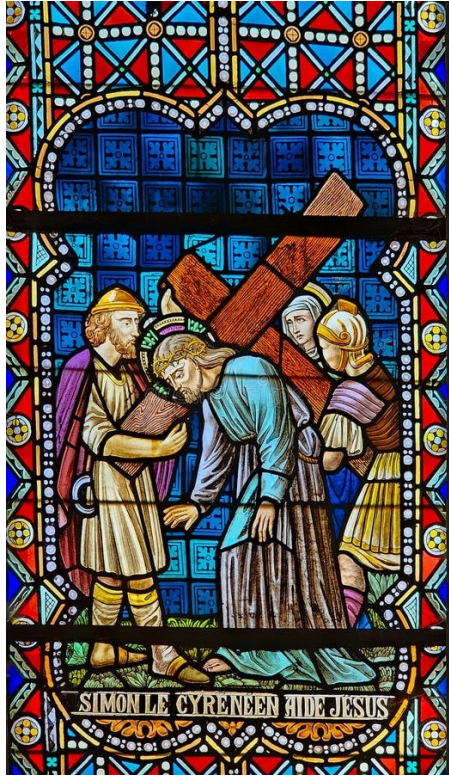


Stockport Sunday School

May 2026 Newsletter 71



In Judith's recent service, the question arose as to what was the difference between those of Jesus' followers called 'Apostles' and those called 'Disciples'.



Well, the first word is derived from the Greek, and the second has Latin roots.

However more relevantly, according to the Oxford Dictionary, a Disciple is a pupil of their adopted leader and teacher; the recipient of their mentor's knowledge and wisdom.

Whereas an Apostle is a teacher of knowledge - as Jesus' chosen friends and immediate colleagues became after His resurrection. Their task was to carry the good news of the New Testament message to the wider world.

I think we are familiar in general terms with the various roles the Apostles played in spreading the Gospel news. I also imagine we might hope to be able to consider ourselves to be in the category of Disciples; for there is always something new to learn as we seek to follow our Lord's guidance.

And we can be encouraged that there were humble followers of Jesus who in those early days of the church played small but significant parts and whose deeds were recorded in the gospels.

First, Simon of Cyrene, who happened 'to be passing on his way from the country' on Good Friday.

He was probably visiting Jerusalem for the Passover celebrations, but lodging in the countryside because the accommodation in the city would be full. It was Simon who the Roman soldiers compelled to carry Jesus' cross to Golgotha. The fact that the Bible refers in some detail to his background suggests he and his family became members of the early Christian community.

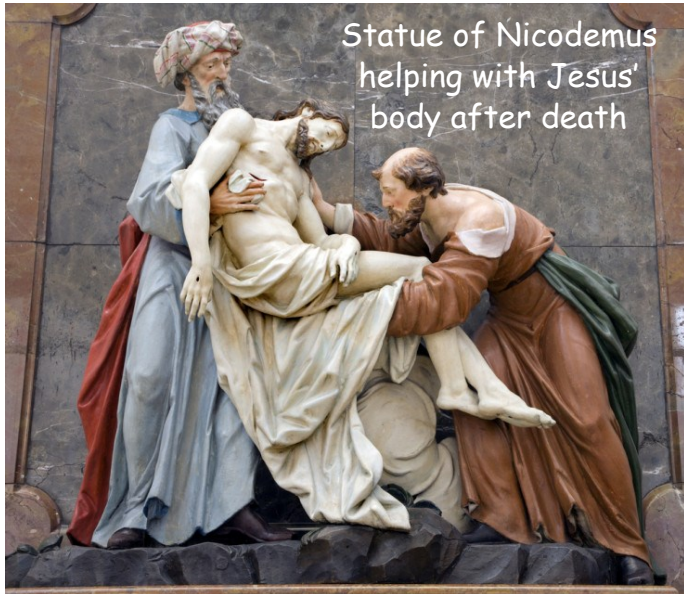
Then there was Joseph of Arimathea. He was a member of the Jewish council, a man with a good reputation and also a secret follower of Jesus.

He was prepared to put his fears aside, and disregard what other members of the temple authority would think, by going to Pilate to ask him for permission to take Jesus' body and have it prepared for burial.

Nicodemus was another member of the Jewish hierarchy, the Sanhedrin who had previously met with Jesus. He had accepted Him as a teacher, wanting to know more about His message.



He had also defended Jesus when the Sanhedrin sought to arrest Him without trial and execute Him. After the crucifixion he assisted Joseph in preparing Jesus body for entombment.



And then after Jesus resurrection, we have the meeting of Cleopas and his companion with Jesus on their way home to Emmaus. They were not part of Jesus group of close friends and it was only when they sat down to share a meal and Jesus blessed the food did they realise who He was, and returned immediately to Jerusalem to tell Apostles and other disciples the good news that Jesus was indeed risen.

If the Passion and Resurrection of our Lord were a theatrical production, no doubt all the above individual incidents would be classed as 'bit parts'. But, in fact, they all have significance in the overall gospel narrative. They remind us of individual acts of commitment to Christ by ordinary folk in the world's view perhaps - but for us a source of encouragement that there is always a role for the ordinary person to play.

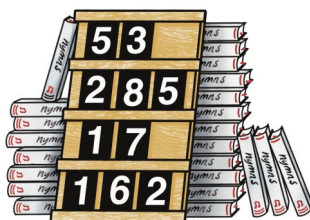
As we continue through this season of Easter to Ascension Day and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (or Whit Sunday as many of us might call it), let us give thanks for all our predecessors who acted out their faith in real terms when the challenge came.

Sadly, we are living in times when principles of honesty, compassion and loving our neighbours seem to be under pressure in many parts of modern life

May we be strong in our commitment to follow our Lord's teaching in whatever He calls us to do.

In the words of the familiar hymn by John Bunyan -

'He who would valiant be... Let him in constancy follow the Master'



SERVICES

- 3rd May Walter Stead
- 10th May Judith Higgins
- 17th May Walter Stead
- 24th May To be arranged
- 31st May Judith Higgins
- 7th June Walter Stead
- 14th June Founders' Day

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Happy Birthday wishes this month to:-
Judith Hadfield - 2nd May





SERVICES



SUNDAY 19TH APRIL 2026

Judith Higgins took this service. She said that when we speak of Jesus' disciples, we think of twelve men. In Matthew's gospel, he writes that Jesus appointed twelve (whom he described as apostles) so that they might be with Him and that He may send them out to preach and have authority to cast out demons.

Luke explained that the twelve were a small part of His followers. There was a much larger group of disciples including many women. He named three in particular, Mary Magdalene, Joanna and Susanna.

Judith went on to tell us about Mary and Joanna who gave up a privileged life, a noble woman, wife of Chuza the household manager of King Herod Antipas. Not much is known of Susanna.



Stained glass window

Many of the women who travelled with Him in Lanark Church had been cured by Him and bore witness to His power. They followed Jesus and stayed close by during his trial and crucifixion, even when some of the disciples went into hiding and Peter denied knowing Him. Judith told us of some of the other women in Jesus' life. Mary, His mother, chosen by God to be His earthly mother, Elizabeth her cousin, mother of John the Baptist, Anna the prophetess who recognised the baby Jesus as the Messiah when Mary and Joseph took Him to the temple, Priscilla, wife of Aquila who travelled with Paul. The Acts says she mentioned the early Christians. The wife of Pontius Pilate, Salome, wife of Zebedee, mother of James and John.

Although many are not named, we know that they gave up their time, talents and livelihoods to follow Jesus. They gave up social standing and friends to follow Jesus and spread the good news of His resurrection.

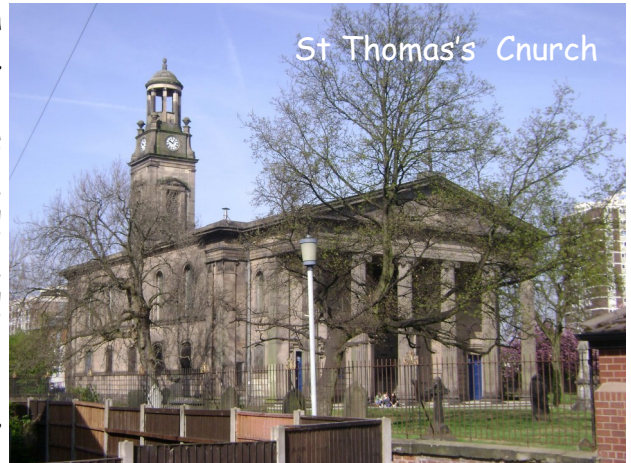
Life can become once more a grand adventure if we will surrender it to God.... He brings one adventure to an end, only to open another to us. ...with Him we must be ready for anything.
- Paul Tournier

A Christian is never in a state of completion but always in a process of becoming.
- Martin Luther

SUNDAY 26TH APRIL 2026

Cath Brown and Janet Moore told us about the history of some of the town's churches.

In March 1888 a hundred Salvationists arrived in Stockport to begin their mission to bring the gospel to the people of Stockport. They based themselves in Hillgate which at the time was notorious as a centre of drunkenness and crime. Their first meeting in a tent was well attended by people curious to find out more about them. But they were not popular by many people and had to pay the police £38 for their protection. Even their founder, General Booth was pelted with mud when he visited the town. They preached throughout the town but built their citadel in Hillgate.



St Thomas's Church



General Booth

St Thomas's Church was known as a Waterloo Church because it was built with the help of a government grant of £15,000 given in thanks to God for the Duke of Wellington's victory over Napoleon at the Battle of Waterloo. People were flocking into Stockport to work in the cotton mills and factories due to the Industrial Revolution and there was a need for a new Anglican Church. St Thomas's was consecrated in 1825. The interior was very different to what it is today. It had a vast three tier pulpit and small altar. Pews could be rented by the wealthy, five shillings in the nave and ten shillings in the gallery. 972 seats were free. The church was originally a daughter church to St Mary's parish church, but in 1838, St Mary's parish was divided and a large area was attached to St Thomas's.

The site of St Mary's church in the market place had been used as a place of worship since before the Norman conquest. Old records show that an early church was in existence in 1190. In 1310 a much larger church was built and was restored in 1848.

In 1805 church bells were rung throughout the country to celebrate Nelson's victory at the Battle of Trafalgar. St Mary's bells were rung for several days in succession and as a result, the bell tower was weakened and was later demolished. The 500 year old church was by this time in bad repair.

The present tower was built in the north west corner in 1612. The old bells were said to be too small and the new bells were purchased. The original bells were stored for many years, but are now installed in All Saints Church, Marple, where they are still used today.



St Mary's Church

The rector of St Mary's was also a local magistrate. He lived in a large rectory higher up the hill from the Church. It was a restaurant until recent times when it was closed down.

Thank you, Cath and Janet, for an interesting service about some of the town's churches.

LANCASHIRE HILL SUNDAY SCHOOL



Recipe

Crispy feta parcels with sesame and hot honey drizzle

Serves 4

2 blocks of feta

4 large sheets filo pastry, halved

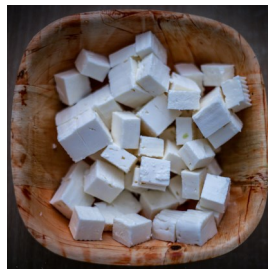
honey, for drizzling

black and white sesame seeds

chilli flakes (optional)

Cut each block of feta in half then slice each carefully in half again widthways so you have eight pieces. Wrap each piece in the filo, folding in the sides as you go, until you have eight small parcels.

Heat a shallow pool of oil in a large non-stick frying pan over a medium heat then fry the parcels for a few minutes on each side until crisp and golden. Cut into diagonals to expose the cheese then serve on a warm plate with a drizzle of honey and a scattering of sesame seeds and chilli flakes.



Happy Birthday

16 May - Margaret Dean


19 May - Jayne Dean

21 May - Beryl Barnett

"MORE MEMORIES"

When I first started teaching at St Paul's Infants in 1959, one of the extra things that I was asked to do, was to take the whole of the Infant Department, (about 80 children), for hymn practice for $\frac{1}{2}$ hr on a Friday morning. The Headmistress (whom I thought was very old, but was probably in her early 60s), chose the hymns. We had no words for the children - they had to learn the verses by heart and they were, in my opinion, always incredibly boring and too old for 5 - 7 year olds. I was used to the lovely Carey Bonner Sunday School hymns like 'God Who "Made The Earth" "Praise Him, Praise Him" and "Little Modest Violet Blue", and was suddenly asked to teach difficult hymns like "We Love The Place Of God" and "Hail To The Lords Anointed".



 On one occasion, at the end of my patience, and feeling very sorry for the children, I lined them all up, and sent them back to their classrooms. 2 minutes later the lines of children returned, with the first girl delivering the message. "Miss Darnley is sorry Miss Morris, but there are still 7 minutes' singing time left"! In desperation I started to teach them:-

"If you're happy and you know it,
Clap your hands." etc

We did "Clap your hands",

"Stamp your feet"

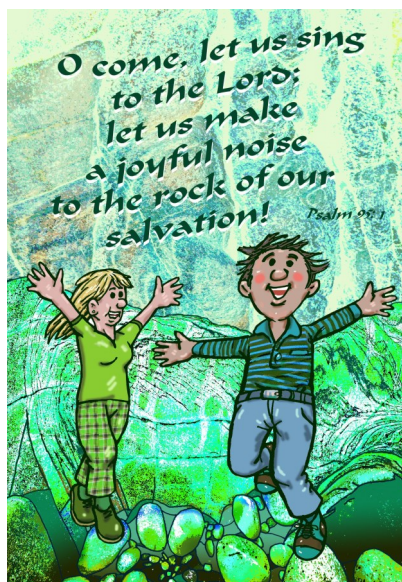
"Shout "We are""

and by then, the 7 minutes were over.

At lunch-time, I was summoned to Miss Darnley's room and she said:-

"I didn't recognise that last song, Miss Morris. It certainly wasn't a hymn. Please stick to the ones I give you, in future!!"

Margaret M Jones



FIRE OF PENTECOST

"You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you and you will be witnesses to me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth" Acts 1:8

We all get tired and battle weary sometimes. The disciples of Jesus had just been through a three-year long roller coaster adventure with Jesus that had culminated in His death, resurrection and ascension into heaven.

The range of emotions would have been hugely taxing in the days leading up to Pentecost, as they remembered Jesus weeping in the garden of Gethsemane, betrayed by Judas, brutally beaten and crucified, and then dead and buried. Then there had been the shock and awe of finding out that He was alive again! But then He had left them again, to return to His Father. By the time the day of Pentecost arrived, the disciples would indeed have welcomed some fresh spiritual fire!

For us today, many of us have felt emotionally drained with the uncertainties caused by Covid 19, the worry of prices rising at an alarming rate, and now the pain and uncertainty of what will happen in the war in Ukraine.

So, what better day to pray for fresh spiritual fire for each of us? As we celebrate the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and birth of the Church, let us thank God that He will never leave us or forsake us.



50 DAYS AFTER EASTER

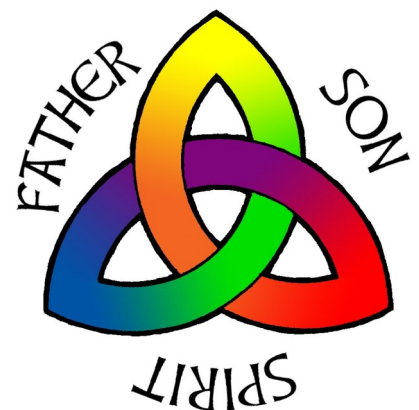
Pentecost 

Pentecost. The word means '50 days after Easter'. It's the celebration of the gift of the Holy Spirit as recorded in Acts chapter 2, and it's the birthday of the Church. So far so good; but beyond this, things get a bit hazy for some of us. We are familiar with

the idea of God the good Father, and we've heard and read of all that Jesus - God the Son - said and did. But the Holy Spirit? *Who He?!*

The images used of the Holy Spirit in scripture can be a bit of a barrier to understanding. Words like 'spirit' 'wind' 'flame' 'breath' are all a bit elusive, and they possibly leave us with a feeling that in trying to understand the Holy Spirit we're chasing rainbows. But if we dig a little deeper, we can see that these images speak of an unhindered force which can be powerful and yet gentle, cleansing and free.

The Bible is full of images of the Holy Spirit. There is 'dove', as seen on many Christmas cards and in stained glass windows. It's usually white. A white dove image speaks of gentleness and purity, unfettered as it wings its way across the sky.



Then there's the more difficult word 'advocate'. Someone who speaks up for us, comes alongside us, someone to aid us in times of need. We could go on with different images which tell us more of the character of the Holy Spirit, but there are two key things to remember. Firstly, this is the spirit of Jesus. All that Jesus was in earthly form, the Holy Spirit is to us now. Jesus is no longer among us as He was two thousand years ago, but the Holy Spirit makes Him available to us now.



Which brings us to the second point; the Holy Spirit is given by the good Father to us, His children - giving us, as it were, an injection of Jesus' personality, wisdom and holiness, enabling us to serve as Jesus did, enabling us, as Mother Teresa put it, 'to do little things with great love'.

The first Pentecost set the young Church in Jerusalem off on a great adventure which culminated in today's world where one in three people worldwide say they are Christians. It could be a great adventure for us as we ask God, the good Father, to gift us with the Spirit of Jesus. Let's do it!

THE NATION'S FAVOURITE CHURCHES, AND FAVOURITE STAINED-GLASS WINDOW



Carlisle Cathedral East Window

The East Window in Carlisle Cathedral has been declared the nation's favourite stained-glass window (in a recent survey by the Association of English Cathedrals).

As our favourite church, there is no one clear winner, but the following 10 churches consistently high as among the most loved in the country, according to data from the National Churches Trust:

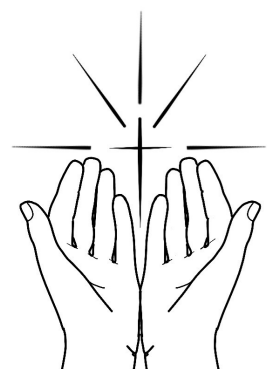
St Paul's Cathedral London; York Minster; Coventry Cathedral; St Mary's Redcliffe, Bristol; Shrine of our Lady of Walsingham; Durham Cathedral; Lincoln Cathedral; St Bride Fleet Street; and Tundergarth Parish Church.

THE POWER OF PENTECOST

The celebration of Pentecost this month could be described as a birthday party for the church, when we remember the gift of the Holy Spirit to the first disciples (Acts 2:1-13). What are we celebrating?

God's Promise:

The disciples obeyed Jesus' instructions as they gathered in the Upper Room: 'Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift My Father promised' (1:4). They met expectantly in prayer for God's promised gift. Just as we look forward to birthday presents, how eager are we to receive more of the Spirit in our lives?



God's Power:



'All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit' (4). The disciples needed the power of the Spirit to be different: not fearfully gathered behind locked doors, but instead energised to make Christ known. The Spirit can transform our lives into the likeness of Jesus and give gifts to equip our witness. Although the disciples' experience of this power was overwhelming, it was essentially an encounter with God's love. For us, this can be equally emotional or quiet, but *all* of us are included, and nobody is excluded from this experience.

God's Purpose:

The disciples 'began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.' (4). The Spirit empowered their witness, so that everyone heard them speaking in their own 'native language' (lit: *dialect*, v8). We all have a story to tell of God's activity in our lives, and the Spirit will translate our words and actions into a language that those around can understand! At Pentecost, 3000 people were added to the Church in one day! What do we expect of the Spirit in our day?



*'Let the church return to Pentecost, and Pentecost will return to her.
The Spirit of God cannot take possession of believers beyond their
capacity of receiving Him'
(Andrew Murray).*

RED SQUIRRELS ON THE ISLE OF WIGHT

A sunbeam, in the woods of Wight
Illumines a magenta coat
And, sat within that beam of light.
A squirrel - red! And how we gloat!
Though squirrels are a common sight
We see them nearly ev'ry day
Aloft within the treetops height
But there, upon the Isle of Wight
No greys have ever set a paw
So go! You never know, you might
See squirrels you've not seen before.
A lovely island's best delight -
Red squirrels on the Isle of Wight.

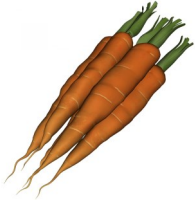
By Nigel Beeton



SMILE LINES

Quiet prayers

The little boy was saying his go-to-bed prayers in a very low voice.
"I can't hear you, dear," his mother whispered.
"Wasn't talking to you," said the small one firmly.



For the wicked

A little boy had been very naughty and as a punishment his mother told him he would go without his favourite vegetable. He sat down for a meal, and his mother served, carrots, corn, - - and ? "It's no use waiting," said his mother, " I told you, no peas for the wicked."

New vicar

The new vicar taking his first service was determined to make a good impression. The congregation sat spellbound throughout the eloquent sermon and the extended intercessions, which seemed to cover the whole category of human wants. After the service one church member asked another in awe: "Don't you think our new vicar prays well?"

"I most certainly do," came the answer. "Why that man asked the good Lord for things that our old vicar didn't even know He had!"



Motoring holiday

Lost Husband: Where are we now?

Wife: Halfway between Paris and Marseilles, dear.

Husband: Don't bother me with details. What country are we in?

Which Way to Heaven?

The evangelist Billy Graham told of a time early in his ministry when he arrived in a small town to preach a sermon. Wanting to post a letter before the service that evening, he asked a young boy in the street where the post office was.

When the boy had told him, Dr Graham thanked him and said, "If you'll come to the Baptist Church this evening, you can hear me telling everyone how to get to heaven."

The boy replied, "How can you do that? You don't even know your way to the post office."

Golf

Golfer: "I'd move heaven and earth to break 100 on this course."

Caddie: "Try heaven, you've already moved most of the earth."



Oops

I went grocery shopping on an empty stomach and am now the proud owner of Aisle 4.

PUZZLES

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



Sudoku

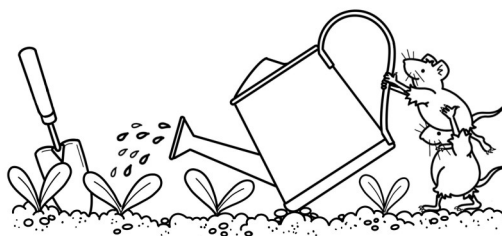
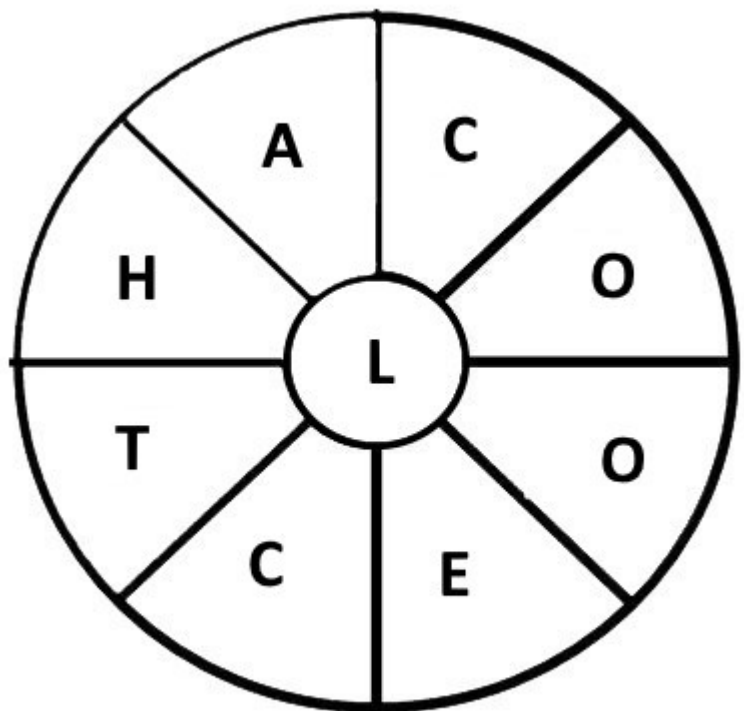


WORD WHEEL

How many words can you make using the letters in the word wheel?

Words must be four letters or more, each word must contain the central letter L. Plurals and proper nouns are not allowed. There is at least one nine letter word.

Good score 14+ Excellent 22+



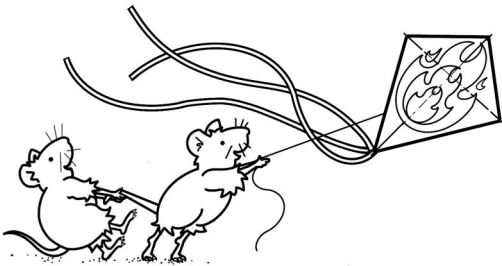
WORDSEARCH

A prayer for the Middle East

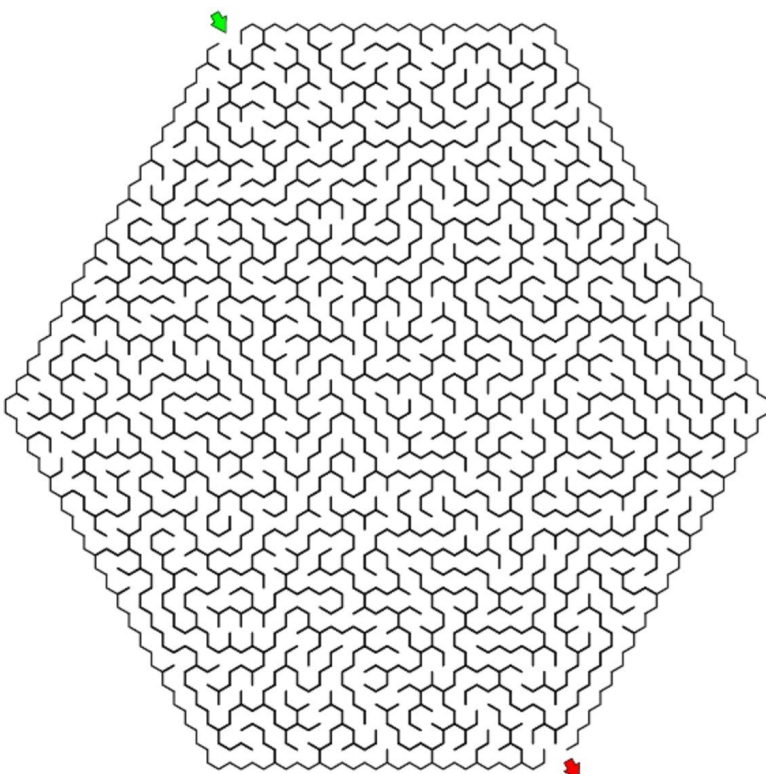
Lord, we **PRAY** for the **CONFLICT** in the **MIDDLE EAST**, and how its damaging the **LIVES** of so **MANY MILLIONS** of people. You, Lord, make **WARS CEASE** to the end of the **EARTH**; You **BREAK BOWS**, **SHATTER SPEARS**, and **BURN SHIELDS** with **FIRE** [Psalm 46:9]. Through Your Holy Spirit, move upon the leaders of the nations to de-escalate this **CRISIS**. We hear of wars and rumours of wars (Matt. 24:6), but You **LORD** are **OUR ROCK**, our **FORTRESS** and our **DELIVERER**. Our **HOPE** is **IN YOU**. Let Your name be exalted among the nations; may You be exalted in the earth [Psalm 46:10]. *KYRIE eleison - Lord have **MERCY**.*

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

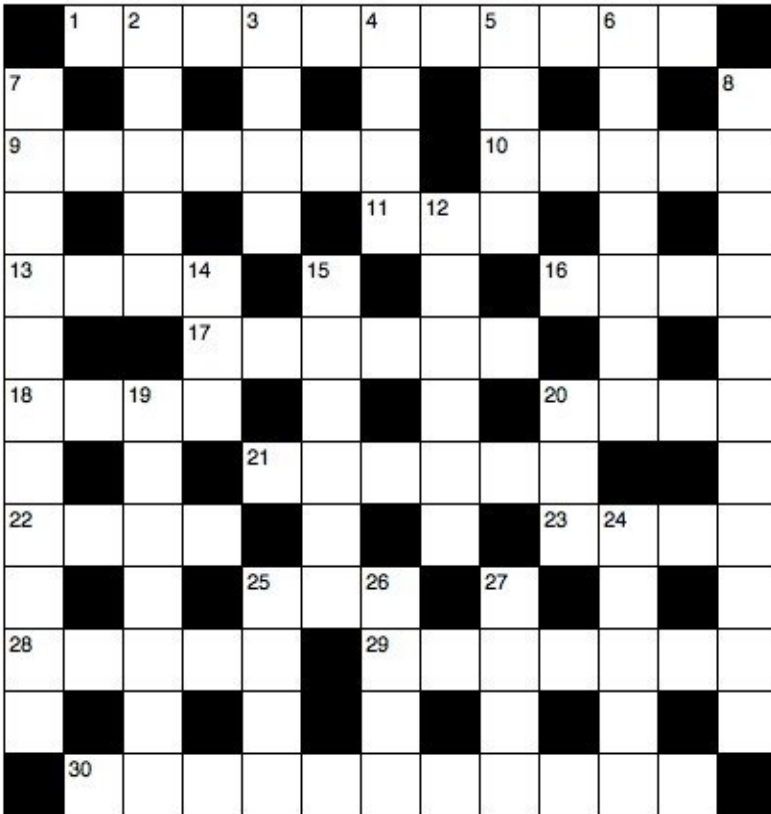
D	F	E	E	E	G	O	D	M	C	W	E
Y	I	Y	A	R	P	S	U	R	A	R	I
C	R	I	S	I	S	O	S	R	O	N	R
R	E	T	T	A	H	S	H	C	P	L	Y
E	R	A	I	A	I	S	K	F	E	I	K
M	E	T	C	I	L	F	N	O	C	V	A
M	V	I	E	A	I	H	T	R	A	E	E
M	I	L	L	I	O	N	S	T	U	S	R
R	L	D	A	M	A	G	E	R	A	B	B
U	E	O	D	R	S	H	I	E	L	D	S
O	D	C	E	L	E	U	C	S	W	O	B
Y	O	E	S	P	E	A	R	S	O	S	M



Can you find your way around the maze entering at the green arrow and exiting at the red arrow.



CROSSWORD



Across

- 1 Overpowered (Deuteronomy 11:4) (11)
 9 'The — are mantled with corn' (Psalm 65:13) (7)
 10 'Each man—a sword to his side' (Exodus 32:27) (5)
 11 On the death of Jesus the curtain in the temple was torn from— to bottom (Matthew 27:51) (3)
 13 Stagger (Isaiah 28:7) (4)
 16 'Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought—and doesn't do it, sins' (James 4:17) (2,2)
 17 Stir up or provoke (Acts 13:50) (6)
 18 Burden (Luke 11:46) (4)
 20 'As far as the east is from the—, so far has he removed our transgressions from us' (Psalm 103:12) (4)
 21 Sign (Luke 23:38) (6)
 22 'After that, Jesus poured water into a basin and began to—his disciples' feet' (John 13:5) (4)
 23 The nature of the seven ears of corn which swallowed up the good ears in Pharaoh's dream (Genesis 41:23) (4)

28 'This is the account of Shem, Ham and Japheth, —sons' (Genesis 10:1) (5)

29 'I will...make them drunk, so that they...sleep for-and-awake' (Jeremiah 51:39) (4,3)

30 Paul said of him, 'he often refreshes me and is not ashamed of my chains' (2 Timothy 1:16) (11)

Down

- 2 Worth (Matthew 13:46) (5)
 3 'A bruised—He will not break' (Matthew 12:20) (4)
 4 'Suddenly a great company of the heavenly—appeared with the angel' (Luke 2:13) (4)
 5 Slip (anag.) (4)
 6 'Take an awl and push it through his — into the door, and he will become your servant for life' (Deuteronomy 15:17) (3,4)
 7 Bountiful (2 Corinthians 8:2) (11)
 8 'Therefore, as we have —, let us do good to all people' (Galatians 6:10) (11)
 12 Acquire (2 Timothy 2:10) (6)
 14 Container cover (Numbers 19:15) (3)
 15 'He...became obedient to death, even death on—!' (Philippians 2:8) (1,5)
 19 Refrain (1 Peter 2:11) (7)
 20 'She began to—his feet with her tears' (Luke 7:38) (3)
 24 One who worships Brahma, Vishnu or Shiva (5)
 25 'Give to everyone who— you' (Luke 6:30) (4)
 26 'I lift up my eyes to the hills; where does my—come from?' (Psalm 121:1) (4)
 27 One of those whom the Lord said would be taken from Jerusalem and Judah as judgment on them (Isaiah 3:2) (4)

ANSWERS FROM LAST NEWSLETTER

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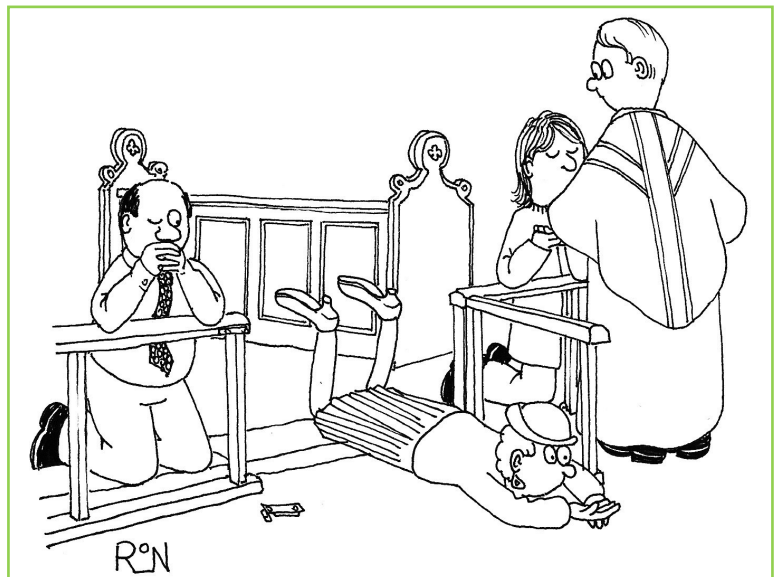


SUDOKU ANSWERS

WORDSEARCH ANSWERS



"Whilst I appreciate the thought, would whoever it is please stop tweeting, 'So far, so good...!'"



Terry made a note to fix the bolt

Thank you to Parish Pump who provide some of the articles and artwork