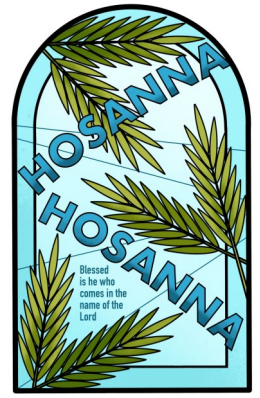


Stockport Sunday School

March 2026 Newsletter 69



By the time you receive this newsletter we will be well into the Christian season of Lent.

Traditionally churchgoers will mark the period from Ash Wednesday to Easter Sunday as a time to think about how we are practising our faith. Following the example of Christ's 40 days of fasting in the wilderness, as a symbolic gesture, we may give up some minor pleasure. Alternatively we might adopt some appropriate additional discipline to mark the significance of the season.



Over recent years, for me this has been reading a psalm each day in Lent.



There are 150 psalms in the Old Testament, so there is plenty of choice, and a number of them can be recognised as the basis for some of our popular hymns.

In doing so this year, it has reminded me that in many churches the psalms feature much less in the Sunday services than they used to be.

In the Church of England, in the days when Matins and Evensong were the main Sunday Services, a psalm would be said or sung at each of those services.

Nowadays, when the main Sunday service is usually Holy Communion, there is no regular place in the Order of Service for a psalm, so they are somewhat neglected.

This is a bit sad, as they are an important part of the Old Testament. They shed a light on the thought and the religious practices of the Jewish nation over many years.

In a way they are the records of the people's conversations with God.

They include acts of worship and thanksgiving, and intercessions for God's help - for the individual psalmist and for the nation as a whole.

They also ask for God's aid in overcoming the faults and shortcomings of the people and their leaders when they have turned away from God.

But in contrast, they also include complaints to God when they experience hardships or feel God has forsaken them in some way, blaming him for their situation.

In this respect the psalms differ from the New Testament writings.

History shows that from time to time the people went astray but still wanted life to go along on their own terms, rather than God's, often with dire results.

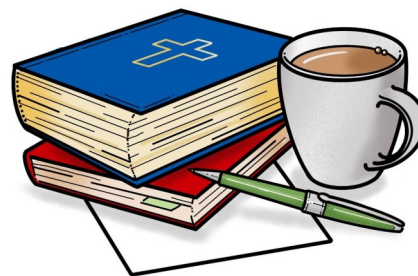


The psalms appear to reflect the culture of their times, - warts and all - including blaming God for the consequences of their actions.

Possibly this is because they believed that they were a nation privileged to be called by God to be the vehicle of His truth; the culmination of God's relationship with mankind.

It is easy for us, in our generation to be judgemental about their faults as a nation, but we must admit the failings of human nature inevitably continue into modern times.

But whatever their failings were, we, as Christians, are indebted to the Old Testament prophets and psalmists for the truths they have passed on to succeeding generations.



In contrast, the Christian New Testament culture is perhaps more aware of the need for humility in our relationships with God and each other; with Jesus, God's Son and our Guide coming as the Servant King.

We are also fortunate that the Gospels tell us first hand of what Jesus was like as a person, and where His authority came from.

The disciples spread the news of His teaching and His resurrection, speaking from their personal experience of living alongside Him; or, in St Paul's case, from a life changing experience of Jesus presence.

And more importantly for us, they spoke of God's will for mankind to be extended to the Gentile peoples rather being reserved for the Jewish nation.

In that , we are truly blessed.

But perhaps, there is one potential pitfall we should beware of in our own day and age.

Whatever we may think about the Psalmists complaints about God's perceived neglect of their hopes, - they were at least honest about their feelings. They still held on to their belief that they were special in God's sight and that He was there to listen to their complaints.

In our day and age, in what is ostensibly a Christian nation, we too may feel at times that life is unfair; to us, to our families, to those we love and others who we know are in difficult situations.

Or when we see natural disasters, warmongering and oppression in our world.

In times which challenge our faith, can we be honest with God?

Remind ourselves that God knows when we need His guidance or support, but also to ask Him to show us where help is needed from us for others, and for us to be ready and willing to provide it in whatever way we can.

Always remembering that God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform.

And perhaps recalling Jesus' prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, when he asked God, His Heavenly Father, if the suffering that He knew lay ahead of Him could be

changed.

But, in prayer and trust, He accepted God's will and went on to His Crucifixion and His Resurrection.

Thanks be to God.



JOYCE SELLERS

As the last newsletter went out we learnt of the sad passing of Joyce Sellers, after a few weeks in hospital and our thoughts and prayers continue to be with Neil and the family.

Many will remember Joyce and Norman in conjunction - a devoted couple who did so much together and they were a very good partnership in all respects.

We at Stockport Sunday School have greatly benefitted from their support and friendship over so many years.

While Norman was a member of SSS from being a child, Joyce's direct involvement came in later times, especially after she and Norman retired from the Post Office. We were very appreciative of the support Joyce gave Norman in his many responsibilities on behalf of the School.

Joyce became a member of the Sunday School Finance Committee in 1991, having previously helped Marjory Maden in running the Savings bank which the School operated in those days. She was a member of the Bank Committee until it was closed in 2012.

She took over the role of SSS Treasurer in 2004 and continued in that capacity until 2 years ago, - a period of 20 years service in a very important and demanding role which she carried out well.



She certainly used her knowledge and skills for the benefit of others.

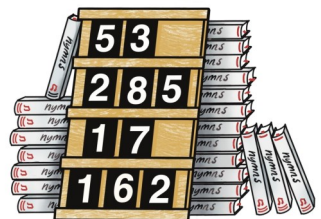
Many of us will remember in particular Joyce's interest in people and how their lives were progressing. She was very good at maintaining contact with friends and colleagues and passing the news on. Her memory of details was incredible and we all benefitted from her fund of knowledge.

And underneath it all, even well into her 90s, she seemed young at heart, wanting to know what was happening.

She will be remembered with a smile by so many and we thank God for her friendship and support, and we hope that will be a source of consolation and support for Neil and the family and all who benefitted from her friendship.

SERVICES

March 1 st	Walter Stead
March 8 th	Margaret Forster
March 15 th	Mothering Sunday Sheila Hulme
March 22 nd	Walter Stead
March 29 th	Palm Sunday Judith Higgins



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Happy Birthday wishes this month to:-

Judith Curry 5th March



THINKING OF YOU

Several of our members and their families have been unwell over recent weeks, with some also having hospital appointments, procedures and hospital stays. We want to let them all know that we are thinking of them and wish them all speedy treatments and recoveries.

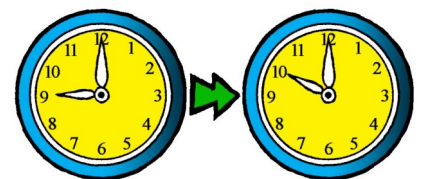


Mothering Sunday this year is on Sunday 15th March and we are pleased to, once again, welcome Sheila Hulme to come and speak to us on this day. Many of you will have heard her speak before at Sunday School and we are very much looking forward to hearing her again.



CLOCKS GO FORWARD

This year the clocks go forward on Sunday 29th March. Officially they say the change happens at 1am on Sunday morning, however, most people will change their clocks the night before or wait until the next day to update clocks (some electronic devices will do the update automatically), although if you have an alarm clock set, you will need to ensure the time is changed for your alarm to continue functioning and giving the correct time to you.



CONGRATULATIONS KITES

Congratulations to everyone involved in the production of the Kites' pantomime, 'Peter Panto'..

Once again the show was a 'sell out' every night. It was lovely to see so many children involved and enjoying taking part in the pantomime alongside the adults. The audience appreciated the hard work put in by all the cast and all those involved with the scenery, costumes and erecting and removing the stage and lighting. Well done everyone.



Spring Fair

31st March, 2026

1.30pm -3.30pm

Compass Point, 96 Nangreave Rd

Stockport, SK2 6DQ

In aid of

Stockport & District **MIND**

Various stalls including

Toys & Crafts

Raffle, Tombola, Bric a brac, Knitwear

Refreshments

Free Admission



KNIT 'N NATTER SPRING FAIR

The Knit N Natter group are holding their Spring Fair on Tuesday March 31st from 1.30pm to 3.30pm. This year the event is in aid of Stockport and District Mind. The fair is always a lovely well supported event, why not bring along family and friends to enjoy this fair and support such a worthy local cause.



TRAVELS

Beryl Manley, who runs the Knit 'N' Natter group, won't be there for the fair this year, as she is off to Australia in the coming weeks to spend time with her son and his family. We hope she has a great time and look forward to hearing about it on her return.



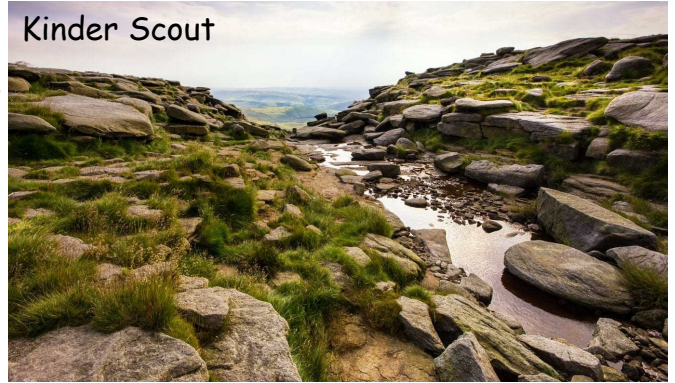
SERVICES



BIBLE SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 1ST

It was a pleasure to welcome Peter Hall, well known to us from his time as a Reader at St George's Church, to lead our Bible Sunday Service. Peter is a keen hill walker and had recently been walking with his grandson on Kinder Scout on a route which they were not familiar with. Fortunately they had Ordnance Survey guidance on both paper and phone which they could rely on, so they got home safe and sound.

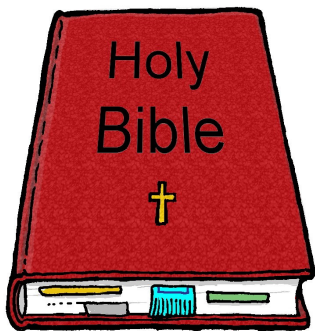
Kinder Scout



For Peter, it prompted the question - where do we get truly reliable guidance from for our journey in our Christian faith.

We would probably say from the Bible. However the Old testament is the writings of various individuals over many years, with copies of copies, and with differing points of view. As Peter pointed out, these sometimes seem contradictory.

The New Testament based on Jesus' teaching comprises writings which cover a relatively short time scale, but again vary in what the writers focus on, as can be seen from the four Gospels.



We then have the churches' interpretation of these writings over subsequent centuries, Peter went on to expand on various ways of approaching this question of finding reliable guidance in theological terms.

In conclusion, we acknowledge that the Bible, the accumulation of a range of sources over many generations, is a vital bedrock for our faith. But we also have a further aid, which is vital - the human input - the preaching, hearing and reading of God's word to help us live together according to His will in an ever-changing world. Much food for thought, thank you Peter.

SUNDAY FEBRUARY 8TH

The service was taken by Cath Brown and Janet Moore who told us about the patron saints of England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales. St George was born to noble Christian parents in Coventry in the third century AD. After the death of his father, he and his mother moved to Palestine where they owned land. He became a soldier during the reign of the Emperor Diocletian who was putting Christians to death. George complained to the Emperor and left the army. For this he was imprisoned and tortured. He would not recant his faith and was finally beheaded. Many legends are told about George the most famous being his slaying of a

dragon to save the life of the princess who was to be sacrificed for it.



St Patrick was born to Roman parents in England or Wales. He was kidnapped as a teenager and sold as a slave in Ireland. He escaped to a monastery in England, where he became a Christian and returned to Ireland as a missionary. Legend says he used the three parts of the shamrock leaf to prove that God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit were three parts of one God.



Andrew and his brother Peter were the first disciples to be called by Jesus. He was close to Jesus. He was crucified for his faith at Patras in Athens. Tradition says he was crucified on an X shaped cross or saltire at his own request because he felt unworthy to be crucified on the same sort of cross as Jesus. The flag of Scotland is a saltire. According to legend Oengus II led an army of Picts and Scots against the Angles. They were greatly outnumbered and he prayed to God promising he would make St Andrew Patron Saint of Scotland if he won the battle.



St David was born in Pembrokeshire around 520. As a young man he became a monk and founded a monastery close to the place where he was born and lived on a diet of just bread and water. He is said to have performed miracles, restoring a blind man's sight and raising a dead child to life. His most famous miracle is said to be that when he was preaching and the crowd were unable to hear him a white dove landed on his shoulder and the ground on which he was standing rose up and became a hill



so that the people could see and hear him. The dove became St David's symbol.

Thank you Cath and Janet for volunteering to take this interesting service.

SUNDAY FEBRUARY 15TH

Walter led this service.

We regularly say the 'Lord's Prayer' but do we always think about what we are saying? We say "lead us not into temptation." Do we really think God would lead us into temptation to sin? Perhaps we should say protect us from temptation or strengthen us in times of temptation.

The Bible reading for the following Sunday, the first in Lent, is the one when Jesus, having been baptised by John, goes into the desert to spend time alone to understand what God wanted Him to do. Whilst there, Jesus was tempted by the devil, but Jesus did not succumb to the temptation. He knew the scriptures and God's way. It is sometimes good to spend time alone, taking time to think, seeking God's plan for us.

Moses spent 40 days on Mount Hareb before receiving God's law (the Commandments) on tablets of stone.



In the wilderness, Jesus was given God's vision for His life as the Messiah.



Jesus was hungry as He had fasted for 40 days. The first temptation was to turn stones into bread. He knew that many people in the world were hungry too. He could put an end to hunger but that was not God's way.

Then the devil showed Jesus all the people of the world and promised to give Him power over them if He worshipped the devil. Jesus saw the good He could achieve bringing everyone to worship God. But this was not God's way. Jesus refused.

The third temptation was to make Jesus a celebrity. If people saw that Jesus was saved by God if He jumped from the temple they would believe He was God's Son. But again Jesus refused. We should not put God to the test.

In Lent, people often try to give up something, a daily reminder of the religious aspect of the season. Some try to do something more positive, perhaps developing a good habit that may continue beyond the Easter Season.

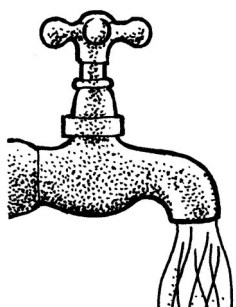
But whatever we do it should not be for show. Jesus told His followers that if they fasted, they should not put on a sad face to let everyone know that they were fasting. They would have their reward from men if they put on an outward show of fasting but God would know what they had done.

God isn't interested in things done for show, but how we relate to and support each other.

Thank you, Walter, you have given us a lot to think about as we enter



SUNDAY FEBRUARY 22ND



Judith Higgins said how lucky we are to live in a country where we can connect to an electricity supply at the touch of a switch, get gas at the turn of a knob and fresh water by turning a tap. There are many people in the world, who do not have any of these amenities, including places where women and children walk some distance to collect often dirty or infected water for their families.

We looked at the many times water is mentioned in the Bible.

Water is mentioned many times in the story of Moses, from surviving being hidden as a baby in the rushes by the Nile, the parting of the Red Sea, striking the rock with his staff to produce a flow of water to refresh people and animals.



John the Baptist baptised many of his followers, Jesus was baptised and in His first miracle, turned water into wine.

In the story of Noah, he and his family and animals survived the great flood. Jesus called His first disciples on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, and calmed the storm.

After the last supper, Jesus took a bowl of water and washed the disciples feet, telling them to follow His example by serving others.

Water is one of God's many gifts that we take for granted. We should remember to thank God each day for his many gifts and share what we have with others, especially sharing the knowledge of God and Jesus with people we meet.



15TH MARCH MOTHERING SUNDAY - THE DAUGHTERS OF MOTHERS

There are certain small things that you notice,
Little things you have started to do,
That prompt you to question, and wonder
If the face in the mirror, is you.

The realisation is dawning,
As one year hurtles after another,
That in word, thought and deed,
In gesture and glance,
You have somehow turned into your mother!

By Daphne Kitching



*My sermon today comes from
Apps Chapter 1 beginning at verse 2...*

LANCASHIRE HILL SUNDAY SCHOOL



Recipe

Lemon, Raspberry and Blueberry Cookies

Makes 12

50 g butter
50 g caster sugar
2 eggs, lightly beaten
200 g plain flour
Zest of 2 unwaxed lemons
Pinch of salt
1 tbsp lemon juice
12 raspberries
24 blueberries



Preheat the oven to 200°C/180°Fan/Gas 6. Line a baking sheet with baking paper.

Cream the butter and sugar in a large bowl until well combined. Add the eggs, beating them in well. Then add the flour, lemon zest and salt and mix again until combined. The mixture will be slightly wet and sticky.

Using damp hands, divide the mixture into 12 even-sized balls, placing them spaced apart on the baking sheet. Squish each one down with the palm of your hand to about 1cm in thickness, then make a thumbprint in the middle of each cookie. Wiggle your finger about a bit to make the dip wide enough to fit three berries in. put one raspberry and two blueberries into each and press them down lightly to really nestle them in. bake in the centre of the oven for 8-10 minutes until very lightly golden and cooked through.

Once cooked, remove from the oven and leave to cool a little before transferring to a wire rack to cool completely.



Happy Birthday

14 March - Eileen Harrington



Kites

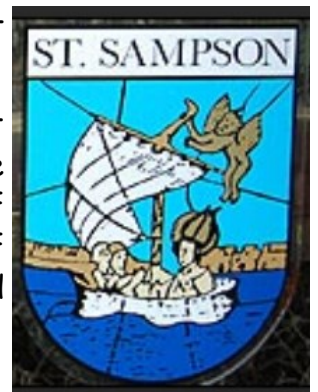
Kites would like to thank everyone at SSS for their help and support during the run up to, and performance of 'Peter Panto'. Hopefully we did not cause too much disruption or make too much of a mess. We had a very successful show this year, all nights were sold out. We were pleased to welcome the Mayor and Mayoress on our first night.



"OUR FRIENDS NEXT DOOR"

The island of Guernsey has always had a very special place in my heart and memory and I'd like to share some of these memories with you.

In 1941, when I was 2, a lively family moved into an empty shop next door to my house on Wellington Road South. I was too young to take much notice at the time, but, as I got older, I became very aware of them and gradually got to know them very well. There were 7 of them, 5 children, aged from 8 to 16 - Gavin, John, Kathleen, Leonard and Rex Warr and an Auntie and Grandma to take care of them.



They had been evacuated from Guernsey in the Channel Islands, and for the next 4 years, they lived next to me. Rex, the eldest boy, was 16 and my Grandad offered him a job in his Furniture Removing business. Rex was tall, strong and cheerful and he jumped at the opportunity. He loved the job, but not our English weather, and he could often be heard on one of our many wet, cold and rainy days, singing, "Oh, what a beautiful morning", at the top of his voice!!

I was still very young whilst the evacuees lived next door, but they were very friendly with all our family, and, before they left in 1945, they invited mum and I to go for a visit to their home in St Sampson's, the following summer, in 1946. Their house was very close to the sea and I was 7 years old and just learning to swim, and have wonderful memories of our Guernsey holiday, full of sun, sea and sand and hours spent on the beach and in the lovely warm sea. I'll always remember, also, the many greenhouses full of tomatoes and the fragrant tomato scent wafting over the island!



There were, of course, still ugly reminders of the German occupation and barbed wire on the beaches with harsh, grim little look-out huts in strategic places, but my overall memory is of sun and sea and the kind, hospitable Warr family, so

anxious to show us their lovely island, an abundance of fruit, especially tomatoes, and wanting our holiday to last forever! Of course, like all special things, the holiday came to an end and, very reluctantly, Mum and I got on the ferry to return to a post-war England, with strict food rationing and cold, wet weather once again.

Many years later, when Rachel was 16 and Gareth 13, I managed to persuade my husband to "splash out" on a family holiday in Guernsey. We stayed at St Sampson's, where the Warr family had their houses, and hired bicycles for the 2 weeks to help us explore as much as possible. We managed to locate Rex, our "singing furniture remover", and paid him a visit one day. It was a wonderful reunion and he



couldn't believe that this mature wife and mother of two teenagers was "little Margaret" whom he'd left behind in Stockport!! On his recommendation, we visited Jersey, Sark and Herm, and marvelled at the Guernsey cottages, which had overflowing baskets by their front gates, full of fruit and veg and "honesty boxes". As we were self-catering, these were a wonderful surprise.



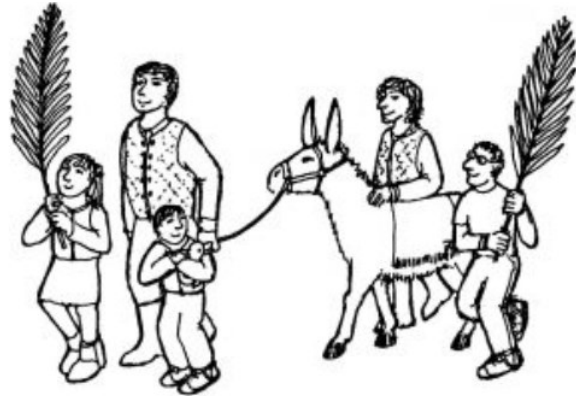
As we flew home, we were left with memories of sun-filled days, magical islands, kind people, new experiences, endless fruit and veg and not a single raindrop in sight!

Margaret Morris Jones

WHY WE SHOULD BE LIKE DONKEYS

In Bible times, donkeys were essential to daily life. They did everything from helping to grind corn, to ploughing, to carrying people, to transporting their belongings. Despite their small frame, donkeys are surprisingly tough. They are content with poor fodder like thistles and can travel an average of 20 miles a day.

There are two occasions in the Christian calendar where donkeys walk into the picture. At Christmas, Mary travelled the 100 miles from Nazareth to Bethlehem on a donkey. And although a donkey doesn't get a specific mention in the manger story, that same one that transported her was probably there at the birth; where else would it have been?



On Palm Sunday Jesus entered Jerusalem riding on a donkey. Jesus deliberately chose this animal rather than a horse. Why? In Bible times, the horse was associated with war, conquest and worldly might. But the donkey was a symbol of peace and humility. Jesus used this animal to show that He had come with the dignity of the King of peace. His entry into the Holy City also fulfilled Zechariah's prophecy concerning the Messiah.



Donkeys are hardworking and undemanding. They wait for their master to put them to the work he has chosen for them. And, remarkably, each one bears the mark of the Cross on their backs!

TWO DONKEYS

Two donkeys were walking the streets of Jerusalem. One said: "Just a few days ago I came down that hill carrying Jesus, and the people were all singing and shouting and throwing down their cloaks and palms for me to walk on. But today they don't even recognise me."



A CHILD'S MORNING PRAYER

1. Look down on me, a little one,
Whose life on earth is but begun:
Dear Saviour, smile on me.

2. Watch over me from day to day,
And when I work, or when I play,
Dear Saviour, smile on me.

3. Help me to do Thy holy will,
With lovely thoughts my mind to fill:
Dear Saviour, smile on me.



By J Kirby



SMILE LINES

HOW GOD WORKS



A grandmother was taking her young grandson for a walk in the park. The daffodils were in bloom, and it was a beautiful Spring day. Wanting to encourage her grandson's spiritual understanding of the world, she said: "Doesn't it look like an artist painted this scenery? Did you know God did all this?"

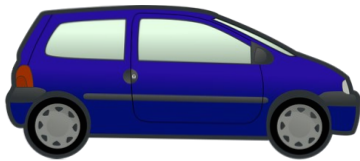
Her grandson replied: "Oh yes, and God did it left-handed, too." In astonishment, the grandmother asked what he meant. "Well, He must have done," said her grandson, "because we learned at church last week that Jesus sits on God's right hand."

PRESENT

For the elderly minister's 75th birthday, the congregation at St Mary's decided to give him a present of a new suit. He was so moved by the gift that the following Sunday he stood before everyone and began his homily with a tear in his eye, saying: 'Today I am preaching to you in my birthday suit.'



BUMP



A man was trying to pull out of a parking slot, but bashed the bumper of the parked car in front of him. Witnessed by a handful of pedestrians waiting for a bus, the driver got out, inspected the damage, and proceeded to write a note to leave on the windshield of the car he had hit. The note read: "Hello. I have just hit your car, and there are some people here watching me who think that I am writing this note to leave you my name, phone number, and driver's license number, but I am not."

WHO'D BE A MOTHER?

Constant nagging didn't seem to provide any relief from having to clean up the bathroom after each of my three teenage children. After I cleaned it one day, I resorted to posting a sign that read: "Please leave the bathroom as you found it."

I noticed the bathroom was in the usual mess after my son used it, so I called, "Brian, how did you find the bathroom?" After a brief pause, he replied, "Straight down the hall, first door on the right."



NAUGHTY MUMMY

A mother asked her young son, as they waited for the bus, to tell the driver he was five years old, because then he would ride for free. As they got into the bus the driver asked him how old he was. "I am five years old," said the little boy proudly.

The driver had a son of his own that age, and so he smiled. "And when will you be six years old?" he asked.

"When I get off the bus," answered the boy.

PUZZLES

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



Sudoku

WORDSEARCH

Can you find all the words shown in **BOLD CAPITALS** in the passage below in the grid. Words can be found in any direction.



Love and serve one another

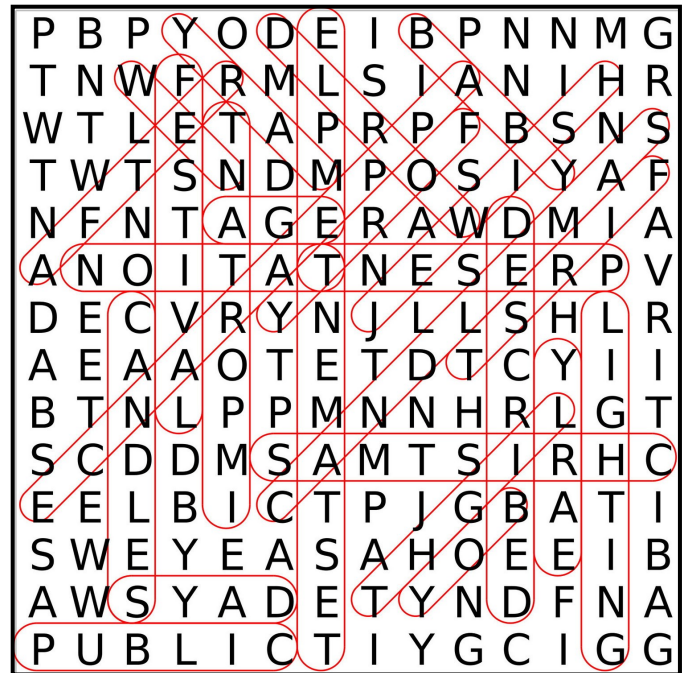
On **MAUNDY THURSDAY** we recall the **FINAL COMMAND** that **JESUS** gave to his **DISCIPLES** before his **DEATH**. After the **LAST SUPPER**, He rose and **WASHED** his disciples' **FEET**. This was **ASTONISHING** for a **'TEACHER'** to do, but He had a firm **PURPOSE** in mind: "A new command I give you: Love one another. **AS** I have **LOVED** you, so **YOU MUST** love **ONE ANOTHER**." His disciples were to love through **SERVICE**, not **DOMINATION**, of one another.

In **LATIN**, the opening phrase of this sentence is 'mandatum novum do vobis'. The word 'mundy' is thus a corruption of the Latin 'mandatum' (or command). The 'washing of the feet' **CEREMONY** was an important part of the **MEDIEVAL** church's liturgy, symbolising the **HUMILITY** of the clergy, in **OBEDIENCE** to the example of Christ.

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

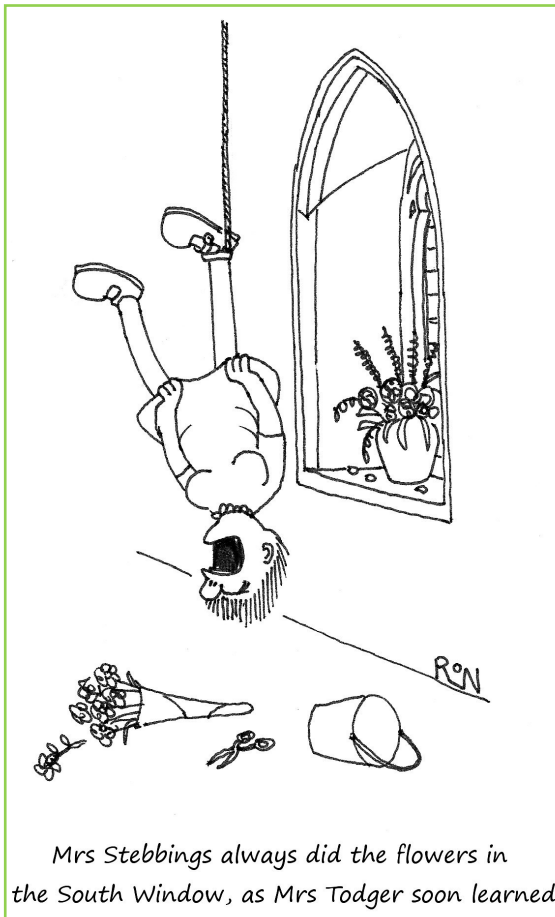
ANSWERS FROM LAST NEWSLETTER

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



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