



# Stockport Sunday School

June 2021 Newsletter 16



The 'New Daylight' Bible reading daily guide carries the sub-title 'sustaining your daily journey with the Bible'. In the first instance, that can be interpreted as using the Bible as our guide for our lifelong journey of faith, through good times and bad.

On the other hand, it can be taken to mean using the notes to help the reader gain better appreciation of the Bible itself - perhaps taking us to parts of the book we might not otherwise visit, or giving new insight into familiar texts. Either way, it is a valuable source of information and understanding.

Recently reading a commentary on the story of Noah in *Genesis* proved a good example of the 'new insight' aspect.

The account of Noah and the Ark is a familiar one which many of us first heard as young children. The idea of filling the ark with animals, battening down the hatches and the eventual deliverance from the floodwater, has great appeal for young minds. Grown-ups however, might find it a bit fanciful, although there are historical records of widespread floods in those parts of the world at the time *Genesis* refers to.



Furthermore, there are aspects of the story which have underlying significance. For example, the story concludes with God making a covenant with the human race. It is the first of the four great Old Testament covenants, a precursor to those with Abraham, the Israelites and King David, each establishing a relationship of commitment between God and His chosen people.

Noah lived in a time when people had turned away from God, had gone their own ways, resulting in violence, corruption and wickedness on a large scale. Sadly, the history of mankind is full of examples of such, up to modern times. As the saying goes - 'all power corrupts' - and honesty, humility and care for others are early casualties as a result.



However, the Bible tells us 'Noah was a righteous man and blameless among the people - he walked with God'. That is, in the words of the prophet Micah - 'To act justly, to love mercy, and walk humbly with your God'. The story of Noah is of a man prepared to obey God's directions, to stand up for what is right, reject the evils of society at the risk of mockery by all around, and trust God that his work would not prove to be pointless wasted effort.

So he went ahead in faith and, what's more, he and his family survived and prospered against all the odds.

Jump forward 2500 years, and we are in the time of Christ, the ultimate example of someone who would stand up against evil, - whether the authorities or the general crowd, - who 'walked

with God' in the closest possible way. As John records in his gospel, at Jesus' baptism, the voice from heaven announced - 'You are my son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased'.



In the Christian church's calendar, we have just celebrated the final outcome of Jesus' life - the Ascension, followed ten days later by the coming of the Holy Spirit on His followers at Pentecost, and henceforth to all people everywhere. It is the date which celebrates the birth of Christ's church on earth.

The disciples were transformed from being a small number of ordinary people, who had lost their beloved leader, to the founders of a movement, people prepared to speak out in Jesus' name for what was good, true, just and, above all, loving. It required trust and courage to overcome the mockery and enmity of those whose lives were based primarily on materialistic gain. Like Noah's successors, mankind was being given a second chance by a loving God.

Leap forward another 2000 years, and in many ways much has changed, at least for us in the Western world. In practical terms our lives are much better - health, food, freedom for example. But there are still many parts of the world where corruption, persecution and other evils exist. Even here, in our country, in the words of Bob Dylan 'The times they are a'changing'. Sometimes the changes happen quickly - sudden events. Other times the changes may be slow, less noticeable, a gradual deterioration in standards and morality. In some ways this is harder to combat. We can see this in our present times; an increasing acceptance of a level of dishonesty in society as a whole, lack of respect and consideration for others, leading to such practices as bullying, highlighted in present time by increasing levels of on-line abuse.

At the same time, we face the present day challenge of Covid. An event in a way comparable to the flood of Noah's time, one which could devastate our world if not dealt with on a universal scale.

Even here, in the UK, it has demonstrated the vulnerability of our health service with its shortages of staff; the problems of social care for the elderly; the selfish behaviour of some members of our population with regard to guidelines; for increasing examples of prejudice against particular sections of society. These are all areas for concern.



Fortunately, there is reason for hope. We have seen many positive examples of individuals and groups who have gone out of their way to support those who have been most affected by the pandemic. As long as there are people who will stand up for what is right, who will look after their neighbour, who will walk with God, whatever their faith, then there is cause for hope for a better world.

The flood in Noah's times cleansed the earth. Christ's sacrifice brought the light of love to a cruel world.

Perhaps Covid in a way is a timely reminder to us that all humanity is built on interdependence. We all have a duty to each other, to care for our neighbour, and to speak out as individuals and as members of the wider church, against injustice, even if others accuse us of being unrealistic, naive, other-worldly.

The experience of the disciples at Pentecost is an example to us of being open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the task of making God's kingdom come, here on earth. It is there for us in good times and in bad.

One thing we have in common with these first followers of Jesus is our fellowship together as a Christian community. Our ability to join in worship is a time when we can pause, think about aspects of our faith, our relationships, both with God and with our friends and neighbours. A time to examine our strengths and weaknesses, and also the opportunity to encourage and support one another.

Let us thank God for that gift.



### FOUNDERS' DAY

In light of the uncertainty of lockdown restrictions, it has been decided to celebrate Founders' Day this year with an outdoor service on the car park, weather permitting.

Our Senior Inspector, Walter Stead, will be the speaker.



Seating will be provided but please wear suitable clothing for the weather conditions.

Tea and biscuits will be served at the close of the service.

We hope that you will join us for this service of celebration of the work of Stockport Sunday School since its foundation.



### DONATIONS

Many thanks to Beryl Manley and Judith and Garth Higgins for the generous donations in lieu of the weekly collections received by the Treasurer, very much appreciated.

Joyce Sellers



### BIRTHDAYS

We wish Happy Birthday this month to  
Hilary Wood on 15th June.



# Lancashire Hill Sunday School

## LANCASHIRE HILL BI-CENTENARY

Hi everyone,

Many of you will know that 2021 marks the bi-centenary of the original Lancashire Hill building with the school itself having been founded in Dutton's Rooms (a Silk throwsters room during the week) in 1820. I am fortunate enough to have a copy of the green backed book written and compiled by Frank Broome in 1921 at the time of the celebration of the centenary of the school. In this book there are many reports of the events which had taken place over the preceding hundred years since Thomas Duckworth walked in procession from Lancashire Hill to the "new" building on Old Road. Anything which can continue for 200 years is certainly worthy of celebration and our school is no exception. However the Covid-19 situation means we cannot celebrate this year as we would wish. So look forward to next year when we will have a number of events and when we hope to show photographs of the school over the full 200 years.

Stuart Dean



***Happy Birthday***

We send Birthday wishes this month to

Stuart Dean - 28 June



## ZOOM SERVICES



### ZOOM SERVICE, 2<sup>ND</sup> MAY 2021

Judith Curry led the service on May 2<sup>nd</sup>. Margaret Forster read the lesson from Mark chapter 6 verses 1-5. Jesus is rejected by the people of Nazareth.

Judith showed us a recording of a talk given by Chris Goswami from Lymm Baptist Church, based on that reading.



Jesus had been busy preaching and healing before going to Nazareth. The people there turned out to see this great man but when they realised he was the son of the local carpenter they could not believe he was anyone special.

Jesus was amazed at their lack of faith.



Chris asked 'what is faith?' He said it does not mean that we can never have doubts, real faith allows us to have doubts. The Bible is full of faithful doubters.

In time of difficulty our faith can be questioned, we ask, 'why does God allow this to happen?' Thinking through difficult questions helps us to grow in faith.

Faith will include doubts, faith is a decision to trust even when we have doubts. Jesus will accept our doubts and questions if we choose to put our trust in Him.

Thank you, Judith, for sharing this video with us, we always learn a lot from Chris Goswami's plain speaking. We also enjoyed singing the hymn, 'Tell Out My Soul' to a recording made by a group of singers and instrumentalists during lockdown. Each one recorded his part at home and the recordings were put together by modern technology.

### ZOOM SERVICE, 16<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2021

Stuart Dean led the service on Sunday 16th May.

Stuart asked how many of us had ever made a big mistake. Sometimes making a decision is a leap of faith. Decision making is part of life. According to Albert Einstein, "Anyone who has never made a mistake has never tried anything new".



Every day we learn something new. Stuart showed us a video clip of a class of Japanese children using abacuses to work out complicated maths problems. Although the abacus was invented 5,000 years ago, schools in Japan have re-introduced it to children. They found its use helps concentration and patience and also helps develop memory.

Stuart quoted three Bible passages about learning - Exodus 18 from verse 17, Proverbs 19 verse 20 we learn to become wise and verse 27 when we stop learning we forget.

Stuart then asked us five questions to see what we had learned about world news this week.

It showed us that we all have a lot to learn.

Thank you, Stuart, we always enjoy your services and learn a lot from them.



### **FUTURE ZOOM SERVICES**

#### **Please not the changes to the dates of future Zoom services.**

The next Zoom service was scheduled for May 30th. As this is a Bank Holiday weekend, we discovered that several people will be busy or away. So the new dates are:-

|           |                |
|-----------|----------------|
| June 6th  | Judith Higgins |
| June 20th | Garth Higgins  |
| June 27th | Founders' Day  |



### **9<sup>TH</sup> JUNE      EPHREM THE SYRIAC, PROLIFIC HYMN WRITER**

Here is a saint for you, if you have ever been touched by the words of a song.

Ephrem the Syriac was born 306AD in Nisibis, Turkey. Baptised in 324, he joined the cathedral school in Nisibis, where it was soon obvious that he had an outstanding gift for writing both music and lyrics.

Ephrem would have agreed with St Paul about the value of using music to express our faith in God. In an age of widespread illiteracy, he saw that hymns could be powerful carriers of orthodox Christianity, even when sung by uneducated people.

And so Ephrem wrote - and wrote. His poetry was so powerful, and his melodies so evocative, that soon his hymns were spreading far and wide across the Roman Empire. And wherever they went, his hymns took the Christian gospel along with them.

Some of Ephrem's hymns were written to refute heretical ideas, while others praised the beauty of the life of Christ. To Ephrem, everything around us could become a reminder of the presence of God, and thus an aid to worship.

Ephrem became the most prolific and gifted hymn-writer in all of eastern Christianity. His hundreds of hymns influenced the later development of hymn-writing in both Syriac and Greek Christianity.

Ephrem was also a well-respected Christian theologian and writer, always keen to defend orthodoxy from the widespread heresies of the time. Ephrem stressed that Christ's perfect unity of humanity and divinity represented peace, perfection and salvation.

After Nisibis fell to the Turks in 363, Ephrem fled to Edessa, where he continued to work. But plague struck the city in 373, and while nursing others with the plague Ephrem finally died of it himself on 9<sup>th</sup> June. But his music lives on - more than 500 of his hymns still survive today.



### FATHERS' DAY, A TIME TO CELEBRATE MALE ROLE MODELS

In the UK, USA and Canada, the third Sunday in June is Father's Day. It's usually a good time for sons and daughters to take their father to his favourite restaurant, or to watch a favoured sport, or whatever else he enjoys doing.

How will you celebrate it this year? If your own father cannot be with you, how about a Zoom meeting?

How do these special days ever get started, anyway? Well, Father's Day began because way back in 1909 there was a woman in Spokane, Washington, named Sonora Louise Smart Dodd. That year she heard a church sermon about the merits of setting aside a day to honour one's mother. Mother's Day was just beginning to gather widespread attention in the United States at this time. But Sonora Louise Smart Dodd knew that it was her father who had selflessly raised herself and her five siblings by himself after their mother had died in childbirth. So the sermon on mothers gave Sonora Louise the idea to petition for a day to honour fathers, and in particular, her own father, William Jackson Smart.



Sonora Louise soon set about planning the first Father's Day celebration in Spokane in 1910. With support from the Spokane Ministerial Association and the YMCA, her efforts paid off, and a 'Father's Day' was appointed. Sonora Louise had wanted Father's Day to be on the first Sunday in June (since that was her father's birthday), but



city council didn't have time to approve it until later in the month. And so on June 19<sup>th</sup>, 1910, the first Father's Day was celebrated in Spokane.

Gradually, other people in other cities caught on and started celebrating their fathers, too. The rose was selected as the official Father's Day flower. Some people began to wear a white rose to honour a father who was dead, and a red one to honour a father who was living. Finally, in 1972, President Richard Nixon signed a presidential proclamation declaring the third Sunday of June as Father's Day - a permanent, national holiday.



## Recipe

### Cheesy Baked Cod

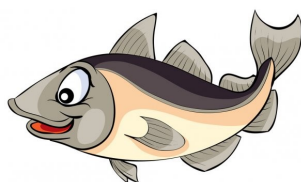
Serves 2

*2 cod fillets, skinned and boned*  
*2 tomatoes, sliced*  
*a pinch of dried mixed herbs*  
*125g plain fromage frais*  
*2 spring onions, chopped*  
*75g Cheddar cheese, grated*  
*Salt and freshly ground black pepper*  
*2 lemon twists, to garnish*

Preheat oven to Gas 4/180°C/160°Fan. Arrange the fish fillets, side by side, in a shallow ovenproof dish. Arrange the tomatoes over the fish. Season with salt and pepper and sprinkle on the herbs.

Mix together the fromage frais, spring onions and all but a tablespoon of the cheese. Season to taste. Spoon over the tomatoes and sprinkle on the remaining cheese.

Bake for 20 minutes, or until golden. Garnish with the lemon twist and serve.





## DOGS

When the weather is sunny and bright  
And we go for a walk in the park,  
We haven't yet got to the end of the road,  
When we hear a loud woof or a bark.

And who is this trotting towards us?  
Not one dog or two dogs, but SEVEN!  
Everyone's walking their dogs out today  
And for us it does not feel like Heaven!



We're not trying to say we dislike dogs.  
We love them - the big and the small.  
But the owners of dogs are quite different  
- and they don't seem to see us at all!

We sit on a bench for a quiet rest  
And who is this sniffing around?  
No! We haven't a sandwich or packet of crisps,  
Kind sir! Would you please move your hound?

To the country we go to see flowers,  
The grass gently sways in the breeze,  
But, careful, don't stand in that dog mess.  
Yuk! And smelly small bags hung on trees!

And what of the dangerous dog leads?  
They're so long that we just cannot pass.  
The owners don't notice - they're having a chat  
And we have to dodge past on the grass!



We want everyone to be happy,  
We don't want to be cross or to fuss.  
But, dog owners take care  
Please remember we're there  
And one day you'll be old folks like us!!

Margaret M. Jones



## THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD

A Sunday School teacher decided to have her young class memorize one of the most quoted passages in the Bible - Psalm 23. She gave the youngsters a month to memorise the short Psalm. Little Richard was excited about the task - but he just couldn't memorise things very well.

On the day that the children were scheduled to recite Psalm 23 in front of the congregation, Richard was very nervous. When it was finally his turn, he stepped up to the microphone and said proudly,

"The Lord is my Shepherd, and .... that's all I need to know."

# PUZZLES

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



*Sudoku*

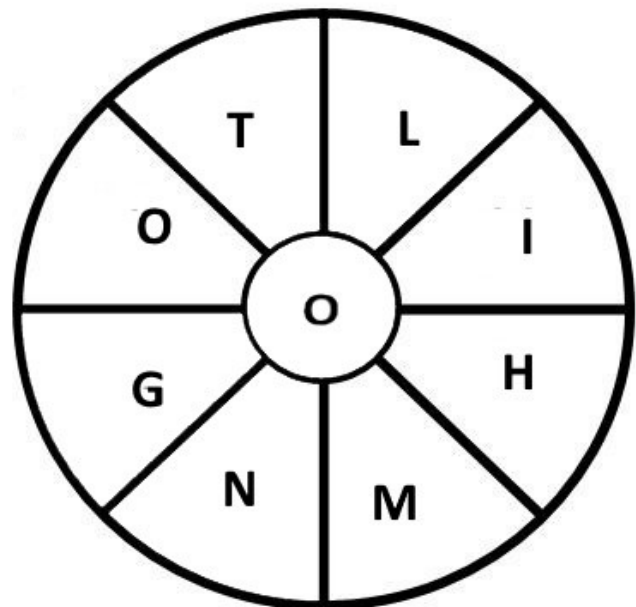


## Word Wheel

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 O. Plurals and proper nouns are not allowed. There is at least one nine letter word.

Good score 12+ Excellent 18+



### WORDSEARCH

Can you find in this grid the words shown in bold red capitals in the passage below? The words can be found in any direction.

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



### ST ALBAN - THE FIRST BRITISH MARTYR

**PERSECUTION** of Christians worldwide is rising fast, so it is worth remembering St Alban, the first British martyr. Alban was a **ROMAN** citizen living in England when the Roman **EMPEROR, DIOCLETIAN**, began a fierce persecution. Soon Alban found a desperate **PRIEST** on his **DOORSTEP**, hunted by local soldiers. Alban gave the priest shelter, and within days was **CONVERTED**. When the **SOLDIERS** arrived, Alban took the priest's place, refused to offer **SACRIFICE** to the Roman **GODS**, and was **CONDEMNED** to **DEATH**. Alban went to his **EXECUTION** on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 250AD with such **SERENITY** that one of the executioners was converted. He **DIED** on the **SITE** of the Hertfordshire **TOWN** that now bears his **NAME**.



*After months of lockdown, the Sunday procession probably needed some practise.*



## ANSWERS FROM LAST NEWSLETTER

|          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| 7        | 1        | <b>2</b> | 9        | 4        | 3        | <b>8</b> | 6        | 5        |
| 6        | <b>3</b> | 5        | <b>1</b> | 8        | <b>7</b> | 2        | <b>9</b> | 4        |
| <b>4</b> | 8        | 9        | 5        | 2        | <b>6</b> | 7        | 3        | <b>1</b> |
| 9        | <b>5</b> | <b>6</b> | 4        | 7        | 1        | 3        | <b>2</b> | 8        |
| 2        | 4        | 3        | 8        | <b>9</b> | 5        | 6        | 1        | 7        |
| 1        | <b>7</b> | 8        | 6        | 3        | 2        | <b>4</b> | <b>5</b> | 9        |
| <b>8</b> | 2        | 7        | <b>3</b> | 1        | 9        | 5        | 4        | <b>6</b> |
| 5        | <b>9</b> | 4        | <b>2</b> | 6        | <b>8</b> | 1        | <b>7</b> | 3        |
| 3        | 6        | <b>1</b> | 7        | 5        | 4        | <b>9</b> | 8        | 2        |



### SUDOKU ANSWERS



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

### WORDSEARCH ANSWERS

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

### CROSSWORD ANSWERS