



Stockport Sunday School

December 2022 Newsletter 33



Well, here we are at the second week of the Advent season, and the preparations for Christmas are starting to accelerate.

So many things to do! Have we bought enough Christmas cards, (where is last year's list?). Who have we not chosen a gift for yet? Is it time to buy the Christmas tree, or will the needles fall off by Boxing Day? Do the tree lights work - have we got any spare bulbs?

Who is hosting Christmas dinner this year, and do we have to contribute anything? And so on.

Before you know what is happening the 'magic' of Christmas is beginning to seem a bit faded.

So we need to remind ourselves that it is when we can make time for

following family traditions, making contact with relatives and friends, bringing back happy memories of past times, even if sometimes they may be tinged with sadder ones.



All these practical tasks that we take on board, are intended to be a reflection of our care for one another; for our family, friends and acquaintances.

But what is missing? It is surely also a time to step aside from the hustle and bustle of the Christmas rush and to think about the essential reason for the celebration of Christmas - namely, God's love for humankind, demonstrated by the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In the words of the carol by Christina Rossetti:

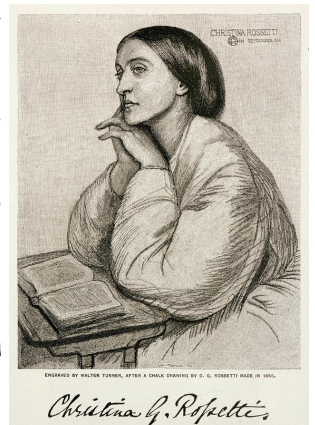
Love came down at Christmas
Love all lovely, Love divine
Love was born at Christmas
Star and angels gave the sign

And as God has shown His love for us, in response, we are called to love Him and our neighbours.

But what do we mean by the word 'Love' in this context? In practice, we use it in differing ways.

The dictionary defines Love as 'an intense feeling of deep affection for another person'; - as in romantic love; emotional, and suggesting it is something outside our control.

However, it could refer to the love a parent has for their child - an instinctive thing, protective, wanting the best for them.



But Jesus' message is surely that our love for God, and other people, is something we have to develop, and work at.



It is interesting to note how use of words can change over generations. For example, in early editions of the New Testament, as in St Paul's letter to the Corinthians, so often read at weddings, the word 'Charity' is used instead of 'Love'. Sadly it is a word that has lost its original meaning to a degree. Charity can be seen as something a bit unfeeling; to do with organised fundraising. Perhaps it may be thought of as doing good as a duty - as in Jesus' parable of the rich man putting his gift into the temple Treasury, congratulating himself on doing what custom required, compared with the poor widow and her gift of two copper coins, all she had.

Then we have common sayings, such as 'Cold as charity' - bringing to mind the days of the old work houses or charity for the 'deserving poor'. Surprisingly, the original meaning of this saying is almost the opposite of what these words seem to imply.

The source is in Matthew's gospel ch 24: v12, where Jesus is forecasting the end of the age, and the destruction of the temple because of the people's failure to follow God's law. In the early Wycliffe translation Jesus says, 'Because iniquity shall abound, the charity of many will wax cold'.

That is to say, because of the deterioration of the nation's moral standards, then the love for each other in society will diminish as a consequence. Selfishness will rule; love for our fellow men and women will be diminished.

Similarly, the phrase 'Charity begins at home' is often interpreted that we should concentrate on looking after our close family to the exclusion of others. But, perhaps its real meaning is that love and care for others will grow out of how we deal with each other within our family, with the people who are dearest to us. If our family relationships are wrong, it will hinder our relationships with others. Practising charity at home is the starting point to living a charitable (loving) life outside the home, encompassing everyone.



The origin of the word Charity is from the Latin 'Caritas' in the sense of being 'cared for'. So, when we talk of universal love, perhaps 'care' gives a better understanding of the essence of the original word 'charity'; less dependent on emotions, but, nevertheless heartfelt. Let us care for one another.



So, in our spiritual preparations for Christmas, let us remind ourselves that we have a God who cares for each of us and all of us, intensely, and bids us have 'caring love' - for those around us - in thought and word and deed. Something for us to think about, especially in the difficult times we are currently experiencing as a nation.

And as followers of Jesus: - we can be inspired by the closing words of Christina Rossetti's Christmas carol;

Love shall be our token
Love be yours and love be mine
Love to God and all men
Love for plea and gift and sign

So, over the coming days, we hope your Christmas preparations, in their various forms, will bear fruit and that you will have a joyful and fulfilling time of celebration.

And, as we sometimes say nowadays, in farewell, 'Take care'.

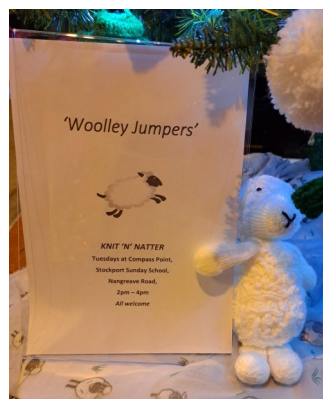
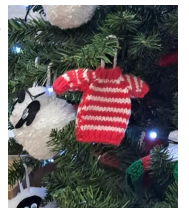
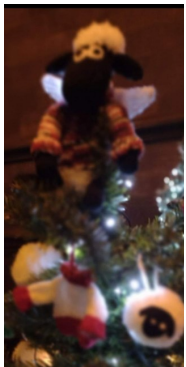
With very best wishes from the Officials to everyone for a very :-

Happy Christmas and a Healthy and Peaceful New Year



KNIT 'N' NATTER CHRISTMAS TREE

The ladies of the Knit 'N' Natter group created a lovely Christmas tree for St George's Christmas Tree Festival, titled 'Woolley Jumpers'. It was a beautifully decorated tree and as you can guess from the title, it was covered with sheep and jumpers. The tree was situated in an ideal spot not far from the entrance and was one of the first trees you could see at the festival. A lot of work, as always, must have gone into designing and creating this tree, it was gorgeous to see it all lit up, and to continue with the theme, it was fantastically topped with a sheep wearing a jumper instead of a star. The details were amazing, even right down to having a knitted sheep holding the Knit 'N' Natter sign at the bottom of the tree. Thank you ladies, for all the hard work you put into creating this amazing tree, it was much admired by all who visited.



CHRISTMAS FAIR

Once again we welcomed friends, family and local residents to our Christmas Fair. There was a good variety of stalls, a bottle tombola, a raffle, Father Christmas in his grotto and the lounge became a lovely 'café' area for people to enjoy a cup of tea or coffee, a toasted teacake, a bacon balm and cakes, whilst chatting with other visitors.

A huge 'thank you' to Don and Judith Curry for all the hard work that they put in to make the fair a success, not just on the day itself, but in all the preparation work they do, including collecting goods for the fair, in the weeks leading up to it, it is much appreciated and the day was enjoyed greatly by those attending the fair.

Thank you also to anyone who helped in any way at all to make the day possible, from the setting up and clearing away, to the donating and buying of goods for the stalls and the café, to those selling on the stalls and in the café, and of course to all those who were able to come and support the fair. It was a lovely day, the start to the Christmas season, and at a time when people are having to cut back with all the rising costs, an amazing amount of £847.65 was raised for the School.



CORRECTION

In last month's newsletter, we included the calendar for 2023, but unfortunately added the incorrect date for the Christmas Fair. The correct date for next year's fair is **Saturday November 25th**.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

We wish 'Happy Birthday' this month to:-

Judith Higgins on December 4th
and
Don Curry on December 16th
and
Joan Heald on January 10th



THINKING OF YOU

It has been lovely to be able to welcome back to School members and friends who have been unable to attend. We send our thoughts and prayers to all those who are unwell at this time and wish you a speedy recovery.

ACTION FOR CHILDREN

Thank you to everyone who collected money in their lanterns throughout the year for Action For Children.



CHRISTMAS POST FOR SUNDAY SCHOOL MEMBERS

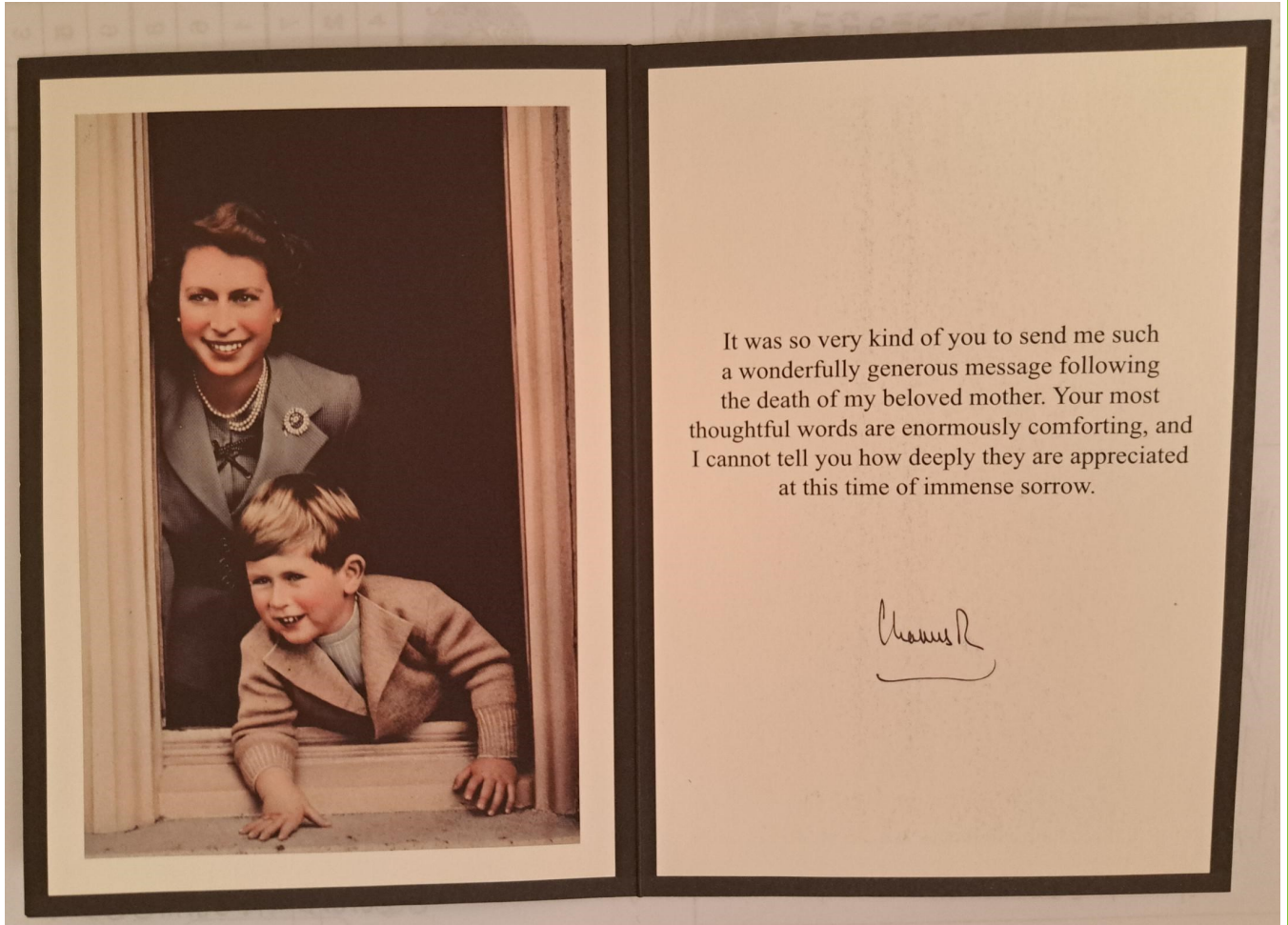
Once again, the post box will be out again in the entrance hall of Compass Point for members to post their Christmas cards to each other. The post box will be out on Sunday 4th and Sunday 11th December.

STAMPS

As you start to receive your Christmas cards over the following month, please remember to save your stamps for Margaret Forster to send off to raise funds for charity. When cutting the stamps off your envelopes please leave a good border all the way around. They can be put in the box in the entrance hall at School for Margaret to collect. Thank you.

LETTER FROM THE KING

In response to the letter of condolence we sent to His Majesty King Charles III on the death of his mother, our Queen, Elizabeth II, we have received the following response, a copy of which can be found on the noticeboard in the corridor of School.





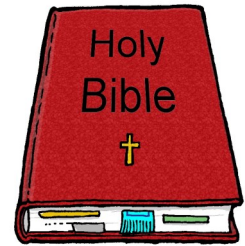
SERVICES



SUNDAY OCTOBER 30TH 2022

The service on October 30th was taken by Walter. He began by asking us 'how good is your memory?' The answer for many is probably not as good as it used to be.

Different witnesses remember different things about an event, one person interprets things in different ways so it is often good to have more than one report of an event to be sure of what happened. In the Bible, we have a good record of Jesus' teaching reported by different people, stories passed by word of mouth before being written down, some time later.



Mark was the first to write a gospel based on what Peter had told him. Matthew, Mark and Luke's gospels have much in common but are written in different ways. Matthew was writing for the Jews, proving Jesus was the promised Messiah. Luke was a gentile, loyal friend and companion of Paul who wrote the Acts.

John's style was different. Rather than recording historical events he tried to report 'the word', Jesus' message. He wrote a great deal about love. He also wrote the book of Revelation which is very different from the rest of the New Testament ending with a message of hope, God amongst men. We know that John was at the foot of the cross of Jesus' crucifixion with the women and Jesus entrusted the care of Mary, His mother, to John.

The Bible does not give us much background to the disciples. We know that Andrew and Peter, James and John were fishermen called by Jesus on the shore of Lake Galilee but we do not know much about the other disciples but we can learn a lot about Jesus' ministry by reading the reports of four different men in the gospels.

Thank you, Walter, for this insight.

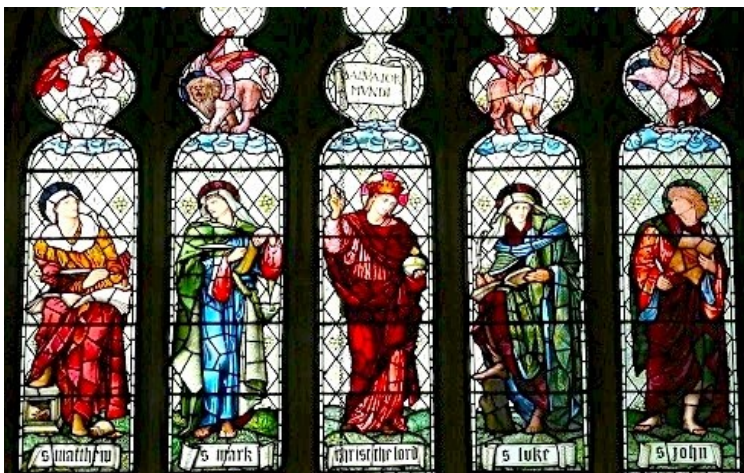


Image taken from Victorianweb.org of part of a window in St Edward The Confessor Church, Leek showing St Matthew, St Mark, St Luke and St John with Christ

SUNDAY NOVEMBER 6TH

On November 6th, Judith Higgins spoke about the twelve men Jesus chose to be His apostles (men who were given the authority to teach about Him).

They were Peter, Andrew, James and John, Philip Nathaniel, Matthew, Thomas, James the Less, Simon the Zealot, Judas, son of James, and Judas Iscariot. Would we have chosen the same men as Jesus? Jesus said she would have chosen men who were good orators, used to speaking to large groups of people. Jesus chose simple Jewish men of faith, like God, His Father, He focussed on the humble and rejected the proud.

Judith told us more about each of these men. After Jesus' death they travelled across the world spreading the gospel and setting up churches. Many died for their faith, crucified, stoned or killed by a spear. James, son of Zebedee, was the first to be martyred. We read in Acts that he was beheaded. John, his brother, took the gospel to Asia, Nathaniel worked in Ethiopia and Egypt. Tradition says that Simon the Zealot preached on the west coast of Africa before coming to England where he was crucified.

Eleven ordinary men became extraordinary after receiving the Holy Spirit.

We are all ordinary people who have chosen to follow Jesus. We are not likely to be persecuted for our faith although there are parts of the world where Christians are but we all have a part to play in spreading the word. Others will judge Jesus by the way His followers act.



Stained glass window showing the apostles from St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin

Carols sound throughout the land
Heralding a special birth
Rejoicing as from Heaven's realm
Immanuel comes to bless the earth.
So in the town of Bethlehem
The Saviour Jesus gently lies,
Mary rocks the tiny child
As angels serenade the skies.
Shepherds told the awesome story
Divinity will now reside
As He who ruled in Heaven above
Yet Lord of all comes as a child.

By Megan Carter



REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 13TH



The speaker on Remembrance Sunday, November 13th, was Martyn Bennett from Hazel Grove. For the last couple of weeks, people have been wearing red poppies, a symbol of remembrance. Remembrance Day marks the end of WW1 when hostilities ended on the 11th hour of the eleventh day of the 11th month. Two minutes silence is held throughout the country when people remember those who have lost their lives and those who survived but suffered both physically and mentally as a result of wars. The congregation observed two minutes silence whilst the names of SSS members who lost their lives in two world wars were projected on the screen.

Martyn focussed the rest of the service on the reading, John chapter 10 beginning at verse 1, 'Jesus, the good shepherd'.

In the reading, a good shepherd would lay down his life for his sheep just as Jesus gave his life for us.

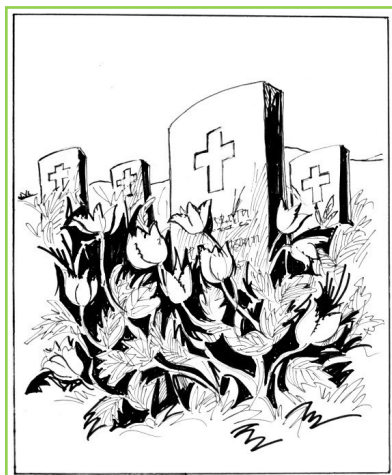
In the reading, the sheep followed the shepherd because they recognised his voice. But we know that sheep will also follow other sheep.

What about us, do we follow Jesus' voice or do we follow what other people are doing, are we prepared to listen to Jesus even when what He says may be challenging?

In the reading from John's gospel the good shepherd said, "I have sheep that do not belong to the fold, I must lead them". Is He referring to the gentiles. The good news that Jesus brought was meant for all men.

Thank you, Martyn, for a moving service. Walter thanked Martyn on our behalf and also thanked Beryl Manley for the display of poppies and Alan Bowdon who once again brought a lovely display of military drums and ceremonial military helmets to decorate the hall and remind us of the service men and women who defend our country.

Thank you to everyone who contributed in any way to this service.



*'Lord God,
our refuge and strength,
bring near the day
when wars cease,
suffering and pain end
and all the earth knows
the peace of heaven.'*

SHOE BOX SERVICE, SUNDAY 20TH NOVEMBER

We were pleased to welcome several visitors to our Shoebox Service on Sunday November 20th. Beryl Manley took the service and welcomed everyone, thanking them for making up shoeboxes and making donations to Teams4U.

During the service we watched four short videos. In the first was Dave Cooke, the founder of Teams4U, who told of the history of the shoe box appeal and something of the effect receiving a shoe box had on individuals and families. The second was a report from a lady living in Ukraine describing the effect that the war had on the people. The other two videos showed the distribution of shoe boxes in Romania and Ukraine with first hand experiences of volunteers who had delivered the boxes. Thank you, Kirsty Higgins, for downloading these videos.



Margaret Forster read the parable of the Good Samaritan and said prayers before blessing the shoe boxes. The collection that day was £59 which was sent to T4U. There were 70 shoe boxes in School and after the service our shoe boxes were taken to Margaret Forster's house and the next day T4U collected 180 boxes from Margaret. These came from:-

Stockport Sunday School

St Mary's Church

Davenport Methodist Church

Alderley Edge Methodist Church

And friends

Thank you to everyone who supported this appeal and to Beryl and Margaret for organising it.



T4U



SUNDAY 27TH NOVEMBER

On Sunday November 27th, we had a very different service. Bob Gaunt, who had lived in Brinksway and attended Brinksway Sunday School had collected photographs of Brinksway Rose Queens. He travelled from Yorkshire to give us a slide show of the queens and the old School and photographs of what the site looked like today.

Beryl Manley led the service and Judith Higgins lit the first candle on our Advent wreath.

Beryl had asked people to bring in photographs of Rose Fetes at SSS and Branch Schools. At the end of the service, after a cup of tea or coffee and a cake there was time to look at an extensive display of photographs and reminisce about the 'old days' and catch up with friends.

We were pleased to welcome a number of members from Brinksway to the service.



Thank you, Bob, for an interesting service. Thank you also to Cath Brown for making our Advent wreath.

This service was held as the newsletter was being produced and there were no photographs available to include at the time, but if anyone has any photos from the day or would like to write about their own memories of taking part or their family taking part in the Rose Fetes, this would be interesting for our readers in the January newsletter. You can pass them to Judith Higgins any Sunday before Christmas or email them to Kirsty.higgins@icloud.com



FUTURE SERVICES

The next dates for our services are:-

December 4 th	Judith Curry Christmas Post
December 11 th	Candle and Carol Service Christmas Post
December 18 th	Officials Service Christmas Lunch
December 25 th	Christmas Day - no service
January 1 st	New Year's Day - no service
January 8 th	Judith Higgins

LANCASHIRE HILL SUNDAY SCHOOL



Season's Greetings

Everyone at The Triangle would like to wish everyone a happy and peaceful Christmas and prosperous New Year.



Kites Group

Tickets are available from 15 December 2022 for our 2023 production, 'Kites through the decades past and present', on www.kitesgroup.com .



Recipe

Italian sausages with lentils and spinach

Serves 2

4 Italian sausages flavoured with fennel

olive oil

500g jar or tin of ready to use lentils

zest of 1 lemon

4 tbsp of tomato passata

pepper to season

60g roughly chopped spinach

flat-leaf parsley



Fry the sausages in a little olive oil in a deep, heavy pan over a medium heat until golden brown.

Add the lentils along with most of their liquid, the lemon zest, tomato passata and some pepper. Bring to a bubble and cook for 10 minutes or until the sausages are cooked through.

Stir in the chopped spinach and cook for another 2-3 minutes to wilt the spinach.

Stir in the parsley and squeeze over some lemon juice to serve.

You can use any sausage for this recipe

CHRISTMAS

1. Christmas time will soon be here!
Now, have I made my list?
First, cards to write, then gifts to buy
And no-one must be missed.



2. Now, what about a Christmas tree?
Shall it be large or small?
Or, 'praps with lots of lights and cards,
I won't need one at all!



3. But, yes! I love a Christmas tree
They make me feel so jolly.
And then, I'll buy some mistletoe
And, maybe, lots of holly!

4. But, first of all, we've concerts three,
Our choir will be so busy,
So many carols to be learnt,
It makes me feel quite dizzy!



5. We all enjoy our trips to church
To celebrate Jesus' birth,
With carols, prayers and happiness
And peace to men on earth.

6. But, Christmas Eve's my favourite
Where love and peace abound
The Big Day to look forward to
With family all around.



7. Yes! Christmas Day is family time
With turkey for our dinner,
I know that if I eat too much
I won't get any thinner!



8. So, thank-you, God for all our friends
And families, whom we love.
We specially feel at Christmas time
Your blessings from above.

Margaret Morris-Jones



PUZZLES

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



Sudoku



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.

Christmas is nearly here! Two **THOUSAND** years ago the Jews were **LONGING** for the coming of their **MESSIAH**. The Old Testament had promised that when He came, He would preach good news to the poor, bind up the **BROKEN HEARTED**, proclaim **FREEDOM** for the captives and release from **DARKNESS** for the **PRISONERS**, proclaim the year of the Lord's **FAVOUR**, **COMFORT** all who **MOURN** and to **BESTOW** on his people a **CROWN** of **BEAUTY** instead of **ASHES**. **JESUS** did all those things. He was and is the **SON** of **GOD**, and whoever has **SEEN** Him has seen the **FATHER**. **WHOEVER** believes in Him will have the best gift of all - His Spirit within them, which gives them eternal life.

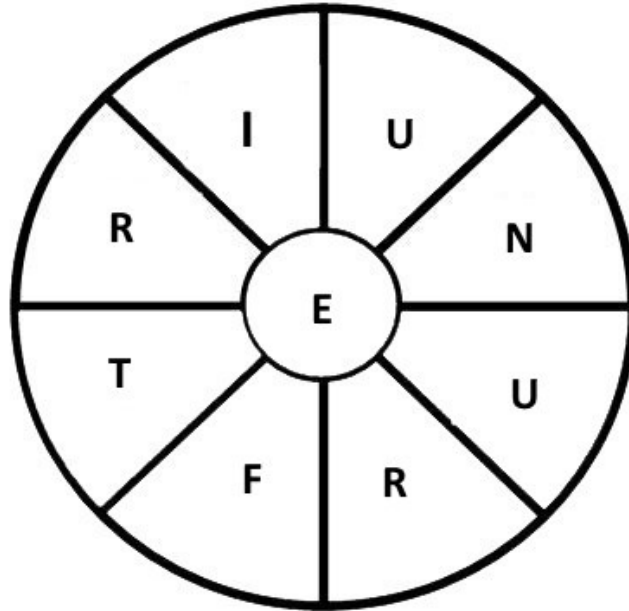
O	R	S	H	O	U	U	G	U	I	S	T
U	E	T	R	O	G	N	N	W	O	R	C
J	I	H	J	T	N	S	E	N	A	B	N
O	E	N	G	H	I	S	W	E	M	E	A
D	K	S	R	O	G	L	H	K	E	A	I
O	A	T	U	U	N	E	O	O	S	U	R
C	P	R	I	S	O	N	E	R	S	T	E
E	R	O	K	A	L	M	V	B	I	Y	H
H	N	F	E	N	S	E	E	N	A	R	T
S	G	M	O	D	E	E	R	F	H	A	A
R	U	O	V	A	F	S	E	H	S	A	F
E	R	C	D	S	B	E	S	T	O	W	M

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

Good score 14+ Excellent 22+



Luke 2:14



Rodney didn't know how she'd got in, but she seemed keen to audition for the nativity play...

ANSWERS FROM LAST NEWSLETTER

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

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



SUDOKU ANSWERS

WORDSEARCH ANSWERS



"The vicar's still miffed that one of the parents got £250 from You've Been Framed for their video of last year's nativity play."



"Does anyone have a light, please?"

