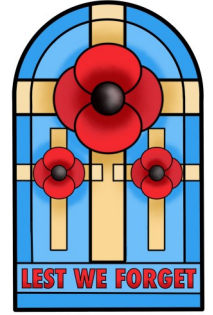


Stockport Sunday School

November 2023 Newsletter 43



Together with a good number of SSS members, I was among the congregation at St George's last week for the funeral service in memory of our dear friend, Jean Norton. We were just one of several groups of Jean's friends, gathered to pay our respects and it prompted some thoughts about the concept of 'friendship' and what it means for us.

Defining it is a bit like describing Liquorice Allsorts - things that come in a variety of shapes, sizes, mixtures, but all with a common sweet flavour.

A friend is more than an acquaintance; not just someone you know; and more than a companion who perhaps accompanies you to events and special occasions.

The dictionary defines a friend as someone with whom you have a mutual affection, outside your family circle, and they come in different sizes, shapes, characteristics, backgrounds and degrees of closeness.

They may be people you have frequent and regular contact with. On the other hand, many friendships will have stood the test of time and maybe separation - perhaps formed from schooldays, or shared sporting or social activities in earlier times. But no matter how long ago, when you do meet up, the intervening years seem to pass away in no time at all.

If we look back, it may surprise us to recall how particular friendships impacted on our lives. Without them, our lives might have been very different.

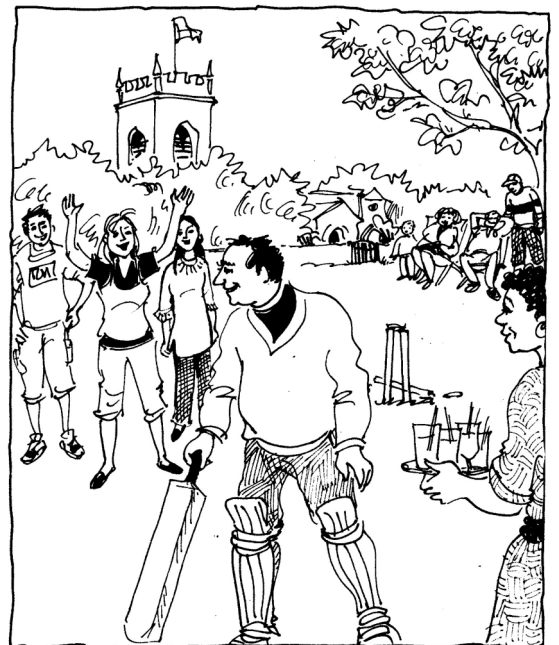
I am reminded of one of my friends from my youth who I first met through playing cricket. He persuaded me to play rugby (briefly, I must add!) and encouraged me to join the choral society he sang in. He was also instrumental in introducing me to Evensong at St George's church. It was as a result of these last two contacts that I met my first wife, Pauline!

A series of individual events whose significance was not appreciated at the time.

Perhaps you may be prompted to look back on how your own friendships started, and thrived - who, how, where, when. For many of us the memories will have connections with Sunday School.

However they came about, let us be grateful for the friendships which we have been able to enjoy.

And as we progress through life, hopefully we will continue to make more friends.



For true friends are the people we can turn to when times get difficult; who will listen, understand, give advice, guidance, and practical assistance where needed.

As I'm sure we will gladly do, if and when our friends need help themselves.

So let us thank God for our past and present friendships.

As I said at the beginning of these notes, these thoughts were prompted by Jean's funeral service.

The Lesson was taken from John, chapter 14, vv1-6, where Jesus promises his disciples there are many rooms for us in His father's house for those who follow Him, and that He is going to prepare a place for them. In the following chapter He tells them that "you are my friends, if you do what I command - love one another".

This created for me a mental picture of Jesus, our Friend, waiting to welcome Jean, and us in the fullness of time, to our place in His heavenly kingdom, our new home in God's presence, thanks to His grace.

Experiencing that warm, special feeling we get when we meet up with a particular close friend after a period of absence.

This is the hope we have in Jesus, our Lord.

May it be a source of encouragement for us as we seek to serve Him in our daily lives.

Thanks be to God.

Thank you for your friendship
It has meant so much to me
Thank you for your kindness
And your loyalty

Thoughts of you, like golden threads
Go running through each day
How different life would be
If you had never come my way

Your wonderful companionship
Has helped me through the years
In sunshine and in shadow
You have shared my hopes and fears

So, thank you for your friendship
Time will never break the bond
You'll always be that special friend
In this life, and beyond

Anon





HAPPY BIRTHDAY

We wish 'Happy Birthday' this month to:-

Maureen Jewsbury on November 4th

Joyce Sellers on November 27th

Judith Higgins on December 4th

GET WELL SOON

We were sorry to hear that Maureen Jewsbury was in hospital for a hip operation after she had a fall. We send her our best wishes for a speedy recovery.

THANK YOU

Norman and Joyce Sellers submitted their letter of resignation as Trustees to the recent Committee Meeting. The members thanked Joyce and Norman for their many years of service as Trustees of the School.

..CHRISTMAS FAIR

Saturday November 18th 2023

11am - 1.30pm

There will be a raffle, bottle tombola, books, jigsaws, crafts, cakes, jam, white elephant and soft toys.

Donations to the above stalls will be very welcome.

Don and Judith are happy to collect items.

Tea, coffee, cakes, bacon baps and toasted teacakes will be available.

Please speak to Judith Curry to see what time your stall will be available to set out. This might not be until Saturday morning.



SHOE BOX SERVICE

This will be held on Sunday 19th November. We hope that people will bring in their shoe boxes on that afternoon.

If you are not able to make up a shoe box but would like to donate a gift to go into a box, please leave it in the entrance hall. There are leaflets on the table suggesting items that can be put in the boxes. Monetary donations for the transportation of the boxes can be given to Margaret Forster.

If you need further help, please speak to Beryl Manley or Margaret Forster.



T4U

CHRISTMAS LUNCH



This year our annual Christmas Lunch will be held on Sunday 10th of December at 12.30pm. As we all appreciate, organising this takes time and planning, so to allow Margaret Forster time to sort out the catering, please could you let her know if you are attending this as soon as you can and definitely by Sunday 3rd at the very latest.

CHRISTMAS POST FOR SUNDAY SCHOOL MEMBERS

Once again, the post box will be out 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 10th and Sunday 17th December.



WINTER SERVICES

The Committee has decided to keep the start of services at 2.30pm as several members who go to morning church services found it very difficult to get to SSS on time when we started at 2pm last winter.

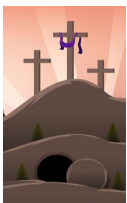
COMING EVENTS AND SPEAKERS



November 5th	Walter Stead
November 12th	Remembrance Sunday Speaker Stuart Dean
November 18th	Christmas Fair
November 19th	Shoe Box Service Beryl Manley
November 26th	Judith Higgins
December 3rd	Garth Higgins
December 10th	Christmas Lunch Christmas Post
December 17th	Candle and Carol Service run by The Triangle Christmas Post
December 24th	No Service
December 31st	The Officials

2024 CALENDAR

January 7th	Normal service
January 14th	Election of Inspectors
January 28th	SSS Committee
February 4th	Bible Sunday
February 12th - 17th	Kites Pantomime Week
March 10th	Mothering Sunday
March 24th	Palm Sunday
March 31st	Easter Sunday
April 7th	Committee
June 16th	Founders' Day
June 30th	AGM
September 15th	Harvest and Lunch
September 22nd	Committee
October 20th	Anniversary
November 10th	Remembrance Sunday
November 16th	Christmas Fair
November 17th	Shoe Box Service
December 8th	Christmas Lunch Christmas Post
December 15th	Candle and Carol Service Christmas Post
December 22nd	Official's Service



T4U





SERVICES



SUNDAY OCTOBER 1ST 2023

Judith Curry began her service with the reading Luke 10 verses 25 - 37, the story of the Good Samaritan. She had chosen this because she had witnessed a modern day parallel to this story. Whilst on holiday with a U3A group, Garth had had a fall and immediately strangers had come to help him, helping him up and getting a chair from a nearby building. Two nationalities and three different age groups stayed with him until the coach driver brought the bus round. She read the words of a hymn she had sung at school and in the Primary Department.

Cross over the Road



*Would you walk by on the other side
When someone called for aid?
Would you walk by on the other side
Or would you be afraid?*

Chorus

*Cross over the road my friend,
Ask the Lord his strength to lend,
His compassion has no end -
Cross over the road.*

*Would you walk by on the other side
Would you saw a loved one stray?
Would you walk by on the other side
Or would you stay and pray?*

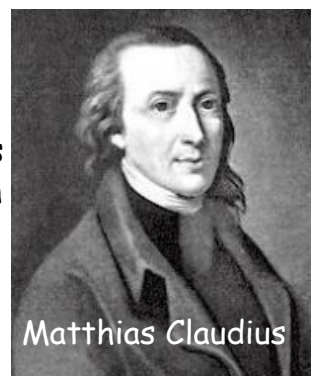
Chorus

*Would you walk by on the other side
When starving children cried?
Would you walk by on the other side
And would you not provide?*

Chorus

The theme for the rest of the service was hymns and their writers.

The popular harvest hymn, 'We Plough The Field And Scatter', was written by the German poet Matthias Claudius in 1782, set to music in 1800 and translated into English in 1861.



Matthias Claudius



The second hymn, 'Praise God For The Harvest' was written in 1936 by Brian Wren from Essex. After serving in the army for two years he went to Oxford University and was ordained in the United Reformed Church in 1965. He wrote 250 hymns as well as collections of worship songs for congregations.

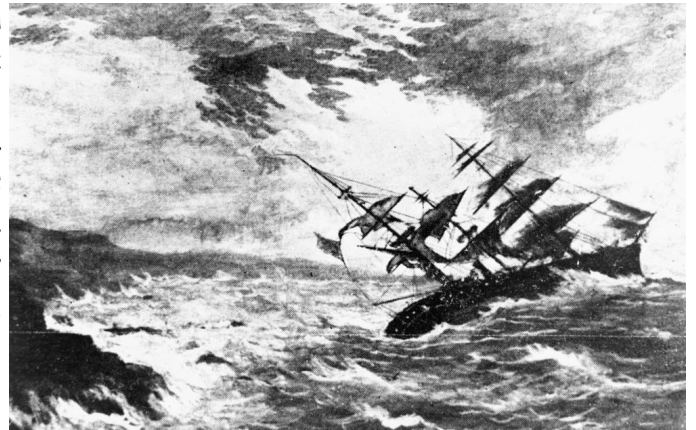
Another popular harvest hymn, 'Come Ye Thankful People Come' was written by Henry Alford in 1884. Originally it had seven verses but has been revised to the more popular four verses. After leaving Trinity College Cambridge he held a number of livings in the Church of England and rose to be Dean of Canterbury Cathedral. He wrote the inscription for his own gravestone, translated from the Latin, it reads, "The inn of a traveller on his way to Jerusalem".

Thank you, Judith, for stepping in at late notice to lead this enjoyable service.

SUNDAY OCTOBER 8TH 2023

We had a very interesting service about the shipping forecast taken by Judith Hadfield. We have all heard the broadcasts beginning, "Attention all shipping", which alerts seafarers of impending storms listing the familiar sounding shipping areas. Its almost prayerful delivery has on one hand a loneliness and bleakness about it, but it's also reassuring and familiar.

On the night of 26th October 1859, an exceptional storm hit Anglesey with tragic consequences. The steam clipper, The Royal Charter, was returning from Melbourne Australia with 112 crew and 375 passengers many of whom were miners returning from the Australian gold fields. The hold contained many boxes of gold which would have been worth many tens of millions of pounds in today's money. Many passengers also carried gold sewn into their clothing or in money belts. The ship was suddenly hit by 100 mile an hour gusts of wind and was driven onto the rocks. Only 40 people on board survived. Over 133 ships were lost in storms that night with a loss of about 800 lives.



The scale of this tragedy prompted efforts to improve weather forecasting and storm warnings. The Meteorological Office had been founded just five years earlier under the charge of Admiral Robert Fitzroy. As a naval man, he had an understanding of the importance of the weather to the lives of those at sea. He developed a national Storm Warning Office which began in February 1861.

The shipping forecast began on 24th August 1867 as a series of telegraph messages sent to coastal harbour towns warning of impending storms.

As the method of weather forecasting improved, he refined the forecast areas but inevitably there were errors and he faced significant criticism which eventually led to his taking his own life in April 1869. Many will remember that one of the sea zones in the forecast was Finisterre, this was later renamed Fitzroy in his memory.

The shipping forecast is important to those at sea and has saved many lives, but does not affect those on land and yet for many listeners to the shipping forecast is a soothing daily ritual, a few minutes of respite the nearest thing some people experience to prayer.

Judith finished by reading Carol Ann Duffy's poem, 'Prayer'. In a stressful world some people are unable to pray but a familiar sound or sight can bring a moment of peace and a prayer forms. At the end of the poem she mentions the shipping forecast and how the regularity of the broadcast can bring some people peace and induces calmness in times of stress.

Thank you Judith for an interesting service.

Prayer by Carol Ann Duffy

*Some days, although we cannot pray, a prayer
utters itself. So, a woman will lift
her head from the sieve of her hands and stare
at the minims sung by a tree, a sudden gift.*

*Some nights, although we are faithless, the truth
enters our hearts, that small familiar pain;
then a man will stand stock-still, hearing his youth
in the distant Latin chanting of a train.*

*Pray for us now. Grade 1 piano scales
console the lodger looking out across
a Midlands town. Then dusk, and someone calls
a child's name as though they named their loss.*

*Darkness outside. Inside, the radio's prayer—
Rockall. Malin. Dogger. Finisterre.*



SUNDAY OCTOBER 15TH 2023



Judith Higgins' theme was 'Seasons'. She began by talking about Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter, but went on to talk about the seasons or special periods in the Church's calendar. She had initially been cross when newly planted bulbs had been dug up and some eaten. Then realised that they represented food to the culprits (magpies not squirrels as she first suspected). We had sung in our first hymn, 'has thou not seen, all that is needful has been granted in what He ordaineth'. God has provided enough food for all, not just people but all creatures. We need to learn to share what He has given us.

Farmers grow much of our food but are very dependant on the weather. Water is vital for life, that is why we had a glass of water on the harvest table. Our second hymn, 'Praise God For The Harvest', mentioned the harvest from the sea and products that are mined, coal and metal ores. Salt is also mined. We use it a lot in food preparation and give it little thought.

We heard about Rev. Robert Stephen Hawker, vicar of Morwenstow in the nineteenth century, who saw beauty in nature all around and is thought to have started the custom of holding a harvest thanksgiving in his church as God had told the Israelites to do when they entered the Promised Land (Deuteronomy chapter 26). She then went on to talk about the special periods in the church's calendar. We discussed:-



- Advent, which begins the fourth Sunday before Christmas when Christians prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus.
- Candlemas is celebrated forty days after Christmas. Candles are lit in churches to remind us of Jesus The Light of the World.

Then on through Lent, Holy Week, Palm Sunday, Easter, Ascension Day and Whit Sunday and the fact that for centuries Christians have found strength and inspiration for their work through the Holy Spirit and the Good News has spread through the world.

The service concluded with the singing of 'Let Us With A Gladsome Mind, Praise The Lord For He Is Kind.'

Thank you Judith.

ANNIVERSARY SUNDAY OCTOBER 22ND 2023



We were pleased to welcome Rev. Paul Deakin as our speaker along with his wife, Angela, both former members of the School.

Paul's theme was the forgiveness of God.

Walter Stead read Isaiah 6 verses 1 - 8, God calls Isaiah and Judith Higgins read Luke 24 verses 18 - 35, the walk to Emmaus.

When God called Isaiah, he didn't feel worthy, but God touched his lips and all his sins were forgiven. God loves and forgives us, he deals directly with each individual.

On the road to Emmaus, Cleopas and his companion did not recognise Jesus even when He explained to them how the prophets had foretold His life and suffering. Only when He broke and blessed the bread did they recognise Him and they returned to Jerusalem to tell the others what they had seen and heard and the early church began.

Paul told us of his original plans. He had a good job at Bentley and he thought he would retire at 55. He then spent a day in Mirfield, West Yorkshire, at a meeting for people considering going in to the ministry where the main speaker was Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

As he broke the the communion wafer, Paul had a remarkable feeling, he wasn't sure what it was, perhaps the Holy Spirit, God's call. Sometimes God's call is dramatic, sometimes more subtle.

On a visit to the library one day, Paul picked up a book on art and was drawn to a picture painted by Caravaggio in 1601 called 'Supper at Emmaus'. Paul had brought copies of the picture for us to see.



Jesus is sitting at the table with a disciple on either side of Him, one with arms outstretched, the other leaning on the table listening to Jesus. There is no one else sitting at the table, Caravaggio's message - the space at the table is for you. Jesus can come into our own lives at any time and we might not recognise Him. Like the disciples, Paul's journey began when Archbishop Tutu broke the bread.

God's call is personal, it is not always for what we want to do, He knows us better than we know ourselves. His will be done. Our work matters whatever we do in God's name is worthy.

Angela led us in prayer. Paul closed with the reading of the prayer of Terese of Avila.

*"Christ has no body on earth but yours,
no hands but yours, no feet but yours.*

Yours are the eyes through which the compassion of Christ must look out on the world.

Yours are the feet with which he is to go about doing good.

Yours are the hands with which He is to bless His people."

Thank you, Paul, for an interesting and inspiring service.

At the close of the service, cream tea was served. Thank you to Margaret, Joyce and Judith for preparing this and to Cath Brown for the beautiful flower arrangements around the School and to Ken for playing for the hymns.



LANCASHIRE HILL SUNDAY SCHOOL



Recipe

Sweet chilli chicken traybake

Serves 4

800g whole skin-on chicken thighs or legs

80ml sweet chilli sauce

800g sweet potato, cut into wedges

12 Brussels sprouts, halved

6 spring onions, thinly sliced, white part separated

oil for the tray

100g mangetout or sugar snap peas, shredded

toasted sesame seeds, lime wedges and steamed rice

Toss the chicken, sweet chilli sauce, sweet potato, sprouts and white part of spring onion in a bowl to marinate (do this overnight if you can)

Heat the oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6. Oil and line a large baking tray with baking paper

Transfer the chicken, skin-side up, and veg onto the tray and arrange so that the veg is cut-side down. Roast for 50 minutes-1 hour, or until the chicken is cooked through.

Boil a kettle of water. Put the mangetout or sugar snap peas in a heatproof bowl and pour over hot water, stand for 3 minutes, then drain

Scatter the mangetout or sugar snap peas, green spring onion parts and sesame seeds over the chicken. Serve with lime wedges and rice alongside.



Kites Group

The Kites Group are busy preparing for their February 2024 show to be held at Compass Point. More details and tickets will be available soon on www.kitesgroup.com.

"Festive Cheer"

Yesterday was stormy, wet and miserable, so I decided to start thinking about Christmas cards. I always try to buy cards which support charities, and, like most people, I have my favourite charities, so I try to buy a few boxes from each one. Part of the enjoyment, for me, is looking through the catalogues and then choosing my favourites.

I have a special book containing my 'Christmas List', but, as all my contemporaries know, each year when I look at the list, there are, inevitably certain names to be deleted as some friends and relatives are no longer with us. Somehow, though, my list doesn't seem to grow much shorter, as, since my partner died, I have joined new groups in the U3A and a new choir, and so have made several new friends to go on the list!



I love choosing, writing and sending cards and, of course, receiving them and can't wait to retrieve them after hearing them plop through the letterbox, then, the best bit, sorting them out—all the robins together, all the angels together etc and fastening them all up on every available surface, with Blue-Tak!

When my grandchildren were younger, and came to visit at Christmas, I organised various games connected with the cards, which seemed to go down well. They are never wasted, as there are many requests for used cards, when, regretfully, I have to take them down!

Well, it won't be too long now, before the cards begin to arrive. I usually like to post mine on December 1st, if possible, but, being able to use the Church and Sunday School boxes, saves a lot of stamps!!



"Sing a song of Christmas cards,
What a lovely show!
Robins, stars and angels
all hanging in a row!

Some are oblong, some are square,
And some are thin and tall.
So, it's quite hard to fit them neatly
all along the wall!

I'm always sad to take them down
And pack them all away,
But, still, God willing, come next year,
I'll have a new display!"



Margaret M. Jones

A NEW KIND OF REMEMBRANCE POPPY

For the first time in 28 years, there is a new kind of poppy for Remembrance Sunday this year: it is plastic free.

Director of the Poppy Appeal, Andy Taylor-Whyte explains: "We are very proud to introduce the plastic-free poppy. It will not only enable people to support our Armed Forces community but also continues the RBL's commitment to sustainability."

The new poppy has been three years in the development and making. The aim was to reduce the use of single-use plastic and to "be economical, sustainable, and less impactful to the environment."

The new poppy design has a 40% smaller carbon footprint, and is made from "bespoke red and green paper." The paper comes from a blend of renewable fibres, 50 per cent of which has been recovered from the waste used in the production of coffee cups.

The plastic-free poppy will be available alongside remaining stocks of the current poppy, to reduce any waste of poppies already produced. Poppies containing single-use plastic can be returned to Sainsbury's stores for recycling.



THE STORY BEHIND THE HYMN: O GOD OUR HELP IN AGES PAST

'O God our Help in Ages Past' is considered one of the grandest hymns. It is sung at the annual Remembrance Sunday Service at the Cenotaph in London, and it was also sung at the funeral of former prime minister Winston Churchill in St Paul's Cathedral.

The hymn was written by Isaac Watts in 1719, as a paraphrase of Psalm 90. It is a psalm of Moses, and carries a strong message of hope and faith in God's loving care.

Isaac Watts was born in Southampton in 1674, the eldest of nine children. His father, an educated deacon in a dissenting Congregational church, was in prison for his non-conformist beliefs at the time of Isaac's birth.

Watts had an outstanding aptitude for language. By the time he was 13 he had learned Latin, Greek, French, and Hebrew. He had also begun to write in verse, even speaking in rhyme in ordinary conversation - much to the irritation of some of his family!

By the time Isaac was 18, he had a particular bugbear - the deplorable state of congregational singing. It was mostly metrical psalms, which were heavy going and ponderous. But many non-conformists thought that if congregations sang anything other than the actual words of Scripture, it would be an insult to God.

Isaac was complaining about this one Sunday when his father suddenly challenged him: "Why don't you give us something better to sing, then?"

Isaac accepted the challenge. The next Sunday he produced his first hymn, and the congregation loved it. Isaac then wrote new hymn texts for his church - every Sunday for the next two years. By 1719, Watts had published a hymnal: *The Psalms of David in the Language of the New Testament*. He had paraphrased nearly the entire Psalter.

In all, Watts wrote more than 600 hymns. Other favourites include: *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross*, *I Sing the Mighty Power of God*, and the famous Christmas carol *Joy to the World*.

At the time, some people felt Watts's hymns were "too worldly" as they were not based solely on the Psalms. Yet Watts argued that the Christian church should sing of Christ. He explained his approach this way:

"Where the Psalmist describes religion by the fear of God, I have often joined faith and love to it. Where he speaks of the pardon of sin through the mercies of God, I rather choose to mention the sacrifice of Christ, the Lamb of God. Where He promises abundance of wealth, honour, and long life, I have changed some of these typical blessings for grace, glory and life eternal, which are brought to light by the gospel, and promised in the New Testament."

Watts died in 1748, having been a much-loved hymn-writer, scholar, pastor and preacher.

SMILE LINES

SCARE IT

A man had the courage - but not always the skills - to tackle any home-repair project. For example, his garage was littered with the pieces of a lawn mower he had tried to fix. One day his wife found him in the living room, attacking the vacuum cleaner with a screwdriver. "I can't get this thing to cooperate!" he exclaimed.

His wife replied, "Why don't you just drag it out to the garage and show it what happened to the lawn mower?"



DID NOAH FISH?

A Sunday school teacher asked, "Johnny, do you think Noah did a lot of fishing when he was on the Ark?"

"No," replied Johnny. "How could he, with just two worms?"

THINE

A Yorkshireman wanted an inscription on his wife's grave to read: 'She was Thine'. The engraver mistakenly put 'She was Thin'. The man wrote to explain that they had left off the 'e'. The next attempt read: 'E', She was Thin.'

ST MATTHEW

Underneath a street sign 'St Matthew's Close', someone had added: 'Well, I can't see him.'



The treasurer still had a trick up his sleeve

PUZZLES

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

Sudoku



This month, on 30th November, **SCOTLAND** remembers one of the very first **DISCIPLES** of **JESUS**. St **ANDREW** is **HONOURED**, not for any mighty deeds of his own, but for his **LOVE** of **INTRODUCING** people to Jesus. He went straight off and introduced his brother **PETER** to the **SAVIOUR**, and followed that up by bringing **NATHANAEL** / **BARTHOLOMEW** to Jesus. 'Better Together' seems to have been his slogan, too! 'We have found the **MESSIAH!**', he told them, unable to keep the good news to himself. Andrew's connection with Scotland dates back to the claimed **TRANSLATION** of his remains from **PATRAS** in **ACHAIA** to Scotland in the **EIGHTH** century. The church in **FIFE** where these **REMAINS** were buried became a **PLACE** of **PILGRIMAGE** during the **TENTH** century. All of this may be no more than **PIOUS** legend, but that St Andrew was highly regarded in Scotland and became its **PATRON SAINT** is beyond doubt.

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

WORDSEARCH

Can you find in the grid above the words shown in bold and capitals in the passage?
 The words can be found in any direction.

ANSWERS FROM LAST NEWSLETTER

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



SUDOKU ANSWERS

WORDSEARCH ANSWERS

