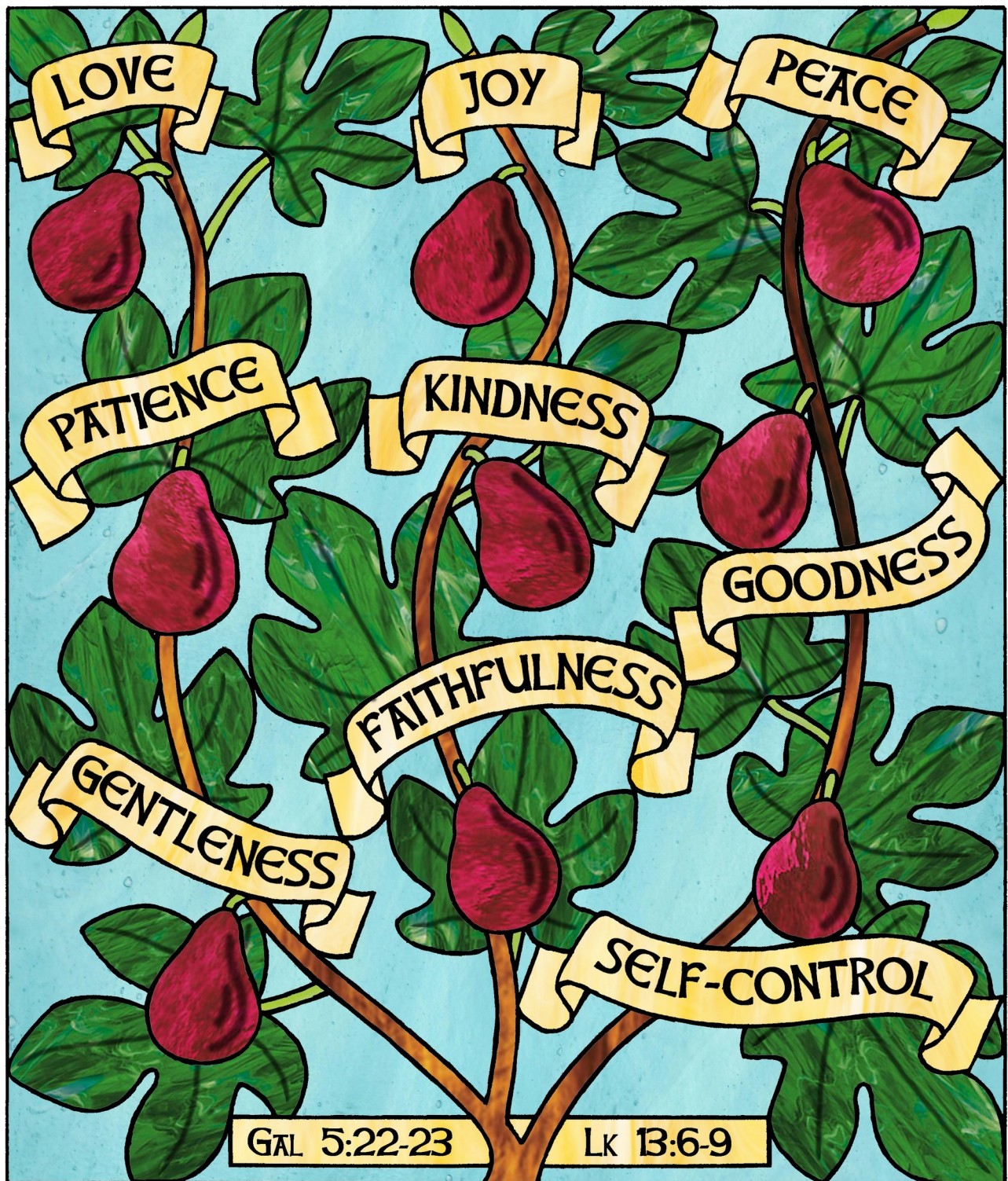


PORTTREE PARISH CHURCH OF SCOTLAND



SUMMER 2026

Church Office Bearers

		Telephone
Minister	Rev S Fazakas	611868
Session Clerk	Mr W Marshall	650405
Roll Keeper	Miss D McEwan	612266
Treasurer	Mr W Marshall	650405
Clerk to the		
Congregational Board	Mrs M MacKay	612690
Fabric Convenor	Mr N Bruce	612480
Hall Convenor	Mrs H Quaye	612071
Crèche	Mrs S Beaton	613075
	Mrs M Gillies	01470 532378
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Coordinator	Ms Mhairi MacDonald	07464 414278
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Prayer Secretary	Mrs C Sutherland	640318
Prayer Fellowship		
Convenor	Mr L Gillies	611837
Church Officers	The Elders	
Church Website	Mrs C MacDonald	612748
	Mr N Smith	611061
Magazine Coordinator	Mr W Marshall	650405

NOAH'S FAITH, AND THE ARK OF OUR SALVATION.

By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that comes by faith. (Hebrews 11: 7)

The biblical story of the Flood, of Noah and his Ark (Book of Genesis, chapters 6-10) is known even by people who do not read the Bible and never come to church. A fascinating description of a big boat, Noah and his family, and all those animals coming in two by two: two elephants, two doves, two eagles, two snails, two tigers, two rabbits... even two skunks and two midges! Most people know about the great flood, and how the boat floated until the waters receded, then the animals departed two by two. Finally, the rainbow appeared with God's promise never again to send a great flood that would cover the entire earth, killing all living creatures. Certainly, the story offers general lessons to be learned:

- Don't miss the boat.
- Remember that we are all in the same boat.
- Plan ahead. It wasn't raining when Noah built the Ark.
- Stay fit. When you are even 600 years old someone may ask you to do something big.
- Don't listen to critics, just do the job that needs to be done.
- For safety's sake travel in pairs.
- Speed isn't everything. The snails were on board with the cheetahs.
- When you are stressed, get into a boat and float a while.
- Remember the Ark was built by amateurs, the Titanic by professionals.
- No matter the storm, there's always a rainbow waiting.
- Always learn the right lessons.

Even it seems important to ask, "How did a flood cover the entire earth?" – or all kinds of controversial questions about the described details, we risk missing the larger message.

1. NOAH. He was a unique person. In an impure world, he was pure. In an unrighteous world, he was righteous. In a world that dismissed God, he walked with God. He stood alone, believing God, building the Ark, no doubt receiving much abuse. If people considered him excentric and crazy, it did not bother him. He stood his ground, and God noticed. Noah was a family man, an obedient and bold man in dangerous times. How did Noah manage to save himself and his family in such a hostile environment? – read again Hebrews 11: 7 from under our title. Noah was a godly man in an ungodly age. He believed God, and God blessed him, and blessing all like him. Let there be no complaining about how hard things are. No excuses about how evil the world has become. Be a man of character, a woman of conviction. Stand on the Word of God, and do not worry about what the world things or says. Believe in God, and you'll save yourself, and by God's grace you may save your family and even others beside.

2. THE ARK. Regarding the Ark itself, there was a precise design and plan given to Noah, with a very specific reason: a great flood was coming. The Hebrew word translated **ARK** comes from the same root-word translated elsewhere as **ATONEMENT** or **COVERING**. It is used only once more as **ARK**, meaning **CONTAINER BOX**, and that is in Exodus 2 referring to the basket in which Moses was placed and saved. Both the Ark and Moses' basket were coated with **PITCH**, the same resinous material which Hebrew word also means **BLOOD**. The Ark was essentially an enormous container designated to keep afloat all that was in it during the Flood. Noah didn't need to steer it. He just needed a boat-box that would float; large enough to deliver Noah, his family, and the land animals safely through the flood.

3. JESUS CHRIST, THE ARK OF OUR SALVATION. Three obvious spiritual lessons arise: **GOD JUDGES SIN, DISPLAYS GRACE, and OFFERS SALVATION.**

As the Bible says: - ***...God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the Ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, and this water symbolises baptism that now saves you also – not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience towards God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ...*** (1 Peter 3: 20-21).

If the water symbolizes baptism, then the Ark must symbolize Jesus Christ and His Church. There was only one Ark, and it had only one door. One Ark – One Door, - as Jesus said: - ***I am the way and the truth and the life. No-one comes to the Father except through me*** (John 14: 6).

- The Ark saved everyone who entered; as everyone who comes to Christ is saved. The Ark was a place of total security; as everyone who comes to Christ is saved and finds rest for his/her soul. Once God shut the door no one else could enter: today is the day of salvation: - ***Whosoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life*** (John 3: 16).

Consider this: - when the flood finally arrived, everyone inside the Ark was saved, while everyone outside of it perished in the rising waters. Perhaps, some people came and banged on the door and cried: "Let us in !" But it was too late then. A final separation was made between the saved and the lost. Meditate on these deeper lessons of the story of Noah and his Ark.

May you and yours be found safe in the **ARK OF OUR SALVATION !**

With every blessing,

Sandor, your Minister.



SESSION CLERK'S REPORT

At the Church AGM held in June this year I posed the question "How are we doing as a church."

I went on to highlight several areas which I felt would enable people to form their own opinion.

Our Minister

Unlike many charges throughout Scotland, over the last 20 years we have been blessed with the stable situation of having our own minister.

Additionally, we know that when Sandor comes to his retirement in October of next year, we already know that there will be no gap before Rev Beckie Bartocho takes over the united parish of Portree with Staffin and Kilmuir.

During his lengthy period of as minister here, Sandor has served his congregation in an exemplary manner. His love for, and commitment to, his whole congregation shows in each service he conducts, and in his regular pattern of home visits.

His sermons are always of the highest standard in terms of both content and delivery. Having on occasion delivered sermons myself, I know the time involved in the preparation of each one and remember that Sandor has to prepare three services each week. In addition to this, he is required to conduct funeral services throughout the year, including, in his role as Parish Minister, those of local residents who have had no association with our church.

Our Congregation

I spoke earlier of the commitment of our congregation to the financial upkeep of the church. In my time in Portree this has always been the case, but in these days of falling numbers of members and rising expenditure it is something that everyone should consider and ask themselves if their offerings are commensurate with what is required to keep the church going. No one would be expected to give a tithe 10% of their income to support the church, but it would be good if people regularly reviewed their level of giving .

On a more positive note, we are blessed with a congregation who are more than willing to answer any call for help with regular or occasional duties in our church. These range from Sunday door duty – meeting and greeting worshippers, especially visitors to our church, preparing and serving tea and coffee after Sunday morning worship, cleaning duties, the Summer opening of the church to visitors, grass cutting and general care of the church grounds, and so many other necessary jobs that are carried out without the knowledge of the congregation but would certainly be noticed if they were not done.

You will obviously know who carries out many of these tasks, but there are many members who do this without public recognition and who would not want that.

Church Attendance

We are all aware that in the main our congregation is an elderly one and attendance at services has been falling year by year. We all want our church not just to survive but to thrive and it is the responsibility of us all to try to encourage others to join us. This is especially true for our Sunday School where these youngsters are the life blood and future of the church.

Church Administration

As with any organisation, various administrative matters must be carried out on an annual basis. To ensure that these matters are done satisfactorily churches are required by Presbytery to have all appropriate records attested. These include Church Accounts, Safeguarding Registers, Congregational registers of membership, Baptismal Registers, and Fabric records.

Thanks to the professional way in which the appropriate people prepare these records, Portree has always provided all information required and to an exemplary standard.

Congregational Board and Kirk Session

Board members, which includes members of Session, are responsible for the financial affairs of the church and make decisions on expenditure on large projects. At each meeting they are given an itemised report on income and expenditure with full details of all expenditure from each of our accounts.

And finally, members of Session, your Elders, who were approved by you and appointed to deal with spiritual matters in the church. Duties being carried out partly at the regular meetings of Kirk Session and partly as individuals outside it. Responsibilities include due and reverent observance of the Sacraments of Baptism and Communion, and of the operation of the Sunday School.

Outwith these duties a number of your Elders make visits to members of the congregation who are unable to attend services. When Sandor takes his annual leave entitlement, we are in the fortunate position that many of the Elders are prepared to lead worship on all necessary occasions. Many our Elders also assist other local congregations when a minister is unavailable.

When inviting members of the congregation to consider becoming an Elder I usually tell them that this is not a promotion to a higher office but rather that they are becoming servants to the church. I am pleased to say that throughout my time as Session Clerk we have had a Session composed of people who have carried out to the highest standards all duties and responsibilities expected of them.

Conclusion

Going back to the question I posed at the start of this report, "How are we doing as a church ?"

I would hope that you find this to be a positive report. There are, as always, certain areas where improvements would be welcomed, or are necessary, to ensure the needs of the church are addressed but, on the whole, I feel that with our faith, our love of the Lord and the desire to ensure the continuation of the preaching of the Word in Portree, the maintenance of our buildings, and the continued support of our congregation, Portree will continue to be a light in the community.

God bless you all.

Bill

TREASURER'S REPORT

My report to the Church AGM in June started as usual with a detailed explanation of the Annual Accounts of the Church for 2025. I followed this up by looking back over the finances of the church since I took over as Treasurer in 2007.

In 2007, our total funds amounted to £44,400. At this time regular Retirement Offerings were being made to fund the building of a mobility access at the front of the church. And other essential repairs to the fabric of the church. Thanks to the generosity of the congregation our funds had by 2010 risen to £104,700 in 2010 before falling to £65,400 following the installation of and payment for the mobility access and repairs to the stonework of the church building.

After that our funds rose again to a high of £102,500 before Covid hit with a consequential fall in our funds to £87,600. Following the return to normal church attendance and the wonderful bequest from the Craigs we climbed back up to £93,400 in 2023 before the costs of the AVA equipment in the Church and Church Hall and the refurbishment of the Hall Kitchen.

At the start of this year, our Accounts showed that our funds had risen to £93,500 .

While this may seem a lot, almost £40,000 is locked into our Liquidity Reserve Fund which is kept specifically for any unexpected major emergency spending and our General expenditure is in the region of £60,000 per annum.

Our commitment to the Church of Scotland Giving to Grow scheme which is used to pay the stipends for ministers and for mission work in Scotland and abroad is in the region of £35,000 each year.

Relatively small , but essential, works in and around the church are never cheap. Already this year £1,200 has been spent on a tubular steel fence around our Calor Gas tanks and a further £1,800 on painting work around the windows in the church.

This is where the continued financial support of our congregation is so important.

Other ongoing factors that we must consider are :-

- Rising energy costs and inflation in general

- Falling attendances in church with consequential falling in offerings

- General upkeep of our buildings

- Expenses to be incurred next year when Beckie moves into the Portree Manse.

Over my years as Treasurer, whenever there has been a need, our congregation has always rallied to the cause and I have every faith that they will continue to do so.

My thanks go out to everyone and God bless you all.

Bill



"I thank my God every time I remember you" ... Philippians 1:3

A TRIBUTE TO JAN ...

It was with great sadness that we learned of the passing of our dear friend Jan MacDonald.

Jan was a much-loved member of our Church and the Ladies Bible Study Group. She loved singing along with us and contributing to our discussions, sharing her love and knowledge of Jesus with us. Jan always had a welcoming smile on her face and a kind word to say to everyone she met. She also had a 'wicked' sense of humour, and her infectious giggle made us all laugh.

Jan showed her appreciation of God by accepting an invitation to become an Elder on 12 May 2019, and she was a truly valued member of the Kirk Session.

True friends are rare—and we were lucky enough to have one in Jan. She listened without judgment and supported without hesitation and our memory of her brings warmth and a feeling of presence that still feels nearby. Jan's love and example leaves a gift we will carry forever.

Jan's very sudden passing came as a huge shock to the whole community. She will be sorely missed, and our love, thoughts and prayers go to Archie, John, Andrew, Jenny, Mairi and all the grandchildren, at this time. Jan never tired of speaking of her love for her family and the pride she had in them all.

Rest in peace, dear friend !



THE TRANSFIGURATION - A GLIMPSE OF JESUS' FUTURE GLORY

The story is told in Matthew (17:1-9), Mark (9:1-9) and Luke (9:28-36).

It was a time when Jesus' ministry was popular, when people were seeking Him out. But on this day, He made time to take Peter, James and John, His closest disciples, up a high mountain. In the fourth century, Cyrillic of Jerusalem identified it as Mount Tabor (and there is a great church up there today), but others believe it more likely to have been one of the three spurs of Mount Hermon, which rises to about 9,000 feet, and overlooks Caesarea Philippi.

High up on the mountain, Jesus was suddenly transfigured before His friends. His face began to shine as the sun, His garments became white and dazzling. Elijah and Moses, of all people, suddenly appeared, and talked with Him. A bright cloud overshadowed the disciples.

Peter was staggered, but, enthusiast that he was - immediately suggested building three tabernacles on that holy place, one for Jesus, one for Moses, and one for Elijah. But God's 'tabernacling', God's dwelling with mankind, does not any longer depend upon building a shrine. It depends on the presence of Jesus, instead. And so a cloud covered them, and a Voice spoke out of the cloud, saying that Jesus was His beloved Son, whom the disciple should 'hear'. God's dwelling with mankind depends upon our listening to Jesus.

Then, just as suddenly, it is all over. What did it mean? Why Moses and Elijah? Well, these two men represent the Law and the Prophets of the Old Covenant, or Old Testament. But now they are handing on the baton, if you like: for both the Law and the Prophets found their true and final fulfilment in Jesus, the Messiah.

Why on top of a mountain? In Exodus we read that Moses went up Mount Sinai to receive the sacred covenant from Yahweh in the form of the Ten Commandments. Now Jesus goes up and is told about the 'sealing' of the New Covenant, or New Testament of God with man, which will be accomplished by His coming death in Jerusalem.

That day made a lifelong impact on the disciples. Peter mentions it in his second letter, 2 Peter 1:16 - 19 - invariably the reading for this day.

A Prayer for August 2026

Dear Father,

In this summer month of August, help us to be aware of Your presence.

If we are away on holiday, If we can't have a holiday, On our journeys, In our homes, With our families or friends, When we're alone, When life is sweet, When it's like an obstacle course.

At all times and in all circumstances, help us to know that You are in it with us, sharing our ups and downs, offering Your love and peace and hope when we connect with You through putting our trust in Your Son, Jesus.

Thank You Lord.

In His name, Amen.

By Daphne Kitching

THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF 9/11

25 years ago, on 11th September 2001, the terrorist attacks on America took place.

Al-Qaeda terrorists hijacked four planes and crashed them into the World Trade Center's Twin Towers in New York, into the Pentagon, and into a field in Pennsylvania (following a passenger revolt – the intended target was Washington DC). 2,973 people were killed.

This year major national institutions in the US will mark the anniversary of that terrible day. In New York, a good number of Christian churches and interfaith groups are planning special services and memorial events.

This will include hourly musical offerings at St Paul's Chapel in New York City, in honour of the chapel's role as a refuge for the first responders.

Other events include a digital experience at the 9/11 Memorial & Museum, and various events by the New York City Fire Department, who lost 343 members that day, as well as the 400 members who have since died from World Trade Center-related illnesses.

There will also be the iconic reading of the names of those who died, and the annual Tribute in Light installation, held at Ground Zero.

It was one of these events that is imprinted on people's minds. People will remember where they were when they heard the terrible news. Special services of remembrance will be held in various towns and cities throughout the world when people can reflect on the loss, and the human cost of violence.



Deborah: A Woman of Faith and Courage

Some people are good working behind the scenes. They don't make a fuss or want to grab your attention. Instead, they quietly do a job which always gets done, and it is only when they are missing for some reason do we realise the important work that they do!

Deborah was a bit like that. Her name may not be familiar to us, but her story is recorded in the Old Testament Book of Judges. She lived many years after Joshua had taken the former Egyptian captives into the Promised Land. After Joshua's death the Israelites disregarded God's laws. They intermarried with the heathen nations around them, practised all kinds of wickedness and worshipped at pagan shrines.

So, God responded by punishing His people. He allowed them to fall into the hands of their enemies which resulted in a period of oppression during which the Israelites pleaded to God for mercy. God answered their cries with a judge to deliver them, and Deborah appeared.

A judge in those days was a compelling figure who rallied the nation at times of defeat and called them back to God's laws and standards. These judges delivered the people from danger and out of sin and rebellion. Into this male dominated society God gave them Deborah, a kind of mother figure. As far as spiritual things were concerned, they were like children and needed mothering!

God revealed to Deborah His plan to save Israel from their enemy. She rallied Barak, to muster the tribes of Israel and lead them into battle against the Canaanites. In an act of great faith, Barak agreed to do this, and Israel entered a period of peace which lasted 40 years.

The Book of Judges demonstrates God's grace in using unlikely people for His work. At a time when women were regarded of low status and expected to be silent, Deborah responded to God's call and became an unlikely hero. Deborah's great achievement was to inspire faith in others. Do we know a Deborah? Someone who encourages and supports us or helps another Christian in some vital way?

Deborah was decisive, determined and dauntless in bringing deliverance to her people. Once God had spoken to Deborah, she knew Israel would be victorious. We need the faith of Deborah. She believed that God was on her side, and He would not fail her. So must we.

Lester Amann

Clothed with Christ

Georg Philipp Telemann, the 18th Century German composer, was an early collector of folk music, long before the vogue for collecting folk tunes in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, which in England drew in Ralph Vaughan Williams, Cecil Sharp and George Butterworth.

Telemann would travel to Poland and note down the folk tunes he heard there, which then re-appeared in his music and played for the sophisticated audiences at his concerts. He described the transformation of folk tunes to *concerti* as 'clothing the tunes in an Italian coat'- the Italian style being all the rage at the time.

The phrase 'clothed in an Italian coat' is rich in allusions. Peasant fustian (a cotton fabric with a twill weave, like corduroy) becomes elegant and rich velvet or silk, in gorgeous hues which bring distinction to the wearer. From workaday to refined, the image speaks of transformation. It's possibly also a covering over of the ragged with something altogether more presentable.

Clothing is an image used by Paul at least three times in his letters. Writing to the believers in Rome, (Ch 13 v14) he urges his readers to 'put on the Lord Jesus Christ'. He's urging an active participation in all that Jesus was and did, a daily mental decision to be as Christ. To the Galatians (Ch3 v27) he says 'for all of you who were baptised into Christ have clothed yourself with Christ.' As it were, your old clothes won't do any more- you need the fresh clean linen which Christ offers. And to the Colossians Paul writes (Ch3 v12) 'clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience... And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.'

Clothes are important. They make a statement, say something about how we wish to present ourselves- smart or casual, formal or informal, conservative or outlandish. We make judgements about people (often wrongly) from how they dress. Paul is taking these themes to a deeper level, asking that our character as Christians reflects and brings honour to the one who has invited us into his kingdom of justice, peace and love. I was invited some years ago to a Garden Party at Buckingham Palace. Should I wear crocs, yellow shorts and a Hawaiian shirt? No contest! That would not honour the Queen and the occasion. A formal suit or nothing.

How does your character reflect Jesus? What have you asked to be clothed in as you have prayed? God bless you as your daily life reflects all that Jesus would have it be; may we all be 'clothed with Christ'.

Rev. Roy Shaw

FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE – NURSE, SOCIAL REFORMER

If you have a strong sense of calling from God, then you will well understand Florence Nightingale. At the age of 16 she felt God was calling her to some great lifework, and so she determined to avoid marriage, and thus be available to obey Him.

Florence had been born in Italy in 1820, while her parents were travelling - hence her name. But she grew up at Lea Hurst in Derbyshire. Her parents were Unitarian, but Florence later joined the Anglican Church.

Florence had a strong sense of God's personal presence in her life, and in 1844, when she was 24, Florence came to believe that her calling was to nurse the sick. In 1849 she set off to study nursing in the hospitals of Europe.

It was on 12th May, 1850 that she wrote in her diary: 'Today I am 30 – the age Christ began His mission. Now no more childish things. No more love. No more marriage. Now Lord let me think only of Thy will, what Thou wilt me to do.'

Later that same year she went to train in the hospital of Alexandria in Egypt, and then the Lutheran Deaconess Institute at Kaiserswerth in Germany. In 1853 she returned to England, and was appointed superintendent of the Hospital for Invalid Gentlewomen in London.

Then the following year, 1854, war broke out in the Crimea. Florence contacted friends in high places, and soon got permission to take 38 nurses to serve at the military hospitals at Scutari in Turkey, and later Balaklava in the Crimea. These hospitals were dreadful places, but with better nursing and better sanitation, the mortality rate among the sick and wounded men soon fell dramatically.

When, by night, Florence took to patrolling the hospital wards, carrying a dim lamp, the legend of 'the Lady with the Lamp' was born.

After the Crimean war, Florence returned to England determined to establish the first professional nurse training scheme in the country. She found a base at St Thomas' Hospital in London, and through her efforts the stature of nursing gradually rose to become that of a respected medical profession.

But Florence had been working too long and too hard, and now her own health broke down, and she became an invalid. But she was not forgotten, and the honours rolled in. In 1907 she became the first woman to receive the Order of Merit.

Florence died in London on 13th August 1910, aged 90, and was buried in St Margaret's, East Wellow, in Hampshire.

Her tombstone says simply: F.N. 1820 – 1910.



God put the Wiggle in Children

God put the wiggle in children,
the wonder, the questions, the noise;
the fidgeting feet and the laughter,
the bright, unexpected joys.

So let them be little among us;
they needn't sit silent and still.
There's room here for all of their living,
their voices, their movement, their will.

Sit close, so they see what is happening;
sing boldly and help them to join in.
For children learn faith from our footsteps,
and love where worship begins.

And if you both need to step outside,
take time, catch your breath, then return.
Your place will be here when you're ready;
there's a welcome at every turn.

God put the wiggle in children
- a sign that our church is alive.
May every wee one know, growing,
this is a place where they can thrive.

So, offer a smile and be patient;
make room in the pew and the day.
For Jesus said, "Let the children come near
and do not send them away"

Kay MacKinnon

Blythswood Shoebox Appeal Christmas 2026



Last year Portree Parish church contributed an amazing 78 filled shoeboxes to the Blythswood Christmas appeal, along with other churches, schools and individuals who sent over 1000 boxes from the Isle of Skye. These were all packed into a lorry in November as part of a consignment of 85,000 shoeboxes which were distributed to people in need in eight different countries: Albania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Kosovo, Moldova, Romania, Serbia and Ukraine.

Many in our congregation have been involved over the years in this effort since it started in 1983. Boxes are individually wrapped, and filled with small, practical items such as toiletries, stationery, and small essentials like a hat, scarf, socks and gloves. The filled boxes are transported to Eastern Europe by lorry, then distributed by people in partner churches and agencies to schools, hospitals, orphanages and care homes, and to households in very low income communities. Many have gone to people affected by the war in Ukraine which sadly is ongoing and creating many needs for children, families and older people.

It would be great if we could work together again as a congregation this year and fill as many boxes as possible. Once again we'll have a shoebox wrapping session in the church hall (with tea and baking of course!) and the date will be advised.

Meanwhile if you have any empty shoeboxes that you could donate please do bring them to church. It would also be helpful if anyone is able to contribute any of the essential items that go into every box. These include:

Toothpaste	Underwear
Toothbrush	Hat
Soap	Gloves
Shampoo	Scarf
Body wash	Comb or brush
Socks, tights	Shaving cream or foam

Finding out more

More information and dates will be provided in the weekly intimations and you can also find out more about the shoebox appeal on the Blythswood website at

<https://blythswood.org/shoeboxappeal/>

Hornby trains and Dinky toys

Ninety years ago, on 21st September 1936, Frank Hornby, the British inventor, died. He is remembered for the immensely popular Meccano, Hornby Model Railways and Dinky Toys.

Hornby was born into a Liverpool working-class family and was said to have been inspired by the industry in the city. He was brought up as a Methodist and was interested in music, having a strong tenor voice. He met his future wife, Clara, when they were members of the Liverpool Philharmonic Society choir: they married in 1887 and had three children.

To amuse his two sons he constructed a model crane using perforated strips of metal held together with nuts and bolts. It could be dismantled and the parts used to build other things: this formed the basis of Meccano, which when refined proved hugely popular.

After the first world war he turned his attention to the construction of toy trains, powered by clockwork. At first these were made from kits, but it was not long before they were sold as ready-made train sets – a perfect children's toy. Dinky toys started as an accessory but soon developed into big-sellers in their own right.

Later Hornby, who was described as polite and a “keen observer of morality”, became a Conservative MP for Everton. In his youth he joined the anti-alcohol Band of Hope and set up a number of groups and clubs dedicated to the improvement of society. He was a great believer in determination and the ability to overcome setbacks.

This enabled him to become not only a visionary but a practical creator in toy development and production. His persistence in adapting his original ideas and making them workable brought him deserved success in producing three of the most popular lines of toys in the 20th century.

Tim Lenton



Lester Amann considers a great prophet of Israel.

Samuel - the exceptional man who put the crown on David's head

The Bible contains descriptions of many kinds of leaders. These men (and sometimes women) were responsible for the well-being of groups of people. Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt. Joshua led the wilderness wanderers into the Promised Land. Gideon, Ezra and Nehemiah led people to fight against their enemies and improved their moral and spiritual lives.

While these people may be familiar to us, the Bible also mentions other individuals who had different leadership responsibilities. Some fulfilled their positions readily while others, like Joseph and Esther, gradually became aware of their roles and achieved the purposes God had for them.

As a baby, Samuel was dedicated to the service of God. While a young boy, God spoke directly to him. Samuel grew up gaining favour with both God and men. At an early age, God was with Samuel and made everything that Samuel said come true.

Samuel became the ruler of Israel. His style of leadership was based on godliness, fairness and good organisation. He settled disputes, served as a judge and banned pagan gods from the land.

When Samuel became old, the people became restless. They demanded to have a king to rule over them. God reluctantly agreed. Under God's guidance, Samuel chose Saul. Unfortunately, Saul failed to lead the people in the way of God. So, Samuel was directed by God to anoint David - to be the next king of Israel.

Samuel, it appears, was acutely aware of his responsibility to be a good leader. He was a man of good reputation but his obedience to God brought about difficulty, uncertainty and hardship. He wanted Saul to be a good leader, but Saul failed to live up to his high calling. Samuel was deeply upset and departed from the king's presence. He knew that a bad leader would bring about the nation's downfall.

Nevertheless, Samuel treated Saul with respect and courtesy. He understood the principle of submission to God-ordained authority. He was loyal to Saul, even though he turned out to be a bad leader.

Samuel's grief over Saul's failure is a reminder for us to pray for our leaders on a regular basis (whether or not they fall short in their official capacity!) We need God to provide us with leaders who are trustworthy and honourable. Let's pray for good leaders that they may enhance truth, peace and justice throughout the world.

SIXTY-SIX BOOKS , ONE STORY

What if you tried to summarise every book of the Bible in a single sentence?

Not every chapter. Not every theme. Not every detail. Just one sentence per book. At first that sounds impossible because the Bible contains thousands of years of history, poetry, prophecy, wisdom, law, letters, miracles, wars, kings, shepherds, fishermen, and enough plot twists to keep you reading long after you planned to go to bed. Yet here's the surprising thing. When you boil each book down to its simplest message, the Bible starts sounding less like sixty-six separate books and more like one story told chapter by chapter.

Genesis: God creates everything, and humanity immediately finds a way to break it. Exodus: God rescues His people and teaches them who He is. Leviticus: God is holy and approaching Him is not something to take lightly. Numbers: People can witness miracles and still complain about lunch. Deuteronomy: Remember what God has done before you forget and repeat the same mistakes.

Joshua: God keeps His promises. Judges: Things go badly when everyone does what is right in their own eyes. Ruth: God is working even when life feels ordinary. First Samuel: People want a king, but what they really need is God. Second Samuel: Even great men can fall, but God is not finished with them. First Kings: A nation flourishes when it follows God and fractures when it doesn't. Second Kings: Ignoring God's warnings eventually has consequences.

First Chronicles: God has been writing the story longer than you realise. Second Chronicles: Revival is always one humble prayer away. Ezra: God rebuilds what seems lost. Nehemiah: Sometimes faith looks like picking up a shovel. Esther: God is still working when He seems silent. Job: God does not always explain Himself, but He is still trustworthy. Psalms: Bring God everything because He can handle it.

Proverbs: Wisdom is worth more than almost anything else. Ecclesiastes: Life without God eventually feels empty. Song of Solomon: Love is powerful and worth protecting. Isaiah: Judgment is coming, but so is the Saviour. Jeremiah: God keeps calling people back even when they refuse to listen. Lamentations: Sin breaks things, and grief is real. Ezekiel: God specialises in bringing dead things back to life. Daniel: God is still King when earthly kingdoms rise and fall.

Hosea: God's love remains faithful even when we are not. Joel: Return to God while there is still time. Amos: God cares about justice, not just religious appearances. Obadiah: Pride eventually collapses under its own weight. Jonah: God's mercy extends farther than we often want it to. Micah: What God wants is surprisingly simple and incredibly difficult. Nahum: Evil does not win forever. Habakkuk: Trust God even when you do not understand what He is doing. Zephaniah: Judgment is real, but so is restoration. Haggai: Put God first. Zechariah: The King is coming. Malachi: The people wait.

Then, after four hundred years of silence, Matthew arrives with perhaps the most important announcement in history: The King arrives. Mark tells us Jesus came to serve and to save. Luke reminds us Jesus came for everyone. John boldly declares that Jesus is God. Acts shows that the Gospel cannot be stopped no matter how hard people try.

Romans explains that salvation is by grace through faith. First Corinthians reminds us that Christians are messy and God keeps working anyway. Second Corinthians shows that God's strength shines brightest through weakness. Galatians insists that you cannot earn what God freely gives. Ephesians teaches that grace changes everything. Philippians reminds us that joy is possible regardless of circumstances. Colossians declares that Jesus is enough.

First Thessalonians tells believers to live ready for Christ's return. Second Thessalonians says to keep going. First Timothy says lead well. Second Timothy says finish well. Titus teaches that sound doctrine should produce godly living. Philemon shows that the Gospel changes relationships. Hebrews repeatedly reminds us that Jesus is better. James teaches that real faith does something.

First Peter reminds believers that suffering is not the end of the story. Second Peter warns us not to drift. First John declares that God is love. Second John reminds us that truth matters. Third John reminds us that faithfulness matters too. Jude tells us to contend for the faith. And Revelation closes the entire story with one simple reality:

Jesus wins.

And maybe that's the thing that should amaze us the most.

Sixty-six books. Roughly forty authors. Written across centuries by kings, shepherds, fishermen, prophets, priests, doctors, tax collectors, and even a former persecutor of Christians. Most never met one another. Many lived hundreds of years apart. Yet somehow the story never changes.

We could and certainly should spend a lifetime studying the details because the details are incredible. But if you had to summarise the Bible in a few sentences it might go something like this.

Humanity falls.

God pursues.

Jesus saves.

The gospel spreads.

Jesus wins.

The greatest story ever told.

Or perhaps more accurately...

Amen.



This article was taken from a FB page that popped up on my iPad a few months ago. It's written by a young American Christian called Erica Dewaard who goes by the name Farmer Girl on FB. Erica is an author and dairy farmer, and she combines her work and her faith in her posts. Recently at Ladies Bible Study we've been using some of her articles in our discussions and have found them to be thought provoking and inspiring. In her writing you are encouraged to look afresh at passages from the Bible that you thought you knew so well only for her either to shine a light on something you had never before considered or spell out what you had always known but just didn't realise it! She also can be very funny. Please look her up if you get the chance. The cows are pretty cute too!

Heather Quaye

MATTHEW – CALLED JUST AS HE WAS

In this article we remember Matthew's call to be an apostle of Jesus and ask what it means for us to follow Christ.

Jesus calls us where we are:

'Jesus saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector's booth. 'Follow me,' He told him, and Matthew got up and followed Him.' (Matthew 9:9).

It was just an ordinary day at Matthew's tax booth, when Jesus called him. He simply got up and followed! Despite Matthew's past, his occupation and what people thought of him, Jesus still called him. Are we ready to follow when Jesus calls us into a relationship with Himself?

Jesus comes to where we are:

'While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with Him and His disciples. When the Pharisees saw this, they asked His disciples, 'Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?' (10,11).

Jesus went to Matthew's home and ate with tax collectors and sinners, demonstrating that He meets people where they are, despite their sin and shame. The Pharisees avoided sinners, because they believed only the perfect could have access to God. When God is at work in the lives of those we don't expect, allow Jesus to open our hearts to embrace what He is doing.

Jesus comforts us where we are:

'On hearing this, Jesus said, 'It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but those who are ill.' (12).

Jesus came to save sinners and to give hope to the hopeless. The Pharisees were so committed to keeping the law, that they had forgotten God's heart of compassion. However, Jesus reminded them that they were witnessing God's love in action. In what ways can we express compassion towards others, especially those outside the community of faith?

Paul Hardingham

On 12th August there was an eclipse of the sun, partial for most of us but total for some in Spain and Iceland and on the Atlantic Ocean.

It's an interesting astronomical event, of course, but it also calls to mind the events of Good Friday when, Luke tells us, darkness covered the earth (Luke 23:44)

A Transient Darkness

A shadow steals across the land;
A darkness in the summer sky.
The sunlight thieved by silent hand –
No robins sing, no blackbirds fly.

Celestial spheres align in space
A band of shadow on the earth;
Reminding mortals of our place
The fragile nature of our birth.

The sun once turned its face away
And hid dread scenes from human eye;
The brightness turned to sombre grey
As Christ our Saviour hung to die.

And then! A flash of diamond light!
The King regains His rightful crown!
The gloom is but a fleeting sprite –
The King returns! The shadows drown!

The cross is bare as empty tomb,
Their victim broke their hellish bond.
For Christ is Risen! Gone the gloom!
He calls us to the light beyond!

The evil powers that cause us pain,
That lead us from the rightful way,
How very transient is their reign!
How soon we'll know eternal day!

Observe with joy the lunar shade
Mourn not the passing of the sun,
The light returns! The debt is paid!
Christ is alive! The battle's won!



By Nigel Beeton

JOHN BUNYAN – THE MAN WHO WROTE PILGRIM’S PROGRESS

After the Bible, John Bunyan’s wonderful Christian allegory, the Pilgrim’s Progress, is one of the most celebrated and widely-read books in the English language. It has been translated into more than one hundred languages around the world and keeps its place as a Christian classic.

Names of people and places from its pages have been commonplace wherever English is spoken. We need only recall Mr Great-Heart, Mr Valiant-for-Truth, Giant Despair, Madame Bubble, the Slough of Despond, Vanity Fair, the Delectable Mountains, the Hill Difficulty and the Celestial City.

Bunyan was born on 28 November 1628, at Elstow, near Bedford, England, of a poor family. He had little formal education and his father taught him to be a metal worker. His first wife died young. His second wife, Elizabeth, helped him considerably with his blossoming literary career. His conversion was the result of reading the Bible, and the witness of local Christians. From that time the Bible became the great inspiration of his life. He wrote more than fifty books on Christianity. A Baptist by conviction, he had little time for the Established Church.

Bunyan became a popular preacher, but because of his opposition to the Established Church and because he did not have a Church of England preaching licence, he was imprisoned in 1661. It was in prison that he wrote Pilgrim’s Progress. It was not only Bunyan’s greatest book but was destined to become one of the most popular Christian books in the world.

Pilgrim’s Progress is an allegory, using the names of people and places from the Bible to teach spiritual lessons. The vivid and unforgettable imagery in the Pilgrim’s Progress covers the whole Christian gospel from sin and condemnation all the way through faith, repentance, grace, justification, sanctification, and perseverance to heaven itself.

Bunyan died on 31 August 1688. His portrayal of the death of Mr Valiant For Truth is Bunyan at his allegorical best. This brave old soldier of Jesus Christ had received his summons to ‘go home.’ Calling his friends together he says, *‘My sword I give to him who shall succeed me in my pilgrimage ... My marks and scars I carry with me, to be a witness for me, that I have fought His battles, Who will now be my rewarder.’ ... So he passed over, and all the trumpets sounded for him on the other side...’*



PUZZLE PAGES

Wordsearch – The Parable of the Weeds (Matthew 13.24-30)

Ever wonder why there is both good and evil allowed in this world? Jesus told a parable that touched on this subject – it is called the Parable of the Weeds. It runs like this: Consider the world as if it were a field where a Farmer has sown good seed. But then an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat. So, when the wheat came up, so did the weeds. What to do? Instead of destroying the weeds, and thereby risking the wheat, the Farmer tells his reapers to wait and let both wheat and weeds grow together until the harvest. At the harvest he will instruct the reapers to gather up the wheat, but to discard the weeds. So do not despair when evil seems to thrive in this world – there is a reckoning still to come, and justice will be done.

Find the following words in the grid below

Kingdom Heaven Good Seed Field Sleeping Grain

Weeds Enemy Servants Master Sow Gather Reap

Root Let Grow Together Harvest Bundles Barn Burned



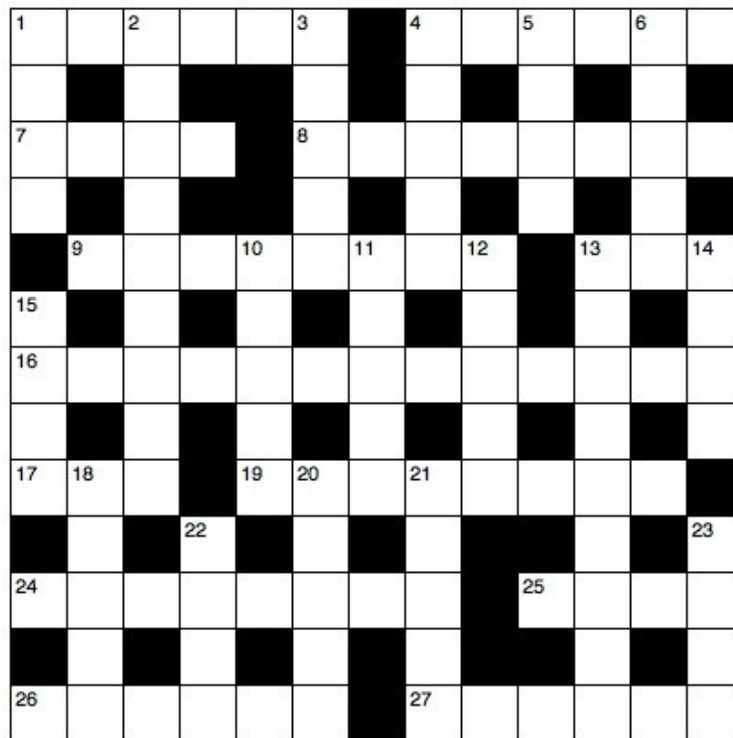
Crossword

Across

- 1 'Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders — in vain' (Psalm 127:1) (6)
- 4 Season of the year (Psalm 84:6) (6)
- 7 'My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. — here and keep watch with me' (Matthew 26:38) (4)
- 8 It came over the whole land from the sixth to the ninth hour on the first Good Friday (Luke 23:44) (8)
- 9 Paul invariably did this in the synagogues he visited on his missionary journeys (Acts 17:2) (8)
- 13 'It is God who works in you to will and to — according to his good purpose' (Philippians 2:13) (3)
- 16 Members of the Church of Scotland (13)
- 17 'Now when he saw the crowds, he went up on a mountain side and — down (Matthew 5:1) (3)
- 19 Mock (Luke 14:29)(8)
- 24 Disgrace (Psalm 44:13)(8)
- 25 First month of the Hebrew calendar (Exodus 13:4)(4)
- 26 Christianity of the Britons before Augustine arrived from Rome(6)
- 27 Mean (Numbers 35:23)(6)

Down

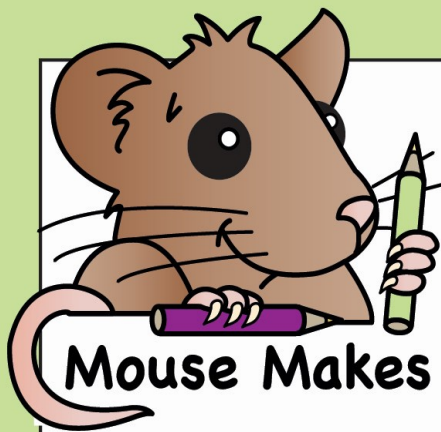
- 1 'Whoever finds his life will — it' (Matthew 10:39) (4)
- 2 'My lord the king, let the — — on me and on my father's family, and let the king and his throne be without guilt' (2 Samuel 14:9) (5,4)
- 3 O raid (anag.) (5)
- 4 'If two of you on earth — about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven' (Matthew 18:19) (5)
- 5 Take care of (1 Samuel 17:15) (4)
- 6 What the older son heard as he came near the house the day his prodigal brother came home (Luke 15:25) (5)
- 10 'Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with — judgment (Romans 12:3) (5)
- 11 Do ten (anag.)(5)
- 12 Architectural style first used in Greek temples in the sixth century BC (5)
- 13 Capable of being used (1 Kings 7:36)(9)
- 14 'Each one should — his own actions' (Galatians 6:4)(4)
- 15 Among the items imported by Solomon's fleet of trading ships (1 Kings 10:22) (4)
- 18 'But I am afraid that just — was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray' (2 Corinthians 11:3) (2,3)
- 20 Outstanding 18th-century hymn writer, — Watts(5)
- 21 One of the four sons of Asher (Genesis 46:17)(5)
- 22 Be distressed (Proverbs 24:19)(4)
- 23 He was the father of Gaal, who threatened rebellion against Abimelech (Judges 9:28) (4)



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

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Solutions to the Puzzles can be found on Page 34



Mouse Makes



READ
John 15:1-17

THE TRUE VINE

Who is the vine?

— — — — —
John 15:1

What does Jesus
ask us to do?

"Go and bear

— — — — —"
John 15:16

What happens
to the branches
that do not remain
in the vine?

Thrown into the

— — — — —
and

What does
Jesus command?

To — — — — —
one another.

John 15:12,17

How many
times does Jesus
command us
to LOVE
one another?

— — — — —
John 15:6

H T H R O W N A W A Y
I R A B I D E W I S B
D U F R U I T F U L U
N E R A J S I A M J R
C V U N F C U T V P N
L J I C W I T H E R S
E O T H O P J E S U S
A Y V W R L C R O N V
N G A R D E N E R E I
O S F J E S I S W S N
E R E M A I N F I R E

JESUS • I AM • TRUE • VINE • FATHER
GARDENER • FRUIT • FRUITFUL
BRANCH • PRUNES • CUT • WITHERS
CLEAN • THROWN AWAY • FIRE • BURNS
REMAIN • ABIDE • DISCIPLES • JOY

All in the month of AUGUST

It was:

250 years ago, on 2nd August 1776 that the formal signing of the US Declaration of Independence took place.

175 years ago, on 12th August 1851 that the American inventor Isaac Singer was granted a US Patent for his sewing machine. Since then, well over 100 million various models of Singer sewing machines have been sold worldwide.

Also 175 years ago, on 22nd August 1851 that the first America's Cup yacht race was held. That first event was a race around the Isle of Wight, won by the American schooner *America*. The trophy was then named in honour of the first year's winner. The race is the oldest still-operating international sporting competition in any event.

150 years ago, on 7th August 1876 that the birth of Mata Hari, Dutch exotic dancer and courtesan was born. She was convicted of spying for Germany during WW1 and executed by the French in 1917.

Also 150 years ago, from 13th to 17th August 1876 that the German composer Richard Wagner's complete Ring cycle (*Der Ring des Nibelungen*) was performed for the first time, over four nights, at the Bayreuth Festspielhaus.

125 years ago, on 4th August 1901 that Louis Armstrong, American jazz trumpeter and singer, was born.

90 years ago, on 1st August 1936 that Yves Saint-Laurent, Algerian-born French fashion designer, was born. (Died 2008)

80 years ago, on 13th August 1946 that H G Wells, British science fiction novelist (*War of the Worlds*, *The Time Machine*, etc) died.

70 years ago, on 27th August 1956 that Britain's first nuclear power station, Calder Hall in Cumbria, began operating. It was the first nuclear power station in the world to generate power on an industrial scale and formed part of the Sellafield complex. Closed in 2003.

65 years ago, on 13th August 1961 that East Germany sealed the border between East and West Berlin with barbed wire to prevent an exodus of refugees to the West. Construction on the Berlin Wall began on 15th August. The border reopened in 1989.

60 years ago, on 1st August 1966 that the Cultural Revolution began in China. Intended to preserve China's Maoist Communist ideology, millions of people were persecuted or displaced. It ended after Mao Zedong's death in 1976.

Also 60 years ago, on 4th and 5th August 1966 that US newspapers and radio stations quoted John Lennon as saying his Beatles band was "more popular than Jesus." He provoked widespread protests, and many radio stations refused to play Beatles' records. Lennon apologised on 12th August, at the start of the Beatles final tour of the USA.

50 years ago, on 7th August 1976 that NASA's Viking 2 spacecraft went into orbit around Mars. In two years it orbited Mars about 700 times and sent back 16,000 images.

***I recently found a lot of joy in writing some words to create songs using AI.
I thought you might like to read some lyrics:***

Elijah's Song

I was once Gods man in an evil time
And my life was hard with few resources
The land I loved was filled with crime
And worship of demonic forces

I lived through famine, drought and pain
And the ravens brought me bread
The flour and oil came again and again
And I brought a son back from the dead

And at mount Carmel in my finest hour
I stood against the Priests of Baal
And Yahweh answered with fiery power
And then I killed them all.

Soaked with blood and drained
I looked for national revival
But though it finally rained
All that was left to me was survival

The King stayed on his wicked throne
Jezebel's demons still ruled the land
I realised I was all alone
As she reached out a destructive hand.

I ran afraid, I ran depressed, depleted of my powers
And sat beneath the yellow tree staring at the sky
I realised I had failed my God and after many darkest hours
I broke and gave up and prayed to die.

Me the mighty prophet who saw miracles and grace
Called by God raising the departed son
Could only grieve and cry and hide my face
And wish my life was over and done

Wind shattered rock and the earthquake roared
Fire burned on the barren hills
But after the fire and repeating my ills
I was restored by the still small voice of the Lord

And onward with prophecy
No longer disappointed
The future legacy
Elisha anointed

And a life that went from highs to a low
So desperate that I prayed to die
Became an icon for the world to know
By flaming chariot lifted high



For all who hear in their despair
Remember me, my desperate prayer
The God of Elijah still at hand
To help and heal and understand

For all who live these difficult times
Of deception deep and demonic powers
Depression easily fills our minds
But God's purposes outlast our darkest hours

And I the man who never died
Stood with Jesus on that mountain
Seeing his transfiguration
Speaking of his resurrection

I once thought death was the answer to my pain.
But here was a voluntary death of the God
To whom I prayed in past futility
And all our loss was really gain
And this death won salvation
Victory for all eternity

See all your sins on Jesus laid
The lamb of God was slain
His soul was once an offering made
For every soul of man
For every soul of man

Elijah sings through time and space
See the Lords transfigured face
And take your place
In the beautiful story

Glory



Colin Reeve

The Shell

Upon the sandy shore an empty shell,
Beyond the shell infinity of sea;
O Saviour, I am like that empty shell,
Thou are the Sea to me.
A sweeping wave rides up the shore, and lo,
Each dim recess the coiled shell within
Is searched, is filled, is filled to overflow
By water crystalline.

From a poem by Amy Carmichael 1867 – 1951

Fellowship

..... is something video calls and teams meeting simply cannot achieve.

The word fellowship is derived from the Greek word koinonia, which is defined as "holding something in common"

Fellowship is the shared spiritual partnership, mutual support and common life among believers.

Christianity is deeply personal, but it is also deeply shared. We are called into a family, a body and a community of people who encourage one another to keep going.

The Church is not an idea, it is people.

We worship together, share tea, coffee, juice, conversations without rushing off to the next thing in our lives.

Kay MacKinnon

Back to School

The summer days of leisure
Give way to autumn cool;
Our mood is hard to measure
As we go back to school.

The table that was bearing
The fizzy pop and snacks
The surface is now caring
For books and packed lunch packs.

It's sad when times of easy rest
Give way to daily grind;
The bright side, when we're feeling stressed
Can be quite hard to find!

But we can't live forever
On a beach of golden sand;
It wouldn't be so clever
To live our lives unplanned!

A new phase is beginning
New scope of things to learn,
New ways we can be winning
New corners we can turn!

When school days are behind us
And faded, like a ghost –
The summertime will find us
With two weeks hols at most!

By Nigel Beeton

“Doubting” Thomas is famous for his scepticism that Jesus was alive, when in fact he had a towering faith that carried him further from Jerusalem than any of his fellow apostles.

His faith carried him to India, where he preached the gospel and eventually lost his life for his faith.

Thomas

Thomas struggled to believe
That Jesus lived again;
He feared that hope would just deceive
He thought it easier to grieve –
So “Doubting” is his name.

But then he met the risen Lord
And touched His wounded side.
His solid faith was so restored
He saw his mission lay abroad
And journeyed far and wide

His Lord led him to Indian shore
To bring His words of love
Through journeys long and hardships sore
To bring the needy and the poor
The peace of God above.

But some who dwelt in that far land
Returned his peace with strife
For they just could not understand
The gifts he held within his hand
And so he gave his life.

Oh grant us, Lord, the certainty
That “Doubting Thomas” knew,
May we, like him, cross land and sea
Oh may we just as faithful be
To do what You would do!

By Nigel Beeton

God in the Sciences

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

Parable: The Strength of a Seed

At this time of year, we enjoy the fruits of our gardens, fields and hedgerows: vegetables ripen, crops are harvested, and berries begin to show bright among the leaves. Much of this growth started with a few seeds in spring: the miracle of life coming from small dead-looking things. There is a league table of long-lived seeds. The winners so far are from the narrow-leaved campion, buried by squirrels in the Siberian permafrost over 30,000 years ago. When those seeds finally germinated, they became healthy plants that flowered and produced seeds of their own.

The Bible contains many links between seeds and spiritual growth, and the parable of the sower is the most famous (in Matthew 13). A person may hear or experience something of God which has the potential to germinate into a life of following Him, resulting in the fruit of others coming to know God too. But things can happen that snatch that seed away, killing it before it has finished germinating, or choking its growth.

What about the knowledge of God that gets trampled, churned too deep in the mire of life to receive the warmth and light it needs to develop into faith? Buried seeds don't always die, but they can lie dormant, remaining alive but inactive until the earth is turned over. The possibility of that moment of connecting with something divine, scrap of knowledge, or snatch of conversation resulting in a changed life may seem infinitesimally small, but it's not zero. The seed may be incredibly tough, just waiting for a chance to grow.

The Gospel narrative plays on the fact that it took a long time for the disciples to understand the full implications of Jesus' teaching: a germination process that took many of them three or more years. They could have been discouraged, but Jesus was not. I don't think it's too much of a stretch to draw out of the parable of the sower to include the observation that it can take a long time, sometimes decades, for people to work their way through the various barriers, sticking points, and phases of forgetfulness that may keep them from following through on their spiritual experience. When we finally receive – or are open to – the encouragement, challenge, or experience that helps our faith in Christ grow, we can experience the rich fruit of a transformed life.



The Sower

He works beneath the morning sun
He scatters wide the seed;
Rests not before the work is done
That bread may fill our need.

Some fell upon the hardened way
Where clay was hard as stone,
Birds ate the seeds right where they lay
And none was left alone.

Some landed on the rocky soil
Soon sprang their leaves of green –
To wilt beneath the sun's dread boil
As if they'd never been.

Some fell among the choking weeds
The tares took all the light;
Their growth then overwhelmed the seeds,
Which disappeared from sight.

But some fell on the fertile loam
The rain fell from the sky
A hundredfold their seeds had grown
As they grew strong and high.

Let not your heart be made of stone
Nor fail when troubles come;
By no foul sin be overgrown,
But thriving 'neath the sun!

By Nigel Beeton

Reflections on being a Christian :

The one who kneels to the Lord can stand up to anything. – *Anon*

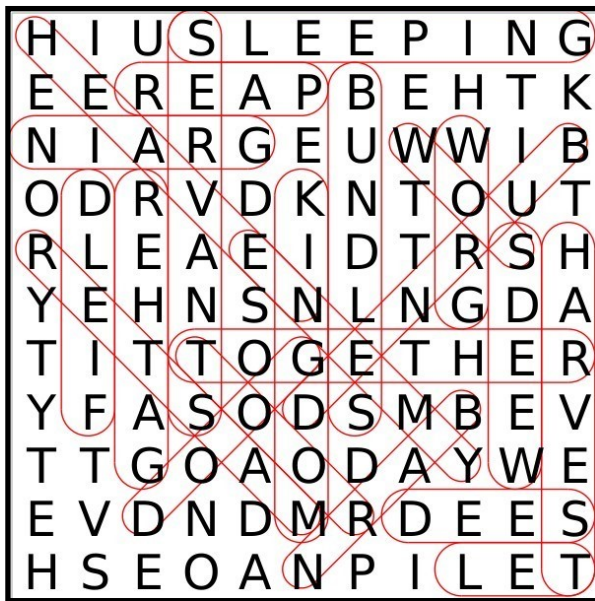
You're not free until you've been made captive by supreme belief. – *Marianne Moore*

The Christian believes that he was created to know, love, and serve God in this world and to be happy with Him in the next. – *Evelyn Waugh*

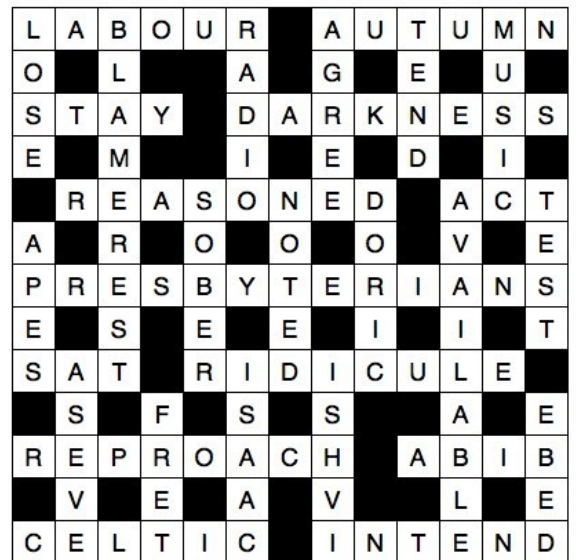
As we know, our own mother bore us only into pain and dying. But our true mother, Jesus, who is all love, bears us into joy and endless living. – *Mother Julian*

Solutions to Puzzles on Pages 23—25

WORDSEARCH



CROSSWORD



SUDOKU

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

SOME SUMMER & AUTUMN POETRY

The Apple Rhyme

Apples ripe and apples red,
Grow they high above my head.
Alack-a-day! For I am small
And apple-trees are mostly tall;
Dreary me! But what is sadder,
Nobody can find a ladder!

From a poem by Madeline Nightingale

Autumn

Yellow the bracken,
Golden the sheaves,
Rosy the apples,
Crimson the leaves;
Mist on the hillside,
Clouds grey and white.
Autumn, good morning!
Summer, good night!

By Florence Hoatson

Lovely Things

Bread is a lovely thing to eat –
God bless the barley and the wheat!
A lovely thing to breathe is air –
God bless the sunshine everywhere!
The earth's a lovely place to know –
God bless the folks that come and go!
Alive's a lovely thing to be –
Giver of life – we say – bless Thee!

By H M Sarson

The Whole Earth Shall Cry Glory

Almighty God, Creator:
The morning is yours, rising into fullness.
The summer is yours, dipping into autumn.
Eternity is yours, dipping into time.

The vibrant grasses, the scent of flowers,
the lichen on the rocks, the tang of sea-weed,
All are yours.
Gladly we live in this garden of your creating.

By George MacLeod (1895 – 1991; founder of the Iona Community)

