am not the same person I was a year ago – for better or worse!

I shall hear those words differently this year than ever before. Christ is risen – He is risen indeed!

WORD CROSS WORD

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

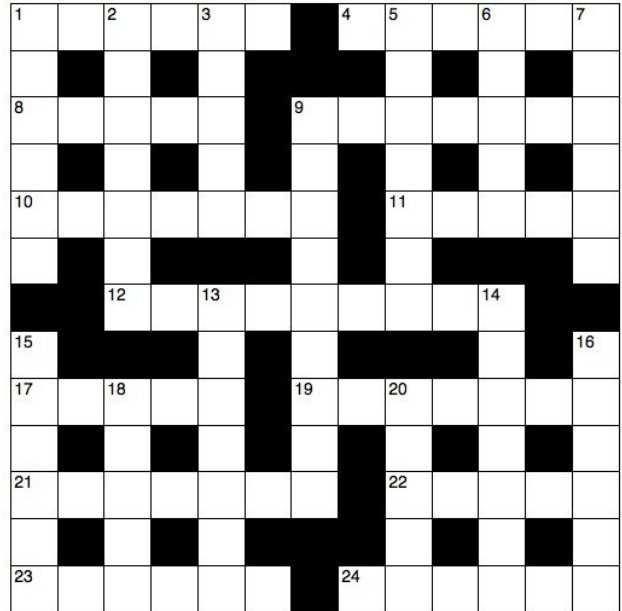
Solution below

Across

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

Down

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



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

In our Book of Remembrance

In April

- 2nd Harry Tucker, 1986
Mark Harding, 2003
- 3rd Henry Prescott, 1988
- 6th Ralph Gregson, 2022
- 8th John Hamer, 1972
- 9th Ruby Bennett, 2000
Harriet (Pat) Hind, 2007
- 12th James Canadine, 1986
Elizabeth Powney, 1990
William Baker, 2000
- 13th Eric Whitehead, 1983
- 15th Alan Short, 1977
- 17th Bernard Rimmer, 1996

- 18th Elizabeth Critchley, 1989
- 19th Annie Rimmer, 1986
- 20th Samuel Maguire, 1996
- 21st Dora Gott, 1987
George Hamer, 1983
- 22nd Robert Rimmer, 1974
- 23rd Aubrey Hanoman, 1997
- 24th Ruth Beaumont, 2009
- 26th Joyce Crosby, 2010
- 30th Ada Whitehead, 2013

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

CROSSWORD SOLUTION

ACROSS: 1, Cosmic. 4, Thomas. 8, In his. 9, Deliah. 10, Falwell. 11, Water. 12, Recovered. 17, Sidon. 19, Radiant. 21, Centaur. 22, Broil. 23, Eleven. 24, Prison.

DOWN: 1, Cliffs. 2, Scholar. 3, Issue. 5, Holy war. 6, Moist. 7, Sphere. 9, Deliverer. 13, Candace. 14, Deacons. 15, Psyche. 16, Stolen. 18, Dance. 20, Debar.

Walking on Water

Can you see the join in the floor?

It is well known that in recent years, church congregations around the country have been diminishing, an issue we are successfully addressing here at St John's. But maintenance and other costs are continually increasing while offerings reduce in proportion to them so balancing our books is a constant struggle.

Combining worship with exercise, the spin classes introduced by Jennie have been doubly successful, addressing participant spiritual and physical issues in a unique way and bringing new participants into church.

So with that in our minds we wondered if there might be another activity we could embrace that could combine elements of worship with a finance generating activity.

For some weeks that's all it was - an idea - but recent christenings, which included an adult baptism, prompted some discussion about whether we should install a full immersion baptistry in St John's. The idea seemed to have some merit and the clincher came when we realised that a larger than normal baptistry could have a dual use as an instructional pool for children's swimming lessons and adult aqua aerobics which would bring in much needed cash.

Initially thought to be more than a little far fetched, funding by the Baptist Trust led to exploratory design work and contractors descended en-masse at the end of March, lifted the parquet tiles and dug a hole into which a fibreglass tank would be positioned.

During the dig, a metal box was unearthed which proved to be a memory box including a 1911 edition of the Southport Visiter.

From that it was estimated that when the north aisle and pews were added in 1910 to enlarge capacity of the church by 180 seats, work in front of the pulpit was not actually completed until the following year.

With the hole dug and tank in-place, novel folding birch plywood covers were made, the pool filled and the covers tested to make sure that when closed they would take the weight of the chairs and congregation. Everything worked fine so the parquet tiles were re-fixed to the panels and nobody noticed a thing on the following Sunday.

At a final testing however, the combined weight of the wooden parquet tiles and the baptistry covers to which they had been fixed was far too great for our older men to lift. That delayed the proposed first use of the baptistry pool so a portable pool has been hired for the Easter Sunday service. If you have a workable solution for lifting the pool covers, please contact the editor.



THE STORY BEHIND..

Fooling around – the BBC's spaghetti farm

Probably the most famous April Fool's joke of all time was the 1960's BBC TV broadcast feature on the spaghetti farms of Italy. A BBC reporter interviewed Italian farmers about their work and the progress of the spaghetti plants in great detail. Spaghetti plants were filmed being carefully planted, and then being harvested. And all in the BBC's most serious documentary manner. It took a while to appreciate that this was Auntie playing games. Whatever next!

The odd thing is that no one is quite sure of the origin of this very British tradition. Most attribute it to changes in Britain's calendar in the 1700s, when New Year's Day moved from 25th March to 1st January. Not surprisingly, the change caused a lot of confusion and mistakes around the start of April. Others look even further back, to the ancient Roman feast of Hilaria, when the goddess Cybele was celebrated with pranks and jokes around the Spring Equinox, 25th March.

WHAT IS MAUNDY THURSDAY?

Maundy Thursday is the 5th day of Holy Week. 'Maundy' comes from the Latin word for command, 'mandare'. On this day the Church looks back to Jesus' command to His disciples that they should: "Love one another as I have loved you."

On the evening of Maundy Thursday Jesus shared the Last Supper with His disciples, before going on to the Garden of Gethsemane and being arrested. It was the last evening He had with them before His crucifixion.

Maundy Money refers to the coins given to elderly people by the monarch in a ceremony that drew inspiration from Jesus' commandment he gave after washing the disciples' feet. By the fourth century AD monarchs would wash the feet of the poor and give food and clothing. The Maundy ceremony today first took place in the reign of Charles II, in 1662. The Royal Maundy ceremony takes place every Maundy Thursday and there are as many recipients as there are years in the sovereign's age.

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

ENVY

'A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones.' (Proverbs 14:30).

This month we are looking at the Deadly Sin of envy. As a consuming desire to have what others have got, it's a major source of unhappiness.

It is different to jealousy: *'Envy is wanting something that someone else has. Jealousy is the fear of losing something you already have to someone else'* (Brene Brown). We can envy things like wealth, looks and, possessions, resulting in resentment, bitterness and anger. The pursuit of possessing what others have will always leave us empty and dissatisfied, as the use of social media demonstrates.

How do we overcome envy in our lives? *Gratitude: 'Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus'.* (1 Thessalonians 5:18). A grateful heart has no

room for envy, when we focus on God's love for us and what He has given us, rather than looking at others' gifts and opportunities. God has created us uniquely to be the people we are and different to others. As a result, we are better able to rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep.

Trust: 'And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.' (2 Corinthians 9:8). One of the chief causes of envy is FOMO: Fear of Missing Out! We can trust that God knows everything that we need and so we don't need to worry about missing out. By entrusting our lives to Him, we can confidently depend on God meeting all our needs.

Is God truly enough for me? *'The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing.'* (Psalm 23:1).

CHURCH NOTICE BOARDS

THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS



ENVY (RIVAL CHURCHES POACHING OUR CONGREGATION)

WORD SEARCH

Solution on page 30

Even as Jesus ate that last Passover meal with his disciples, he warned them he was about to be betrayed. He took the bread, blessed it, broke it and gave it to them; he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them to drink.

The Old Covenant, based on Law, was ticking away its final hours; the New Covenant, based on Christ's body and his blood, was about to be ushered in.

Jesus prayed in Gethesame that this fearful cup might be removed from him, but even more, that God's will might be done. And it was. From Easter onwards we can only approach God through his Son, Jesus Christ, not on our own merit.



JESUS	DISCIPLES	WINE	OLD	CUP
ATE	WARNED	THANKS	NEW	REMOVED
LAST	BETRAYED	DRINK	BODY	WILL
PASSOVER	BREAD	COVENANT	BLOOD	EASTER
MEAL	BLESSED	LAW	GETHSEMANE	APPROACH GOD

An Introduction to Books in the Old Testament: Lamentations

By Canon Paul Hardingham

The Book of Lamentations consists of five laments over the destruction of Jerusalem and the exile of Judah's leading inhabitants to Babylon. Tradition ascribes the book to Jeremiah, who witnessed Jerusalem's destruction in 586 BC. Each lament is an *acrostic* i.e. each verse begins in order with a different letter of the Hebrew alphabet (except the fifth).

The themes of the laments can be summarised as follows: Jerusalem in Agony (1); the LORD's Anger (2); Judah's complaint against Adversity (3); Jerusalem's Anxiety (4); and Judah's prayer to the Almighty (5).

Lamentations portrays the overwhelming sense of loss that accompanied the destruction of the city, along with its Temple with its worship and sacrifices. However, the book is not simply concerned about Jerusalem's destruction, but for the lessons that can be learned from it.

Jeremiah sees the Babylonians as human agents of God's judgment upon Judah's sin. It was God Himself who destroyed the city and temple. However, God's action was not arbitrary, for the people had deliberately sinned against Him and broken their covenant with Him. Although the people's tears and cries for vengeance are understandable, God looks for a sincere heartfelt sorrow from the people. The book begins with lament, *'How deserted lies the city, once so full of people! How like a widow is she who once was great among the nations!'* (1:1), but finishes with repentance, *'Restore us to yourself, Lord, that we may return; renew our days as of old'* (5:21).

However, in the middle of the book there is a reminder of God's goodness and faithfulness:

'Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.' (3:22-23).

THE GOOD AND BAD KINGS OF ENGLAND... AND SCOTLAND!

By Dennis Davis

King David the 1st of Scotland

This month I deviate to a Scottish king. Why? You may well ask. Well! Because my family name stems from the name David, but which David? Your guess could be as good as mine. Maybe King David from the Bible or St David of Wales, or David Dhu of the Clan Davidson. We may never know, but I have chosen King David the 1st of Scotland as his name is linked very much to some of English History.

He was noted for his reforms and expansion of the Scottish Kingdom, his promotion of Christianity and the building of monasteries and Castles.

David's mother was Margaret of Wessex, a Saxon Princess who had fled to Scotland to avoid the Norman Conquest who later became known as Saint Margaret of Scotland. His father was Malcolm (Canmore) the 3rd of Scotland and she was Malcolm's 2nd wife. She brought English culture to the Scottish Court and furthered the Anglicised Christianity against the Celtic form of worship. On the death of the King the Royal Princes and Princesses had to flee to England for safety when there was an uprising against these changes.

From 1113 David lived at the court of Henry 1st of England who had married David's sister who had changed her name to Matilda. He spent much of his life here at the King's court. In 1114 King Henry arranged for David to marry the widowed wife of the Earl of Northumbria, who was the Great niece of William the Conqueror; with Norman help he acquired the English Earldom of Huntingdon.

Back in Scotland, on the death of Donald the 3rd David's brother Edgar took the throne and reigned for 10 years, on his death bed he insisted that when Alexander came to the throne he allowed David to govern the Scottish lowlands, Lothian and southern Strathclyde. Alexander died without an heir so David, the youngest son came to the throne in 1124. In 1136 David recognised his niece, the Holy Roman Empress Matilda, as heir to the English throne and he fought for her against King Stephen.

After a brief peace he again fought for Matilda and lost at the Battle of the Standard near Northallerton and again made peace with Stephen who granted him Northumberland.

In 1141 David once more entered the war on Matilda's side, in 1149 he knighted Henry Plantagenet who was Matilda's son who became King Henry 2nd of England.

David died on 24th of May 1153 at Carlisle.

Next month, it might be of interest to look more closely at Henry 1st.



The Great Seal of King David 1

observations on life...

At my age I ...get my daily paper, look at the obituaries page and if I'm not there, I carry on as usual. – Patrick Moore

Just because two people argue, it doesn't mean they don't love each other and just because they don't argue, it doesn't mean they do. – Anon

Why do people who know the least, know it the loudest? – Anon

The refusal to forgive and be forgiven lies at the root of a great deal of sickness. – Anon

STOP PRESS!

There will be another **ALPHA** course starting at St Johns on Wednesday 6th May. Listen for further details in church during April and look for information in THE WORD next month.

GOD IN THE SCIENCES

This series is written by Dr Ruth M Bancewicz, who is Church Engagement Director at The Faraday Institute for Science and Religion in Cambridge. Ruth writes on the positive relationship between Science and Christian faith.

THE BEAUTY OF GOOD FRIDAY

Some of the most beautiful things in the world have an ugly side. What about the emperor penguin chick, nestling in a feathery pouch above its parent's feet? There's a lovely moment when mum and dad greet each other over the gaping beak of their fuzz-ball offspring. Heads bent together, making a heart shape in the air, we can't help seeing a reflection of our own ideals of love in the pair.

But the reality of what those birds are going through is even more gruelling than human parenthood. Father penguin has spent all winter sheltering the egg from freezing hurricane-force winds, while mother penguin was feeding at sea. When the chick hatched its parents started an exhausting game of tag, taking it in turns to walk across the ice and risk being eaten by leopard seals or killer whales, in order to catch fish for their new offspring.

The living world is truly wonderful in so many ways, but the darker side of the picture is never far away.

Creation is groaning (Romans 8:22), and just waiting to be rescued. Enter Jesus, through

whom all of Creation was made. The king of the universe came to live with us, bringing His great love and wisdom to the human population of first-century Israel. The Creator was relating to His creation in a very personal way, and this could have been a totally beautiful picture.

But there is a horrifically ugly side of Jesus' story that threatens to obscure the beauty of what He did on Good Friday. It was a brutal and terrifying day when human sinfulness resulted in the Son of God being executed by His enemies, but thankfully there was much more to it than that. The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ set off a seismic wave of spiritual events whose effects are still rippling out across the world.

So that ugly day over 2,000 years ago is called 'good' because of what it achieved. Those who follow Jesus find their lives are changed for the better, even if their day-to-day existence may still be incredibly tough. When people come to understand what Creation is for and who it belongs to, they can begin to serve and preserve the earth as they should. These things are only whispers of what is to come, but they give me hope for the future redemption of all Creation. I can choose to dwell on the beauty of Jesus' death because it was not the end of the story – the future beckons.

This article is extracted (with permission) from [New Life: Reflections for Lent](#), edited by Amy Robinson and Wendy H Jones (£7.99).

Warm Space

Struggling with the cost of living? Feeling lonely?
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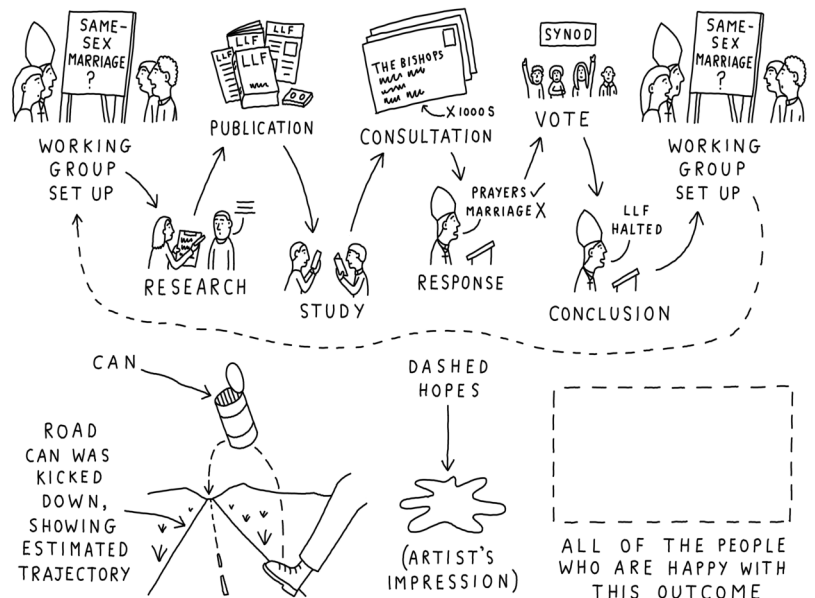
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LIVING IN LOVE AND FAITH

APPROXIMATE SUMMARY OF THE PROCESS



I REMEMBER IT WELL

By John M. Shakespeare

Some philosophers argue that it is our memories that go to make up the people we become. John Locke (1632-1704) stated that "Memory is the key to survival of self, you are the same person today as you were in the past, because you remember your past". I find this a debatable idea personally, as we can never claim the memory we believe we have of past incidents is always totally reliable.

Words of wisdom by Christina Rossetti (1830-1894): "Better by far you should forget and smile, than that you Remember and be sad".

Fortunately it would seem that as a general rule of thumb we do tend to relegate bad memories to the past and give more credence to our happy memories. It is, however, a fact that we finally recognise PTSD as causing identifiable suffering, brought on by very stressful past memories.

Derek Parfit (1942- present day), an English philosopher, has interests in questions of moral and emotional significance, concerned with the nature of self. He argues that there is no sense in which a person at one time can be the same person at a later time if the latter has no recollection of the former. He says therefore that we must accept that our bodies contain not a single continuous self but, rather, that we are made up of a collection of successive selves, as we have evolved.

Many poems I find and enjoy, take me to the realms between a certain wistfulness and those of mixture of emotions. On these thoughts I quote the second verse of the poem "I Remember I Remember" by Thomas Hood (1799-1845):

I remember, I remember, the roses red and white, the violets and the lily-cups. Those flowers made of light, the lilacs where the robin built, and where my brother set the laburnum on his birthday - the tree is living yet.

The Bible tells us of Solomon's wisdom, Proverbs (Ch 10 verses 7-8): "The memory of the righteous is a blessing, but the name of the wicked will rot. The wise of heart will heed the Commandments, but a babbling fool will come to ruin".

Plutarch (50-120 AD), a Greek born philosopher, in the last years of his life served as a priest at Delphi. He saw Memory as a source of knowledge. As a factor in his view of past times being relevant, he acknowledged a positive form of evil that exists in the world. I see his propositions of memory, being a relevant bridge to the knowing of past events, having some merit, allowing for a difference in perceptions.

By calling on the use of our memory, we may seek the Lord's own blessing.

Psalm 119 (verses 55-56): "I remember your name in the night O Lord and keep your law. This blessing has fallen to me, for I have kept your precepts".

With regard to your memories, it is best not to let things gone by take up too much time of your today. It is good, naturally, also to recall happy times, and take pleasure in lessons learnt. To quote J.M. Barrie (1860-1937): "Someone said that God gave us memory, so that we might have roses in December".



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REVELATION REVEALED



The vision from God as imagined by Jacqui Parkinson

Last month we looked at John's letter to the Christian community in Ephesus. This month we shall look at what he wrote to the Christians in Smyrna.

Anyone who has been on holiday on the western coast of Turkey has probably heard of the city Izmir. It is a vibrant, modern metropolis and Turkey's

third-largest city, a Western-oriented alternative to Istanbul.

Two thousand years ago it was called Smyrna and was one of the loveliest cities of Asia. It was a coastal city with a safe harbour, and it was on great trading routes which led across Asia Minor and to the far east. Writers at that time described its beauty. It was a free city although very loyal to Rome.

It had a large population of Jewish people who were influential in the city and provided much financial support for its beautification. They were hostile to Christians whom they saw as people drawing Jews away from Judaism. Polycarp, the Bishop of Smyrna, refused to admit that Caesar was the Lord and was brutally martyred by being burned alive with the assistance of Jews who even broke the Sabbath by doing so, such was their opposition to Christians.

And so the Christians in Smyrna faced grave difficulties not only from the Roman overlords but also from the Jewish diaspora.

The angel of the Lord told John to write to them in these words:

These are the words of him who is the First and the Last, who died and came to life again. I know your afflictions and your poverty—yet you are rich! I know about the slander of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. Do

not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you life as your victor's crown. Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. The one who is victorious will not be hurt at all by the second death.

This letter was written in praise of the Christians in Smyrna who were enduring many difficulties because of their faith. Many of them belonged to the lower classes and poorer members of society. Sometimes they were attacked by mobs and their homes wrecked. Some were persecuted and imprisoned for being Christians. They lived in uncertain times and circumstances and were always at risk of being victims of religious and social hatred. And "imprisonment" in those times was not likely to be a short sentence with early release on a Home Detention Curfew. It was often a prelude to execution.



With all these anxieties it took enormous courage and faith to be a Christian in Smyrna. The instigators of the persecution were the Jews who stirred up the authorities against Christian preachers.

The letter to them urged them to remain loyal to the faith even if the price for this would be their death which would bring its own reward: eternal life; victory over death.

The reference to "second death" stems from Jewish and early Christian thinking that there was an intermediate state into which we all pass after physical

death until the time of judgment. The "second death" would have been spiritual death into which the wicked would pass until after the final judgment.

In simple terms this letter encouraged the Christians in Smyrna and promised the faithful life after their death on earth, however that might occur.

Stuart Baker

Various Sources including William Barclay "The Daily Study Bible" The Revelation of John

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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WHAT'S ON IN OUR NEIGHBOURING CHURCHES

Social Events at St James' Birkdale (Lulworth Road)



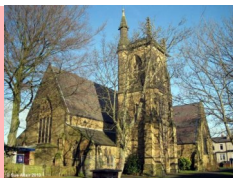
First Tuesday of each month:

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 Events at St Peter's Birkdale (St Peter's Road)



Wednesday 15th April

Bingo, 1pm-3pm in the hall. Tea, coffee & chocolate crispy cakes, £5.

Friday 8th May

Quiz, starts at 7pm in the hall. BYO. £5.

Sunday 14th June

Open Day & Garden. 2pm. Tea, coffee and cakes £5.

Saturday 22nd August

Family Fun Day 1pm-4pm. Fabulous healthy, homegrown outdoor plant stall. Tea, coffee & cakes. Free entrance.

Saturday 26th September

The Wanderers- cabaret style concert. 7pm. £10, includes a light supper.

Friday 23rd October

Phil Shotton. Dafe Society Trio. 1920's style Jazz. 7pm. £10, includes a glass of red or white wine.

Saturday 21st November

Quiz, 3pm in the hall. Tea, coffee & biscuits. £5.

Saturday 5th December

The Wanderers Barn Dance in the church. 7pm, includes a light supper. £10.

Friday 11th December

Christmas Bingo. 1pm-3pm in the hall.

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

Interview with Howard Bennett, PGA Master Professional
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

Sign up through your local Church
Local Churches should email: info@1peter4.co.uk



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DO YOU KNOW SOMEBODY IN NEED?

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LONG TERM ASSISTANCE - **FOOD PANTRY**

Visit www.compassionacts.uk/food-pantry to download our referral form.

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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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 (#)

BUT PLEASE CHECK YOUR CALL PACKAGE CHARGES WITH YOUR PROVIDER

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

Was it really that long ago?...

75 years ago, on 17th April 1951 the Peak District National Park was established. It was Britain's first National Park.

65 years ago, on 10th April 1961 South African golfer Gary Player became the first non-American to win the Masters Tournament in Augusta, Georgia.

Also 65 years ago, on 12th April 1961 Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin became the first person in space and the first person to orbit the Earth.

50 years ago, on 3rd April 1976 the UK won the 1976 Eurovision Song Contest with *Save Your Kisses for Me* by Brotherhood of Man.

Also 50 years ago, on 7th April 1976 politician John Stonehouse, who infamously had tried to fake his own death in 1974, resigned from the Labour Party, leaving the government in a minority. After his death in 1988 it was revealed that he had been a Czech spy since 1962.

40 years ago, on 11th April 1986 Halley's Comet made its closest approach to Earth during its most recent visit. It will return to Earth's vicinity in 2061 and 2134.

Also 40 years ago, on 17th April 1986 TV journalist John McCarthy was kidnapped in Beirut, Lebanon by the militant group Islamic Jihad. Released 1991.

Also 40 years ago, on 26th April 1986 the Chernobyl disaster took place in Ukraine, then within the Soviet Union. It was the world's worst nuclear power plant accident, killing 31 people outright, and leaking radiation across the western Soviet Union and Europe.

30 years ago, on 1st April 1996 during the BSE ('mad cow disease') outbreak, the government announced that it would begin slaughtering all cattle over the age of 30 months to eradicate the disease. In the end, 80,000 cattle were slaughtered

25 years ago, on 7th April 2001 NASA launched its Mars Odyssey spacecraft to search for evidence of water and volcanic activity on Mars. It found water and ice below the surface.

15 years ago, on 29th April 2011 Prince William and Catherine (Kate) Middleton were married at Westminster Abbey in London. They were given the titles Duke and Duchess of Cambridge.

10 years ago, on 20th April 2016 Victoria Wood, comedian, actress, singer and songwriter died. Remembered for *Victoria Wood as seen on TV*.

Also 10 years ago, on 22nd April 2016 the Paris Agreement on Climate Change was signed. It came into effect on 4th November 2016.

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.

Resurrection

(John 20:1-18)

Even in the darkness
Still she went,
Stumbling, longing for light,
Finding a stone-moved emptiness.
Then her running
And the running and out-running of the men,
The believing whilst not understanding,
The tears and the angels with questions and
messages.
Death transformed to Life
In the turning,
And revelation in a name,
Mary!
Lord, sometimes I don't understand
And the world seems dark,
But I choose to turn from darkness to You.
Speak my name Lord,
Hold me safe
In Your resurrection power and light.

By Daphne Kitching

Easter Dawn

Creation holds collective breath
In darkness, cold and deep;
Has hope and joy been claimed by death?
Has love been laid to sleep?
The solid seal, the heavy stone
The chill of Friday's gloom
Leave faith to flicker all alone
Beside a borrowed tomb.
But, as the night begins to fray
The soldiers faint with fright!
An angel rolls the stone away
At dawn's first glint of light.
No linen shroud can hold Him now
The grave has lost its prize,
No thorns are seen upon His brow
As Love and Triumph rise!
Let hallelujahs wake the earth!
Let bell-sound rend the skies!
For Christ has won our second birth
By His triumphant rise!
The empty tomb, the open door
Proclaim the darkness gone;
Death was defeated evermore
On Easter's glorious dawn!

By Nigel Beeton

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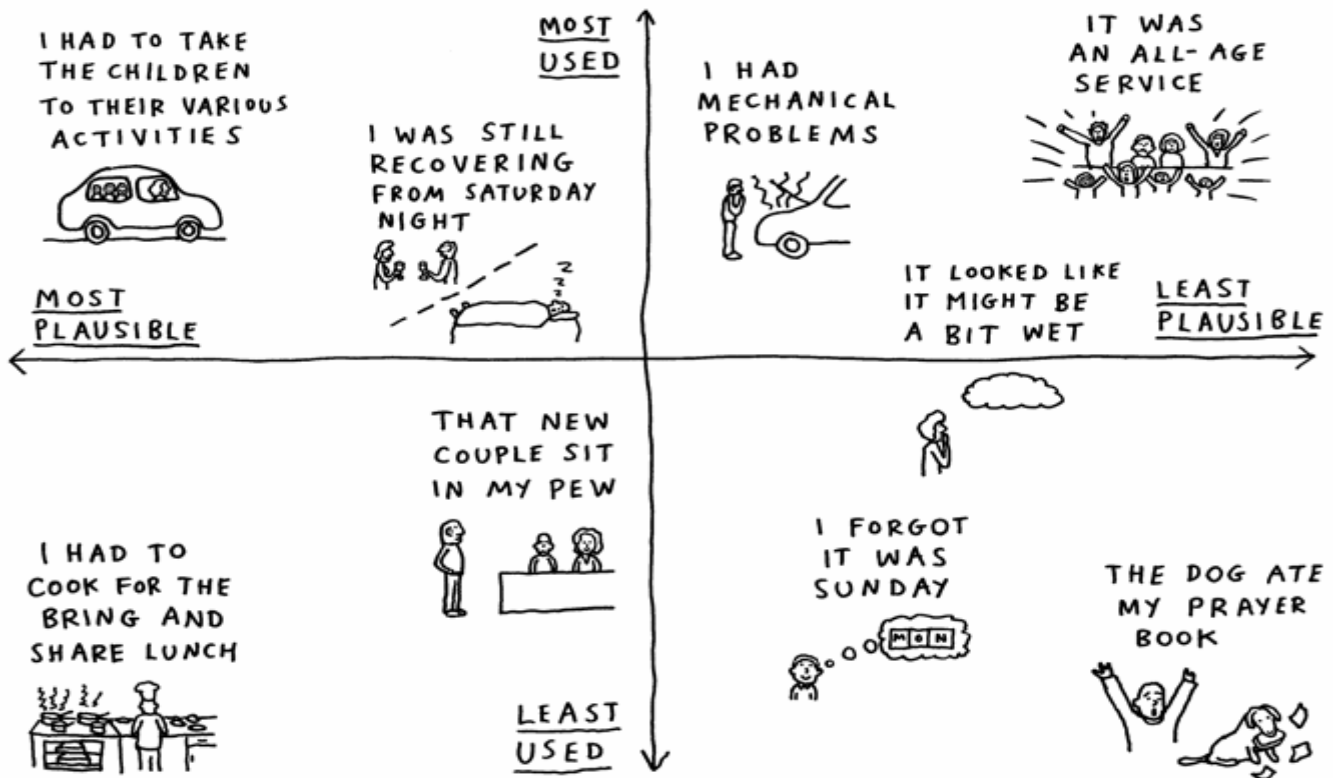
To Garry Whittaker on 4th April
 Curtis Davey on 5th April
 Jennie Hardy on 5th April
 John Shakespeare on 13th April
 Andy Dean on 21st April
 Cath Whiteside on 26th April
 Zac Downey on 27th April

Garry and Deborah Whittaker on 3rd April
 Linda and Bob Caton on 18th April: their 39th

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

The Last Laughs

EXCUSES FOR ABSENTEEISM



Walking on Water

If you are wondering about the baptistry pool feature on page 23 or why the project has not been mentioned in church, just remember that this is the April issue and that the editor manipulated the distribution so that instead of the last Friday of the previous month you received your copy on **April first**. And if you had half as much fun reading it as the editor and Ian Bennett had writing the feature and taking the photographs then it will all have been worthwhile. (Thank you Ian! Ed)

"The Laughing Fool" by Jacob Oostanen circa 1500

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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