



Stockport Sunday School

February 2021 Newsletter 12



In just over two weeks time we will be entering the season of Lent, traditionally a time for us to think about our Christian faith and practice. In the past this usually involved some form of self-discipline - which often included serious 'fasting'.

I've been reading recently the trilogy of books by Hilary Mantel, works of historical fiction, based on the life of Thomas Cromwell, who rose from being the son of a blacksmith in Putney to being the Lord Privy Seal and right hand man of King Henry VIII.

It is a fascinating account of life in a very different world from ours, and, amongst other things, I was struck by the way Lent was observed in those days, when the influence of the Church was so powerful. For the people of Tudor times, food and feasting (at least for the well-to-do) was a very important part of life, and any opportunity to celebrate was readily taken up. Saint's days - of which there were many - weddings, 'sports' events, such as jousting or hunting, were all excuses for a good feed. However, come Shrove Tuesday, all the staple ingredients in the larder would be consumed ready to start the Lenten fast. This would require giving up eating meat, cheese, eggs, butter and similar products. (Fish was allowed, however.) The compliance was strictly observed and enforced, with only one meal a day allowed. In some ways it compares with the Muslims' observance of Ramadan nowadays. It certainly makes just giving up chocolate for Lent a rather insignificant penance, even if it might be good for us healthwise !

Lent also required daily attendance at church worship, and religion as a whole had a very high profile at all levels of society. Of course, life in general was very different in those days and rules and regulations including matters of religious faith were strictly, and often brutally, enforced. In particular, the people's lives were being affected by the advent of the Protestant Reformation, and the question of the position of the Church in the nation's affairs.

In addition the rulers of the major European Christian nations subscribed to the doctrine of the 'Divine Right of Kings'. This decreed that kings ruled by God's authority alone, and therefore any decisions they made must be God inspired. In effect they had absolute power and demanded total obedience, and Henry VIII was a prime example of this belief. In fact this doctrine continued in our country up until William of Orange came to the throne in 1689, at the invitation of Parliament, on the basis that the kings in future would be responsible to them in how he ruled.

Nowadays we might think the Divine Right would be a ridiculous concept to hold, but traces of the mindset still pop up among national leaders of a certain type. I have a vivid memory of Donald Trump, in recent times, likening his position as President of the USA to that of 'kings and royalty,' with the implication of having absolute power. A chilling thought for us all, and especially for his own country which is, after all, a Republic.

Here in the UK, we are fortunate to have grown up in a country with a long democratic tradition. Nevertheless it is a freedom that has to be jealously guarded, even in this day and age as recent events both here and abroad have demonstrated. We are also fortunate



to have a monarchy which is committed to the principles established when William II came to the throne.

It was the historian, Lord Acton, who warned - 'Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely', and his statement begs the question - if power is so toxic, who should we trust?

For us, as followers of Christ, the answer to the question is clear; ultimately we are called to put our trust in Him, and in God our heavenly Father. We acknowledge this whenever we say to God, in the Lord's Prayer - 'Your kingdom come... for Thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory.'

When Jesus gave His followers this commandment on how to pray, it was in the context of living in a time of autocratic power wielded by individual rulers, both Romans and Jews. Also, when it comes to kingship, we should also remember that even amongst Israel's most famous leaders and kings, there were those, such as David, who at times showed their weaknesses and failings. That is how Jesus' disciples would have understood His words.

Jesus, however, by his teaching and example, has shown us that in God we have a loving King and Father, a ruler who cares for each one of us. Yet He gives us the freedom to choose whether and how, and to what extent will we serve Him. The promise is that by giving our allegiance to Him, we will experience true fulfilment in life. But, whatever our position in society, to serve Him truly and faithfully, we have to be prepared to be open to His guidance, and follow what is right in His sight. So, with this in mind, as we approach another Lenten season, let us try to find time to consider how we might better serve our King, our God, our loving Father, so that we can play our part in making His 'Kingdom come, on earth, as in heaven'.

Christ's deeds and examples are commandments of what we should do. - *John Wycliffe*



Jesus walking on earth is far more important than man walking on the moon. - *Anon*



Those who go against the grain of God's laws shouldn't complain when they get splinters. - *Anon.*



Your worst days are never so bad that you are beyond the reach of God's grace. And your best days are never so good that you are beyond the need of God's grace. - *Jerry Bridges*



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

There are no February birthdays, but we send Happy Birthday wishes to Judith Curry who celebrates her birthday on 5th March.



TOM MOORE

We were sorry to hear of the death of Christine Moore's husband, Tom. Christine was brought to School at an early age by her parents, Mr and Mrs Jackson. Tom always came to the Special Services with Christine and despite failing health recently he always had a smile for everyone.

Christine is in our thoughts and prayers at this sad time.



FROM THE TREASURER

Thank you to Mrs Olive Gosling for the donation in memory of her husband, James, our never forgotten Senior Inspector, and also for the Gosling family.



A further £10 from Judith Curry for the Christmas Cakes she made, making the total £115. Many thanks, Judith.



I am sure a huge thank you to Kirsty and Judith Higgins from everyone who has received the newsletter instead of the usual magazine due to lockdown, for now almost a year. Such a lot of work and effort, so beautifully illustrated in colour and detail.

Many many thanks for your time and skill.

J. S.



ZOOM SERVICES



ZOOM SERVICE, SUNDAY JANUARY 3RD 2021

Walter led the first service of 2021 on January 3rd. This is the period of Epiphany when we remember the visit of the Magi, which marked the revelation of Jesus to gentiles. Norman read from Matthew 2 beginning to read from verse 1.

During the lockdown we have been able to join with other churches broadcast on TV or zoom services. These may have brought back memories of when we were in nativity plays or watched our children perform in them enjoying telling the Christmas story in a simple way.

Recently when sorting out, Walter had found a book by Gervaise Phinn, a retired primary school inspector in which he described watching nativity plays. At one school, the children had been asked to write about different parts of the Christmas Story in their own words and they read these out as other children acted out the parts. It was a spiritual experience to hear how the children saw Christmas.

At another school, he asked another child what he liked best about Christmas - "people are happy and smile a lot, I like watching mum making the Christmas pudding and letting me scrape the bowl, my sister and I decorate the Christmas tree. On Christmas morning we listen to Granddad preaching at the chapel, telling us the Christmas Story. He says people sometimes forget about the true meaning of Christmas, not the presents, but the baby in that cold stable wrapped in a cloth. We should be grateful for what we have got." It's strange what children take on board.

The nativity service is sometimes a child's first introduction to the Christmas Story. As we grow older, our faith and outlook changes, but we must not be influenced by our uncertain world but remember that the light came into the world on that first Christmas Day.

ZOOM SERVICE, SUNDAY JANUARY 17TH 2021

Garth took the service on January 17th, which was the saints day of St Anthony of Padua. He was born in Padua in 1195 to a wealthy family. At the age of 15, he entered an Augustinian monastery where he was educated and ordained a priest. On hearing about five Franciscan monks who had been martyred for preaching Christianity in Morocco, he offered to join the order and go to Morocco himself. But the ship carrying him was blown off course in a storm and he arrived in Italy.

He was asked to speak at a gathering in 1222, his knowledge and holiness was recognised by those present and he was sent to preach in Northern Italy. He saw that words were not enough and he lived a simple life of poverty. He trained the friars in Bologna which became a famous school and was appointed Provincial Superior in 1226, but still spent time in solitude and prayer.

He was in poor health, but still preached to large crowds, who came to hear him. In Padua he preached his last Lenten sermons. 30,000 came to hear him and no churches could hold this number so he preached on the piazzas and open fields. He was given a bodyguard to protect him from people who came with scissors who wanted to snip a piece of his habit as a relic. The trip exhausted him and he moved to a little town outside Padua where he died aged 36.

St Anthony's life is what every Christian life is meant to be; a steady courage to face the ups and downs of life, the call to love and forgive, to be concerned for the needs of others, to deal with crisis, great and small and to have our feet firmly on the ground of total trusting love and dependence on God.

FUTURE ZOOM SERVICES

We would love to hear from anyone (or a group of people) willing to take a zoom service.

If you have a favourite hymn or Bible reading you would like us to include in a service, please let us know.

The next dates for our Zoom services are:-

February 14th Beryl Manley

February 28th Stuart Dean

Thank you , Judith Curry, for providing the article from The Times, Saturday January 2 2021, from which the following is extracted, it's interesting reading archaeological links to the Bible.

ISRAELI DIG UNCOVERS BRONZE AGE BABY IN JAR

By David Rose

A Bronze Age jar used to bury a baby 3,800 years ago is among a trove of items found by archaeologists in Israel after they excavated the ancient port of Jaffa, now part of Tel Aviv.

They include burials, homes and pottery from the ancient Greek and Roman periods, Crusader fortifications, 19th-century Ottoman cannonballs and items dating from the British mandate of Palestine between 1920 and 1948. Buttons lost by British soldiers in the Second World War were also unearthed.

Digs overseen by the Israeli Antiquities Authority have been conducted over the past decade at five locations in the ancient city, according to the latest edition of the journal *Atiqot*.

The earliest find was the burial of an infant dating from the Middle Bronze Age (18th and 17th centuries BC), who was interred in a jar on the ancient mound known as Tel Yafo.....

According to the Old Testament, Jaffa was the harbour through which King Solomon imported cedar trees from Tyre, in modern-day Lebanon, to build his Temple in Jerusalem as well as the place from which Jonah departed for his famous encounter with a whale.

Fragments of ancient Greek wine vessels discarded by drinkers about 2,300 years ago provide new evidence of the ancient trade routes between Jaffa and the Aegean islands of Rhodes and Kos, the researchers say.....

WINTER WALKING FOR THE OVER 80'S

The sky is blue, the sun shines down,
We'll have a walk today.
But, wait a moment, lots to do
Before we're on our way.

Now, what shall we put on our feet?
Our trainers are no good.
We'll find thick socks and hiking boots
And they'll keep out the mud!



Although it's bright, we know it's cold,
So, find a scarf and hat
And then a stick to steady us,
And stop us falling flat!

Oh dear, of course, we need our 'phones,
Our daughters - they could ring.
They might have some important news.
We mustn't miss a thing!



We'll take a flask, a bag of crisps
And maybe a small bun.
So, first the ruck-sac, then in side
Small mats to sit upon.

"The seats in winter can be wet!"
I hear my partner cry,
So, little mats are quite the thing
To keep our rear-ends dry!



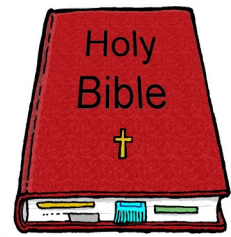
We're nearly there, we've packed with care,
Our gloves we mustn't miss.
Oh! Don't forget, we need our masks
Or, that would be remiss!

Well, that's the lot. We're ready now.
But - all has been in vain.
The sun has gone, the sky is grey
And - I can hear the rain!!!

Margaret Morris-Jones

BIBLE SUNDAY

Usually during February we join together to celebrate Bible Sunday. This year will be different but the following article from *A Basket of Gems*, compiled by Mark Stibbe, Monarch Books is a good reminder about why we read our Bible.



The story is told of an old man who lived on a farm in the mountains of eastern Kentucky with his young grandson. Each morning, Grandpa was up early, sitting at the kitchen table reading from his old worn-out Bible. His grandson, who wanted to be just like him, tried to imitate him in any way he could.

One day the grandson asked, 'Grandpa, I try to read the Bible just like you but I don't understand it, and what I do understand I forget as soon as I close the book. What good does reading the Bible do?'

The grandfather quietly turned from putting coal in the stove and said, 'Take this coal-basket down to the river and bring back a basket of water.'

The boy did as he was told, even though all the water leaked out before he could get back to the house.

The grandfather laughed and said, 'You will have to move a little faster next time,' and sent him back to the river with the basket to try again.

This time the boy ran faster, but again the basket was empty before he returned home. Out of breath, he told his grandfather that it was 'impossible to carry water in a basket', and he went to get a bucket instead.

The old man said, 'I don't want a bucket of water; I want a basket of water. You can do this. You're just not trying hard enough,' and he went out the door to watch the boy try again.

At this point, the boy knew it was impossible, but he wanted to show his grandfather that even if he ran as fast as he could, the water would leak out before he got very far. The boy scooped the water and ran hard, but when he reached his grandfather the basket was again empty.

Out of breath, he said, 'See, Grandpa, it's useless!'

'So you think it's useless?' The old man said, 'Look at the basket.'

The boy looked at the basket and for the first time he realized that it looked different. Instead of a dirty old coal basket, it was clean.

'Son, that's what happens when you read the Bible. You might not understand or remember everything, but when you read it, it will change you from the inside out. That is the work of God in our lives - to change us from the inside out and to slowly transform us into the image of his Son.'

LENT

Fast from judging others;
Feast on Christ dwelling in them.

Fast from emphasis on differences;
Feast on the unity of all life.

Fast from apparent darkness;
Feast on the reality of all light.

Fast from thoughts of illness;
Feast on the healing power of God.

Fast from words that pollute;
Feast on phrases that purify.

Fast from discontent;
Feast on gratitude.

Fast from anger;
Feast on patience.

Fast from pessimism;
Feast on optimism.

Fast from worry;
Feast on God's providence.

Fast from complaining;
Feast on appreciation.

Fast from negatives;
Feast on affirmatives.

Fast from unrelenting pressures;
Feast on unceasing prayer.

Fast from hostility;
Feast on non-resistance.

Fast from bitterness;
Feast on forgiveness.

Fast from self-concern;
Feast on compassion for others.

Fast from personal anxiety;
Feast on eternal truth.

Fast from discouragement;
Feast on hope.

Fast from the facts that depress;
Feast on verities that uplift.

Fast from lethargy;
Feast on enthusiasm.

Fast from suspicion;
Feast on truth.

Fast from thoughts that weaken;
Feast on promises that inspire.

Fast from shadows of sorrow;
Feast on the sunlight of serenity.

Fast from idle gossip;
Feast on purposeful silence.

Fast from problems that overwhelm;
Feast on prayer that sustains.

Anon

The following articles are taken from Parish Pump.

18TH FEB: FRA ANGELICO, PATRON OF ARTISTS

If you enjoy drawing or painting, Fra Angelico is the patron saint for you. This devout Dominican priest of the Early Renaissance (1387-1455) used his superlative talent to the glory of God to such an extent that even six centuries later we are inspired and blessed by his art.

For while you may not be familiar with his name, but you'll know his work: Fra Angelico's *The Annunciation* or *Adoration of the Magi* has adorned many classical Christmas cards. He is reckoned to be one of the greatest Italian painters of the 15th century.

Fra Angelico was born at Vicchio near Florence, and as a young friar worked at illuminating manuscripts such as the *Dominican Diurnal*. Ordained priest at Fiesole in 1418, he continued painting, spending the 1430s decorating the interior of the friary of San Marco, Florence with his masterpieces. Work at the Vatican followed, especially his paintings of Stephen and Laurence in the chapel of the artistic pope Nicholas V.

Fra Angelico's work is sublime, revealing a marvellous command of colour, light and perspective. It radiates spiritual serenity, and a dedication to God that is matched by few others. He has been described by experts as having "a rare and perfect talent", and that "it is impossible to bestow too much praise on this holy father, who was so humble and modest in all that he did and said, and whose pictures were painted with such facility and piety."

From 1449 to 1452 Fra Angelico was prior of Fiesole. Then he moved to Rome, where three years later he died. He was beatified in 1960 and declared patron of artists in 1984. Pope John Paul II described his paintings as 'miracles'.



SMILE LINES



PRAY WITH GRANNIE

A small boy went to church with his grandmother and joined her when she quietly slipped off the pew to kneel and pray. He even copied her example of burying her face in her hands. But after a few seconds his curiosity got the better of him. "Who are we hiding from, grannie?"

FOX

I called the RSPCA today to report I had just found a suitcase in the woods containing a fox and four cubs. "That's terrible," she said. "Are they moving?"

"I'm not sure, to be honest," I replied, "But that would explain the suitcase."

SLOW DOWN

Each Sunday morning our minister was mildly irritated by a member of the congregation who was a fast reader. Finally, announcing the 23rd Psalm, he added:

"And will the lady who is always by 'the still waters' while the rest of us are still in 'green pastures,' please pause until we catch up?"

EYESIGHT

A man went to his doctor to say that his eyesight was getting worse. The doctor asked the man to look out the window and to tell him what he saw. "I see the sun," the man replied.

The doctor replied: "Just how much farther do you want to see?"

PORTRAIT

A primary teacher was observing her classroom of children while they were drawing. As she got to one little girl who was working diligently, she asked what the drawing was. The girl replied, "I'm drawing God."

The teacher blinked: "But no one knows what God looks like."

Without missing a beat, or looking up from her drawing, the girl replied, "They will in a minute."



LANCASHIRE HILL SUNDAY SCHOOL



Recipe

Cheese and Tomato Bake

Serves 4

*4 teaspoons butter
180g bread, torn into pieces
1 small onion, chopped finely
120g cheddar cheese, grated
2 eggs
450ml milk
2 tomatoes, sliced
Salt and freshly ground black pepper*

Preheat oven to Gas 5/190°C/170°C Fan. Grease a 1.2 litre baking dish with some of the butter. Put the bread in a blender or food processor and blend into fine breadcrumbs then tip them into the baking dish.

Heat the remaining butter in a small saucepan and sauté the onion, until softened. Mix with the breadcrumbs in the baking dish and add half the cheese.

Beat together the eggs and milk and season with salt and pepper. Pour over the top of the breadcrumb mixture.

Arrange the tomatoes over the top and sprinkle with the reserved cheese. Bake in the oven for 35 minutes, until risen and golden brown.



PUZZLES

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



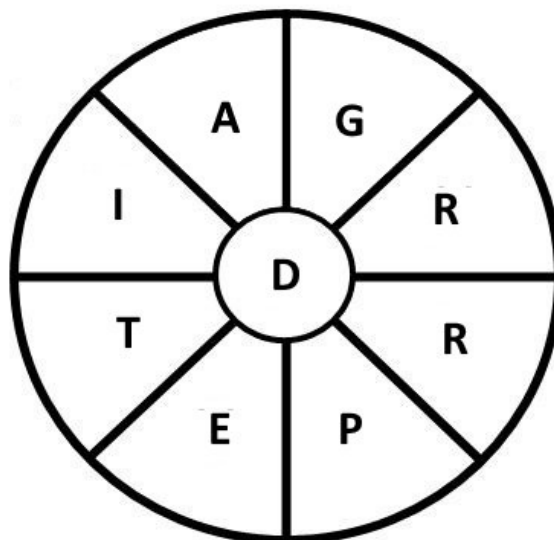
Sudoku

WORD WHEEL

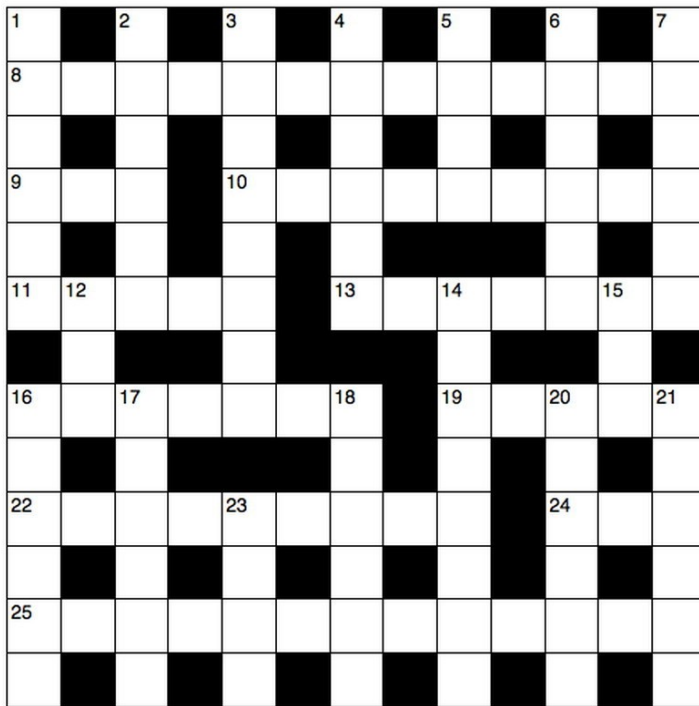
How many words can you make using the letters in the word wheel?

Words must be four letters or more, each word must contain the central letter D. Plurals and proper nouns are not allowed. There is at least one nine letter word.

Good score 20+ Excellent 35+



CROSSWORD



Use the clues below to complete
the crossword.

Across

- 8 Interrogated (Acts 12:19) (5-8)
 9 'Burn it in a wood fire on the — heap' (Leviticus 4:12) (3)
 10 Tobit, Judith, Baruch and the books of Esdras and the Maccabees are part of it (9)
 11 Science fiction (abbrev.) (3-2)
 13 Clay pit (anag.) (7)
 16 Went to (John 4:46) (7)
 19 'Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to — your bodies as living sacrifices' (Romans 12:1) (5)
 22 David's plea to God concerning those referred to in 14 Down: 'On — — let them escape' (Psalm 56:7) (2,7)
 24 Royal Automobile Club (1,1,1)
 25 How the book of Ezekiel refers to God more than 200 times (Ezekiel 2:4) (9,4)

Down

- 1 Seas (Proverbs 8:24) (6)
 2 One of the sons of Eli the priest, killed in battle by the Philistines (1 Samuel 4:11) (6)
 3 Specialist in the study of the Muslim religion (8)
 4 'Do not rebuke an older man harshly, but — him as if he were your father' (1 Timothy 5:1) (6)
 5 One of Esau's grandsons (Genesis 36:11) (4)
 6 Taking a chance (colloq.) (2,4)
 7 God's instructions to the Israelites concerning grain offerings: ' — salt to — your offerings' (Leviticus 2:13) (3,3)
 12 Confederation of British Industry (1,1,1)
 14 'All day long they twist my words; they are always — to harm me' (Psalm 56:5) (8)
 15 The crowd's reaction to Jesus bringing back to life a widow's son in Nain (Luke 7:16) (3)
 16 Disappear (Psalm 104:35) (6)
 17 How Jeremiah was likely to die if he wasn't rescued from the cistern where he was imprisoned (Jeremiah 38:9) (6)
 18 What the prophets do to a wall, with whitewash (Ezekiel 13:10, RSV) (4,2)
 20 Made by a plough (Job 39:10) (6)
 21 Noah was relieved when the flood waters continued to — (Genesis 8:5) (6)
 23 Jesus gave the Twelve the power and authority to do this to diseases (Luke 9:1)

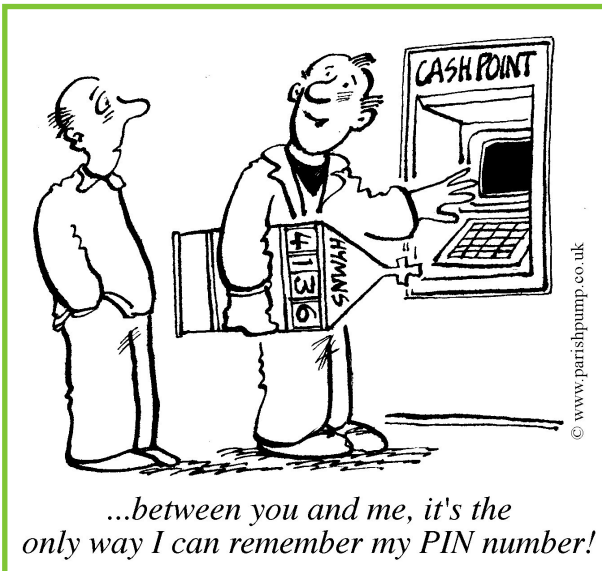
WORDSEARCH

Can you find the following words in the grid?
The words can be found in any direction.

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

Anna
bananas
Candlemas
chocolate
Christ
coffee
Fairtrade
fortnight
Holocaust
love
justice

leprosy
marriage
Matthias
naming
nest box
poverty
romance
Simeon
temple
Valentine
wedding



*...between you and me, it's the
only way I can remember my PIN number!*



February opens with Candlemas - the naming of Jesus in the temple. Simeon and Anna praised God to see the promised Messiah, sent by a loving God to save his people. February also celebrates the love between a man and woman: Valentine cards and romance abound. 'Love' as in social compassion is also remembered: Fair Trade fortnight, Holocaust Memorial Day, World Leprosy Day, and National Nest Box Week.... Love is truly needed by everyone!



ANSWERS FROM LAST NEWSLETTER

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

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



SUDOKU ANSWERS

WORDSEARCH ANSWERS

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

CROSSWORD