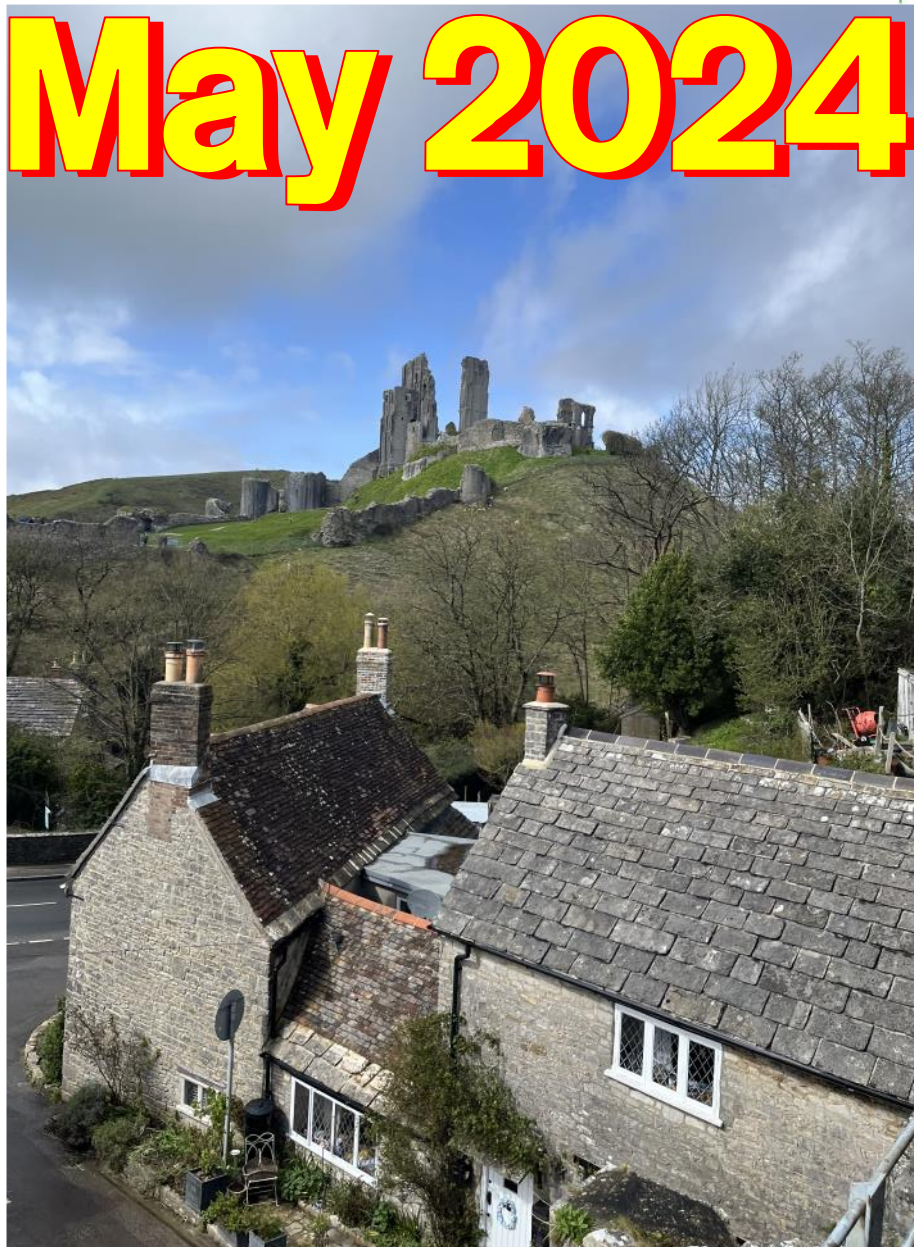


# The Link



# May 2024



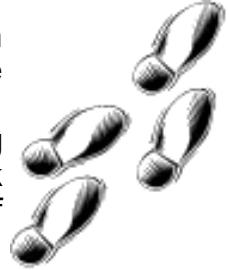
Shanklin United Reformed Church [www.shanklinurc.co.uk](http://www.shanklinurc.co.uk)

# View From Number 10



## Keep walking...

We continue to explore the theme of discipleship in our Sunday services. The language often used in the bible for living our lives with God is that of walking. People of old walked everywhere and taking footsteps was very much the rhythm of life. To walk with God was to journey with him at every moment of the day – to share the whole of life with him.



The London Institute of Contemporary Christianity, LICC for short, champions the idea of whole life discipleship – all of us are full-time Christian workers. They even produce FTCW badges for people to wear to help remind them of their role in society and kingdom service. As we think more about discipleship, I would encourage you to think widely about life and service beyond church and to focus on this idea of walking with the Lord.

We must walk in the light knowing that God sees our every action and indeed reads our very thoughts! In Genesis 5:24, Enoch was commended for walking faithfully with God – we know little more about him but that is some commendation to be remembered by!

At a recent memorial/thanksgiving service, someone held up a bumper sticker that said: “Live your life so the vicar doesn’t have to lie at your funeral.”

Let’s try and keep walking faithfully with God as we follow in the footsteps of Jesus. He sees what we are up to even when no one else is looking.

Prayer is also a key part of our discipleship, and we looked at this topic in the third of the series. Many of us enjoyed some special time together over our recent Sabbath of Prayer. I was a bit disappointed that many of the regular congregation did not participate in the times together at the church. These sessions were so special as we sought the Lord and found blessing and encouragement in his presence. Please do consider joining in for some of the next one in

October.

We now have a couple of special prayer initiatives coming up this month and I warmly commend these to you...

## **Thy Kingdom Come**

We are again sharing with Christians across the world in these eleven days of prayer from Ascension Day up to Pentecost – 9-19 May, praying for people we know to find faith in Christ. See [page 14](#) for details and do pick up the free booklets to help you reflect and pray over the period.



## **Free The Wight**

An Island-wide prayer initiative that I have been involved in setting up with the Wight Church team, which is on the afternoon of **Pentecost Sunday 19 May at 4pm** - see [page 16](#)

We plan to have a number of small prayer groups along Shanklin seafront for the hour. Look out for details - and do let Brian know if you'd be happy to be a prayer leader.

## **Visit of new Synod Moderator**

Rev Dr Michael Hopkins is coming over to meet with me on Tuesday 30 April and will attend the Bible Bite meeting. Do come along at 1.30pm to meet him as we chat over coffee and cake...

He is also coming across for Ryde's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations (they moved to the present site in 1974) on 6 October and we plan to have a tea and cake gathering that afternoon at Shanklin so many of you can meet him and find out more about URC life across the Wessex Synod.

Every blessing for this colourful Spring season,

# Prayer



We had an inspiring 24 hours over our recent **Sabbath of Prayer**, spending time in God's presence together. Another one is planned for October – please look out for details and do try and get involved.

## Tuesday Prayer at 19:30

Continues each week via Zoom using the same account as for other activities and groups :

[https://us04web.zoom.us/j/3242665584?  
pwd=ZTIXZzBLWnkrWTNBY2JBK1o0K2ZXdz09](https://us04web.zoom.us/j/3242665584?pwd=ZTIXZzBLWnkrWTNBY2JBK1o0K2ZXdz09)

Meeting ID: 324 266 5584 Password: 936536.

## Text Prayer Network

This has proved a really efficient method of getting prayer needs around. So, if you have an urgent and important issue that needs immediate cover, please text Lou on **07474 273119** (or, as a back-up, Jean Cunningham on: 07854 324809) with your prayer request and she will mobilise a team of over 30 intercessors by forwarding the message to the group. Each of the team will pray and then delete the message.

If you'd like to be added to this network, please get in touch with Lou and she will brief you on the protocols.

## Prayer for Israel

Is held each Monday at 14:30 at Roy, Melodie and Carol's home in the Old Village.

Should you wish to know more details about the prayer meeting, please contact Melodie or Roy on ☎ 866912 or [melodieroywilson@gmail.com](mailto:melodieroywilson@gmail.com).



# Stepwise

*This is not a course, it is a way of deepening discipleship.*



**Next group starts: September 2024**

**'Come & See' event:**

**Wed 8<sup>th</sup> May 2024, 15:00 – 16:30**

**at Shanklin URC**

*Faith Filled Life stream journeys through exploring your own faith, your own calling, and what mission, outreach and discipleship means.*

To book or show your interest

email: [bookings@urcwessex.org.uk](mailto:bookings@urcwessex.org.uk)

Or call: 023 8067 4513



## From Sabbath of Prayer

### **Psalm 5:8**

*Lead me, Lord, in your righteousness because of my enemies – make your way straight before me. NIVUK*

*Lead me in the right path, O Lord, or my enemies will conquer me. Make your way plain for me to follow NLT*

*Waiting for directions to get me safely through enemy lines.  
The Message*

I'm really feeling that the Lord is saying, "Stop running, ask me to help in those things that are hurting you. Why do you try to do it yourself, ask me - I am here for you. I long to hear you whisper. 'Help me'.

"There is nothing that I do not know. I'm here awaiting the sacrifice. Lay it down and I will pick it up. I will touch those parts of you that need: Life! Love! Peace! Freedom! Healing! Truth! I can do all things. I am He who that gives you life. I am waiting to restore you. Are you ready to let go.

"Release that worry and come forward and I will give you peace."

Lou

### **Connection Quiz**

1. What is it that a rolling stone doesn't gather?
2. What did Jack and Jill go up to fetch a pail of water?
3. What is the name of West Bromwich Albion FC's ground?
4. What was the name of Frank Thornton's character in '*Last of the Summer Wine*'?
5. So, what is the **connection** between the answers to questions 1 - 4?
6. And bonus question... where was the cover photo taken? Hint: it was taken in Dorset, recently

Answers are on [page 35](#)



## Swift Boxes Installed...

If you have heard strange tweeting sounds from on high, this is a speaker issuing bird calls to attract swifts over the coming weeks.

Brian's cousin Robin (pictured right) and his friend Bob Lord from Hampshire Swifts returned to the Island last month to install the first three nesting boxes in our bell chamber. These are fitted behind the wooden louvres above the clock. If these are successful, more may be added in 2025.

Bob comments: *“Our Swift population nationwide is in trouble and declining. Swifts have adapted to living amongst us in holes in buildings, but these are being blocked-up as we move from timber to UPVC fittings - and these don't shrink and crack, creating small nooks-and-crannies for wildlife. New artificial spaces are needed if we want to save our Swifts.”*



*In Shanklin, there are a few swifts in the town during their breeding season (May to August) and now, the United Reformed Church, in partnership with Hampshire Swifts is helping to boost the number of spaces available for them. A box containing three nest spaces has been fitted behind the louvres in the top floor of the tower. A call-player has been fitted, which acts as a lure to attract birds, so if you are in the vicinity of the church during the summer, keep your eyes peeled, look up and listen. You may be lucky enough to see and hear Swifts taking up residence.”*



# ENCOUNTER

**Usually on the last Sunday of each month  
at 10:30**

**A café style meeting place to drop in  
and enjoy some refreshments**



**...a relaxed time of Friendship, Fun, Food  
and exploring Faith...  
with craft, songs, challenges, prayers...**

**EVERYONE is welcome  
– why not bring a friend?**

**This month the café service will be held on  
26<sup>th</sup> May and led by Brian**

**Café serving from 10.15**



# Shared Worship in The Bay



Share Sunday evenings with friends from various local congregations across The Bay

5 <sup>th</sup> May	18:30	<b>Christ Church</b> Broadway, Sandown
12 <sup>th</sup> May	18:30	<b>To be confirmed</b>
19 <sup>th</sup> May	18:30	<b>Free the Wight</b> <b>Prayer on the Seafront</b> see <a href="#">page 14</a>
26 <sup>th</sup> May	19:30	<b>Rylstone Gardens</b> Shanklin - start of the summer Worship in the Open Air season

## **A Few Thoughts from the Sabbath of Prayer 19<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> April**

### **Saturday Morning – ‘Be Still’**

Such a sense of peace coming into the House of the Lord.

Beautiful worship music playing – instrumental – but the words come to mind:

**“Be still**, for the presence of the Lord, the Holy One is here...”

Yes His presence is among us, His peace, His shalom, which He longs to impart to His children.

His presence may we seek – it’s all about you Jesus.

As we release our praise to Him, it delights His heart and He delights in it, as a good father who delights in his children...

“Come before Him now with reverence and fear... In him no sin is found, we stand on Holy Ground, **Be still** for the presence of the Lord, the Holy One is here.”

Thank you, dear Lord, the Holy One of Israel for this time coming apart, sitting at Your Feet... listening to Your **‘Still Small Voice’**.

- In the midst of the sometimes hecticness of life, we choose to come apart... to be still, for Your Presence is among us...

And as we worship, as we unite with our voices as one, may you pour out Your Spirit among us... that You alone would be glorified and the world would know that:

**“There is no other name**, but the Name of Jesus, that is worthy of honour, is worthy of glory, is worthy of all power and all praise”.

Amen and Amen! Come, Lord Jesus come and receive the worship that belongs to You alone.

Blessings and love in His Precious Name

Jane H

*“Be Still for the Presence of the Lord” - David J. Evans © 1986  
Thankyou Music*

*“No Other Name” - Robert Gay © 1988 Integrity’s Hosanna! Music  
CCL Licence number: 40715*

# Church Open Morning

18<sup>th</sup> May

10:00 - 12:00

*With*

- Crafts & Games  
(for children and  
adults)



- Refreshments  
Drinks, Cake,  
etc...

A place to meet up on a  
Saturday morning and have  
some fun  
(and a chat of course)

## **Trials and Temptations**

***Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. James 1 : 2 - 4***

Many of you in our church family are aware of an incident that happened to me at work during late January, and because of the nature of it, I had to report it to management.

Management told me that was the correct decision. An informal investigation ensued with the colleague involved. I had to wait many weeks for the outcome and chose to take sick leave until it was resolved - fortunately I had a very understanding GP. Management at work totally understood.

During this time I confided in family, friends and close church friends who prayed and encouraged me to stand firm and remain strong in the Lord. Thank you to all those who supported me by praying and showing me love and compassion - we truly have a wonderful church family.

Everyone I spoke to were shocked by the situation I was in and many people saying it was persecution and a spiritual attack. It's not always easy being a Christian in a secular work environment but I held on to the truth despite the lies. I feel I've witnessed to management through my response to the outcome of the investigation, and it's resulted in some changes to how certain things function at work - so some good has come out of something bad.

The truth will always be revealed and we must always stick to our beliefs and convictions, no matter what opposition we face.

I've become closer to the Lord throughout this episode and all the glory goes to our God in the highest.

Blessings,

Lavinia.

## Thank You

We are so grateful for all the faithful people on our prayer team and beyond who prayed for Ron and I at the time of his cardiac arrest and month long stay in Guy's St Thomas' Hospital in London.

Ron had 2/3 cardiac arrests (question mark with the doctors about the third one). He was taken in and out of sedation for about two weeks then had two stents inserted and later an LCD device.

It was very frightening but knowing God was leading you all in prayer and I was able to link into our prayer chain was a major comfort.

A very big thank you to Brian who visited twice. Also Brian and Janet on the second evening who talked and prayed with Peter and I, both of us in shock, and found this very reassuring knowing God was with us all.

We have a faithful God who will answer our prayers if we just put our trust in him.

Ron now has to build up his strength. We have an appointment for him to be checked over, then hopefully St Mary's will take over.

Thank you for all the messages, cards and gifts. He will see you soon.

Just put your trust in the hands of our Faithful God

Ron & Meryl Dallimore

### URC Daily Devotions

Each morning the United Reformed Church sends out a reading, reflection and short prayer which helps us to focus on our journeys of Christian discipleship.

The reflections are written by over 100 people with differing perspectives and from different places.

The Devotions are available from the website [devotions.urc.org.uk/](http://devotions.urc.org.uk/), where you can also subscribe, e-mail and URC social media.





Thy Kingdom Come (TKC) is a global ecumenical prayer movement that invites Christians around the world to pray from Ascension to Pentecost for more people to come to know Jesus. Since it began in May 2016, God has grown TKC into a movement which unites more than a million Christians in prayer (in nearly 90% of countries worldwide, across 85 different denominations and traditions) “so that friends and family, neighbours and colleagues might come to faith in Jesus Christ”

*Every person, household and church is encouraged to pray during the 11 days of Thy Kingdom Come in their own way ~ it is hoped that everyone taking part will:*

- *Deepen their own relationship with Jesus Christ*
- *Pray for 5 friends or family to come to faith in Jesus*
- *Pray for the empowerment of the Spirit to be effective in our witness*

*We are praying that the Spirit will inspire and equip us to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with our friends and families, our communities and our networks. It is our prayer that those who have not yet heard the Good News of Jesus Christ and his love for the world will hear it for themselves and respond and follow Him.*

Specifically, we again invite each and every Christian across the globe to pray that God’s Spirit might work in the lives of 5 people who have not responded with their ‘Yes’ to God’s call. Whether you have joined in ‘Thy Kingdom Come’ before or not, we invite you to take part & join in.

**“In praying 'Thy Kingdom Come' we all commit to playing our part in the renewal of the nations and the transformation of communities.”**

*Archbishop Justin Welby*

**For Thy Kingdom Come 2024, both a Prayer Guide and a Novena have been produced. Copies of these will be available in the church or you can access them now at:**

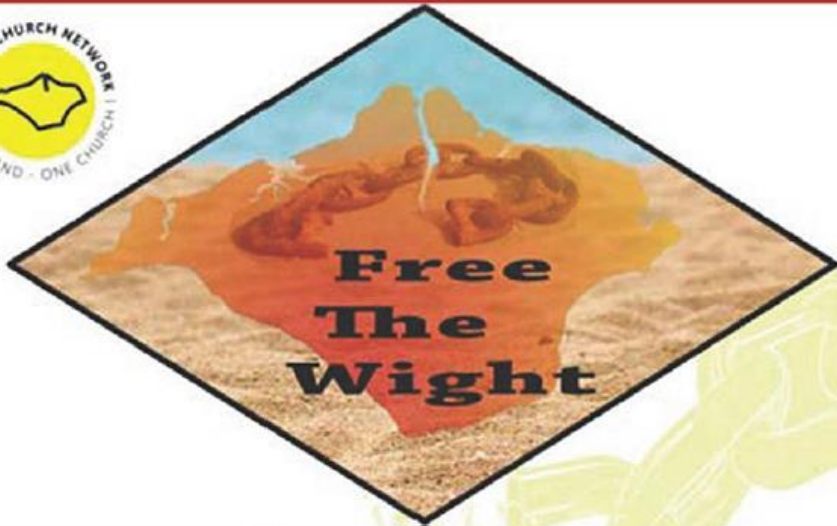
**<https://www.thykingdomcome.global/new-2024>**

**Please do join in with this global initiative when Christians around the world will be praying for people they know to come to Christ.**

*Robin*

## **Word from Lou**

Come to my place of worship  
It isn't such a hardship  
To handover things that hurt you  
Why would you not want to  
Have joy in the place of pain  
It is really a place to gain  
The peace that comes with healing  
When the harshness of that feeling  
Melts in my presence  
it doesn't have to be a lifelong sentence  
Give it to me all of it  
And let me see you healthy and fixed  
So you can walk my path  
That so many before have run and laughed  
With freedom to do my will  
So that the enemy cannot steal or kill  
The very reason that you are mine  
Please leave the past behind  
Look in front and see  
That freedom is yours and always will be  
Look to me and meet my eye  
And that pain will subside  
See my smile fall at my feet  
The enemy is now in defeat .  
Come to my alter and lay it aside  
And let me be your forever guide



**May 19<sup>th</sup> – Pentecost Sunday**  
**Various Locations 16:00 – 17:00**

Free the Wight is a chance for believers to come together across the Island at various locations to engage in prayer for spiritual strongholds to be broken, and for God's Kingdom to break through so that lives and communities are transformed. Locations around the Island are yet to be confirmed – please do get in touch if you'd like to help lead a gathering in your area.

**For more information, please contact:**  
**Rev. Richard Buxton or Rev. Paul Meredith at**  
**[prayer@rydeelim.org](mailto:prayer@rydeelim.org) or**

**Rev. Brian Harley: 862485 or [brianharley58@gmail.com](mailto:brianharley58@gmail.com)**

**"In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind.  
The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."  
John 1:4-5**



## Care Prayer Diary (April – July 2024)

The new prayer diary is available and has a beautiful picture of a chaffinch on the cover.

*The chaffinch is widespread across the UK with a vibrant song and a wide variety of calls to claim territory, attract a mate and – just sing! Apparently, chaffinches have regional accents, and they are one of the species that each morning join in the dawn chorus of beautifully complex and varied songs. Half of all the world's 11,000 known species are classified as songbirds. How amazing that God has created them all and given them a voice to praise Him and bless those of us who are listening!*

*'Ask the beasts, and they will teach you; the birds of the heavens, and they will tell you; or the bushes of the earth, and they will teach you; and the fish of the sea will declare to you... In His hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of all mankind.'* Job 12:7-10

What a wonderful exhortation to God's people to use our voices to praise Him! Day-by-day for all His mercies, which are 'new every morning' and His blessings to us and as we gather together in His House and worship.

The current prayer diary has the following issues in it, with very helpful prayer pointers for each day. If you have not had this very helpful resource before, do help yourselves or download from [care.org.uk/prayer](http://care.org.uk/prayer) - it has so many insights into both our national life and further afield to pray about. Topics include:

- Values in Education
- Music
- The Power of God's Word
- The Government of People
- Gambling Harms
- Leadership with Integrity
- Restoring the Natural World
- Transport Systems
- Caring for Vulnerable Individuals
- Seeking Global Peace
- Commercial Sexual Exploitation
- 'Conviction and Civility'
- Childhood and Youth

Source: [CARE](http://care.org.uk)

## Church Banner

The banner below has been designed by the children and will be taken to the Big Day Out at Hollycombe



# Big Day Out '24

**Hollycombe**  
STEAM IN THE COUNTRY  
hollycombe.co.uk



Children £5  
Adults £8



Were you at the Wessex Synod Big Day Out in 2022?

Big Day Out '24 will be **Bigger and Better** with many **more rides** and additional programme activities provided by the Wessex Synod.

Open to all church groups, user groups, and community links



**SATURDAY 4<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2024**  
**10AM - 5PM**

Book via:



## Shoebox Appeal

Sandra (Snell) who co-ordinates our local collection of shoeboxes has already started assembling items for the 2024 event.

Each week leading up to November, Sandra is focussing on a different aspect of what will be used to make up the boxes for dear children who have so little.

Last Month's was toiletry items (e.g. soap, toothbrushes, etc., although no liquid items).

This month the focus is on stationery items, e.g. notebooks, pencils, coloured crayons, rubbers, pencil sharpeners, rulers, etc.

This such an excellent way of collecting gradually things for the boxes. However, **do not** include: used items, war-related items, gum, chocolate or food items, medicines, sharp or fragile items.

For more details of what you can and cannot include, please go to [www.samaritans-purse.org.uk/what-we-do/operation-christmas-child/how-to-pack-a-shoebox](http://www.samaritans-purse.org.uk/what-we-do/operation-christmas-child/how-to-pack-a-shoebox).

Alternatively, you can pack a shoebox online at [www.samaritans-purse.org.uk/what-we-do/operation-christmas-child/shoebox-online](http://www.samaritans-purse.org.uk/what-we-do/operation-christmas-child/shoebox-online), it is so easy to do - your editor did this last year, and received an e-mail in January saying that the shoebox went to Romania.

If you'd like to be part of this, I would be very glad to pass any items on to Sandra and do ask if you'd like to know more, or visit the Samaritan's Purse website [www.samaritans-purse.org.uk/what-we-do/operation-christmas-child/](http://www.samaritans-purse.org.uk/what-we-do/operation-christmas-child/).

Thank you and blessings,

Jane H



# Good News for All!

'Good News' is a contemporary outreach newspaper used by churches and missions to take the good news about Jesus Christ into communities across the UK.

Every month, Good News reaches thousands of readers with true stories of how God is changing the lives of those who put their trust in his Son, Jesus. Using jargon-free language, it also explains how everyone can find a personal relationship with Jesus.

This such a great resource for people to read and then share with others!!

This month's edition (available in church and to read online at [www.goodnews-paper.org.uk/viewlatesteditionspage.htm](http://www.goodnews-paper.org.uk/viewlatesteditionspage.htm)) has several great articles, including the headline article 'Addict Set Free - suicidal addict now a therapist helping others after finding Jesus'.

Other contributions include:

- **Raye Of Light** - Record-breaking singer Raye says God saved her life
- **Bafta Winner's Joy** - Actress Samantha Morton says her joy comes from her faith
- **Russian Hero** - Martyr for democracy Navalny was driven by Christian beliefs
- **Heavyweight Clash** - Both Fury and Usyk have God in their corner
- **Faith At Forest** – Nottingham Forest striker has a spiritual goal
- **Charity Brings Hope** - Charity run by former addict helps other addicts find new life

# Good News... for a change



## Our Ever-Changing World



### *Saturday Open Church*

God chose a time of upheaval for Jesus to come into our world. The Greek empire had been overthrown by the Romans, but almost everybody still spoke Greek. Straight Roman roads made travelling much easier. This meant that the early Christians could carry God's Good News all over the Mediterranean world.

Today we can reach far further using modern communication methods. Local media advertised our Good Friday procession of Witness beforehand, with the photo in the County Press so large as to be unmissable.

When chatting to someone in Morrisons about the procession, the checkout operator chimed in, "Oh yes, I saw that in the paper." It

also appeared on Facebook. If you look below the photo (reproduced by kind permission of the Isle of Wight County Press), you can see that more than 200 people liked or loved this post, and 13 shared it to their own pages.



But many of those 67 comments were mocking. One wrote 'Next week can we have a re-enactment of Frodo's journey to Mordor'. How ironic that those who post deliberately offensive or provocative messages online are called trolls.

How do you answer the person who wrote: 'there is not one single thread of credible evidence that it did happen.'? You don't. Someone who wilfully chooses to be that ignorant is just what Jesus warned about when he said, 'Don't throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to

pieces.’ (Matthew 7:6)

We should neither be surprised nor discouraged by such reactions. Instead, we continue to sow the seed, knowing that God is the Lord of the harvest. Let us be encouraged by the feedback of those whose good opinion is worth having. For example:

- “I have been coming to CatURpillars since it opened, and I have always found it to be the most welcoming atmosphere. It’s the best. Thank you”
- A family came, for the first time, to Messy Church in March. They arrived early the following morning. Mum said that they were supposed to be going to a party but the children had asked to come to church instead.
- From the support manager of the Mother and Baby unit: “I am astounded by the level of support and kindness you have all shown. A massive thank you, we are eternally grateful”
- “I don’t really go to church, but I know there’s always a warm welcome here.”
- Dover Park School had an Ofsted Inspection in March. On the second day, the Open the Book team arrived at the same time as the Inspector. She chatted with them, saying she had put an approving sentence about OtB in her report because the children had told her they love it.
- And this is what God says about us: “you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light”

Isn’t it wonderful to hear such positive comments. Please don’t be offended by this comparison with our canine friends, but think for a moment how it makes you feel when a dog comes towards you wagging its tail. By contrast, internet trolls cause hurt and dread. What can we do to draw people in?

Acts 4:36 records that the apostles gave a Levite, Joseph, the nickname ‘Barnabas’ which means ‘son of encouragement’. He was the first to befriend the converted persecutor, Saul, and gave unreliable Mark a second chance.

Thank you, Lord, that You are using so many different ways to reach



so many people. Please help me to be a Barnabas.



*Wednesday Healthy Half Hour*

## **“Through the Borders” – “The Voice of the Hidden People”**

- Making Christ visible and the Gospel relevant

One of the ministries we have received information from over the years has been **The Messengers**. They have been reaching out for many years to the often ‘hidden peoples’ of Asia, in partnership with **Ethnos Asia Ministries**.

We have just received a very informative booklet giving details of how God is moving by his Spirit in these often forgotten places.

**Do take** a copy and be inspired! If you’d like to receive the Messengers monthly updates and prayer pointers, or to give to their work, I should be delighted to share more or go to their website, [www.themessengers.org.uk/](http://www.themessengers.org.uk/).

Blessings in Jesus’ Name,

Jane H

Source: [The Messengers](http://www.themessengers.org.uk/)



## The View From The Cross ~ 1

In Matthew 16, Jesus tells His followers ***“Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it.”*** (vv 24 & 25)

With Easter behind us we now look to Ascension Day and Pentecost ... Let's take a look at what it means for us as we seek to walk the way of Jesus today.

We'll look at the *View from the Cross* and *Denying Ourselves* and then next time at *Picking up the Cross Daily* and *Following Him*. Here is what Neil Anderson has to say about these:

\*\*\*

### The View From The Cross

***“For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?”*** (Matthew 16:25-26)

Three guidelines from these verses summarize the view from the cross, which we must adopt to counteract the self-centred worldview promoted by the god of this world.

First, we must sacrifice the lower life to gain the higher life. If you want to save your natural life (i.e. find your identity and sense of self-worth in positions, titles, accomplishments and possessions and seek only worldly well-being), you will lose it. At best you can only possess these temporal values for a lifetime, only to lose everything for eternity.

Furthermore, in all your efforts to possess these earthly treasures, you will fail to gain all that can be yours in Christ. Shoot for this world

and that's all you'll get, and eventually, you will lose even that. But shoot for the next world and God will throw in the benefits of knowing Him in this present life as well. Paul put it this way:

***“Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives’ tales; rather, train yourself to be godly. For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come” (1 Timothy 4: 7-8)***

Second, sacrifice the pleasure of things to gain the pleasure of life. What would you accept in trade for the fruit of the Spirit in your life? What material possession, what amount of money, what position or title would you exchange for the love, joy, peace and patience that you enjoy in Christ? Surely nothing! Victory over self comes as we learn to love people and use things instead of using people and loving things.

Third, sacrifice the temporal to gain the eternal. Possibly the greatest sign of spiritual maturity is the ability to postpone rewards. It is far better to know that we are the children of God than to gain anything that the world calls valuable. Even if following Christ results in hardships in this life, He will make it right in eternity.

**Heavenly Father, You alone are God. Help me to choose the higher life today instead of seeking the pleasures of this world.**

\*\*\*

## **Denying Self**

***“Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves” (Matthew 16:24)***

A primary reason why we struggle to fulfil Christ's Great Commission is that we are guilty of a great omission. We fail to deny ourselves.

Denying yourself is not the same as self-denial. Students, athletes and cult members practice self-denial, restricting themselves from substances and activities that keep them from reaching their goals. But the ultimate purpose of self-denial is self-glorification. The ultimate purpose of denying self is to glorify God.

Jesus was talking about denying yourself in the essential battle of life. The scramble for the throne, the struggle over who is going to be

God. Jesus doesn't enter into that battle - He's already won it. He occupies the throne and graciously offers to share it with us. But we want to be king in our lives by ourselves. Until we deny ourselves that which was never meant to be ours - the role of being God in our lives - we will never be at peace with God, or ourselves and we will never be free.

You were not designed to function independently of God, nor was your soul designed to function as master. You will either serve God and His kingdom or Satan and his kingdom. Self-seeking, self-serving, self-justifying, self-glorifying, self-centred and self-confident living is in actuality living and serving the world, the flesh and the devil. On the other hand, denying yourself is not self-mortification. God is not trying to annihilate you; He is trying to restore you.

When you deny yourself, you invite God to take the throne of your life, to occupy what is rightfully His, so that you may function as a person who is spiritually alive in Christ. Denying yourself is essential to spiritual freedom.

**Lord, too many times I have tried to live independently of You. I deny myself today and yield the throne of my life to You.**

*Neil Anderson*

***Freedom in Christ Ministries***

*Used by permission*

Neil says we should not be shooting for this world but **the next** and that when God commands us to deny ourselves, He is trying to restore us since self-denial is essential for our spiritual growth.

In his Newsheet + notes recently, Brian asked “*Are we prepared to live for others rather than for ourselves? This is deeply counter-cultural, but such is the way of the Kingdom. It's a choice – to be self-less, servant-hearted, and even sacrificial.*”

The question is **ARE WE?**

This Pentecost season, may we recommit ourselves to being disciples of Jesus Christ by denying ourselves and following the ways of His Kingdom.

***“let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and***

*perfecter of faith. For the joy that was set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart” (Hebrews 12:1-3)*

Thank you, Father, that you love us so much that you gave your one and only Son, that, believing in Him, we will not perish but have eternal life.

Dear Lord, help us to truly deny ourselves and follow the Lord Jesus Christ daily.

Next time we'll look at what it means for us to “take up our cross and follow Jesus”

*Robin*

All Bible verses quoted are from the NIVUK (UK): Holy Bible, New International Version® Anglicised, NIVUK® Copyright © 1979, 1984, 2011 by [Biblica, Inc.®](#). Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

## **Praise God for rescue of another Chibok girl**

Another Chibok schoolgirl has been rescued! Lydia Simon was rescued by the Nigerian Army, in an answer to the fervent prayers of Christians in Nigeria and around the world.

Lydia, who was among the missing Chibok Secondary schoolgirls, was rescued along with her three children by troops conducting Operation Desert Sanity III, around Ngoshe in the Gwoza Local Government Area of Borno State.

The army did not share further details of the rescue, but it is a wonderful answer to prayer for the Chibok parents who gathered last weekend to commemorate the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the abduction by Islamic militants Boko Haram. On 14<sup>th</sup> April 2014, more than 270 schoolgirls – mostly Christian – were kidnapped from their dormitories at the federal government school in Chibok. Around 90 are still missing.

The news of Lydia Simon's release is reason for thanksgiving. Please continue to pray alongside the Chibok parents and community for the release of all the young women.

## Street Pastors' Appeal

The reason for this request is to ask if anyone would be able to donate any of the following items:



- Lollipops
- Small bottles of water
- Individually wrapped chocolates (Celebrations, heroes etc) or sweets
- First Aid Items- Plasters, Bandages, Ice-packs, Micropore tape etc
- Money towards items

In June this year we have been asked by the police to have patrols outside the Isle of Wight Festival site on the Friday, Saturday and Sunday of the Festival where 90,000 people are expected to descend on Seaclose Park (Newport) for the weekend.

We will be covering the route from Church on the Roundabout (Coppins Bridge) to the main entrance of the Isle of Wight Festival at Medina College. This may extend to the Isle of Wight Festival bus station depending on what is needed on the patrols.

In addition, great news, we have for the first time in the history of the IoW Festival, also been allowed to patrol inside the festival site as well, Bejoy Pal (CEO of Ascension Trust, our Governing Body) is joining us for the festival patrols.

Therefore, we are expecting to be giving out a lot of these particular items to festival goers and need your help, you can give any of the items needed or alternatively donate any money towards this outreach.

To help support the Isle of Wight Street Pastors a national call has gone out to mainland initiatives for street pastor volunteers to come help us which has had a great response so far- prayer needed. Due to mainland Street Pastors coming over, we are also looking for accommodation. If you have a spare bedroom and are able to accommodate a Street Pastor, please let us know.

I am happy to collect any donations from your congregation or any money can be donated by the following means: - <https://iowstreetpastors.org.uk/get-involved/donate-online/>.

Whilst on patrol, Street Pastors will talk to people they meet, giving out Lollipops and chocolates to show God's love in action or to act as an icebreaker to start a conversation. They may also use lollipops in reaction to a volatile or difficult situation where someone is in need of help or distraction.

We may respond to someone:

- Suffering the effects of having a lot to drink or taking other substances
- Being separated from their friends, or need help to get home,
- Or when there is some argument or altercation brewing

Street Pastors cannot interrupt an ongoing fight - although they can call the police - but they can certainly avoid one starting.

As they patrol, Street Pastors pick up glass bottles and broken glass that might otherwise cause an injury or be used as a weapon. They give out flip flops to women who have found their high heels are no longer bearable after being on them for a while. Street Pastors also give out foil blankets to people who may be cold from not wearing the right clothing for the weather, saving them from Hypothermia.

Most patrols also involve helping people home, whether that's directing them to a bus station, taxis or ringing a friend or family member to pick them up

Basically Street Pastors are simply there to care, listen and help in the name of Jesus.

**This is a fantastic opportunity to show potentially thousands of people the love of Jesus.**

Please contact Suzanne (Street Coordinator) on:

- ☎ 07511 163632 or
- [suzanne@iowstreetpastors.org.uk](mailto:suzanne@iowstreetpastors.org.uk)

to arrange a collection or if you have any questions.



# DONATIONS NEEDED!



The Isle of Wight Street Pastors initiative are looking for donations to aid our support within the IOW festival this year! We are for the first time ever being allowed to run patrols inside the festival! From the 21st-24th of June

**Here are just a few things you could help us with:**

- Sweet's and/or lolly pop donations
- Bottled water donation
- Chocolate boxes or small chocolate's
- Money towards funding kit and resources such as first aid and specialist equipment

We are also looking for Street Pastor volunteers to support and patrol with us alongside the CEO of Ascension Trust - Bejoy, who is also attending alongside us this year!

*Pick up's and drop off's can be arranged to suit you as required!*



**Please contact - [sp@iowstreetpastors.org.uk](mailto:sp@iowstreetpastors.org.uk)**



# The Christian Institute

## – Watchmen for our Nation

The Spring Week of Prayer begins on 28<sup>th</sup> April until 4<sup>th</sup> May, praying for:

- Our Leaders
- Society
- Sanctity of Life
- Schools
- Free Speech
- Conversion Therapy Laws
- The Christian Institute

Do please take a leaflet from church and use the prayer pointers into these vital issues affecting our life as a nation.

**Especially** at this time, please pray for all the Institute's staff and trustees as they adjust to the sudden death of their founder and director, Colin Hart – and also please pray for his family in their time of such loss.

Along with the Week of Prayer leaflet, do pick up a copy of their Spring 2024 Newsletter, which shares more of Colin – as quoted, "A servant hearted man who devoted his life to Christ," – and the legacy he has left behind.

**Please pray** – our nation is 'at the crossroads' in so many ways. "Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful, and thankful." Colossians 4:2.

*Source: Christian Institute*

### Prayer for Iran

Heavenly Father, we pray for our brothers and sisters in Iran who risk so much to follow You. We think of those in prison for their faith; would You be with them, right now, showing them Your grace and mercy? We also think of those forced to flee the country; be with them and help them to know they aren't alone. Finally, we pray You would strengthen the courage of the underground church in Iran — thank You for their example, and may they couple wisdom with boldness. In Jesus' name, Amen.

*Source: [Open Doors](#)*

# FOCUS

**on our Christian Brothers and Sisters being persecuted for their faith**

## ***10 things Christians should know about India's 2024 elections***

Please pray for India's Christians during the nation's elections.

Voting began on 19<sup>th</sup> April in India's nationwide elections. The elections continue in seven stages until 1<sup>st</sup> June, with the results planned to be revealed on 4<sup>th</sup> June.

Christians in India know that these elections could have a significant impact on religious freedom, both in individual states and in the country as a whole. Christians and other religious minorities are facing increasing pressure, largely thanks to a rise of Hindu nationalism. Hindu extremists say that all Indians should be Hindu, and openly call for the erasure of other religions in the country. The results of the elections could have an impact on the amount of power and influence that Hindutva ideology wields in India.

Here are 10 things you need to know about the Indian election, how it will affect Christians, and how you can pray.

### **1. 12.5% of the world can vote**

The electorate in India is enormous. The 2024 elections are set to be the largest democratic election in human history, with 960 million eligible voters – which is 12.5% of the global population of eight billion. The last time India had a national election, in 2019, nearly 615 million of the eligible voters did cast a ballot.

### **2. India has a parliamentary system**

India's government is similar to the United Kingdom's, in that the elections decide who will sit in the lower house of parliament, called the Lok Sabha or House of the People in India. There are 543 seats, and a prime minister is elected from among the people who win those seats. The current prime minister is Narendra Modi of the BJP

party, and he is standing again.

### **3. The election takes a long time**

Because so many people vote and India is such a huge country, the election itself will take nearly six weeks, lasting from 19 April to 1 June. Additionally, India's election laws are designed to make voting as feasible as possible no matter where a person lives – the Election Commission of India is required to ensure that a voting station is available within 2 km (1.2 miles) of every voter. That means even if someone lives in a remote village in the Himalayas, election workers will carry a voting machine to a nearby location.

### **4. The main parties are the BJP and the INC**

The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the India National Congress (INC) parties (and their coalition partners) are the primary two parties that people will decide between. The BJP has had two straight elections of significant success, which means Narendra Modi has been prime minister since 2014. Broadly speaking, the INC is a centrist/centre-left political party, and the BJP is a right-wing party with roots in Hindu nationalism.

### **5. The elections will have significant consequences for Christians**

Because the ruling party in India has significant ties to Hindutva, the ideology that says Indian identity is tied to Hinduism, another victory in this year's election could be continued difficulties for India's religious minorities, including Christians. "These [elections] are very crucial, as this will decide the next five years," says Priya Sharma\*, an Open Doors partner in India. "If the current government stays in power, there are chances that India will undergo a complete transformation into a Hindu nationalist state. India will be absolutely intolerant to Christians and other religious minorities."

### **6. The elections could continue a dangerous trend**

Since 2014, India has gone from 28 on the World Watch List to 11 on the most current list. That shows how the Christian minority in India has increasingly been facing persecution, discrimination and opposition. "In the past ten years, Hindu extremists have openly threatened to eliminate Christianity and other minority religions in India," Sharma says. "There have been open statements of hatred

and threats against Christians. Pastors, leaders and lay Christians have been killed and attacked brutally in broad daylight and the accused are allowed to go free, without any punishment.”

## **7. Christians are targeted by anti-conversion laws**

Anti-conversion laws are currently in place in 12 of India’s 28 states, and purport to prevent forced or coerced conversion from one religion to another (with the exception of conversion to Hinduism). In reality, these laws have created an environment where conversion to a minority religion is very dangerous, and sharing the gospel can lead to persecution. “Under Indian law, citizens are free to choose their religion – but Hindu extremist groups misuse the laws,” says Sharma. “They falsely accuse pastors of offering incentives to people to convert to Christianity or say that church leaders force innocent people to become followers of Jesus. These extremists lodge false complaints at the police station, getting pastors arrested, enmeshed in legal battles and even sent to prison.”

## **8. There are fears of a national anti-conversion law**

Indian Christians are concerned that a win by the ruling party could lead to a national anti-conversion law, rather than simply state-level legislation. “Anti-conversion laws already existed in seven states before the BJP came into power in the national government in 2014, but since they formed their government, anti-conversion laws or bills have been imposed in five more states,” Sharma says. “There have even been several attempts to pass a national anti-conversion law. If the BJP wins the 2024 elections, there is a high chance of an anti-conversion law being introduced at the national level.”

## **9. A national anti-conversion law could have devastating consequences**

These laws are often used to attack converts from Hinduism, and any pastors who are seen as evangelising to Hindus. In 2023, Open Doors partners report that more than 2,300 pastors, leaders and believers were falsely accused, arrested and/or detained for forceful conversion. If a national law passes, this could make things even more dangerous. “If the anti-conversion law is introduced at the national level, this will create huge turbulence for the Christian community,” Sharma says. “More Christians could be tortured, attacked, killed and forcefully ‘reconverted’ to Hinduism.”

## **10. Christians are not in despair – but are asking God for help**

Sharma says that the church in India is growing, despite the persecution. And she's encouraged by growing unity among believers. "Most Christians only want to vote for a good government," Sharma says. "Believers are arranging prayer chains, fasting and hosting prayer meetings for a moral, ethical and righteous government to come to power." Despite the dangers and the persecution, Indian Christians know God is faithful and good. Please join them in praying during this crucial period.

### **Please Pray**

- For fair and safe elections, and that religious minorities would be protected during the campaigning and voting period
- That anti-conversion laws would not spread further, endangering converts and those sharing the gospel
- That whoever wins the election would uphold India's constitutional right to religious freedom .

\*\*\*

## **How many Christians are there in India?**

There are a large number of Christians in India – more than 71 million – but it's still only five per cent of the country's Hindu-majority population.

## **How are Christians persecuted in India?**

India is the largest democracy in the world – but Christians in many parts of the nation find themselves increasingly under threat.

In 2023, persecution against Christians in India hit the headlines. In early January, riots against believers broke out in Chhattisgarh, where gangs of armed Hindu extremists went door to door and assaulted believers. In May, ethnoreligious clashes in Manipur have shaken the region and the country, disproportionately impacting Christians; the violence left 400 churches in ashes and 50,000 believers displaced.

*Source: [Open Doors](#) - used by permission*

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## Connection Quiz Answers

1. **Moss.**
2. **A Hill.**
3. **The Hawthorns.**
4. **Herbert Truelove.**
5. **Connection: they are all British F1 racing drivers: Stirling Moss, Graham or Damon Hill, Mike Hawthorn and Johnny Herbert**
6. **This issue's cover photo is of: Corfe Castle, Dorset (from a train on the Swanage Railway) [© C Sparks]**





# Dates For Your Diary

Day	Date	Time	Details
Wed	1 <sup>st</sup> May	19:30	ALIVE Course continues
Sat	4 <sup>th</sup> May		Synod Big Day Out
Sun	5 <sup>th</sup> May	18:30	Shared Evening Worship at Christ Church
Wed	8 <sup>th</sup> May	19:30	ALIVE Course Continues
	9 <sup>th</sup> - 19 <sup>th</sup> May		Thy Kingdom Come Prayer Initiative see <a href="#">page 14</a>
Fri	10 <sup>th</sup> May	19:00	Elders Meeting
Sun	12 <sup>th</sup> May	10:30 15:00	Richard Buxton Speaking 1 <sup>st</sup> open-air concert of 2024 in Rylstone Gardens - featuring Shanklin Town Community & Youth Brass Bands
Wed	15 <sup>th</sup> May	19:30	ALIVE Course finishes
Sun	19 <sup>th</sup> May	10:30 16:00	Pentecost Sunday with Ordination of Elders Free the Wight Prayer event
<b>Thu</b>	<b>23<sup>rd</sup> May</b>	<b>19:30</b>	<b>Church Meeting</b>
Sun	26 <sup>th</sup> May	10:30 19:30	Encounter Café Service Open Air Worship at Rylstone Gardens begins

The Puzzle Pages

# Sudoku

*A numerical placement puzzle!*

To solve it you need to fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3 x 3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.

**Enjoy!**

*Difficulty level: medium*

			6	7	2			
							5	9
			4			6		7
4		2				9	8	1
9				2		4		
5								
		8	7	6				2
	1		2					
	6	5	1			7		3

1		2		3			4	5	6		7		8
							9						
10											11		
				12		13							14
		15						16			17	18	
	19					20					21		
22		23		24									
25						26				27		28	
		29						30			31		
										32			
33							34						



# Last month's Sudoku - how did you do?

9	2	8	6	5	7	3	4	1
1	5	6	3	4	9	7	2	8
4	7	3	2	8	1	6	9	5
8	3	7	4	9	5	1	6	2
5	1	9	8	2	6	4	3	7
2	6	4	7	1	3	5	8	9
3	8	5	1	6	2	9	7	4
6	4	7	9	7	8	2	5	3
7	9	2	5	3	4	8	1	6

## Across

- 1 A Dire Straits song (8 2 4)
- 9 Tool used to chop wood (3)
- 10 The Menin Gate is in this Belgian city (5)
- 11 @ (2)
- 12 With or in proximity to another person or people (8)
- 15 Burn something lightly (5)
- 16 Canvas roof over, e.g. a doorway (6)
- 20 Our church secretary (3)
- 21 Constrictor snake (3)
- 22 County town of Somerset (7)
- 25 Past tense of run (3)
- 26 Frozen water (3)
- 27 Brand of toilet paper infamous in schools at one time (4)
- 29 Poisonous (5)
- 30 Not Applicable *initials* (2)

- 31 Past tense of eat (3)
- 33 Oblong iced pastry with cream or custard filling (6)
- 34 French car maker, of e.g. the Twizzy (7)

## Down

- 1 French town famous for a tapestry, that isn't a tapestry (6)
- 2 Female ogre (6)
- 3 Be quick to do something (6)
- 4 A herb, or accounting software (4)
- 5 9 in Roman numerals (2)
- 6 Brother or sister's son (6)
- 7 Sound made by a lion (4)
- 8 'Yes' in Italiano (2)
- 13 Town in Northern Spain made famous by a Picasso painting (8)
- 14 Area in Paris where 'Le Moulin Rouge' is (7)
- 16 Makes a heart grow fonder (7)
- 17 One of the Balearic islands (5)
- 18 Not yes (2)
- 19 Sound a sheep makes (3)
- 22 Tricycle (5)
- 23 Up to a point in time (5)
- 24 Income - , monies paid to government (3)
- 28 Financial travel protection organisation *initials* (4)
- 32 Thanks, slang (2)

## Can You Guess The Year?

- Jacques Chirac elected President of France.
- Blackburn Rovers became FA Premier League champions.
- Daewoo began selling cars in the UK.
- Barings Bank, the UK's oldest merchant bank, collapsed
- And UK No. 1s included:
  - Celine Dion with '*Think Twice*'
  - Take That with '*Back for Good*'
  - Robson & Jerome with '*Unchained Melody*'
  - Robson & Jerome with '*I Believe*'

*Answer next issue*

## This Issue's 'Pot Luck' Quiz Questions

1. Which British driver won the British F1 Grand Prix in 1995?
2. When was the Bank of England formed?
3. What's the capital of Andorra?
4. Who was the last Stuart monarch?
5. What was the Portuguese currency before the Euro?
6. What is the name of the Michelin Man?
7. Who created '*Thomas the Tank Engine*'?
8. Who led 617 Squadron RAF on the dams raid in 1943?
9. On the periodic table, which element is Hg?
10. Who was the first monarch to reside in Buckingham Palace?

*Answers next issue*

Please note that the **deadline** for contributions for the next magazine is:

**Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> May**

However, contributions can be emailed at anytime up to the deadline day to the editor at:

[surc.thelink@btinternet.com](mailto:surc.thelink@btinternet.com)

# Last Issue's Solutions

- Guess the year: it was **1986**

- Last issue's crossword ↓

S	U	L	T	A	N	S	O	F	S	W	I	N	G
W		A		E			A		E				R
I	N	D	I	G	O			L	E	A	G	U	E
T	A	B		L		B	O	A		R			N
Z		A		O	W	L		I		Y	O	Y	O
E	L	B	O	W		U	R	S	A		R		B
R		Y		I	K	E		E	D	D			L
L				N		S					I	C	E
A	L	O	N	G			F	R	A	N	C	E	
N			O		T	W	O		U		E	T	
D	E		N		O		U		N		N		
	G	R	E	A	T	B	R	I	T	A	I	N	

## Last Issue's 'Pot Luck' Quiz Answers

- |                |                   |
|----------------|-------------------|
| 1. Arsenal     | 6. William I      |
| 2. 1983        | 7. George Orwell  |
| 3. Hugh Town   | 8. Virgil Tracy   |
| 4. Elizabeth I | 9. Protactinium   |
| 5. Punt        | 10. Norman Foster |

## Sunday Service

- Morning**      **10:30 Morning Worship** in church  
*Broadcast live on YouTube*
- **Holy Communion** on 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of each month
- **All Age Café service** on last Sunday of each month

## Weekday Activities

- Monday**      14:30      **Prayer for Israel** (see [page 4](#))
- Tuesday**      14:00      **Bible Bite** ministry in church  
*Broadcast live on YouTube*
- 19:30      **Prayer Meeting** on Zoom (see [page 4](#))
- Wednesday** 11:00      **Living Well Together** (aka 'The Well')
- Friday**      10:00      **CatURpillars**
- Saturday**      10:30      **Coffee Morning** on Zoom  
                    – a chance to catch up and have a chat

Details of any other services/activities that we hold will be posted:

- [inside the church](#)
- [on our Facebook page](#)
- [and on our website](#)

**Minister:**      **Rev Brian Harley**



10 Dracaena Gardens, Shanklin PO37 7JQ



01983 862485



[brianharley58@gmail.com](mailto:brianharley58@gmail.com)

*Day off: Monday*

**Secretary:**      **Robin Wightman**



[robinwightman@aol.com](mailto:robinwightman@aol.com)

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