



# Stockport Sunday School

July 2022 Newsletter 29



Our Founders Day service, on 12th June, was lead by Stuart Dean, one of our Inspectors, and was once again a very uplifting occasion. Stuart's review of the founding of our Sunday School reminded us of the vision, courage and commitment of that group of Christian people in their project to improve the living conditions of the people of our town through education. It was a far-sighted policy, and was carried out in the face of much opposition, including from church authorities.



Stuart followed up this account with a video of an address by Pope Francis, which he gave to a conference in 2017, on 'Building a Future'. His message was similar in content. We all have a need for each other in our lives. We all have a duty to our neighbours, whoever they may be, as Jesus demonstrated in the parable of the Good Samaritan. And we all have to live in Hope - hope for a better future for mankind; for hope is the catalyst for action and change. All in all,

an excellent service with a powerful message. Many thanks to Stuart and all who contributed to the day, especially our catering staff who prepared an enjoyable tea as part of our celebration of the Queen's Jubilee.

At the time, I had been reading commentaries on the Epistle of James, in the New Testament. James was one of Jesus' brothers. He played an important role in the early church, and was leader of the Council of Jerusalem. Whereas St Paul emphasised the importance of faith as the foundation for discipleship, James' message is that faith must lead to 'works' - ie: listening and doing. It must result in good deeds and responsible behaviour in line with Christ's teaching.



That call for Christians to be 'doers' of the word was what our Founders, and their many successors over the years, have responded to. Moreover, they saw that loving our neighbour is not just done at a personal level. As Pope Francis said, it may also include action for social change. For our Founders, this meant education for all; but the campaign to abolish slavery and in more recent times the establishment of our National Health Service are other notable examples of people responding together to the major challenges of their times.



For, as Archbishop Desmond Tutu said of social action - 'There comes a point where we need to stop pulling people out of the river. We need to go upstream and find out why they are falling in.'

So, when we ask in the Lord's Prayer - 'Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done', - it requires us, and mankind as a whole, to play our part in bringing about His will. We are the hands to do His work.

Another message in James' Epistle, is that our faith, our service, our relationship with God, should not be stuck in time. We are called to grow in faith and understanding - to be 'better', both in good times and also in hard times. While it may be easier to be 'better' when things are going well and we have things to be thankful for, it is always particularly uplifting to hear of people who have suffered tragedy, and have responded by trying to create support and help for others who are experiencing similar hardships. An attitude of not being 'bitter', but being 'better'



In conclusion: one thing that the Christians of James' time, the Founders of our school and our present day members and supporters, have in common, is the opportunity to meet and worship together. It's a time when we can touch base, so to speak, with Christ's teaching. A time when we might hear something that prompts us to think afresh about our beliefs, or maybe to change our habits in some way, or even

join some worthwhile campaign, as we share in witnessing to our common purpose of following our Lord's teaching and example.

And in the words of a prayer, written by Louise Davis:

***'Loving God, help us to be people who strive to be better; who cultivate your wisdom, and live it out through good works done with gentleness. Amen.'***

### DONATIONS

Thank you to everyone who made a donation to School funds 2021 - 2022. From members who are tax payers we were able to claim 25% on their donation and we have now received a payment into the School bank of £577.50 plus interest of £2.35 totalling **£579.85**.

Joyce Sellers



### GET WELL SOON

We send our best wishes to all our friends who have not been feeling well over the last month or have been undergoing investigations and hope that they will soon be feeling better.



## HAPPY BIRTHDAY

There are no birthdays this month but with our next newsletter not due until September we want to wish Happy Birthday to the following people who have their birthdays before the September newsletter is out.

Norman Sellers on 14th August

Joyce Darvill on 18th August

Ken Dean on 29th August

and

Cath Brown on 2nd September



## THE SUMMER GARDEN

Summer comes and waves her hand,  
The garden blooms at her command,  
Plants abounding everywhere  
As fragrant perfumes fill the air.  
Roses, geraniums, lilies too  
Agapanthus with globes of blue,  
Sumptuous colours in such array,  
Their beauty takes our breath away.  
To sit beneath the shady trees,  
To listen to the humming bees,  
As Summer wears her rainbow dress  
We thank God for such loveliness.

*By Megan Carter*



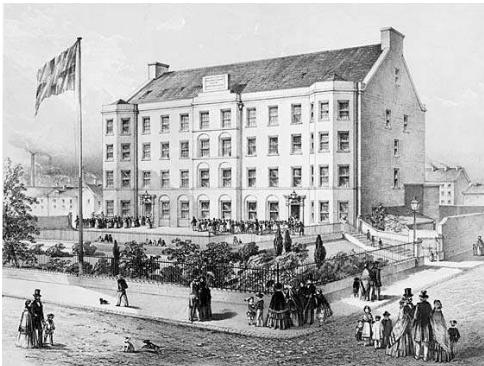
## FOUNDERS' DAY, JUNE 12<sup>TH</sup> 2021

We celebrated our Founders' Day on June 12th, when our speaker was Stuart Dean. He said it was the first time his name had appeared on the front of a service sheet.

Stuart told us some of the early history of the Sunday School illustrated by slides. The founder, Matthew Mayer, was the son of farmer John Mayer and his wife Hannah and we saw a photograph of Portwood Hall where they lived. Matthew became a Methodist and started to preach at Birmingham. He was the first Methodist minister to preach at Eyam, where he was rejected by the congregation. After twenty years of travelling he returned to Stockport and with others founded the Sunday School to teach the poor not only religious studies but reading and writing to give them a better chance of a better job to care for their families. His son, Joseph, part owner of a cotton mill, became the first unpaid teacher at the School and did much to develop it's work.



Despite opposition from those who thought that the working classes should not be educated, the School grew. In 1805, £6000 was raised by subscription to build the large building in the centre of the town to educate 5000 scholars. Music always played a part in the School worship.



Stuart showed us old photographs of an Anniversary in the Large Room and walking days in St Petersgate and on the School field. Jack Bennett (and previously his father) ran Elmfield Brass who played for many Founders' Days and Jack's sister, Jean, was at the service to see a video of Jack conducting the Band.

The School has always been open to welcoming people of all denominations and none.

Today with modern communications there is more chance of hearing what is happening in the world but unfortunately social media and TV is open to abuse and the spreading of false news. We have seen what is happening in Ukraine. The people in Russia are receiving false news about the events.

In a speech in 2017, Pope Francis said, "Life is made of encounters, about interactions." Think of the sick, prisoners, migrants, the jobless, why them, not me? Only by educating people can we gain solidarity with others.

We do not need to dwell on the past, but should look to the future with HOPE and TENDERNESS.



At the close of the service, about forty people sat down to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee with our Jubilee Tea. Thank you Stuart for your address, it was good to look back on the old slides, but also you gave us a message for the future.

Our thanks to those ladies who provided the lovely tea and decorated the hall.







## SERVICES



### SUNDAY MAY 29<sup>TH</sup> 2022

Judith Higgins took the service on 29<sup>th</sup> May. She had just finished reading a book of crime fiction. Instead of giving each chapter a title the author had headed it with a verse from the book of Judges in the Bible.

In the book, Deborah Arbiter had been a very wealthy woman but when she inherited the family estate, she turned the large family house into a refuge for older abused women. She provided them with a safe home, treating them like members of her own family. As well as providing them with therapists and councillors she spent many hours listening to the women herself under a tree in her quiet garden.

When the Bible verses from the book were put together they told the story of another Deborah, a judge and prophetess. She was the only female judge mentioned in the Bible. She did not have a base in Jerusalem but handed out her judgement sitting under a certain date palm ten miles north of the city. People were prepared to travel many miles to ask her advice and seek her judgement. The name Deborah means bee and both the fictional character and the Biblical one were busy bees working tirelessly to help the people in their care. In the book, Deborah had provided a home for the abused women, making them part of her family. In the Bible, Deborah called herself the 'mother of Israel' she saw the whole of Israel as her family.



Judith told us the story of Deborah in the Bible. Through her God had helped His people to overcome their enemies.

Both women had been caring and lived up to God's command 'Love your neighbour as yourself'.

Thank you, Judith, for telling us a little known Bible story.

### SUNDAY JUNE 5<sup>TH</sup> 2022



On 5<sup>th</sup> June, the Platinum Jubilee weekend, Garth took the service. We sang some of the hymns used at the Coronation. His reading was Psalm 121, 'My help commeth from the Lord' and he played the music 'Crown Imperial'.

He told us the history of the Queen's accession and her speech in 1953 in which she promised to serve her people.

He told us a little about the Coronation and the specially bound coronation Bible on which she made her vows during the Coronation ceremony.

The service ended with the singing of the National Anthem.

## SUNDAY JUNE 19<sup>TH</sup> 2022

Beryl Manley took the service on June 19<sup>th</sup>. She took as her theme music that Queen Elizabeth likes. We learnt that she enjoys all genres, including religious, military, musicals, classical, modern and humorous, she



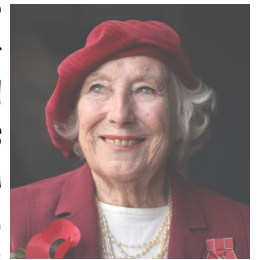
does not however like ballet particularly, but does like the theatre. Beryl told us that the Queen's favourite hymn is 'Praise my Soul the King of Heaven' and we all joined in singing it. As today was Father's Day, the first prayer was for all fathers on their special day. We all then joined in to sing another hymn the Queen likes, 'The Lord's My Shepherd'. After the Lord's Prayer, we listened to 'Soldiers of the Queen' played by the Royal Marines Brass Band, as Prince Philip had been in the Navy. We listened to another



couple of pieces of music that are favourites of the Queen, 'We'll Meet Again', sung by Vera Lynn and 'You Raise Me Up' sung by Aled Jones and Russell Watson.



We learnt that one of the Queen's favourite comical songs is 'When I'm Cleaning Windows' with George Formby. The Queen has ruled the United Kingdom for 70 years and has worked to bring the people of the Commonwealth together and so we all sang 'Land of Hope and Glory' and 'There'll Always be an England'.



After the service, we all enjoyed tea and cream scones. Thank you, Beryl, for an enjoyable service.

## SUNDAY JUNE 26<sup>TH</sup> 2022

Walter Stead took the service on June 26<sup>th</sup>. After speaking with a friend knowledgeable in ancient history, Walter had begun to think about the amazing timescale of human development and compare this with Bible texts, especially Genesis, God's covenant with the Jewish people 19 centuries BC to the 21<sup>st</sup> century AD.

In 605BC Nebuchadnezzar II came to power in Babylon and soon invaded Judah, a small nation. The soldiers destroyed buildings and city walls and set fire to the temple and palaces. They took craftsmen and nobility back to Babylon in captivity, similar to the events happening in Ukraine



Nebuchadnezzar II



today. Shadrack, Meshack, Abednego and Daniel were amongst those taken. In an unusual action, Nebuchadnezzar chose to educate these Jewish men to help him govern. They kept their Jewish faith and refused to eat 'unclean' food. But they prospered and the King turned to Daniel to interpret his dreams. He makes Daniel a ruler and accepted his god a 'God of Gods, King of Kings' but this was short lived.

Nebuchadnezzar erected a 90 foot gold statue of the god Nabu and ordered his officials to worship it. Shadrack, Meshack and Abednego were condemned to death for refusing to do so and were thrown into a fiery furnace but survived. Nebuchadnezzar again acknowledges the authority of God.



When Nebuchadnezzar died the new King, Darius, was also impressed with Daniel and appointed him as one of the three Administrators of the Kingdom. Daniel's enemies planned to discredit him and persuaded Darius decree that no-one should worship any god or man for thirty days. Daniel kept his faith and worshipped God three times a day. Darius knew he had been tricked but had to sentence Daniel to be

thrown to the lions. "May your God, whom you serve, continue to rescue you." God saved Daniel and Darius had his accusers and their wives and children thrown to the lions. Parts of the story are horrific but reflect on the time when the events took place.

Even today when order breaks down, mankind's actions can be terrible.

Events at Auschwitz, Rwanda and Ukraine remind us of man's inhumanity to man.

The simple message of the book of Daniel is that God looks after those who trust and serve Him, although it does not always seem to be that way and innocent people suffer and the evil ones flourish.

Reading and hearing the Bible passages we can recognise the underlying threats, dangers and weaknesses in our own times. Our protection and guidance comes from our trust in the loving God.

Thank you, Walter, for giving us a new insight into a well-known story.



### **UPCOMING SERVICES**

The next services will be

July 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Judith Higgins
July 10 <sup>th</sup>	Garth Higgins
July 17 <sup>th</sup>	Sheila Hulme
July 24 <sup>th</sup>	Walter Stead
July 31 <sup>st</sup>	Judith Higgins

August speakers to be arranged.



# LANCASHIRE HILL SUNDAY SCHOOL



## 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 the oven to Gas4/180°C/160°C Fan/350°F. Arrange the fish fillets, side by side in a shallow ovenproof dish. Arrange the tomato slices over the fish. Season well with salt and pepper and sprinkle on the herbs.

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

Bake for 20 minutes, or until golden. Garnish with a lemon twist and serve with vegetables of choice.



## PERCY

1. There's a pigeon who visits my garden,  
and he's really a bright little chap.  
As soon as I fill my bird feeders  
He is there, with a flip and a flap!
2. He doesn't just come in the morning,  
He likes breakfast and dinner and tea!  
And each time I walk down the garden  
He is there on the roof, watching me!

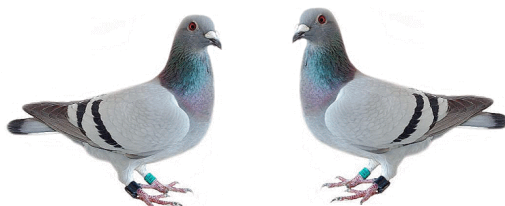


3. The sparrows and blue-tits and black birds  
all manage to get their fair share,  
but, always, if I scatter bread crumbs,  
Well, Percy the pigeon is there!
4. Each time, when I fill up my bird bath,  
Well, guess who's the first for a dip?  
then Penelope pigeon, (his girlfriend),  
Flies down for a delicate sip!

5. Now, Percy is really quite clever,  
If no seeds on the grass can be found,  
He flies to the feeder and flaps his large wings,  
And a shower of seeds lands on the ground.
6. When I filled up my bird-bath this morning,  
and turned to walk back down the path,  
With a splash and a splash, there was Percy,  
completely submerged in the bath!
7. You're welcome dear Percy, I love you.  
Please don't go away for a while.  
Each day you bring good entertainment,  
And, certainly, many a smile!



Margaret Morris Jones



The following article on the positive relationship between Science and Christian faith, was written by Dr Ruth Bancewicz who is based at The Faraday Institute for Science and Religion in Cambridge.

### KEEPING CALM IN THE STORM

One of the most famous stories about Jesus is the calming of the storm (Luke 8:22-25). Of course, anyone could say that the wind stopped suddenly of its own accord, but the disciples were not fooled. They had seen a number of these 'coincidences' in Jesus' ministry, and they weren't about to ignore this one. Jesus had calmed the waves with only His words. Wasn't this an act of God? Who else could be in complete control of creation?

Jesus dealt graciously with the very pressing and practical issue of the raging storm before He did a bit of teaching, asking His followers "Where is your faith?" It's not surprising that they were scared, given the circumstances, but clearly Jesus expected better of them. He had already been teaching them for some time, and clearly knew they were ready to trust Him.

In similar circumstances, Christians often do several things in quick succession. We start by panicking and being afraid. After a while we might remember what we know about God's character and pray for help, trusting that whatever happens He will help us to handle it. Most often, we don't get the storm-calming effect when we ask for it, but battling on with faith and God's help is much easier than trying to keep going in a panic.

'Peace' in this kind of situation is a very active holding on to what we know about God. The difference between trusting and not trusting can be like night and day in terms of stress levels. I have found that it can make the difference between unmanageable stress and something that stretches me and teaches me something new.

Knowing some science can help us to trust God. A Being who created the whole universe, sustaining the wonderfully creative processes that produced diverse life on earth, must be both extremely powerful and extremely wise. The God who can both calm the waves and walk on them must be in complete control of the things He made. When this knowledge goes hand in hand with experience of God's intimate love for us and care for us in every situation that we find ourselves in, I am reassured that He's got things in hand. I will always need help from others to pray faithfully in stormy situations, but hopefully I've seen enough now not to panic for too long.

Time (and my closest friends) will tell!



## BIBLE SOCIETY

### UKRAINIAN SOLDIERS TREAT BIBLE LIKE 'A LIFE-SAVER'



Since the war broke out more than six months ago, Bible Society has been making the Bible available to soldiers as well as civilians in Ukraine.

Recently, Serhii, the commander of a military unit, told Bible Society colleagues in Ukraine how vital the Bible is to his troops. He said, "It is very important for soldiers to have the Bible. Things are very tough at times and many soldiers are praying to God.

"They may have never attended a church before. They may not have believed in God before. But now they are turning to Him. Many of them treat the Bible as a life-saver.

"I have a friend, an officer. He also received a Bible from our chaplain. Sometimes he faces situations that seem to be desperate. He turns to the Bible...and he says, 'You wouldn't believe it. Every time I find an answer. The Bible has a way out! I do as the Bible says and everything works well.'"

Serhii added, "So, for those people who are facing enormous pressures on the frontlines, who experience hardship, both physical and moral, when they have this Bible in their pocket, when it gets very hard, a soldier can open it and find words that he needs to hear at that very moment. It is very important. Thank you!"



## 14<sup>TH</sup> JULY - SAINT PHOCAS OF SINOPE - THE BRAVE GARDENER

Many of us are gardeners, but not many of us are buried in our gardens.

Phocas was a fourth century Christian gardener who ran a little guest house in Sinope, on the Black Sea (now part of modern Turkey). He used the produce from his garden to welcome and feed any visitors who came by, as well as giving anything left over to the poor.

In a time of persecution, the governor of the district sent soldiers to kill him because of his Christianity. But when the soldiers arrived at Phocas's guest house, they did not recognise him. Phocas politely fed them and invited them to stay the night, during which he crept out into his garden to dig his own grave and prepare for death. In the morning, Phocas divulged his true identity, rather to the dismay of the soldiers, who did not want to kill this kindly man. But Phocas assured them that he considered martyrdom the highest honour, and humbly bent his head to their swords. And so, the soldiers killed him and buried him in the grave he had prepared.



The news of Phocas's martyrdom spread far and wide, drawing many pilgrims to his garden. His calm courage and faith in God were widely admired and in time Phocas became the patron of sailors in the Black Sea, and then the whole Eastern Mediterranean.

Phocas's life echoes that of many Christians today, who go calmly about their daily mundane jobs in lands of persecution, and who do not avoid the call to Christian martyrdom, however it may come to them.

## JUST FOR SMILES

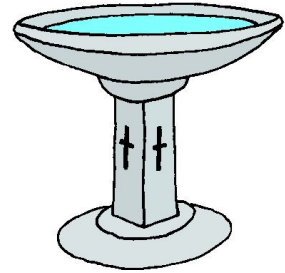


### SOLAR POWER

Somebody finally invented a solar-powered laundry dryer. It's called a 'clothes-line'.

### BAPTISM

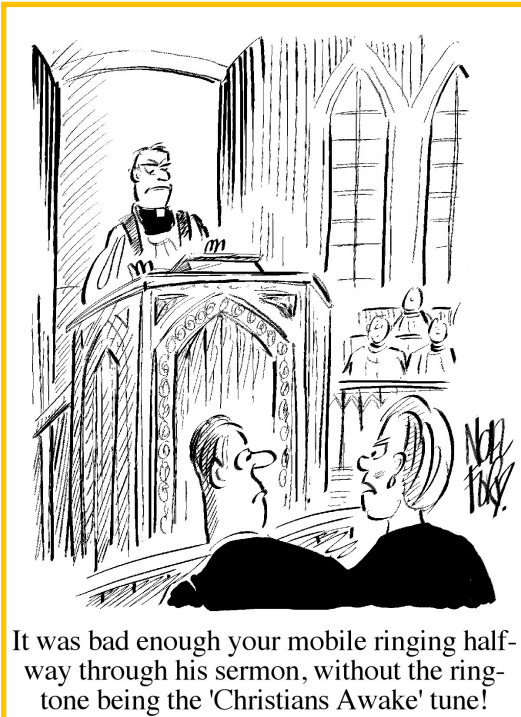
A couple took their five-year-old young daughter to church. During the service, the minister conducted the baptism of a tiny infant. The little girl watched in wonder as he held the baby, said solemn words, then poured water over its head, and then carefully wiped it dry. Finally, she turned to her father. "Daddy, why is he brainwashing that baby?"



### THE LADY WHO WANTED THREE HYMNS

One Sunday a minister announced that the church needed some extra money. He asked the people to prayerfully consider giving a little extra, and as an enticement, added that whoever gave the most would be able to pick out three hymns.

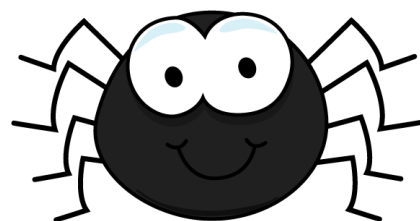
The offering plate was passed around, and to the minister's amazement, someone had put in a cheque for £1,000. He shared his joy with his congregation and said he'd like to thank the person who'd given the cheque. A very quiet, elderly lady shyly made her way down to the front of the church. The minister told her how wonderful it was that she gave so much, and asked her to pick out three hymns. Her eyes brightened as she looked over the congregation. She pointed carefully to the three handsomest men in the building and said: "I'll take him, and him, and him."



It was bad enough your mobile ringing half-way through his sermon, without the ring-tone being the 'Christians Awake' tune!

### SPIDER

Whoever said "Out of sight, out of mind" never had a large spider disappear in the bedroom.

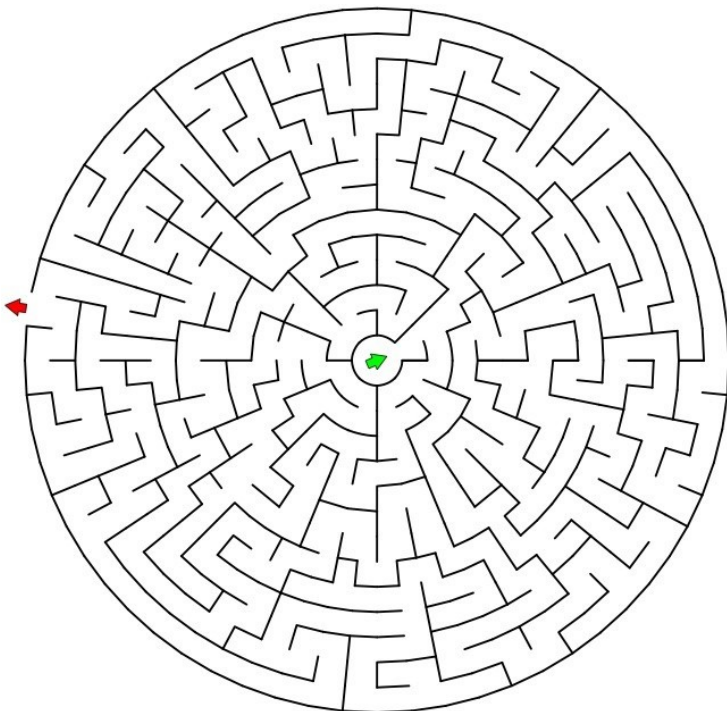
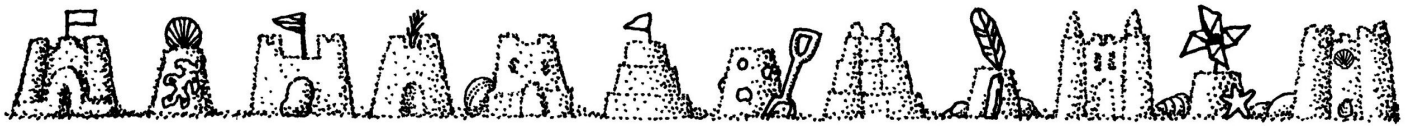


# PUZZLES

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

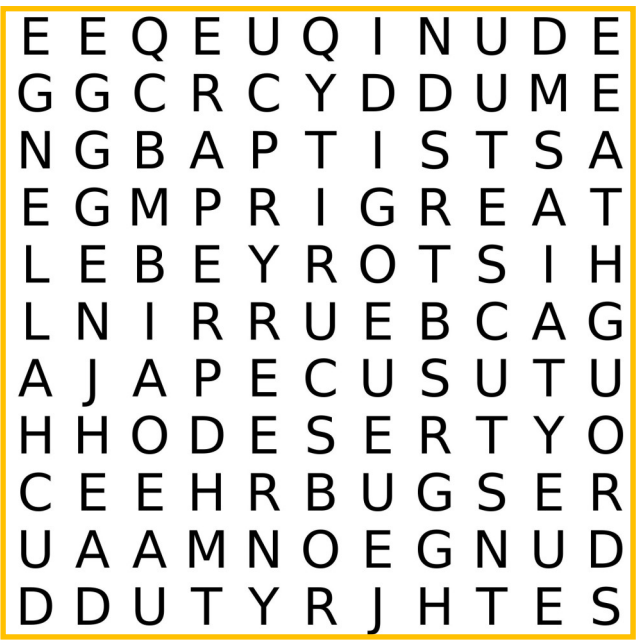


Sudoku



## MAZE

Can you find your way through the maze starting at the green arrow and exiting at the red arrow?

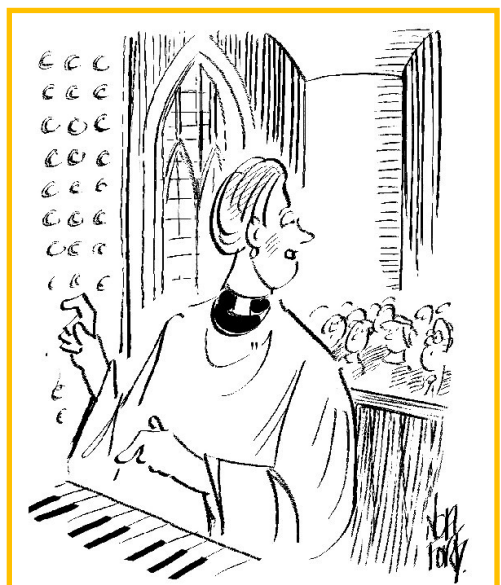


**WORDSEARCH**

Can you find in this grid the words shown in **BOLD CAPITALS** in the Bible passage below? The words can be found in any direction.

**John the Baptist**

This month, on the 29<sup>th</sup>, we remember **JOHN** the **BAPTIST**. By all accounts, he had a **ROUGH** life. He grew up in **OBSCURITY**, lived in the **DESERT** on a diet of **BUGS**. He wore itchy **CAMEL** hair. He worked in the **HEAT** of the **SUN**, constantly **CHALLENGE** people, and wading in and out of **MUDDY JORDAN** waters to baptise many. Then he was **ARRESTED** and kept in a reeking, infested **DUNGEON** until one day they **CUT** his **HEAD** off. Not much comfort in that life. Yet the Bible tells us that of all the people in **HISTORY**, no one has even been born who was as **GREAT** as him. Why? Because of the **UNIQUE** calling God gave him, which was to **PREPARE** the way for the coming ministry of his Son, Jesus. Jesus did not have an easy life, either.



"Due to our failure to secure a holiday-relief organist, the next hymn will also be sung to the tune, *Chopsticks*."



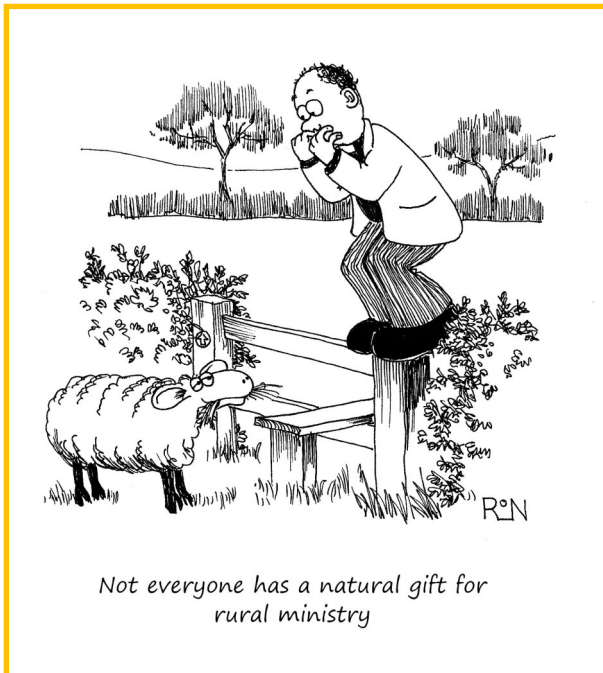
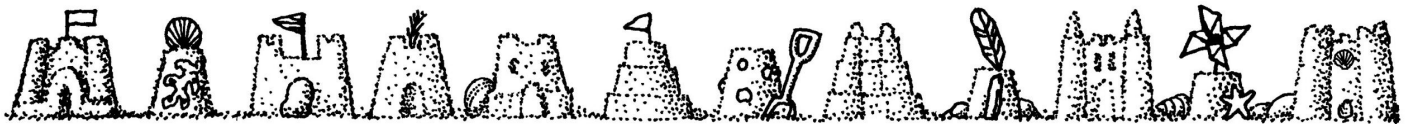
Weeks after the Pet's Service, nobody had claimed the monkey

## ANSWERS FROM LAST NEWSLETTER

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



## SUDOKU ANSWERS



## WORDSEARCH ANSWERS