



Stockport Sunday School

June 2026 Newsletter 72



I was recently reading a Bible commentary on the subject of Friends and Friendship.

In it, the writer, the Rev Gordon Giles, quotes the saying that 'You can never put a value on Friendship - it is priceless.' While most of us would probably agree, a group of students decided to do an experiment to see if it was possible to establish its monetary value. To their surprise, and probably their dismay, the value that came up was £22!

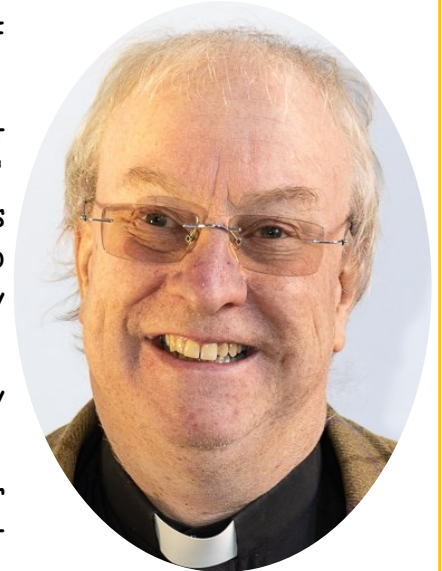
Of course, the way you set up an experiment will greatly affect the type of answer you will get.

What they had done was not to write pages of dense text, or carry out complex mathematical calculations, but instead set up an experiment in Marketing.

They decided to sell the friendship of one of their colleagues - Big John - on e-bay. The person who offered the highest price became the proud, if somewhat bemused owner of John's friendship for exactly one year. We don't know what John thought about this arrangement!

But true friendship is a commodity that cannot be bought, only earned.

We speak of 'having' friends, and Gordon suggests in a way we 'own' our friends and they 'own' us; but not exclusively. Our ownership comes from shared experiences.



Rev. Gordon Giles

Perhaps our friendship goes back to early school years, or people we first met at secondary school.

Maybe they are, or were, neighbours, - when we were children or later as grown ups; or people we have worked with.

In some cases they are perhaps people we first met on holiday - the list can go on and on.

What is interesting is that the depth of the friendship does not necessarily depend on how often we meet. It may be only once or twice in a year, but we can pick up our relationship as if it is only a short time since we last got together.

What is probably most important is not just whether we share common interests and experiences but whether we care for one another.

And how we can help each other when life throws up its challenges.



One other source of friendship for many of us is the fellowship we share as Christians, - followers of Jesus.

One of the characteristics of friendship is openness and vulnerability, - sharing in our situations.

When Jesus is telling his disciples about the forthcoming events of his passion, and the consequences for them, He says to them, 'This is my commandment: love one another as I have loved you..... I call you servants no longer.....I have called you my friends because I have disclosed to you everything that I heard from my Father ... this is my commandment to you: Love one another.'

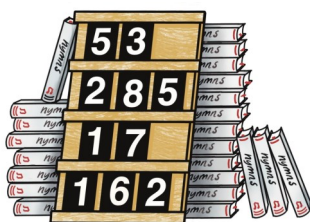


And an important symptom of such love is friendship.

It recalls the hymn we often sing at our services 'What a friend we have in Jesus' - someone who loves us, despite our shortcomings.

Friendship is a two way gift, and by it we are blessed in one another.

So let us give thanks to God - for His love, and for each other.



SERVICES

7 th June	Walter Stead
14 th June	FOUNDERS' DAY - speaker Stuart Dean
21 st June	Judith Higgins
28 th June	Walter Stead 3.30 Committee
5 th July	Judith Higgins



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Happy Birthday wishes this month to:-

Hilary Wood - 15th June



AUGUST

Just a reminder that there will be no newsletter in August, so if you wish anything to go into the July newsletter relating to August or early September, please send your notes in by Sunday June 28th at the very latest.

THINKING OF YOU

We send best wishes to our members who have been poorly recently and hope to see you back in School when you are better. Some of our members are no longer able to join us each Sunday, but we know that some keep in touch with our activities through the newsletter. We are thinking of you and would love to hear from you.



COFFEE LOUNGE



Sadly, due to dropping numbers, lack of helpers and health issues, Beryl Manley has had to close the Coffee Lounge that she ran on Tuesday mornings. She and the late Ken Dean started the Coffee Lounge many years ago and over time it has catered for many people to meet others when they may not normally get out. In recent times Beryl has been helped by Derek, but sadly he is now very poorly and unable to attend.

We thank Beryl and all those who have helped to welcome and provide refreshments for those who attended the Coffee Lounge over the years and indeed to those who attended and made it the lovely space it was. It was good to hear that the ladies who still attend will be coming to the Knit and Natter group, so will have the continuity of friendships.

Thank you to everyone involved.



FOUNDERS' DAY, SUNDAY JUNE 14TH

On June 14th, Founders' Day, our speaker will be Stuart Dean, well known as one of our Inspectors and also for the many Christmas Carol Services he and his Lancashire Hill colleagues produce for us each year.

Founders' Day is always a great opportunity to meet up with friends and share in the celebrations of the work of the Sunday School. Please invite family and friends to join us for this special service.





SERVICES



SUNDAY 3RD MAY 2026

In an interesting service, Walter read us a story that was a modern day parable.

In 1974, it had won the Sunday Times prize for the Best Science Fiction Short Story.

It was written about a family, Simon, Mandy and their children, James and Julie, that lived well into the future, a time when they were able to book a holiday that would allow them to travel back in time to a period of their choice.

This family chose to travel with friends to Golgotha to witness the crucifixion of Jesus.

The travel company told them that they were to remain inconspicuous at all times. To help them they would change their appearance and they would look like Jews and using technology of the time they even taught them to speak Hebrew.

They would arrive on the day that Pilate asked the people whom he should set free, Jesus or Barabas. They were to join in the crowd shouting for Barabas so that they would not



stand out as strangers and they should shout and jeer at Jesus as He is led through the streets, and laugh when they nailed up the sign, Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews, on the cross.

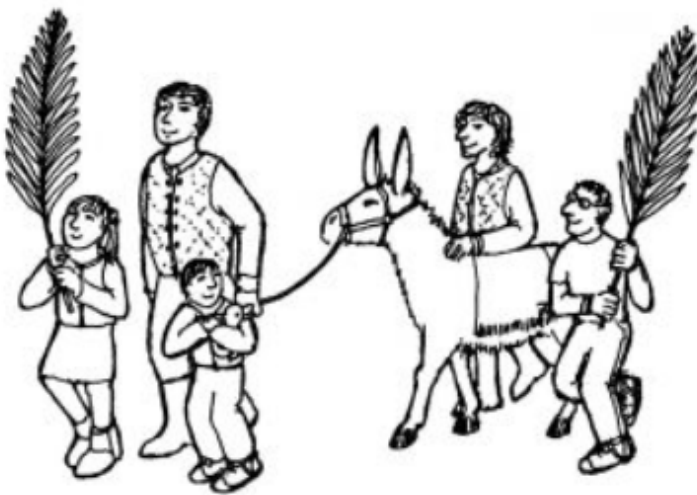
After their initial reluctance about the holiday, the children began to read the story in the Bible whilst their mother began to ask, "How could they do that? His own people. Some that cheered Him and threw down palm leaves as He entered Jerusalem?"

Simon said "It was mankind who were to blame, you can't blame individual nations like the Romans or Jews."

When they arrived, they followed the courier along an uneven sandy track. They blended in well with the natives as their clothes and sandals had been bought locally by the tour company on a previous visit. Some of the children began to complain about the heat and the rough fabric rubbing their skin.

In the town, they heard a man on the steps of a building saying they were to choose who was to be set free, Jesus or Barabas.

Simon was surprised when he heard his son, James, call out 'Barabas' and the crowd joined in.



Their daughter, Julie, was beginning to feel ill with the heat and they moved into a narrow street to find some shade. Mandy looked into the small houses as they passed. Inside each one was a family sitting in silence. She began to think something was wrong.

They began to be afraid as they realised that the inhabitants of the town were in their houses praying and the crowd jeering at Jesus was made up of time travellers like themselves. They could hear the sound of the angry mob ahead as they tried to find James and their friends and they saw the marks on the road where Jesus had dragged his cross.

Simon realised that they were the people condemning Jesus and soon another party of time travellers would follow and so on throughout history.

Thank you, Walter, for another interesting service.

SUNDAY 10TH MAY 2026

Judith began her service by asking everyone if they had ever wished to be someone else, perhaps someone richer or with a manor house or with more power. She reminded us that with power came responsibility and accountability.

People in power do not always have an easy life. She spoke about Queen Elizabeth I. When she was just three, her mother had been executed and the young princess had been neglected and almost forgotten. Later she had been imprisoned by her half sister, Queen Mary.

Queen Elizabeth II was our longest reigning monarch. Judith spoke about her coronation and the regalia used in the ceremony, all bearing a cross symbolising Christ's authority, reigning over all.



The ring was marked with a simple cross.

The orb, a golden globe representing the Christian world surmounted by a cross representing Christ's domination over the world and that the monarch is his representative on earth.

A white dove representing the Holy Spirit is perched on top of the cross on the rod.



The sceptre too is topped by a cross and the crowns used in the coronation are also topped with the cross.

In Bible times, Kings were not crowned but anointed with holy oil by a priest.

In 973 St Dunstan anointed King Edgar during his coronation and since then anointing the monarch has been an important part of the coronation ceremony. During the ceremony the monarch is presented with a Bible with the words, "To keep your majesty ever mindful of the law of the gospel of God."



It was interesting to see pictures of the objects used during the coronation and learning of their meaning, reminding us that Jesus is King over all.

Thank you, Judith, for another interesting service.

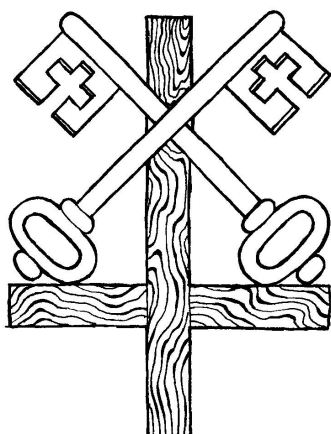
SUNDAY 17TH MAY 2026

Walter spoke about the gospel writers and the apostles and their backgrounds.

Matthew had written for Greek speaking Jews, Mark for the church in Rome and Luke in a letter to Theophilus, a high ranking publisher. John wrote about the spiritual significance of Jesus' life.

Many of the apostles were fishermen, a group used to experience the storms of life in real terms.

Peter and his brother, Andrew, were the first to be called, and he went on to become the leader after Jesus' death.



St Peter church, and later stayed in Caesarea in support of Paul.

Thomas was a person who wanted to think things through, he was prepared to ask difficult questions, but was also a man of great direction and courage.

Bartholomew, thought to be from a noble family, possibly even royalty, a scholar and great servant of the scriptures.

James, sometimes known as James the less, may have been a brother of Jesus.

Simon the zealot, another fisherman. Zealots opposed the Roman occupation of their country.

Judas, brother of James the less, also a zealot.

Mathias chosen to replace Judas Iscariot. Little is known about him, but his companions must have had confidence in him.



After Pentecost, all the apostles travelled spreading the gospel far and wide. Most of them were martyred for their faith.

Jesus chose a group of unlikely men with all their human faults and differing backgrounds and personalities to pass on his message, an encouragement for us in our own small way to believe we have a part in witnessing to God's grace to our generation.

Thank you, Walter, for an informative and thought provoking service.



Thomas and Jesus

SUNDAY 24TH MAY 2026

Today we had another of our services whereby several members choose their favourite hymns for us to sing. Members, including Margaret Morris Jones, Margaret Forster, Cath Brown, Joan Thompson and Pam Bowden, selected hymns 'O Lord My God', 'Amazing Grace', 'Be Still For The Present Of The Lord' and 'To God Be The Glory' to name a few. We all enjoyed singing the different hymns and listening to music.

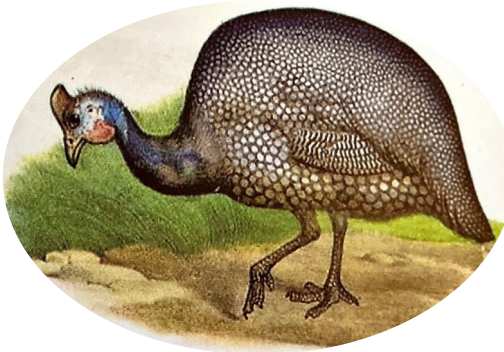
Thank you, Walter, for leading this service of music.



SUNDAY 31ST MAY 2026

Judith gave an illustrated address about the birds found in the Bible.

Some were well-known examples beginning with the story of the creation in chapter 1 of Genesis when he says that birds were created on the fifth day.



The well-known examples included the dove and the raven sent out from the ark by Noah when the rains stopped to see if the flood water was going down. Then there was the story of the quails sent by God to provide meat for the children of Israel as they travelled to the promised land. King Solomon would also have eaten quail and he would also have eaten chicken, goose, guinea fowl and cuckoo.

The longest list of birds in the Bible is found in Leviticus where he lists the birds that must not be eaten. There are many references to the creation in the book of Job which has led many people to say he is the finest naturalist in the Bible. He describes the behaviour of several birds including the ostrich and the vulture.

The first mention of birds in the New Testament is when Mary and Joseph presented the baby Jesus at the temple in Jerusalem to be consecrated and made the sacrifice according to the law of Moses of a pair of doves or two young pigeons.

When Jesus was baptised by John the Baptist he saw the Holy Spirit descending like a dove. Today in paintings and stained glass the Holy Spirit is shown as a white dove. A dove with an olive branch in its beak is a symbol of peace.

Other birds mentioned in the New Testament are sparrows, a hen gathering her chicks under her wing for protection and the birds in the parable of the sower eating the seeds falling on the path.

Thank you, Judith, for this interesting service.



LANCASHIRE HILL SUNDAY SCHOOL



Recipe

Hake and roasted veg traybake

Serves 4

500g baby new potatoes

3 tbsp olive oil

1 small red onion, cut into slim wedges

350g small courgettes, cut into chunks

150g red and yellow cherry tomatoes

4 chunky pieces of skinless hake

1 lemon, zested and halved

handful of parsley, chopped



Tip the potatoes into a pan of boiling salted water, return to the boil and simmer for 8 mins. Drain well and cool.

Heat the oven to 190C/170C fan/gas 5. Drizzle the oil into a large shallow roasting tin, then add the potatoes, onion and courgettes, season and toss together. Roast for 35 mins until the courgettes and potatoes are tender, and have started to colour. Stir in the tomatoes and sit the hake on top. Roast for 10 mins or until just cooked.

To serve, drizzle over a little more oil, squeeze over some lemon juice and sprinkle over the lemon zest and parsley.



Happy Birthday

28 June - Stuart Dean

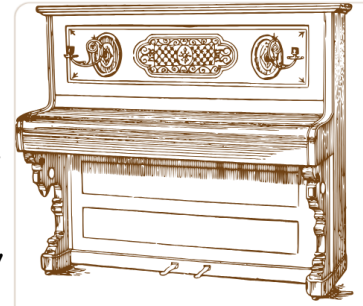
All but God is changing day by day. - C Kingsley

Our life is scarcely the twinkle of a star in God's eternal day. - B Taylor

SING FOR JOY



Many years ago, when I was the leader of a small Concert Party, we used to hold our rehearsals at my house. Next door to me lived an elderly widow and I apologised to her after one particularly noisy rehearsal with 4 of us singing jolly songs, and our pianist enjoying the accompaniment on my piano. I said that I hoped that we didn't disturb her too much and that the piano wasn't too loud. I remember her reply very clearly.



"Too loud? No, definitely not! I LOVE it when you have your rehearsals. In fact I join in sometimes and I'm always sorry when your rehearsal ends!"

Just recently, I came across this little poem which seems very appropriate after what I have just been describing!

Margaret M Jones



'Sing a song and let your gladness
Float from windows, fly through your doors,
Let it touch your friends and neighbours,
Lifting hearts to sing like yours.
Let each note swell ever louder
Spreading sweetness o'er the land,
Helping all who hear its music
Feel the song and understand.
Life, with all its joys and sorrows
Carries still a value rare.
So, unite in joyful music,
Let your singing fill the air.'



20TH JUNE SUMMER SOLSTICE - LONGEST DAY OF THE YEAR

June, of course is the month of the summer solstice, the month of the Sun. *Sol* + *stice* come from two Latin words meaning 'sun' and 'to stand still'. As the days lengthen, the sun rises higher and higher until it seems to stand still in the sky. The Summer Solstice results in the longest day and the shortest night of the year. The Northern Hemisphere celebrates in June, and the Southern Hemisphere celebrates in December.

While the Druids worship at Stonehenge and elsewhere, here are some Christian alternatives that honour the Creator rather than the created.

God in All

He inspires all,
He gives life to all,
He dominates all,
He supports all.
He lights the light of the sun.
He furnishes the light of the night.
He has made springs in dry land.
He is the God of heaven and earth,
of sea and rivers,
of sun, moon and stars,
of the lofty mountain and the lowly valley,
the God above heaven,
and in heaven,
and under heaven.



A Canticle for Brother Sun

Praised be You, My Lord, in all Your creatures,
Especially Sir Brother Sun,
Who makes the day and enlightens us through You.
He is lovely and radiant and grand;
And he heralds You, his Most High Lord.
St Francis of Assisi



*...well you cannot fault the efficacy of
the new 'Planned Giving' scheme...*

SMILE LINES



Car travel

A minister was looking at potential cars down at the dealership. Pointing to one, he asked the salesman: "Cargo space?"

Confused, the salesman looked at the minister's dog collar, and replied slowly: "Car no do that...no go heaven. Car go road."

Boasting

Three boys in the schoolyard were bragging about their fathers. The first boy said, "My Dad scribbles a few words on a piece of paper, calls it a poem, they give him £50."

The second boy said, "That's nothing. My Dad scribbles a few words on a piece of paper, calls it a song, they give him £100."

The third boy said, "I got you both beat. My Dad scribbles a few words on a piece of paper, calls it a sermon, and it takes eight people to collect all the money!"



Windy

Three elderly ministers, all hard of hearing, were playing golf one sunny spring morning.

The Methodist minister observed, "Windy, isn't it?" "No", the Baptist pastor said, "It's Thursday." The Anglican vicar agreed: "So am I! Let's go and get a pint."

Home visit

Several women visited a sick elderly lady in their church. After a while, they rose to leave and told her, "Well, don't worry, we will keep you in our prayers."

The old woman replied: "Actually, if you would just wash the dishes in my sink, I will do the praying."



Short-staffed

Two men were working for the town council. One would dig a hole and the other would follow behind him and fill the hole in. They worked up one side of the street, then down the other, then moved on to the next street, working furiously all day without rest, one man digging a hole, the other filling it in again.

An onlooker was amazed at their hard work, but couldn't understand what they were doing. So he finally approached the hole digger, "I'm impressed by the effort you two are putting in to your work, but I don't get it - why do you dig a hole, only to have your partner follow behind and fill it up again?"

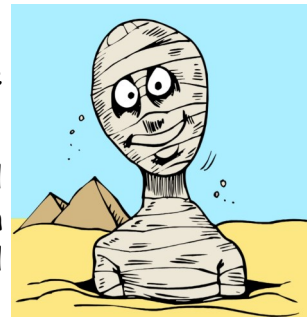
The hole digger wiped his brow and sighed, "Well, I suppose it probably looks odd because we're normally a three-person team. But today the guy who plants the trees called in sick."



What do they teach them in school these days?!

The following excerpts are 10- and 11-year-old answers to history tests and Sunday school quizzes. They were collected over a period of three years by two teachers. Read carefully and enjoy the grammar, misplaced modifiers, and of course, spelling!

Ancient Egypt was old. It was inhabited by gypsies and mummies who all wrote in hydraulics. They lived in the Sarah Dessert. The climate of the Sarah is such that all the inhabitants have to live elsewhere.



Moses led the Hebrew slaves to the Red Sea where they made unleavened bread, which is bread made without any ingredients. Moses went up on Mount Cyanide to get the ten commandos. He died before he ever reached Canada but the commandos made it.

Solomon had three hundred wives and seven hundred porcupines. He was an actual hysterical figure as well as being in the bible. It sounds like he was sort of busy too.

The Greeks were a highly sculptured people, and without them we wouldn't have history. The Greeks also had myths. A myth is a young female moth.

Socrates was a famous old Greek teacher who went around giving people advice. They killed him. He later died from an overdose of wedlock which is apparently poisonous. After his death, his career suffered a Dramatic decline.



In the first Olympic games, Greeks ran races, jumped, hurled biscuits, and threw the java. The games were messier then than they show on TV now.

Julius Caesar extinguished himself on the battlefields of Gaul. The Ides of March murdered him because they thought he was going to be made king. Dying, he gasped out "Same to you, Brutus."

Joan of Arc was burnt to a steak and was canonized by Bernard Shaw for reasons I don't really understand. The English and French still have problems.

It was an age of great inventions and discoveries. Gutenberg invented removable type and the Bible. Another important invention was the circulation of blood.



Sir Walter Raleigh is a historical figure because he invented cigarettes and started smoking.

Sir Francis Drake circumcised the world with a 100-foot clipper which was very dangerous to all his men.



Getting around

I love flying. I've been to almost as many places as my luggage.

Going somewhere

Older people often go to another room to get something, and when they get there, they stand there wondering what they came for.



PUZZLES

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



Sudoku

Visit of the Blessed Virgin Mary to Elizabeth

MARY - the **VIRGIN MOTHER** of Jesus. Her visit to **ELIZABETH**, when both were **PREGNANT**, is a moving account of two humble, **ORDINARY** women, suddenly caught up in a **GREAT EVENT** that would shape **WORLD HISTORY**. Their trusting faith in God and acceptance of His will, shine through.

After Jesus is born, Mary makes few appearances: when the **FAMILY** visits **JERUSALEM** and she loses her Son on the way home; when she urges Him to help the **WEDDING** party in **CANA** with its **WINE** problem; and when Jesus gives her into the **KEEPING** of the **BELOVED DISCIPLE** when He is **DYING** on the **CROSS**. Mary's last appearance is in Acts, just before Pentecost.

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

Mary, chosen to be the mother of Jesus Christ, one who is both God and Man, holds a **UNIQUE PLACE** in history. Down the **CENTURIES** that have followed, the **CHURCH** has paid special honour to Mary - and well deserved it is. "All generations shall call me **BLESSED**..."

Wordsearch

Can you find the words shown in bold capitals in the passage above in the grid?

They can be found in any direction.

ANSWERS FROM LAST NEWSLETTER

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

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
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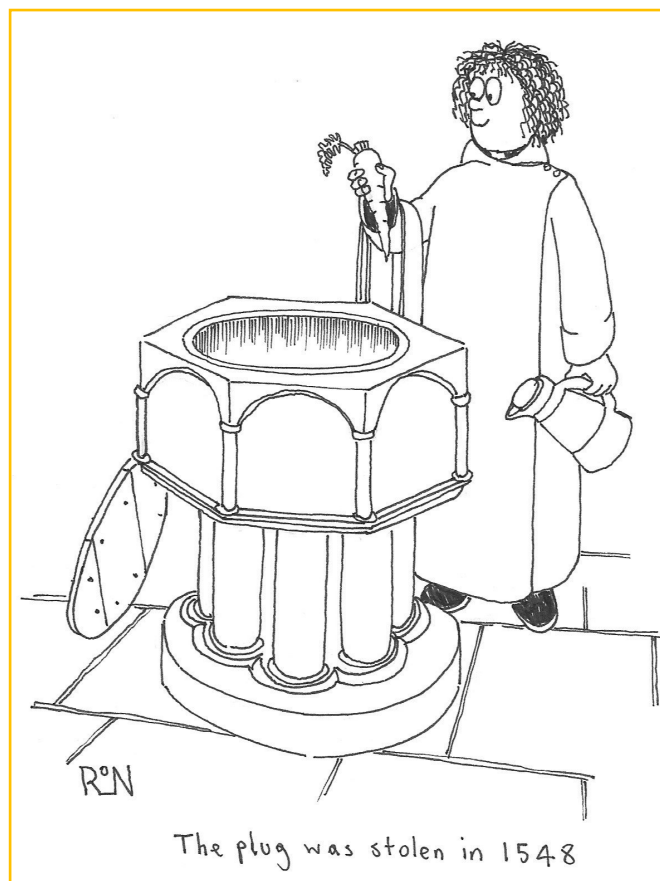


SUDOKU ANSWERS

WORDSEARCH ANSWERS

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

CROSSWORD ANSWERS



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