

The Link - April 2025

View From Number 10 New Life in Jesus

I have been so encouraged by the life of our church over recent weeks. The worship has been vibrant with lots of free participation, and we've seen nearly 40 people involved in the Freedom in Christ courses. These have been bearing fruit in people's lives and I'm sure that has been spilling over into our gatherings.

It was great to welcome seven new members in March and to see these lovely people getting more involved in various aspects of our life as a church family. There has been a hunger for the scriptures at Bible Bite as we have been journeying through Paul's letter to the Ephesians. There have been lots of other good things going on - and I'm not able to share in all of them. You all have stories to tell and encouragement to share, I'm sure. God is good and is at work among us in various exciting ways. His Spirit is moving!

As the celebrations of Jesus' death and resurrection approach, we enter a time of rich opportunity to share the good news with people around us. This glorious message of forgiveness and eternal life is surely unmatched by anything the world can offer - even the largest lottery win!



Paul declares it so well to the people of Corinth - "anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!" (2 Corinthians 5:17 NLT). As we put our faith in what God has done through the cross and empty tomb, we are given this amazing gift of a whole new life.

The old ways can be properly dead and buried with Jesus - he took all our sins upon himself as he died that sacrificial death, and he took all that rubbish to the grave. God raised him from the dead and so

broke the power of sin, death and evil. For all who believe, there is a free gift on offer of salvation and new life.

Paul puts it like this in Romans 10 - "if you declare with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from

the dead, you will be saved."

Jesus said to Martha at her brother's graveside - "'I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die." (John 11:25-26). What an amazing claim!

It all seems pretty unbelievable - but that is why Christianity is so worth embracing. It is a life-changing decision to believe that these extraordinary events are true and to become a follower of Jesus. It is the very best choice you'll ever make, and it seals your destiny. He promises to be your forever friend, even into eternity.

Please join us for our Easter celebrations and discover this new life in Jesus. If you know this good news already, then please consider inviting a friend or two to come along to share in our various gatherings. There is something for everyone; see on the next pages.

he is Kisen,

With love and best wishes in the name of the Risen King,

Blessings,

Gift Day - Sunday 4th May

Please pray about making a special thank-offering to God so that we have a stronger financial base as we serve the Lord over the coming months and years.

We are grateful that giving has increased over the last year but so have expenses and we don't have reserves to fall back on.

Can you release some spare resources for kingdom work...?



Prayer Sabbath Friday 25 – Saturday 26th April

We are holding another special 24-hour prayer event with three opportunities to gather together and spend time with the Lord, beginning with some corporate worship and prayer and then allowing free time for personal devotion:

Meeting times Friday 18:30 - 20:30

Saturday 09.00 - 11:00 – breakfast from 08:30

15:30 – 17:30 – concluding with communion at about 17:00

Please do try and join us for one or more of these times together.

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

Meeting ID: 324 266 5584

Password: 936536.

Text Prayer Network - If you have an <u>urgent and important issue</u> that needs immediate cover, please text Lou on **07514 766798** (or, as a back-up - Jean Cunningham on: 07854 324809) with your prayer request and she will mobilise a team of 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.

Pray for The Bay Grace Mckenzie from Christ Church hosts this gathering, normally on the first Thursday of each month, at her home in Lake at 14:00. Ask Brian for details if you are interested in going along. **Next meeting: 3rd April**



On the last Sunday of each month at 10:30

A café style meeting place to drop in and enjoy time together with God







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

EVERYONE is welcome – why not bring a friend?

The next café service will be on 27th April – do please invite friends to join you for this more informal service

café serving from 10.15

Thought for the month

Jesus rose in GLORY from the CROSS, our sins were forgiven and DIED on the CROSS

Easter at Shanklin URC - new life in Jesus

Palm Sunday	10:30	Morning Worship				
Maundy Thursday	19:00	Supper and Communion				
		A shared event with Ryde URC remembering the Last Supper – please sign the list				
	10:00	Short reflective service				
Good Friday	11:15	Procession of Witness				
		Starting at St Blasius Church See opposite page for timings				
	05:45	Open Air Sunrise Celebration				
		on the seafront at the bottom of Hope Road				
Easter Day		- followed by breakfast at the beach café				
	10:30	Easter Communion for all ages				
	18:30	Easter Café with songs, videos etc				

Mary's Poem

Let the **love** within you flow to someone in need so they will know **Love** has no beginning has no end so put it in the heart of every friend

day

A relaxed evening to end this special

From that **love hope** is restored for someone who was once ignored Now these two have entered in you see **faith** will come to make it three

Now three things remain **faith**, **hope**, **love** 1 Corinthians 13:13

(HRISTIANS WORKING TOGETHER IN SHANKLIN Good Friday

Procession of Witness

Commencing at 11:15 at St Blasius Church



11:45 St Saviour on the Cliff

11:55 United Reformed Church

12:05 Methodist Church

12:20 Sacred Heart Church

12:30 St Paul's

You are warmly invited for refreshments at the end

Easter Sunday Morning

Open Air Sunrise Celebration

05:45

on the seafront

(at the bottom of Hope Road)

Followed by **Breakfast**

The South East Beach Café is opening especially for us





Wessex Synod

120 Alma Road, Southampton, SO14 6UW

Synod Moderator: The Revd Dr Michael Hopkins **Moderator's PA**: Mrs Deborah Walker

3 March 2025

A message for Lent 2025

Dear Friends,

As we enter this Lenten season, we find ourselves in a world filled with challenges. The ongoing humanitarian crises in Gaza and Ukraine, the increasingly visible effects of climate change, and the divisive political rhetoric that surrounds us can leave us feeling overwhelmed and powerless. Yet it is precisely in such times that the meaning of Lent becomes most powerful. When Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, he faced not just external temptations but profound questions about his identity and purpose. His forty days of struggle weren't about proving his willpower - they were about clarifying who he was called to be in a broken world.

Perhaps our greatest temptation today is not chocolate, social media, or other small indulgences we might give up for Lent. Perhaps our greatest temptation is to turn away from the difficult truths about ourselves and our world, to sleepwalk through life rather than to engage with it fully and courageously.

When we look away from the suffering in Gaza or Ukraine, when we ignore the realities of climate change, when we dismiss those whose politics differ from ours, we're not just avoiding uncomfortable topics, we're avoiding the deeper work God calls us to do: the work of becoming more fully ourselves and more fully present in God's world.

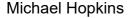
Fortunately, there is good news: the same Spirit that Luke tells us led Jesus into the wilderness remains with us today. The same Spirit that the writer of Genesis tells us hovered over the waters of creation continues to move through the chaos of our lives and our world, bringing forth new possibilities, new understanding, and new life.

This Lent is a good time to ask ourselves what are we running from

today? What truth are we afraid to face? Where might the Spirit be leading us to grow? As you reflect, remember that we don't face our wilderness alone. We journey together as Christ's body, supporting one another with compassion and hope; and we journey with the Spirit, who knows that our struggles are not about proving ourselves good or bad, but about discovering who we are truly called to be.

May this Lenten season be for each of us a time of honest reflection and renewed commitment. May we find the courage to face difficult truths about ourselves and our world. And may we emerge from these forty days more fully alive, more deeply connected, and more ready to be bearers of God's love and justice in a world that so desperately needs them.

With prayers for a blessed Lent,



Wessex Synod Moderator

Connection Quiz

- 1. Where is King William I buried?
- 2. Which French port in Normandie is a UNESCO World Heritage Site?
- 3. Which Spanish city is also the name of a Bank (there's one in Newport)?
- 4. What is the capital of Guernsey?
- 5. So, what is the **connection** between the answers to questions 1 4?
- 6. And bonus question... the cover photo was taken on a beach in Normandie, but do you know where it is?

Answers are on page 39

Come to 'The Well'

a place for

Living Well Together

A safe place for friendship, support and a refreshing time – here at Shanklin URC:

Wednesdays 11:00 - 13:00

Free refreshments and craft activities

Just drop in at any point





Join us every Monday 10:30 - 12:00 at Shanklin United Reformed Church

Come along for your weekly shop.

Register as a member for free and receive £15 of food for only £5.

Enjoy free tea and coffee while you're here too.

Shanklin pantry is run in partnership with

Shanklin United Reformed Church
High Street, Shanklin, Isle of Wight, PO37 6LA

A member of the Evangelical Aliance

www.shanklinurc.co.uk















Keys to Health, Wholeness and Fruitfulness



For the last eight Friday afternoons and one Saturday, we have been running the above course (by the Freedom in Christ organisation), which many of the people who attended have found to be highly beneficial.

On the final day we received the following feedback, which the people who gave it wanted to share with everyone:

We have thoroughly enjoyed this course on Keys to Health, Wholeness and Fruitfulness, even though being Christians for many years (40 + for me, Sue) and we've done many courses before, this one has been very enlightening. We would recommend it to all who want to know more about our Jesus' giftings and to get to know more of the church family.

The Bedwells

I came to this course with the idea I may find some useful tools to help me engage in conversations with others struggling with health issues or oncoming demise.

But instead in week two a word popped in my head, quite out of the blue that connected me to a sin issue I had and still have, which is gluttony.

I find the word so horrid and convicting and have pushed it to the back of my mind for years - unable to address the problem I have

with compulsive eating.

I don't eat a lot but what I do is to eat all the wrong things that do me no good, which resulted in gaining so much weight and a diagnosis of diabetes in 2007.

The course has helped me to identify my actual weight issue started way back in 2007 but my eating habits developed into another issue that came out of the course - it wasn't the amount of food that was the problem necessarily but I recognised I had an issue with cost. It had to be cheap or reduced. I feed myself junk - the stuff no one wants.

Anyone can lose weight if they put their mind to it. It's the habits formed that are the hardest to conquer.

I am a work in progress when it comes to maintaining a healthy weight. Now I have recognised my habit I can prayerfully put things in place to overcome those habits. It's not easy but I'm not going to beat myself up over it anymore - I'm looking for a WWJD bracelet.

I know I am His child. He wants the best for me and He'll give me all I need to keep me on the straight and narrow. I just have to trust Him and lean on Him - share with Him exactly how I feel. As Paul said, "Oh what a miserable person I am, who will rescue me from this sinful mind that subjects me to slavery?"

Thanks be to God who loves me and has saved me through Jesus who has set me free from my bondage to the sin of gluttony, and given me free will to say yes or no to anything. I will mess up - it's inevitable but I won't let this sin be a master to me.

Jesus did so much for us all by giving us new life, not bondage to any sin, yet I recognise that I have been in bondage for years without realising it. It's taken a long time for me to realise but He knows me better than I know myself.

Maybe I'm stronger and more able to deal with now. I just have to believe it. My aim, my goal is to receive the crown of life that James 1:12-13 talks of when we pass ever under trial and stand the test. Paul said he was happy to boast about his weaknesses for when he was weak, he was strong. Never be afraid to reveal your weaknesses. Someone may just need to hear them so they can be honest and open up about their own weaknesses. Confession is good. It's so freeing. God hears our pain and anguish and He deals

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with it in His good timing.

God will use me regardless of whether I am overweight or not, but for years I believed the lie that I would never be effective for Christ unless...

It was all a lie. I feel stronger, bolder and more confident now than I ever have been.

Thanks be to God.

Patricia B

It has been great sharing in the Keys course over these last couple of months. I have greatly enjoyed the whole thing and it's been good seeing lives being touched.

Brian

The Chosen

A new film from the brilliant series about Jesus and his disciples, The Chosen, is being shown over Easter – at Cineworld Newport www.cineworld.co.uk/films/the-chosen-the-last-supper-part-1/

And coming soon...

LICC Vision Event Everyday Matters Friday 9th May 19:30

The London Institute for Contemporary Christianity

Newport Minster

Also on Saturday 10th May at 09:00 Leaders' Breakfast at Carisbrooke Priory

A free event - book your place at: <u>www.licc.org.uk/events/vision-tour</u>

Letter from YMCA

Dear Brian, Ann & Rod and all at Bay Church

YMCA Fairthorne Group – The Lodge

I wanted to take a moment to express our heartfelt gratitude for your continued support of YMCA The Lodge and recent generous donation of £503.62. Your dedication not only helps provide a safe and supportive environment for young mums and their babies but also raises vital awareness of the challenges they face.

At YMCA The Lodge, these young mums at risk of homelessness receive compassionate support ensuring they have the parenthood skills to care for their young ones. With guidance from our dedicated team, they develop essential life skills, build confidence, and identify the support they need to create a brighter future for themselves and their children.

Your generosity and commitment make a profound difference—not only in ensuring these young families feel valued and cared for but also in strengthening the wider community's understanding of their journey. We truly appreciate everything you do to help us continue this vital work.

Thank you again for standing with us.

Yours sincerely

Sarah King Fundraising Manager

Living Water

I really felt like God gave me a picture of water pouring on the church, then I felt like He wanted me to use the words 'living water', which is Jesus.

I just thought I'd share this with you so we can all pray about it and see what the Lord is trying to reveal.

Hannah

Ephesians Chapter 2

(some thoughts on Brian's Bible Bite exposition)

Paul begins chapter two by explaining to the Ephesians where they had come from ~ they were dead in transgression... going nowhere (a dead end). Today, as then, much of creation follows the way of the world and we Christians once walked with them and were deserving only of wrath. As Jesus told His audience during the Sermon on the Mount: "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it." (Matthew 7:13&14)

BUT

Paul explains that it is because of God's great mercy and love for us that he has made us "ALIVE IN CHRIST" and we are <u>NOW</u> **SEATED WITH CHRIST** in the heavenly realms. Tom Wright describes this as, "the sheer, almost unbelievable, magnificent kindness of God." It is important to note that this is <u>NOT</u> a future promise!

How has this come about? Verse 8 explains: "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God."

Let us all think about and praise God for what He has done for us and let us do this **regularly** and remember the unfathomable cost of it... the death of His one and only Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

This is God's gift to each of us and not in any way of ourselves (that no one may boast): we receive this by His gift of faith alone.

WE HAVE BEEN BOUGHT FROM DEATH TO LIFE ~ RESCUED FROM THE BRINK!

In verse 10 Paul explains why... "For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." And in Philippians 2:15 he says, "so that you may become blameless and pure, 'children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation. Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky."

We have been saved by faith, but our works are the demonstration that we have been saved!

LET US ALL SHINE LIKE STARS FOR JESUS

In the second half of the chapter, Paul, who originally was passionate about everything Jewish and against all that was Christian, now begins to write about a NEW Temple!

We, who were once far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ and both Jews and Gentiles are joined together in one body:

"For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace." (vv 14&15)

The Cross is central to this, in His death, Christ has set aside the old laws and commands and has made ONE new humanity. Through Him, both Jews and Gentiles have access to the Father, by one Spirit. Although we are familiar with Paul's writing, this would have been RADICAL to those listening in the mid-first century!

THIS IS A MESSAGE OF PEACE AND RECONCILIATION ~ WE ARE ALL UNITED IN CHRIST JESUS

The Chapter reaches a crescendo in verses 19 & 22. There are no barriers, we are all equal citizens, members of one household.

"Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit."

WE ARE TO BE CHRIST-CENTRED IN ALL THAT WE DO, SAY AND THINK

"The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone." (Psalm 118:22)

"You also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." (1Peter 2:5)

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"It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery" (Galatians 5:1)

We ARE FAMILY

Last month, I summarised Brian's Bible Bite exposition of Ephesians Chapter 1. In that chapter, Paul writes, "In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will" (v11).

Every one of us has been chosen to be members of God's family. As family, we are called to be disciples of Christ. Here is how Neil Anderson puts it:

THE DEFINITION OF DISCIPLESHIP

"Encourage one another, and build up one another, just as you in fact are doing" (1 Thessalonians 5:11)

Jesus' primary call to His disciples is seen in Matthew's gospel: "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." (11:28) and "Come, follow me, Jesus said, and I will send you out to fish for people." (4:19).

Mark records that, "He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him, and that He might send them out to preach, and to have authority to cast out the demons" (3:14&15).

Notice that Jesus' relationship with His disciples preceded His assignment to them. Discipleship is the intensely personal activity of two or more persons helping each other experience a growing relationship with God. Discipleship is being before doing, maturity before ministry, and character before career.

Every Christian, including you, is both a disciple and a discipler in the context of his Christian relationships. You have the awesome privilege and responsibility both to be a teacher and a learner of what it means to be in Christ, walk in the Spirit and live by faith. You may have a role in your family, church or Christian community which gives you specific responsibility for discipling others, such as a wife, husband, pastor, Sunday school teacher, home group leader, etc. But even as an appointed discipler, you are never not a disciple who is learning and growing in Christ through your relationships. Conversely, you may not have an "official" responsibility to disciple anyone, but you are never not a discipler. You have the opportunity to help your children, your friends, and other believers grow in Christ through your caring and committed relationship with them.

Similarly, every Christian is both a counsellor and counselee in the context of his Christian relationships. A good counsellor should be a good discipler, and a good discipler should be a good counsellor. Biblically, they are the same role. Your level of maturity may dictate that you do a lot of Christian counselling. But there will still be times when you need to seek or receive the counsel of other Christians. There will never be a day when we don't need each other!

Father, help me remember that I will never be so mature that I need not receive Godly counsel from my brothers and sisters in Christ.

Neil Anderson Freedom in Christ Ministries Used by permission

In chapter 2 of Ephesians, Paul goes on to say:

"Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit." (vv19-22)

By uniting believers in Christ, God unites believers with each other (the church). God's eternal plan is shown in the people who are made one in Christ and transformed by the Spirit. Why were we chosen? Paul answers this:

[&]quot;in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory" (Ephesians 1:12)

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The prophet Micah explains:

"He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God" (6v8)

Let us all seek to do what the Lord requires of us every day!

Lord, thank You that Your plan has always been to bring everything under Christ. Thank You for including me in Christ, to the praise of Your glory.

Father help us to act justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with You in all that we do, all that we say and all that we think ~ this day and forever more. Guide us in all things and help us to persevere in doing Your Will.

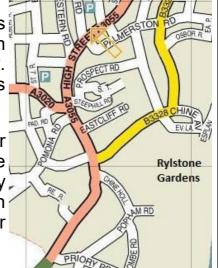
We ask these things in the name of Your Son, our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Robin

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Advance Notice

- Open Air Worship returns to Rylstone Gardens in Shanklin at the end of May. Watch out for further details nearer the time.
- The 2025 open air summer concert season in Rylstone Gardens starts on 12th May with a concert by Shanklin Town Brass Band (weather permitting of course!!).



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 to read online at www.goodnews-paper.org.uk/viewlatesteditionspage.htm) has several great articles, including the headline article 'Forgiving Their Girl's Killer - Couple find grace to forgive after daughter killed in Holy Week '.

Other contributions include:

- Easter Miracle How actor found faith on set of Passion of the Christ movie
- Easter Story in Cinemas The Chosen series begins Easter story in UK cinemas 10th April
- Shroud of Turin New evidence it is 2,000 years old and from the Middle East
- Editor's Easter Message Easter is the ultimate superhero story
- Grylls Bears All Bear Grylls says God gave him a second chance
- Vicar in The Traitors 'I knew God was with me' says competitor in hit TV series

Good News... for a change

Precious Memories of Eileen Parsonage

Eileen has been a blessing in my life. I considered her my Christian mentor.

Several years ago and recently I remember how she answered my many questions regarding the Bible. She was aware of my lack of knowledge. At one stage I was on the brink of not coming to the church anymore because I felt so uncomfortable about my ignorance, although Jesus was in my heart... but Eileen showed me great encouragement, patience, and reassurance. We both prayed about it and sometime later I had the wonderful gift from Our Heavenly Father, I had received the Holy Spirit.

We will all miss Eileen very much.

Praise be to God. Pat Blair

We miss so much dear Eileen's smiling face and loving presence with us in our Church Family.

We personally go back many years, having known dear Eileen when her girls Jo and Sarah were small and we were in St Paul's Church in Shanklin together. Over the years, in spite of being called by the Lord to different Church Fellowships, Eileen was still in our lives through prayer gatherings such as Lydia Fellowship, Ebenezer and other intercessory gatherings for Israel.

When the Lord called us to this, our Church family, it was a joy to again reconnect more deeply with Eileen. We do thank our dear Lord for every remembrance of her – for her deep love for Him and for His Word and her intercessors heart.

Eillen has gone before us all, but she has left a wonderful legacy of what it means to be woman of God.

"Well done, good and faithful servant." Dear Eileen – a very appropriate scripture for our beloved sister in the Lord

May her dear family and all who knew and loved Eileen know God's comfort and peace at this time of such loss.

Blessings and love in Jesus,

Jane and Mike H



A Service of Thanksgiving will be on Tuesday 22nd April at 13:00 and will be at Sandown Methodist Church, at her request - where she spent her first 40 years. Brian will lead the service, and we will not have Bible Bite that day



IoW Street Pastors IoW Festival 2025



Street Pastors will be patrolling again at the loW Festival in June.

As well as patrolling on foot off site and on site at the festival we are also opening our Safe Space in Newport Bus Station and for the first time, we will be having a Festival Safe Space gazebo at the festival, which will be run in a similar way as the Newport Bus Station one.

All foot patrols and the Safe Spaces will be happening from the Thursday to the Sunday (19th-22nd June).

Once again, this is a mammoth task for us so mainland street pastor volunteers will be joining us to help out.

Last year we had 29 mainland volunteers come to the Island and help us; we hope to have even more this year.



The mainland volunteers cover the cost of their own travel with the option of camping onsite at the festival, camping at Miriam & Malc's or if they are unable to camp, then we find them a host house to stay at.

If you have a spare room and would be able to accommodate 1-2 mainland volunteers, please let myself or Miriam & Malc know.

Last year we were extremely grateful to all the people that offered to

host mainland volunteers and every one of the volunteers said how lovely all their hosts were.

We are also now looking for various donations for the festival weekend patrols. This is the list of items that we are looking to be donated:

- Individually wrapped sweets and lollipops
- Small bottles of water
- Wipes, tissues, small bottles of hand sanitizer, ice packs and PPE gloves
- We are also requesting donations of money towards other kit, including to street pastors so they can buy their own mobile defibrillator

The opportunity to show the love of Jesus at the festival, where 90,000 people attend each day, is amazing.

We are the only Christian organisation that are allowed to patrol the whole site

We also have a WhatsApp Prayer group that will be live throughout the whole weekend, where we post prayer requests for people we meet, incidents we come across or dealing with etc. If you would like to join this, please let me know.

I personally would really value your prayers as this is a huge task to organise, whilst continuing to oversee our regular patrols we do and organising all the other extra summer events we either patrol at or attend and attending various meetings.

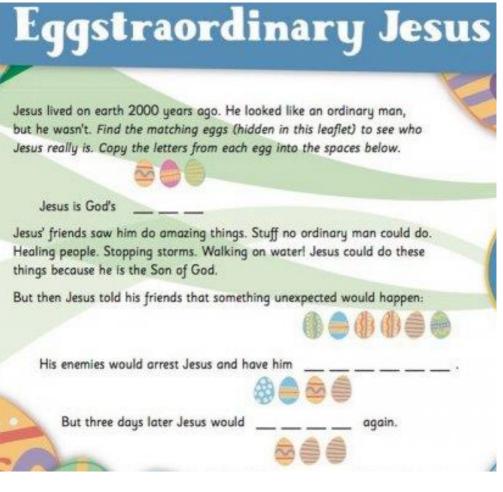
By adding the two safe spaces this year means I have four different locations to oversee during the festival weekend, juggling 2 radios (festival staff radio & street pastor radio), 3 phones and files of paperwork whilst being on site 24 hours a day for 5 days and attending daily safeguarding update meetings on site. This also includes making the welfare of all the volunteers a priority.

Suzanne McCaffery Street Pastor Coordinator Isle of Wight Street Pastors

suzanne@iowstreetpastors.org.uk www.iowstreetpastors.org.uk

Thank You to All Good and Faithful Servants.

After the Open the Book team took the nativity service at St James' Church they kindly gave them their Christmas offering. As a result, every child in the schools we serve in Ryde will receive Easier booklets, such as this one.



Using puzzles to fill in parts of the story, kids will learn that Jesus died to rescue us from all the wrong things we say, do and think that stop us being friends with God, and that He rose again to be King of everything.

When dear Eileen first heard about Open the Book she was really

keen to be involved. "I wish you were going into Haylands" she said, "my grandchildren go there." Taking part in assembly was not really feasible, so we invited Eileen to become our prayer partner. She did so, each Sunday asking what story we would be telling that week. Within a few months, the deputy Head of Dover Park, where we have taken assemblies on Wednesdays for 6 years, was appointed Head of Haylands. She immediately went to the office and asked how to contact the team. Eileen's prayers were honoured. Now, every term-time-Thursday, a Bible story is presented to those children as well.



The photo over the page was taken during rehearsal at Haylands. It shows 'Jesus' looking very unhappy when the disciples turn away parents bringing their children to meet Him.

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One day Eileen went to visit her daughter. Her granddaughter saw her coming excitedly and ran out to meet Eileen, saying: "I was a disciple in Open the Book today!" Every week, her as class files out of the hall, Eileen's granddaughter gives us smile beautiful and waves goodbye. Eileen, who has

now left the hall of this world, will have heard God's words of welcome: "Well done, good and faithful servant – Come and share your master's happiness."



A series of stories leading up to Easter began with Palm Sunday. It was done in the style of the TV News, with a roving reporter asking those in the crowd what was special about Jesus. This gave the opportunity to remind the children of 5 recent stories, reinforcing their memories. The photo above shows the rehearsal at Dover Park. Did you spot that there's a different person dressed identically as Jesus? Immediately afterwards, a teacher emailed Julie asking her to take a lesson about Palm Sunday with Year 1 the following week. Keeping 30 five-year-olds occupied and interested for over an hour was exhausting - teachers who spend the entire day in class are also to be congratulated and valued, Well Done.

Jesus told his disciples to let the children come to Him: 'for the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to such as these'. It is His will that they know about and come to love Him. This is the ministry of Open the Book, and we value your support, particularly in prayer. Our storytellers mime to narration, meaning there are no lines to learn. If you know anyone who might be able to join a team taking the word of God into school assemblies, please talk to Julie.

Thank You

Tribute to Dave Todd

The founder of Open the Book, who sadly passed away in February.

It all started in 1999 as a millennium project. Dave Todd recognised that children didn't know Bible stories and he yearned to change that. He believed that if there was a way to bring Bible stories to life for children in a way that was engaging, interactive and fun, it would make a difference. One evening, he gathered in his home a group of Christians who had experience working with children and in schools, but didn't know why they were there. He unveiled a giant cutout of a lion he had made, and asked the group, 'How are we going to tell the story of Daniel in the Lions' Den?' Since then, Open the Book, as it became known, has grown beyond what anyone ever imagined. There are now more than 7,500 Open the Book Storytellers who comprise more than 2,500 teams that go into over 3,000 primary schools across England & Wales. This means over 360,000 children are hearing Bible stories regularly in their school assemblies. Open the Book is also growing in another 18 countries spread across Africa, Latin America and the Middle East, How thankful we are for Dave's vision, commitment and creativity. (Source Bible Society)

How Open Doors training for seven women transformed a whole church

Seven women from a church in Cameroon attended self-help group training – and now their whole church family has been transformed.

When Auristine attended a self-help group training organised by Open Doors partners in Cameroon, she could not have imagined the impact it would have on her and her community. She and the six women from her church who attended are seeing enormous change – thanks to your support and prayers.

Vulnerability of women

Auristine's husband leads a church in Garoua, in the north of Cameroon. She explains that many Christians in Garoua and the surrounding villages are either not aware of Christian persecution or don't give much weight to it.

Elsewhere in Cameroon, particularly the Far North, persecution is impossible to ignore: the region faces incessant, violent attacks from Islamist militant groups like Boko Haram. In Auristine's region, the persecution is more pernicious: believers face marginalisation in business and the marketplace, particularly if they have converted from Islam. Some are pressured with economic enticements to return to Islam.

"During the seminar, we learned that women are vulnerable when there is persecution," she explains. The additional vulnerability of women is something that her church wasn't yet fully aware of, or properly equipped to face.

Capable women

Determined to help her church understand the reality of persecution, Auristine and the other six women attended the Open Doors partners' self-help group. After the training, they felt much more equipped to speak to their church – and decided to start their first small group, called *Femmes Capable* ('Capable Women').

"We teach the Word of God to women so that they can stand firm in times of adversity"

Auristine

Since then, Femmes Capable has led to the creation of groups in all

12 communities where their local church is present. They've seen how supporting the women in a church leads to transformation throughout the whole congregation.

"At first, I had a hard time getting the women in my congregation together. Even for simple meetings, it was complicated," says Auristine. "Now, we teach women how to evangelise, then we do Bible studies. We teach the Word of God to women so that they can stand firm in times of adversity."

Equipped to support their families

There are also practical elements to the groups, which help the women of the church support their families in the face of financial discrimination. "They must be able to do things with their hands because God blesses the work of our hands," Auristine explains. "Finally, we teach women how to save."

The main group manufactures products like soap and neem oil, which is made from the fruit and seeds of Cameroon's neem trees. "Neem grains cost us nothing," says Auristine. "These seeds fall from the trees, and we go to the villages. We pay the women in these villages and they collect 50kg bags at 3,000 francs per bag. When we receive it, we soak the seeds, dry them and then we can extract the oil. The litre sells for 6,000 francs. That's a lot of profit!"

She adds: "In the group, there are women who make soap from carrots, carrot oil, neem soap, liquid soap, kinkeliba tea. The women also have their products, and I can say that all these women are now financially autonomous and participate in the financial growth of their households and the church."

"Today, the women are thriving"

Besides group projects, each woman also has her own, individual income-generating activity. "Today, the women are thriving in the church, in their homes and even where they serve on a daily basis," Auristine shares proudly. "Today, we are a women's association that can subsidise projects in its entirety. We have money in our accounts that allows everyone to take loans for projects. We make savings that are used to help families at the end of each year for their projects."

The group's dream is to grow these productions nationally and internationally. "There is a company in Yaoundé [Cameroon's capital

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city] that buys our soaps in large quantities every month. It's a good start. I dream of seeing these products go further."

Thank you!

Auristine is deeply thankful to God and to the people who made this transformative training possible: "I am grateful to the Lord for this seminar. I am able to see the women fulfilled and ready to face persecution if it arises here in Garoua.

"I thank you very much for the training, the follow-ups, the support and I pray that the Lord will repay you a hundredfold."

Praying



It can be hard to know where to start when you know you need to speak to The Lord.

We have a new series of Explore prayer cards ~ you will find them as you come into the church. There are a series of 12 small cards which cover various topics from "Feeling Sad and Anxious" to "Being Thankful", and many more besides ... each card has a Bible verse on the reverse (from The Message translation) and a short prayer to help you speak to God about how you are feeling.

Please make use of these and if you know someone who might benefit from one or two of them, please do pass them on.

Robin

"Digging Deeper"

It was fascinating a few weeks ago when Ellen spoke at the Sunday morning service on 9th February on the theme of '**The crimson worm and the cross**'.

Ellen helped us to 'dig deeper' into Psalm 22:6 – "But I am a worm and not a man, scorned by everyone, despised by the people."

This prophetic scripture was pointing to Messiah Jesus, who would lay down his life and who would be an object of scorn to many.

It was thrilling to learn the deep connections between the crimson worm throughout scripture and the sacrificial death of Jesus, shedding His life blood for the salvation of mankind.

This red worm is found primarily in the Middle East. It produces a brilliant red dye, used in Bible times and still today. It was used in the High Priest's robe and in the veil that separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies (Exodus 26:31) to quote from Ellen's notes.

"When Jesus died, it was the big curtain that tore from the top to the bottom showing that Jesus had made a way for us to come near to God."

Digging Deeper into the significance of this worm, reveals **so** much about its life cycle that ties up with God's redemptive plan going right back through history.

If you missed Ellen's talk do ask me – I am blessed with a copy of her notes! – or watch the service again on YouTube (www.youtube.com/watch?v=isgpQN8vQoE). To me it was so exciting to see the link between this little creature and rather puzzling scripture and God's prophetic purposes for our redemption – Amazing Love, Amazing Grace!

As we approach Easter, may it come afresh to us – the Suffering Servant, Jesus, laid down His life, that we might have life in all it's fullness. And on Resurrection Day we will together celebrate our Risen Ascended Glorious Lord seated at the Right Hand of our Father, interceding for us!

Hallelujah – What a Saviour!

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Abundant blessings and love in His Wonderful Name

Jane H

P.S. Let's keep digging together for all the riches to be found in God's Word.

Tuesday's "Bible Bites" is a great opportunity and a pause in the week to spend time with the Lord and "dig deeper" and the recent courses "Freedom in Christ" and "Health, Wellness and Fruitfulness" have been brilliant opportunities to 'dig deeper' in our walk with the Lord.

Such helpful and blessed times, thank You dear Lord!

Bible a Month

By regularly giving £10 or more, you can put the Bible in someone's hands every month.

Your support brings the Bible to more people.

More than that, your faithful support will provide the backbone for global Bible outreach. When people who love God's word pledge to share it each month, together you can build life-changing Bible ministries. That means rapid response during crises and the Bible reaching people who would never otherwise experience it as Bible-engagement programmes take God's word to new places.

To join the Bible a Month Club, go to:

www.biblesociety.org.uk/giving/regular/bible-a-month-signup/

The Bible can really change lives. Thanks to your generosity on a regular basis many more people would be able to experience it.





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

6th Apr 18:30 Christ Church

Broadway, Sandown

13th Apr 18:30 Sandown Baptist Church

Station Avenue, Sandown

20th Apr 18:30 URC

Easter Café High Street, Shanklin

27th Apr 18:30 Church of the Sacred Heart

Atherley Road, Shanklin

How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity



on our Christian Brothers and Sisters being persecuted for their faith

Severe prison sentences given to three converts in Iran, including a pregnant woman

13 March 2025

Long-term prison sentences have been handed to three converts in Iran as the authorities continue their brutal crackdown on those who leave Islam for Christianity.

Abbas Soori, Narges Nasri and Mehran Shamloui are facing long-term imprisonments – please pray for them.

Three Iranian Christian converts, including a pregnant woman, have been sentenced to a combined total of over 40 years in prison.

They were arrested in coordinated raids on their homes in the capital Tehran last autumn and held in Evin Prison. They were later released on bail before facing trial. Their sentencing reflects the ongoing crackdown on Christian converts in Iran.

Wide-ranging punishments

Narges Nasri (37) – who is pregnant with her first child – has been sentenced to 16 years' imprisonment. This comprises ten years for 'propaganda activities contrary to Islamic law', five years for house church involvement, and one year for social media posts supporting the 'Women, Life, Freedom' movement that emerged following the death of Mahsa Amina for 'improper' wearing of the hijab.

Abbas Soori (48) has been given a 15-year sentence – ten years for 'propaganda activities' and five years for house church involvement. He had previously been arrested in 2020 and sentenced to non-custodial punishments alongside other Christians.

In addition to their sentences, both Narges and Abbas have been fined, banned from any group membership, and prohibited from residing in Tehran or leaving Iran for two years after their release.

Meanwhile, Mehran Shamloui (37), a musician, has been sentenced to ten years and eight months' imprisonment. This breaks down to eight years for 'propaganda activities' and 32 months for house church membership. His musical instruments, worth around £4,250, were confiscated during his arrest. He's also been fined.

Why are converts targeted?

The reason why converts are most vulnerable to extreme persecution in Iran is because the authorities believe they have been influenced by Western countries who want to undermine Islam and the regime. This makes them see the converts as a threat – a threat they want to stifle through tactics such as surveillance, raids on house churches, interrogations, fines and imprisonment. The approach means many Christian converts meet secretly, if at all, or leave the country altogether – and it's why the country is ninth on the World Watch List.

Please continue to remember your Iranian family in your prayers – for those imprisoned and their families, those forced to flee, and those who bravely follow Jesus in their homes and communities despite the acute dangers it brings.

Thank you.

Open Doors' Source: <u>Article18</u> (Article18 is a non-profit organisation based in London, dedicated to the protection and promotion of religious freedom in Iran and advocating on behalf of its persecuted Christians).

Please Pray

- For Narges Nasri's health and the safety of her unborn child, and that she will receive proper care and experience God's strength and peace
- That Abbas Soori and Mehran Shamloui will remain steadfast in their faith, encouraged by the Holy Spirit despite their harsh conditions
- Pray for protection and wisdom for Iran's underground church, that believers will continue to worship and share their faith despite persecution.

Source: Open Doors - used by permission

Dates For Your Diary



Day	Date	Time	Details
Thu	3 rd Apr	14:00	Pray for the Bay (see page 4)
Sat	5 th Apr	15:30	Messy Church
Sun	6 th Apr	10:30	George speaking
Sun	13 th Apr	10:30	lan speaking
Thu	17 th Apr	19:00	Maundy Supper and Communion
Fri	18 th Apr		Good Friday Reflective Service Procession of Witness
Sun	20 th Apr	10:30	Easter Sunrise Service Morning Communion Easter Café at SURC
Tue	22 nd Apr	13:00	Thanksgiving Service for Eileen - at Sandown Methodist Church
Fri	25 th Apr	14:00	Property Team Meeting
Fri- Sat	25 th - 26 th Apr		Sabbath of Prayer (see page 4)
Sun	27 th Apr	10:30	Encounter Café service
Sun	4 th May	10:30	Communion Service and Gift Day Brian's last Sunday here before Sabbatical
Sun	11 th May	10:30	Paul Woolley of LICC speaking
Thu	22 nd May	19:30	Church Meeting



Saturday 5th April 15:30 - 17:30

Free fun for all the family

 no unaccompanied children please

Come and explore Easter through a Messy Church experience at Shanklin URC - a fun way of learning for all ages in a hands-on way.

There will be several craft activities to choose from followed by a short celebration with songs, prayers – and some delicious food.

Come as a family; bring the grandchildren along – any combination is fine! Enjoy it together.

For more information, please speak to Yvonne Sparks or Brian and Janet Harley

And please let Yvonne know if you can help in any way – even with clearing up!

Pick up an invite to encourage people you know.

Connection Quiz Answers

- 1. Caen.
- 2. Le Havre.
- 3. Santander.
- 4. St Peter Port
- 5. Connection: they are all destinations that can be reached by ferry from Portsmouth.
- 6. This issue's cover photo is of: La Plage du Butin, Honfleur, Normandie (photo © C P Sparks).



The Puzzle Pages													7	1			6
Sudoku A numerical placement puzzle!									9								
							6			4							3
									2		6	;	5			9	8
To solve it you need to fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3 x 3 box contains					fill					8			4	2			
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															2	27	28
29									30								
			10														

Last month's Sudoku - how did you do?

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

Across

- 1 French National Anthem (2 12)
- 9 Norwegian group who had a hit with 'Take on Me' in 1985 (1-2)
- 10 Walk in a relaxed manner (7)
- 11 The opposite to west (4)
- 12 Not new (3)
- 14 Surplus water that covers lands (6)
- 15 En français, c'est nous (2)
- 16 Not yes (2)
- 18 Reach an objective/aim (7)
- 21 Mr Sheeran, singer (2)
- 22 Park, Surrey racecourse (7)
- 23 Group of musicians, e.g.
- Shanklin Town (4)
- 25 Adam's mate (3)
- 26 State of mental or emotional strain (7)

- 27 Leave, depart (2)
- 29 Longest river in Eurasia (7)
- 30 A dull pain in the body (4)

Down

- 1 Capital of Portugal (6)
- 2 Fungi found in a moist environment (5)
- 3 Roland, a character on TV-AM in the 80s, was one (3)
- 4 This city's football is United on Wednesday (9)
- 5 You hear with this (3)
- 6 Capital of the UK (6)
- 7 Tool used for chopping wood or trees (3)
- 8 17th book in the OT, named after a woman (6)
- 13 Heavy or bulky thing being carried (4)
- 17 Large flightless bird of South America (4)
- 19 Town where racecourse in 22 across can be found (5)
- 20 Seat suspended by ropes or chains, a playground equipment item (5)
- 21 Board used for filing a person's finger nails (5)
- 23 Haricot, broad or runner, for example (4)
- 24 And tidy? (4)
- 28 Not off (2)

Can You Guess The Year?

- · Nurses throughout the UK strike for higher pay .
- Wimbledon win the FA Cup, beating Liverpool 1-0.
- Children's author Roger Hargreaves dies, age 53
- And UK No. 1s include:

Robin Beck with 'First Time'
Tiffany with 'I Think We're Alone Now'
Whitney Houston with 'One Moment In Time
The Hollies with 'He Ain't Heavy, He's My Brother'

Answer next issue

This Issue's 'Pot Luck' Quiz Questions

- 1. Who was the English monarch before George I?
- 2. What was the currency in Romania?
- 3. When did the Battle of Culloden take place?
- 4. What's the capital of Latvia?
- 5. When was the coronation of King George VI?
- 6. Where was the Magna Carta signed?
- 7. Who was the first performer at the Live Aid concert in 1985?
- 8. Who wrote the 'Four Seasons'?
- 9. What's the name of Obelix's dog, in the Asterix the Gaul stories?
- 10. Who designed the WW2 aeroplane the HP Halifax?

Answers next issue

Please note that the <u>deadline</u> for contributions for the next magazine is:

Sunday 20th April

Contributions can be emailed at anytime up to the deadline day to the editor at:

surc.thelink@btinternet.com

Last Issue's Solutions

- Guess the year: it was 1976

- Last issue's crossword ♥

W	E	L	L	1	N	G	T	0	N		В	E	E
A		0		С		В	E		Ε		R		L
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	R		Е		В	_	J	0	U		A		М
S	T	A	R	T	E	D			Ε	A	R	L	Y

Last Issue's 'Pot Luck' Quiz Answers

- 1. King Edward VI
- 2. Peseta
- 3. 25th October 1415
- 4. Bucharest
- 5. Westminster Abbey

- 6. William the Conqueror
- 7. Thomas Hardy
- 8. Jacques Offenbach
- 9. Gnasher
- 10. Sydney Camm

Sunday Service

Morning 10:30 Morning Worship in church
Broadcast live on YouTube

- → Holy Communion on 1st Sunday of each month
- → All Age service on last Sunday of each month

Weekday Activities

Monday 10:30 Community 'Pop Up' Pantry

Tuesday 14:00 Bible Bite ministry in church (Refreshments from 13:30)

Broadcast live on YouTube
19:30 Prayer Meeting on Zoom (see page 4)

Wednesday 11:00 The Well (aka 'Living Well Together')

Friday 10:00 CatURpillars Toddler Group

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

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Day off: Monday

Secretary: Robin Wightman

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Shanklin URC is a member of the Evangelical Alliance

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