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Dear Friends,



Welcome to the first Newsletter of 2022, and I wish you a Happy and settled New Year. It has been described as **the nicest show** on television. It has run for several seasons and was on our screens over Christmas. It's **The Repair Shop** and is where people take their old damaged or worn-down family heirlooms and items to be **fixed and restored** by a team of tender, loving and expert craftspeople. The items are returned in much better condition, while retaining the signs that it has **'had a life'**.

In this hectic world of fast fashion and disposable bargains, the Repair Shop celebrates **resilience** and hand-crafted **brilliance**, as the experts repair **wonky** typewriters and 19th century firefighter helmets and radios that survived Dunkirk, and as we saw at Christmas an **old** toy train set and a mechanical doll. The restorers work slowly and patiently, quietly fixing the world, one **fragile**, beautiful, **quirky** thing at a time.

And it is also the human stories that make The Repair Shop such a moving programme to watch. Every item has a **backstory** that makes it come alive, taking us back into the history of families and events that give the show **its soul**. They might not look pretty or be worth a lot in cash, but there is an emotional connection in the Repair Shop that money cannot buy. It appears that every episode of The Repair Shop ends in **tears**, both the tears of those who see their stories brought back to life, and us the viewers, as we witness emotions of **past connections** and **restoration**.

What is **heart-warming** in The Repair Shop are the **craftspeople** themselves. They hold every one of the treasures they encounter in **their heart**; there is no judgement, nothing is too difficult, no story is too demanding to embrace and no problem is too big to solve. Their quiet **resolve** to bring **new life** to the old and broken is unwavering. Does all this **resonate** with us somewhere?

Of course, the undertones and link to the **Christian narrative** is perhaps what I find the most moving about The Repair Shop. The

programme is designed to entertain us but is also a heart-warmingly **graphic picture** of what the Gospel story **portrays**. We know that we are a broken story, damaged long ago when our ancestors thought they could live life without their Creator, and since that point we've struggled to enjoy the new life that was so freely offered to us.

God the Father knew that we would be broken, so He made a plan to **send us** to the Repair Shop, and he **sent a skilled craftsman** to be our healer, our **restorer**, to bring new life to that which was broken, tainted, despairing. The Gospel stories recount the story of Jesus, fully human and yet fully divine, going to the cross and rising again so that we may be not only forgiven for our selfish ways, but so that we may **enjoy** the life we were designed to live, **restored** to life to the full as Jesus says in John Ch.10.

The **master craftsman**, God the Father, bears all the hallmarks, and more, of the craftsmen we see in The Repair Shop. Constantly **patient**, skilled in every way, **careful** and delicate in the **transformation** of our lives, allowing His Spirit to chip away at our faded and chipped character so that we can become who we were **created** to be. I can't help thinking that the Repair Shop is an excellent way to portray **the church** in a time when we need to be more creative about how we **portray** the work of God in our world, particularly as we chart our way through the post-Covid world.

Knowing that restoration is totally **possible** with God the craftsman, we can think about how we might encourage people to bring their lives to the eternal Repair Shop, to be restored in a way that starts now but will last for eternity, where rust and decay will not destroy. Others might see The Repair Shop (aka the local church) as being a story **worth embracing** and **worth bringing** their lives to. As Jay Blades once said, 'Who doesn't want some wonder and joy in their lives.' This New Year?

Yours in the master craftsman's name

John



Sunday Worship

FEBRUARY 10.30am unless specified

- 6 Revd John Lee
- 13 Revd John Lee, Communion
- 20 Mrs Esther Lewis, Fairtrade
- 27 Revd Keri Eynon

New website:

thatcham-urc.org.uk

New design.

New links.

Submit any news.

Advertise an event.

Have a look and let us know what you think.

Elders Contact

Karen Fakes 868310	Alan Tarry 873642
Esther Lewis 861332	Jackie Tarry 873642
Gill Mossman 827103	David Weller 864551
Alan Mossman (Church Secretary) Evening 827103 Daytime 523240	Jackie Wood 874241

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 mail@AlphaXperience.co.uk

**Deadline for next issue:
 Sunday 13 February**

REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS



Mark Weller & family; Amanda's mother, Pat; Gill, Alan & family; Margaret Wilson; and any others known to us individually.

New! Ev'ry morning it's new,
the love of God is wonderfully new
New! Ev'ry morning it's new,
the love of God is wonderfully new'
Great is His faithful ness, constant
is His love,
Great is His saving pow'r,
coming from above
New! ev'ry morning it's new,
the love of God is wonderfully new.
Amen



'The Lord is King' Psalm 96:10

Pray for a new deal for climate justice. Pray for fair share of finance and technology to be transferred to poor and climate-vulnerable countries. Pray for an end to fossil fuel expansion and for clean, renewable energy to be invested in instead. Pray for renewable energy to be developed without people being exploited or the environment being destroyed.

May your vision of a new creation inspire our action for a new deal for climate justice. Amen

EMBRACE the Middle East

(extracts from Prayer Diary)

6 February

As well as providing a livelihood for Palestinian farmers, olive trees are a symbol of heritage and resilience. Yet they are under threat from Israeli settler attacks. Please pray for the Olive Tree Project, which for 20 years has helped farmers plant new trees and protect their harvest.

20 February

The right to freedom of movement is denied to many Palestinians, who face roadblocks, checkpoints, permits and the separation barrier. This World Social Justice Day we pray for the Society of St Yves, who provide free legal advice for those challenging the restrictions.

ST MUNGO'S EVEN LESSER

On the 20th day of January
In the Year of Our Lord
2022

To Uncle Eustace

Rector

St James the Least of All



Dear Uncle,

Perhaps you would like to consider the following, humble, suggestions for solving the current difficulty with the kneelers.

Firstly. The embroiderers. They have to produce the relevant number of 4" square patches, of a subject pleasing to themselves. Furry, horror, whatever.

Secondly. The stitchers. Join the patches into kneeler-sized pieces.

Thirdly the stuffers. (Announce there has been a nasty skin disease affecting some of the congregation, and please would everybody buy new, and donate the old to the church.) There should be sufficient wadding for your needs.

Finally, the stitchers again.

This should provide activity for all the skills available without recourse to war.

Your loving nephew,
Darren

Dear Lord God,

February can be a difficult, cold month, and this year there is much to be concerned about, with the pandemic still affecting our lives in so many ways. But thank you, Lord, that February can also be a month of wonderful signs of hope. Help us, when we look down, to see the snowdrops - sometimes known as Candlemas Bells - and other bulbs pushing through the dark earth, showing the promise of Spring and brighter days ahead.

And then, help us to look up, to see the light of Jesus, Your revelation to all the world, in that baby who grew and died and rose again to offer salvation, hope and life to all who put their trust in Him.

Thank you, Father, for Jesus and that, because of Him, nothing - no pandemic, no circumstance - can ever separate us from You.

Thank you for Your Holy Spirit, living in all who trust in You, giving us strength for each new day of this and every month.

In Jesus name, Amen.

By Daphne Kitching

Advert for a church jumble sale: '

We have a gents three-speed bicycle, and also two ladies for sale,
in good running order.'

How do you decide who to marry?

No person really decides before they grow up who they're going to marry. God decides it all way before, and you get to find out later who you're stuck with. - Kirsten, age 10

ST. JAMES THE LEAST OF ALL from The Rectory



My dear Nephew Darren

I am glad you enjoyed your conference, but please do not be deluded into thinking that conferences are there to teach you anything. Conferences exist to provide another entry on your CV, to give you time off while flattering yourself that you are working, and to make the person leading it feel that

their life is not wholly pointless.

As it happened, I was also invited to the same one, the one entitled 'Learning how to say no.' But I refused to attend, thereby proving that I didn't need it anyway.

There are certain useful points you need to learn for conferences. First, about half the attendees will have been together only the previous week attending another conference in another part of the country. They will be eager, enthusiastic, and overflowing with management platitudes. Avoid them at all costs. Should one of them say to you: 'expect the unexpected' you have my permission to strangle them. They won't have expected that!

Secondly, when you are all asked to go through that ghastly process of introducing yourselves to everyone

else, make it up. I think the last time I was obliged to do this, I became a butcher specialising in exporting offal to Saudi Arabia. All your clerical colleagues will then panic that they have turned up for the wrong course and the leader will make sure that you are not asked another single question throughout the event. Both outcomes are satisfying.

Thirdly, do realise that when you are asked to divide into small discussion groups, it means that the conference leader has run out of ideas about what to do next. Do not, at all costs, volunteer to be chairman. It only means that when you have to report back - and if the leaders use the word 'plenary', then by all means contemplate strangling them also - you will be involved in sticking sheets of paper on to walls, which will then rip off the wallpaper when you try

to remove them.

You will also have the embarrassment of finding that every felt tip pen you try to use will be empty, and what you thought were the conclusions your group had arrived at will be volubly contradicted by all the other members.

No, if you are ever obliged to attend another course, take a good book, enough claret to cover every evening away, and develop a debilitating illness that, while enabling you to attend every meal, obliges you to retreat to your room for the rest of the day. You will leave having learned as much on whatever the topic was as your colleagues, but you will return refreshed and eager to make the next booking.

Your loving uncle,
Eustace



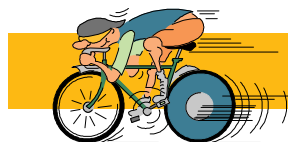
Across

- 1 'If you love those who love you, what — is that to you?' (Luke 6:32) (6)
- 4 'They threw the ship's — overboard' (Acts 27:19) (6)
- 7 The first murderer (Genesis 4:8) (4)
- 8 He was the head Levite in charge of the singing when the ark of God was brought back to Jerusalem (1 Chronicles 15:22) (8)
- 9 Samson was noted for this (Judges 16:6) (8)
- 13 Solicit money or food from passers by (Acts 3:2) (3)
- 16 What William Booth's Christian Mission became in 1878 (9,4)
- 1 Alliance of Religions and Conservation (1,1,1)
- 19 'I will praise your name for ever and ever. — I will praise you' (Psalm 145:1-2) (5,3)
- 24 Simon had (anag.) (8)
- 25 Desperate (Deuteronomy 28:48) (4)
- 26 Elisha witnessed the boy he was seeking to resuscitate do this seven times before opening his eyes (2 Kings 4:35) (6)
- 27 The belly and thighs of the statue in Nebuchadnezzar's dream were made of this (Daniel 2:32) (6)

Down

- 1 'Before the — crows, you will disown me three times' (Matthew 26:75) (4)
- 2 Relating to the books of the Bible between Acts and Revelation (9)

- 3 'They have — the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!' (John 20:2) (5)
- 4 Belief (5)
- 5 'Take the following fine spices: ... 250 shekels of fragrant — ' (Exodus 30:23) (4)
- 6 'Do not — Jerusalem, but wait for the gift' (Acts 1:4) (5)
- 10 A seer (anag.) (5)
- 11 'Even there your hand will — me' (Psalm 139:10) (5)
- 12 The wild variety was part of John the Baptist's diet (Mark 1:6) (5)
- 13 A non-Greek speaker who was looked down on by civilized people (Colossians 3:11) (9)
- 14 Famous 1950s musical whose characters included members of
- 16 Across, — and Dolls (4)
- 15 The province from which Paul wrote to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 16:19) (4)
- 18 'He was standing in the gateway with a linen cord and a measuring — — his hand' (Ezekiel 40:3) (3,2)
- 20 'Today, if you hear his —, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion' (Hebrews 3:15) (5)
- 21 The Jericho prostitute who hid two Israelite spies on the roof of her house (Hebrews 11:31) (5)
- 22 'And now these three remain: faith, — and love. But the greatest of these is love' (1 Corinthians 13:13) (4)
- 23 'God has numbered the days of your reign and brought it to an end' (Daniel 5:26) (4);



News from our

'Roving Reporter'

Christmas Day is remembered for the end of the volcano erupting (a record time) on the Canary Island of La Palma and the launch of a research spacecraft from French Guyana.

Two significant figures in today's world disappeared from the scene:

The death of Archbishop Tutu, whose 18 months in the Home Counties were quite important in his formation as an Anglican priest.

It was from this little world that Desmond Tutu learnt more about the evangelical authority of the church of England, and gave talks on 'Obedience' and 'Merit'. He made a great and favourable impression, was 'joyous' and 'radiated the love of God' as did his whole family.

There is some evidence that the very lack of racial animosity which he experienced in England helped embolden him to try and change the terrible divisions in his native South Africa. It is good to think his Surrey sojourn did its bit!

Angela Merkel, daughter of a Lutheran priest, came to the end of her long term of office as German leader as a Politician, within the E. U. and member of the Christian Democratic Party, being regarded as resolute and a stable influence, particularly on economic measures.

Christians Against Poverty

In heading for a time of increasing financial hardships, it is worth knowing that after a group was set up in Hungerford, with a lead from the Methodist Church, there is now one in Newbury.

We provide free debt counselling and take new appointment bookings for our Debt Help service via our helpline 0800 328 0006. The Newbury centre covers RG14 and 17-20 and we are booking appointments up to 3 months in advance. Christians Against Poverty has a network of over 300 debt centres operating in postcode catchments. To check what is available in a particular area use the postcode checker at <https://capuk.org/i-want-help>.

Our free debt counselling service normally takes place face to face in our

client's homes. Due to the restrictions since the beginning of the pandemic we were not able to see clients face to face, and we changed our debt counselling service to offer a telephone based debt help service. Since restrictions have been lifted we offer a hybrid service (telephone based and face to face) to help and support the clients through the process.

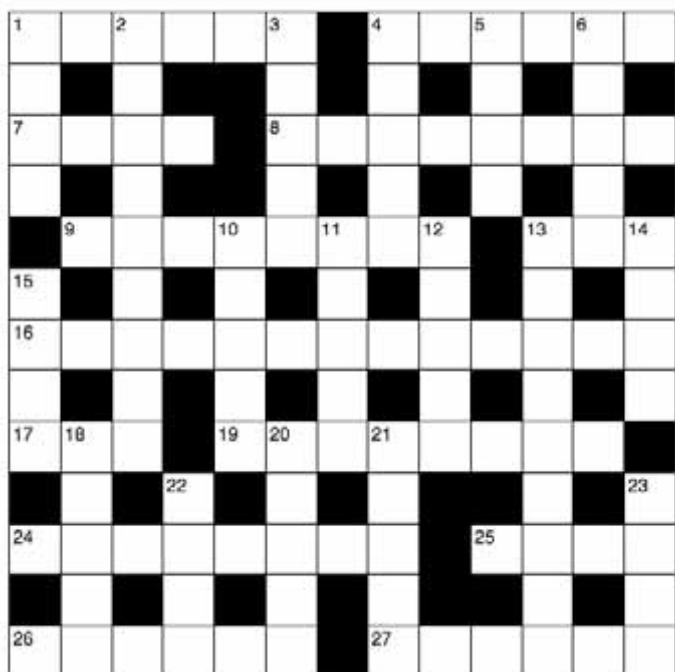
During our appointments we explain our service and gather together all the information about their income, expenditure and debts. Our head office debt advisors produce a financial statement/budget and options for the best route out of debt for the client from this information. We then explain and coach the client through the details and options on their final appointment. We support them through this process and afterwards all the way to them becoming debt free.

Our client statistics show that 58% of our clients had waited a year before seeking help and 30% had waited 3 years. We do not want people to wait this long before seeking help, especially in light of the fact that 38% of our clients have considered or attempted suicide. With the impacts of the pandemic, the recent reduction in Universal Credit and rising costs of energy and food there is an increase in need for our service. Helping to identify those that need help early, and encourage them to contact us as soon as they get into difficulties, is crucial. The sooner we can help people the easier it is to get them out of debt and stay out of debt. All that is needed is to give them our New Enquiries number 0800 328 0006 and encourage them to call us.

We work together with local organisations like Foodbank, West Berkshire Community Baby Bank and Community Furniture Project to support our clients to provide emergency aid and more general support to those who need it.

Showing people there is always hope! G

Lisa John, Centre Manager - Newbury
Christians Against Poverty 07307 209636 Thursday & Friday Please call 0800 328 0006 for all new enquiries



Answers next page

CHURCH SPRING CLEAN!

**Helpers needed to help
sweep the cobwebs away!**

Monday 21st February 2.00-5.00

or Saturday 26th February 9.00-12.00

Come along for an hour or whatever time you
can offer, we will be pleased to see you.

Sign up sheet in the Vestibule or contact Esther

Full Covid guidelines will be followed so please
bring a mask & gloves if possible.



Bible Notes - Every Day with Jesus

Are you feeling challenged to read the Bible more regularly this New Year? Every time we read Scripture we encounter the Living Word, Jesus, and grow as Christians.

In the foyer, there are free copies of 'Every Day with Jesus' - a booklet which gives daily insight into a Bible reading, followed by prayers and suggestions for further study and actions to take. The booklet is for January and February 2022. If you usually read another daily devotional book, you might like to try EDWJ as an alternative (or as an extra!). If you have not used a daily devotional book before, why not sample this one? Please help yourselves to a booklet and enjoy fresh insight into God's Word for your life and relationships in 2022.

Rachel L-J

Gracious God, creator, provider and sustainer of all things; we have not taken good care of the wondrous creation that you gave us to oversee.

We have not loved as you commanded,

but have allowed selfishness, self-importance, injustices and inequalities to invade our societies leading to climate disruption, social and economic disparities. Through our actions people all over the globe have been left vulnerable, desolate and open to disease and poverty. We pray that you will bless the work of organisations such as Christian Aid, Global Justice Now, Fairtrade, Jubilee Debt Campaign and other groups as they seek to respond to global spiritual, moral, social and economic issues to make it a fairer and more equal world. In your mercy, hear our prayer. Amen

Commitment
for Life



What do most people do on a date?

Dates are for having fun, and people should use them to get to know each other. Even boys have something to say if you listen long enough. - Lynnette, age 8

On the first date, they just tell each other lies and that usually gets them interested enough to go for a second date. - Martin, age 10

Crossword Answers

ACROSS: 1, Credit. 4, Tackle. 7, Cain. 8, Kenaniah. 9, Strength. 13, Beg. 16, Salvation Army. 17, ARC. 19, Every day. 24, Admonish. 25, Dire. 26, Sneeze. 27, Bronze.

DOWN: 1, Cock. 2, Epistolic. 3, Taken. 4, Tenet. 5, Cane. 6, Leave. 10, Erase. 11, Guide. 12, Honey. 13, Barbarian. 14, Guys. 15, Asia. 18, Rod in. 20, Voice. 21, Rahab. 22, Hope. 23, Mene.

Wordsearch for February

February is the month of romance. Millions of Valentine cards will be sent in the next week or two, as we celebrate our romantic love for that special person in our lives. But there are other kinds of love to celebrate, and on Candlemas we remember Mary and Joseph taking their baby son to the temple to present Him to God. Jesus' whole life was a loving present to us from God. Through His death for us on the cross, and His resurrection, His love can now transform anyone's life. Romance can die, but God's love for us is always



there. But it won't do us much good - unless we accept it!

Valentine boyfriend
Rose fiancé
Romance worship
Love repentance
Present angels
Restaurant baby
Hearts temple
Kiss Mary
hug Candlemas
girlfriend presentation

Easy sudoku

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

WESSEX SYNOD
BIG 2022
Day Out

Saturday
7th May 2022

Hollycombe
STEAM IN THE COUNTRY

Attractions for everyone, Largest Traditional Steam Fairground in Britain, Steam Railways, Listed Woodland Gardens including an Azalea Walk, Treasure Hunt, Reflective Labyrinth, Live Brass Band, Synod Marquee and Activity Field with Interactive Zones and Workshops, Refreshments and Worship.

Save the date, more information including booking information in the new year.

50+ The United Reformed Church Wessex Synod

A great day out for all the family and for all ages

The Tale of The Friend at Midnight

JESUS OFTEN TOLD STORIES WITH HIDDEN MEANINGS

ONE WAS ABOUT A MAN WHO HAD RUN OUT OF BREAD...

... HE WENT TO HIS NEIGHBOUR'S HOUSE AND BANGED ON THE DOOR - LOUDLY!

BLAM! BLAM!

WAKE UP! I NEED SOME BREAD

...AND HE NEEDED PLENTY AS A FRIEND WAS COMING TO STAY.

EVEN THOUGH IT WAS MIDNIGHT...

PLEASE WILL YOU LEND ME THREE LOAVES?

GO AWAY! WE'RE ALL TRYING TO SLEEP!

OH GO ON... PLEASE I REALLY DO NEED SOME!

ALRIGHT THEN BUT I'M ONLY DOING THIS BECAUSE I WANT SOME PEACE AND QUIET!

JESUS EXPLAINED - THE NEIGHBOUR AGREED TO SHARE HIS BREAD BECAUSE THE MAN KEPT ASKING

DON'T BE AFRAID TO TALK TO GOD. HE LONGS TO HEAR OUR PRAYERS.

Mouse Makes

Lord, you are a God who shows _____ and is _____
...You have great _____ and _____

Psalm 86:1

Love the Lord your God with all your _____
with all your _____
and with all your _____

How did God show He loved us?
Read 1 John 4:9

Matthew 22:37

See what great love the Father has for us that He would call us His
1 John 1:3

Love is...
Whoever lives in love lives in _____, and lives in them.
1 John 4:16

Love your _____
the same as you love
Matthew 22:39

Love is:
PATIENT • KIND • GRACIOUS • JUST • TRUTHFUL • TRUSTING • HOPEFUL
PERSEVERE • ENDURES • GOD

Love is not:
JEALOUS • ENVY • BOASTFUL • PROUD • SELFISH • ANGRY • RUDE • EVIL

God's love is:
LOVE • MERCIFUL • FAITHFUL • UNFAILING • ABUNDANT • COMPASSIONATE

Feb220 deborah noble • parishpump.co.uk

How can a stranger tell if two people are married?

You might have to guess, based on whether they seem to be yelling at the same kids.
- Derrick, age 8

We like someone who comes right out and says what they think, when they agree with us. - Anon

We make a living by what we get. We make a life by what we give. - Duane Hulse

My train of thought was just derailed. - Anon

When is it okay to kiss someone?
When they're rich. - Pam, age 7

INTERMEDIATE

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

From the Elders' Meetings

REPORT ON ELDERS MEETINGS –
TUESDAY 9TH NOVEMBER 2021 AND
TUESDAY 11TH JANUARY 2022 AND
EXTRAORDINARY MEETING (EOM)
TUESDAY 29TH NOVEMBER 2021

Please note that this report is only
a precis of the main issues discussed
at the Elders Meeting and not a
verbatim account of procedures. All
meetings were held via Zoom.

Tuesday 9th November

After the signing of the Minutes
the following two matters were
raised under:

Matters Arising

1 Toddler Group – Esther has
volunteered to lead a team with a
view to getting the toddler group
back on its feet hopefully by January
2022 but this is subject to any further
Coronavirus restrictions introduced.

2 Car Park Sign – The wording of
the new Car Park sign has been
agreed and would be installed
shortly.

Covid – The Elders were
constantly monitoring the local
situation and in accordance with
Government and Synod Guidelines
would amend the restrictions relating
to Worship accordingly.

Worship start time – Following
the poll amongst the congregation
Worship would commence at
10.30am with effect from Sunday 21st
November.

Finance – The up to date situation
regarding finance will be set out in
the report on the 11th January 2022
meeting.

Trustees – The Deed of Trust was
circulated and Elders were requested
to submit any queries direct to Roy
Tubb.

Matthew Henry Trust – The list of
recipients for 2021 was approved by
Elders who also authorized the three
Trustees to agree on the sum to be
distributed once the final balance is
known at the beginning of
December.

John's Time – Ernest Smith and
Samantha Coney's names were put
forward to Elders and it was agreed
that their names would be presented
to the Church Meeting to become
Church Members along with a
request from Nikki Pizzey to transfer
her membership from Grange to
Thatcham, together with one
resignation. The Elders Awayday

would focus on the wellbeing and
future of the Church and would
include a discussion on the concerns
raised by Graeme on the future of the
Church.

Tuesday 29th November (EOM)

Christmas Worship Arrangements
- The Elders discussed and agreed on
the Worship arrangements for the
Christmas period, including the
decoration of the Church and its
environs.

Tuesday 11th January 2022

After the signing of the Minutes
the following four matters were
raised under:

Matters Arising

1 Toddler Group – There is to be a
meeting on Friday 14th January to
discuss the way forward.

2 Christmas Arrangements –
Despite lots of planning and
organisation the Christmas Eve Carol
Service was moved into the British
School at the last minute due to very
heavy rain.

3 Christmas Morning Service –
The service was streamed live and
was available to watch on two
devices. Overall it was agreed that
the Christmas arrangements had
gone well.

4 Christmas Lunch – Following
the cancellation of the Christmas
Lunch it was agreed that it would
now take place (restrictions
allowing) on Sunday 13th March 2022
after the Church AGM.

Finance – Jackie Tarry reported
that the balances at the end of
December 2021 is:

URC Account £1242.49 (Deficit
due to Gas Bill being received and
paid)

Old British School Account
£3166.04

Building Fund £26,855.58

Pastoral Fund £428.31

Following the introduction of
charges by the HSBC Bank the
Treasurer was authorised to
investigate the setting up of a new
bank account to include online
banking and once established
approval for payments would be
made via e-mail. AM would be
checking to see if the Constitution
need to be changed to accommodate
this pending move to another bank.

Website: - The new Church

Website is now live and thanks were
recorded to Jackie Tarry for all her
hard work in setting this up. The
website would include photographs
of the Elders/John, a weekly service
sheet with a link to the Daily
Devotions. The Church Newsletter
would be added but would appear in
the Blog. JT reported that from
January there will be a charge of £4.99 a
month for e-mails.

Matthew Henry Trust – The Elders
approved the 2021 accounts which
would be signed off by the three
Trustees. The Annual Return to the
Charity Commission had also been
completed and forwarded on.

Covid Omicron and Strain Risk
Assessments – There is to be a
Baptism on Sunday 6th February but
certain restrictions will have to be
upheld with God Parents to remain
seated and masks to be worn. In
addition the parents should be
requested to take a Lateral Flow
Device Tests prior to attending. Toys
will be available for children to play but
will then be quarantined for one
week.

Coffee Break – In line with the
advice from Synod not to do anything
that isn't absolutely necessary, it was
agreed that a decision on resuming
Coffee Break would be deferred and
discussed again at the next Elders
meeting on 13th February.

Dates – Dates for Church
Meetings in 2022 were discussed and
agreed with the Café Service
scheduled for May being brought
forward to April subject to
agreement by Diane who had offered
to lead the service.

Car Parking at Church – It was
reported that concerns have recently
been voiced over the unacceptable
attitude of one of the neighbours
towards users of the Church
premises. John had spoken to the
neighbour concerned and it was
agreed that Jackie T would prepare a
script to be given to Group Leaders
which they could use in the event of
any further occurrences. John would
also ask Group leader to report any
further occurrences to him or an
Elder so that a log of incidents can be
kept. With the full support of Elders,
Group Leaders are being encouraged
to call the Police should they feel
threatened. John will also contact
Synod to enquire if they could

provide a legal letter that could be
used.

Alan M reported that he would be
producing the car park permits for
use by John/Elders/Leaders very
shortly.

Trustees – In thanking Roy Tubb
for preparing the draft deed of trust,
concerning the Old British School
Foundation Land the document was
approved by Elders.

John's Time – The week of prayer
for Christian Unity would take place
during the week beginning 17th
January and John would be attending
a CTIT meeting to discuss
arrangements. Rev Nicola Hulks
would be leading worship on Sunday
23rd January as part of the Pulpit
swap with John leading worship at
the Methodist Church.

AM would be contacting Grange
Church to commence the process for
accepting Nikki Pizzey's request for
transferring her Church membership
to this Church.

Any Other Business – Esther
suggested that the Church cleaning
Rota be re-established and once
people had volunteered she would
organise the Rota. The Church Spring
Clean would be taking place on
Monday 21st February and Saturday
26th February at times yet to be
determined.

Next Meeting – The next Elders
meeting is scheduled to take place on
Tuesday 15th February commencing
at 7pm via Zoom.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR
QUERIES ON THIS SUMMARY
PLEASE CONTACT DAVID WELLER
(01635 864551 OR E-MAIL
davidrwell65@yahoo.co.uk) WHO
IF NECESSARY WILL CONTACT
EITHER JOHN OR THE ELDERS
BEFORE RESPONDING.

PLEASE DO NOT CONTACT JOHN
OR ALAN DIRECT – THANK YOU

David Weller, January 2022



I'm updating the "rota notice-
board" rota rota ... do I see a
hand...?

Roy visits Bermuda

Bermuda, a British Dependency – has an area of 20.5 square miles. It is 22 miles long and barely two miles across at its widest part (excluding ocean water areas). Bermuda consists of 181 islands. The eight largest islands are connected by bridges and causeways. The highest point is a hill 249 feet above sea level.

Bermuda's population is about 64,000. According to the census about 55% of the population described themselves as “black” but the vast majority of those are said to have some European ancestry – in other words they are of mixed ethnicity, including that of native North American. About 34% were described as “white” being largely of British, Irish or Portuguese ethnicity. About 11% were described as “mixed or Asian”.

Bermuda was discovered by Spanish explorer Juan de Bermudez in 1503, hence the name of the island. The Spanish never settled there. In 1609 in the aftermath of a hurricane, the English Virginia Company, having established Jamestown in Virginia in 1607, permanently settled in Bermuda. The

company's flagship (Sea Venture with Sir George Somers at the helm) had crashed into reefs just offshore. The islands have also been known as the Somers Isles.

The town of St George, Bermuda's first permanent settlement and its first capital was established in 1612. It remains the oldest continuously inhabited British town in the New World.

Religion – the Anglican Church 23% represents of the population, the Roman Catholics 15%. Other Protestant Churches (mainly Presbyterian and Methodist) serve about 29% of the population.

Bermuda is surrounded by the Sargasso Sea, named after the seaweed Sargassum that floats around the edges of the sea. It is about 2,000 miles long (east-west) and about 680 miles wide (north-south). The sargassum is carried along by ocean currents and provides nourishment to wildlife, such as conger eels, sea turtles and frogfish.



1) Hamilton in Pembroke Parish is the capital of Bermuda and is ideally situated in the centre of Bermuda. It has a population of less than 900. The largest town in Bermuda is St George's (population about 1,600) at the north-eastern tip of Bermuda.

2) Yachting is popular in Bermuda. A yacht race is held biennially from Newport (Rhode Island, USA) to Bermuda (about 730 miles).

3) Front Street, Hamilton, fronting on to the Hamilton Harbour.

4) The Anglican Cathedral of the Most Holy Trinity, Hamilton. The first church on this site was Trinity Church, completed in 1869 but destroyed by arson in 1884. The present church was built in 1886-1905 in Gothic Revival style as a new Trinity Church. It was then part of the See of Newfoundland & Bermuda. Since 1919 Bermuda has had its own Bishop and Trinity Church then became Bermuda's Cathedral. It was retiled in 1978.

5) Another view of Bermuda Cathedral in Church Street.

6) The Wesley Methodist, also in Church Street, is about 170 yards north of the cathedral. Revd George Whitefield was the first Methodist minister to visit Bermuda. He came in 1748 from the USA and only stayed two months but the seeds of Methodism were sown. In 1799 Revd John Stephenson arrived from England but he was soon arrested for "inflammatory preaching" (preaching to slaves in fact) and ended up in jail, from where he continued to preach from his cell window. In 1808 Revd Joshua

Marsden arrived and opened a Sunday School in St George's. Later he moved to Hamilton and preached in an inn. A Zion Methodist Chapel was opened in 1810. The congregation had outgrown the chapel by 1868. The cornerstone of the present Wesley Methodist Church was laid in 1876. The church was dedicated in 1881 (800 people attended the evening service). A new church front was added in 1964.

7) The organ of the Methodist Church was installed in 1924 and



completed renovated in 1981. It has over seventy pipes.

8) Stained glass windows in north wall of the Methodist Church.

9) Sessions House of Assembly (building with the clock tower). The House of Assembly has 36 members elected for five years, while the Senate has 11 members appointed by the Governor.

10) City Hall and Arts Centre, opened in 1960, home of the Hamilton Corporation.

11) A worthy set of maxims standing in just outside the City Hall and Arts Centre.

12) The Pig Pen restaurant, which takes up half of Burnaby Street. It was permitted as an open air restaurant when covid struck in 2020 but has remained ever since.

13) Fling Colours in Queen Street, clothes & souvenirs. The Bermuda flag is top left alongside the Union Jack.

14) Harrington Sound, connected

to the Atlantic Ocean through a narrow inlet although the water flows in mainly from subterranean passages. The sound was named after Lucy Harrington (1580-1627), Countess of Bedford. She was one of the original 118 shareholders (and the only woman) in the Somers Isle Company, which administered Bermuda during 1616-84 under Royal Charter.

15) The Botanical Gardens lie adjacent to Bermuda's hospital (90 beds), consisting of 35 acres, were inaugurated in 1898.

16) Inside the Crystal Caves of Bermuda. The islands are mainly limestone sitting above a truncated volcanic seamount. The caves were discovered by accident in 1907 when a cricket ball belonging to two boys disappeared down a small hole into an underground cave.

Bermuda relies 50% - 70% for its fresh water on rainwater. It is collected on the limestone roofs of houses and collected in storage tanks beneath the houses. About 3,000 houses have wells but the well water is not drinkable. The remainder of the drinking water is obtained from six desalination plants.



17) the Royal Navy dockyard in Somerset parish. The navy left in 1951 although it was not officially closed until 1995. Today it is a museum.

18) The Perot Post Office in Hamilton, where the first stamp was issued in 1848 by the Hamilton postmaster William Perot. Today it is used by the Bermuda Collectors Society (mainly philately) and for the vaccination of the local population and visitors.

19) Oxford House where I stayed. It is a guest house with 12 rooms next

door to a young children's nursery, the playground of which I could see from my room.

20) The charming staff at Oxford House: Rachel, Tata and Madeline, all Filipino ladies.

21) View facing north from Oxford House.

22) Madeline's 'selfie' with extras!

23) A Tazzari electric car (Italian) on charge. Yes, Bermuda has started to go electric, this car being well suited to its narrow roads.



22



23





Workshop with Charlotte

Christian Aid's Church Relations Officer in the UK
Charlotte Scott updates us on Bangladesh, Zimbabwe, & Central America

Wed 9th February @ 2pm
Meeting ID 828 1061 2970





Commitment for Life



A Commitment for Life ZOOM EVENT

COFFEE WITH WILLIAM

JOIN US ON ZOOM TO HEAR WILLIAM BELL SHARE ON THE IMPACT OF THE 2021 CHRISTIAN AID REPORT 'WHERE IS PALESTINE?'

THURS 17th March 2022
11am-12.15pm GMT

ZOOM Meeting ID: 826 2918 7235





Commitment for Life



Fairtrade Fortnight 2022

21 February to 6 March



For two weeks each year at the end of February and start of March, thousands of individuals, companies, churches and groups across the UK come together to share the stories of the people who grow our food and drinks, mine our gold and who grow

the cotton in our clothes, people who are often exploited and underpaid.

Fairtrade Fortnight 2022 will this year be a show of solidarity with communities overseas on the frontline of the climate crisis. November's COP26 summit didn't

deliver the change needed to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees, nor did it secure finance to directly support farmers and workers on the frontline, but the Fairtrade Foundation believes there is hope if we all act together.

Fairtrade Fortnight is an opportunity for individuals, communities, and businesses around country to stand with farmers in low-income countries such as Honduras and Uganda who are affected daily by climate change. Together, by keeping the pressure on government and businesses, we can all play a role in ensuring farmers can benefit from fairer prices, fairer trading practices and the resources needed for tackling the climate emergency, says the Fairtrade Foundation. The climate crisis is the biggest threat to the livelihoods of millions of small-scale farmers and agricultural workers in

low-income countries worldwide. Without a fairer income, they are unable to invest in the types of mitigation and adaptation techniques needed to protect the environment, and their businesses. This represents a vicious cycle of poverty in which steps towards environmental protection and decarbonisation are likely to be beyond reach for those who aren't even able to earn a living income because the price they receive for their produce is far too low. COP26 fell short of what farmers and workers need but together we can still make a difference.

Our own Fairtrade activities in Thatcham will be limited this year, but join us on Sunday 20th February, 10.30am, for Fairtrade Worship led by Esther.

URC Wessex Synod: Sharing-the-Vision

The URC's 50th Jubilee

Service of Thanksgiving and Celebration

If you asked for a seat or two to be reserved for the October 1 service, you should now have received an email from Eventbrite with your ticket/s. Please keep these safe as the codes will be needed to gain entry to the venue. You can bring a print out of the PDF or show them on your phone. You can also visit the Eventbrite website to amend the number of tickets required or cancel them if needed. More than 600 tickets have been reserved and so if you have yet to reserve any, please do so soon:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/50th-anniversary-service-of-thanksgiving-and-celebration-free-event-tickets-163843796205>

Celebrate Together

Copies of Celebrate Together, the brilliant new, joyously colourful anniversary booklet by Sam Richards and Ruth White, illustrated by Mark Beech and put together by Sara Foyle, are available to order from the URC Bookshop. The book is free so please order as many as you can use. Please share this in your Synods, with committees and other networks so that the anniversary year starts in a celebratory fashion.

Local church packs

All churches will receive a pack in the next month containing worship resources, a drama, a quiz, posters and other resources to help with anniversary plans. The resources will also be available to download.

URC at 50: Worship Resources –

All the details can be found here: <https://urc.org.uk/who-we-are/our-50th-anniversary/> (scroll past the videos).

Legacies of Slavery Consultation

We are seeking to widen the Legacies of Slavery (LoS) consultation process.

We would like to encourage all churches to engage as they are able, and to send feedback to help shape the input for General Assembly 2022.

The papers are available on the Synod website or by clicking on the links below.

- A Consultation Overview document - including the proposed wording for a URC Apology and Confession
- Consultation Questions for Churches - to help shape the feedback needed for General Assembly. This includes a link to the LoS video presentation which churches/individuals may find helpful to consider. Deadline for feedback 7th February.
- A list of FAQs - responding to feedback received to date.

Deployment Consultation

The October meeting of Synod included a presentation addressing the deployment of stipendiary ministers of word and sacraments across the Synod. Available at this link: <https://wessexsynodurc.org.uk/synod-deployment-consultation/> This is not a new discussion but we are now at the point where we wish to consult with congregations and all those concerned about how we address these issues. We would ask that you send your ideas and feedback to the Synod Clerk by the end of January 2022.

GEAR – Refreshing Your Ministry

GEAR are running another 'Refreshing Your Ministry' session on Zoom with worship, Biblical input and prayer. Our first one for 2022 is on Thursday 10 February from 2-3.30pm, and will be led by John Proctor, our former General Secretary. John's title is: "Holy Week in Luke's Gospel - Jesus in grief, Jesus as guide, Jesus as giver"

All active and retired ministers and CRCWS, local leaders and lay preachers are welcome to join us, and it's completely free. If you'd like to register, please contact Richard Bradley for the Zoom details (richardbradley@cantab.net)

What is God asking of YOU?

Ministry Enquirers' Event to help you think about God's call to ... Worship Leading, Lay Preaching, Ministry with children and young people, the Ministry of Word and Sacraments or Church Related Community Work. Saturday 12 February 2022, 10am – 3pm online. Register with ministries@urc.org.uk to receive zoom details.

Synod Big Day Out – 7th May 2022

URC Wessex Synod - Big Day Out. Date: 7th May 2022 Time: 11am till 5pm

Venue: Hollycombe Steam Fair and Museum near Liss (Wessex Synod will have sole use of the whole site) Theme: Jubilee: 50th anniversary of the URC

Wessex Workshops

In the Autumn of 2020 and Spring of 2021 we ran our area gatherings as workshops online as we were not able to meet physically, and agreed the spring meetings would stay online and have reviewed how best this could work.

We would like to offer an online workshop each month over the Spring, February to May, with possibly more in the future, and wondered if you have any subjects you could offer or any that you would like us to discuss.

Please send any suggestions/offers to Karen Bell clerk@urcwessex.org.uk

Stepwise in Wessex Synod

If you would like to join a Stepwise Faith Filled Life group, please download a participant form from the Synod website [wessexsynodurc.org.uk].

Mental Health First Aid training

Become a certified Mental Health First Aider. A two-week online course, which includes four live zoom sessions with the trainer. Wessex Synod will cover the cost. Register via the Synod Office, not direct.

Course starting on Monday 7 March 2022. Further details.

Booking is essential and places are limited so book early to avoid disappointment. Please email bookings@urcwessex.org.uk to receive the link to register on the course.



We invite you to join us at our

Vintage Adventure

A time of fun, friendship, informal
Christian worship, activities and refreshments.
For the young at heart in our community
Inclusive and dementia friendly
Led by the Churches in Thatcham



Thursday, 17 February 2022
2.30—4.00pm
Thatcham Methodist Church
(Chapel Street, RG18 4QL)

Book your place: contact Karen on 07444 851606 or email: pastoraldevelopmentworker@outlook.com

What the papers say...

“Shocking” threat to parishes as more than 400 churches close in less than a decade

By Gabriella Swerling, Religious Affairs Editor, & Ben Butcher, Data Journalist, Daily Telegraph 4th January 2022

More than 400 churches have been shut down in less than a decade, The Daily Telegraph can reveal, as senior clergy warn of the “shocking” threat to parishes as “the bedrock of the Church of England”.

Analysis of Church of England data by this newspaper found that 423 churches were closed between 2010 and 2019.

The figure demonstrates the accelerating downward trend regarding the number of churches in the country.

Further analysis reveals that almost 1,000 churches have been forced to close in a little more than 30 years - 940 churches between 1987 and 2019. This means that the total number of remaining churches stands at around 15,496.

It marks the first full analysis of church numbers because the Church's official data contained in its annual reports only cover individual years.

The research does not take into account the impact of the pandemic; both clergy and lay people fear the total figure could be much higher.

The Very Revd Andrew Nunn, Dean of Southwark Cathedral in London, who is one of the most senior Anglican priests, called the rate of increase in the number of church closures “shocking”.

“I share the concern of many people that the policies that lead to the closure of churches may also mean that we shall be seeing more and more changes to the parish system, which is, after all, the bedrock of the life of the Church of England for England”.

Across the Church's 42 dioceses, there are on average almost 6% fewer churches, with the total falling from 16,436 in 1987 to 15,496 in 2019.

The Church of England defines a “church” as “a building which is licensed as a place of worship within the parish system”. This can include former mission halls and less permanent buildings. Officials said that of the 423 church closures between 2010 and 2019, 209 were traditional church buildings.

Global car production down by 10 million

By Louis Ashworth, Daily Telegraph 27th December 2021

Nearly 10 million fewer cars were built this year due to supply chain issues and a semiconductor shortage, analysts say. Research by market intelligence group LMC Automotive estimated a 9.6m global shortfall in the number of light vehicles produced in 2021.

European carmakers are expected to have suffered the biggest hit, producing 3 million fewer vehicles as they struggled to get hold of supplies. Semiconductors have been one of the biggest pain points in supply chains, with delays, production disruption and hoarding spurred by the Covid pandemic leading to a severe shortage.

The crisis is still running, LMC said, with the situation for carmakers unlikely to improve until the second half of 2022 and the gulf between chip demand and supply taking until 2023 to close. Justin Cox, the group's head of global production, said the outlook had improved slightly in recent weeks as emergency measures, such as cutting the use of chips in vehicles, boosted production. Overall, production of light vehicles is expected to reach 84.9 million units this year - a 12% increase compared with 2020.

Trans row put me off British universities, says prof stock

By Camilla Turner, Daily Telegraph 20th November 2021

The professor at the centre of a row with trans activists has said she has no desire to return to British academia because every university has “people like those at Sussex”.

Prof Kathleen Stock, an expert in analytic philosophy, quit Sussex University last month after facing death threats and accusations of transphobia.

She has since announced that she will become a founding fellow at the University of Austin, a new “anti-cancel culture” university that welcomes academics who have been treated like “thought criminals”.

Prof Stock revealed that she had no plans to return to a British university, since they all have “people like those at Sussex, who've got a light in their eyes, who want social

justice according to a very narrow conception that does not involve employing me”.

She said she intends to write another book and also devote time to parenting, as her wife is expecting a baby girl in February.

Prof Stock, who denies all allegations of transphobia, published a book earlier this year questioning the idea that gender identity is more “socially significant” than biological sex. She has questioned the idea that men who identify as women should have automatic access to women-only facilities or be allowed to appear on women only shortlists or sports teams. Last month, a group calling itself “Anti-Terf Sussex” described Prof Stock online as “one of this wretched island's most prominent transphobes, espousing a bastardized variation of radical feminism”.

Terf, which stands for trans exclusionary radical feminist, is used as a derogatory term to describe those who believe that “identifying” as a woman is not the same as being born a woman. Speaking about her experience at Sussex, she told The Times: “It's been very, very challenging. I've been low but it's also given me a sense of purpose . . . I do feel I've made a difference to a lot of women. I feel proud of that”.

She also said that she made up her mind to quit Sussex after the University and College Union published a statement backing the pro-transgender students.

Trans critics will be protected by new freedom of speech legislation on contentious subjects

By Charles Hymas, Home Affairs Editor, Daily Telegraph, 7th Dec 2021

People who question mass migration or criticize the transgender lobby will be protected from hate crime prosecutions under proposed freedom of speech laws.

In a report on hate crime published today, the Law Commission said people with outspoken views on transgender, cultural, political and immigration issues should be protected from the threat of prosecution for stirring up hatred. The commission warned that without protections written into law, overzealous officials could mount hate crime investigations into people that would have a “chilling effect” on legitimate debate and people's right to freedom of expression.

Its overhaul of hate crimes law,

the biggest for decades, said private conversations should also be protected from complaints of stirring up hatred, to ensure people were not prosecuted for dinner table talk.

It said: “The understandable importance that law enforcement authorities place on being seen to tackle hate crime may mean they do not give sufficient consideration to the implications of their actions on freedom of expression when considering how to respond to allegations of ‘hate speech’. The correct way to address this is by clearly defining the limits of the stirring up offences. It is possible that in making clear that the law does not criminalize - for instance - discussion of controversial topics, our recommendations will enable law enforcement officials to deal robustly in dismissing complaints that do not amount to a criminal offence”.

As revealed in The Daily Telegraph on Saturday, the commission rejected classifying misogyny as a hate crime alongside race and religion but said that people who stirred up hostility on the basis of sex or gender should be prosecuted for hate crimes.

However, the commission said this new offence should be allied to a change in the law to protect “gender critical” views. These beliefs that sex is binary and immutable was a long-standing feminist strand of thinking that deserved to be heard in a democratic society even if it upset people, it said.

It said such views should be protected from mistaken potential hate crime prosecutions, citing Harry Miller, a former police officer, investigated by Humberside Police for allegedly transphobic tweets questioning if transgender women were real women.

For immigration, it cited Amber Rudd, the former home secretary, reported to police for suggesting employers reveal their proportions of foreign workers and Darren Grimes, who was investigated over his YouTube interview in which the historian David Starkey suggested slavery was not genocide.

Pope: EU language curbs are like a dictatorship

By Nick squires in Rome, Daily Telegraph 7th December 2021

Pope Francis has compared the European Union to a dictatorship in its attempt to impose “woke” rules on language. The Pope, 84, said the bloc

risked falling apart if it became a vehicle for “ideological colonization” as he rounded off a four-day trip to Greece.

Brussels last week withdrew a 32-page guide on inclusive language that advised staff to say “human-induced” instead of “man-made” and to avoid reference to Christmas during the holiday season. Facing an outcry, Helena Dalli, the European commissioner for equality, said the guidebook “clearly needed more work”.

Trying to ban such Christian terms amounted to “a fad, watered-down secularism”, Francis said. “It is something that throughout history has not worked. In history, many dictatorships have tried to do these things. I’m thinking of Napoleon, the Nazi dictatorship, the Communist one”.

The Pope said that while he believed the EU was “necessary”, it should not try to erase the different identities of countries within the bloc. “The European Union ... must be careful not to take the path of ideological colonization. This could end up dividing countries and causing the EU to fail”, he said.

Francis, who was speaking on board the papal plane taking him back to Rome, said mandarins in Brussels “must respect ... the variety of countries and not want to make them uniform. I don’t think it will do that ... but be careful, because sometimes they come and throw projects like this one out there”.

The Pope has earned a reputation for speaking his mind during these

onboard press conferences with journalists who accompany him on his apostolic visits.

And from Church records Congregational girls’ club open evening, 1955 December 5th

Parents and friends were invited to a Congregational Church Girls’ Club open evening on Monday, when a programme of carols and poems was introduced by Mrs R Booth. The winning girls’ team, led by Joan Rose, was presented with a shield by Mrs R Cass. The Marjorie Brown prize for most marks went to Bettv Flitter. Miss Brown, who presented the book, recalled how she had started the club 24 years ago. She expressed her pleasure that it was still progressing so favourably.

Christmas Play

The evening closed with a Nativity play The Road to Bethlehem, in which the shepherds, kings and children of man\lands were shown on the road and at the manger. The children spoke their parts clearly and acted with simple reverence. Young people of the choir and the Youth Guild provided a background of Christmas music. Taking part were Betty Flitter, Hilary and Priscilla Langdon, Mary Pollard. Helen and Rosamund Booth, Pat Harmer, Susan Panting, Sheila Molloy, Joan Rose, Gillian Workman. Claudia Brewer. Helen Raymond, Susan Townsend, Norma Jennings, Margaret Lewis, Wendy Davis and Raylin Canning.

Covid stats

How do you think England compares with other countries?

The following countries are listed in order of the highest percentages of deaths of those infected. The order of those with the highest % infected is given in TABLE 2 below. Columns (2) and (3) do not add to 100% because some of those infected had not yet recovered and different dates may have been involved.

COUNTRY	INFECTED Per 100,000 POPULATION	DEATHS % of INFECTED	RECOVERED % of INFECTED
PERU	7,093	8.5%	72.0%
S AFRICA	5,837	2.6%	93.3%
POLAND	11,202	2.4%	88.3%
ITALY	12,523	1.8%	71.6%
VIETNAM	1,940	1.8%	83.1%
GERMANY	8,992	1.5%	89.7%
USA	18,763	1.4%	67.8%
BERMUDA	12,725	1.4%	78.2%
INDIA	2,561	1.3%	96.4%
BELGIUM	19,599	1.2%	83.2%
PORTUGAL	16,353	1.2%	82.0%
SPAIN	15,940	1.2%	69.5%
SWEDEN	13,895	1.1%	86.1%
MALAYSIA	8,452	1.1%	97.4%
FRANCE	18,636	1.0%	70.4%
UNITED KINGDOM	21,361	1.0%	74.3%
AUSTRIA	14,989	1.0%	92.8%
SWITZERLAND	17,598	0.8%	72.1%
ISRAEL	16,702	0.5%	88.6%
IRISH REPUBLIC	19,954	0.6%	61.2%
NEDERLAND	19,608	0.6%	84.3%
DENMARK	16,423	0.4%	74.7%
NORWAY	8,220	0.3%	?
NEW ZEALAND	295	0.3%	92.5%
AUSTRALIA	4,396	0.2%	?
VATICAN	3,358 (27)	0.0%	100% (27)

TABLE 2
TABLE OF INFECTIONS PER 100,000 POPULATION.

UTD KINGDOM	21,361
IRISH REPUBLIC	19,954
NEDERLAND	19,608
BELGIUM	19,599
USA	18,763
FRANCE	18,636
SWITZERLAND	17,598
ISRAEL	16,702
DENMARK	16,423
PORTUGAL	16,353
SPAIN	15,940
AUSTRIA	14,989

I sometimes get a very funny look when I say that I have a bit of a problem with the word mission. Don’t get me wrong – most of the things we do that we call ‘mission’ are great. But we have rather come to use the term to cover absolutely everything. We often ask: “what is the ‘mission’ of your local church?” We often say: “We should be more concerned about ‘mission!’” We often resolve: “Let’s call it a ‘mission committee’ to help us focus...” and so on.

And yet, what are we doing when we take the Latin translation of a Greek word that, in the New Testament, only gets used for the sending of the Son and the Holy Spirit out into the world? Why do we use it to construct an entire edifice of Church life? Following Jesus and the Spirit out into the world is, of course, a wonderful thing to do, but when a word begins to mean almost

anything, it can mean nothing.

I have found myself in recent years talking, perhaps more clumsily, about the “Worship, Witness, Service and Evangelism”

that make up the call of the Church. There is nothing new or radical in doing that – these are words, and ideas, that folk have used for millennia. I do find that they point us more directly and concretely to those elements of the life of the Church that are vital.

Everything we are and do is rooted in our worship, which, as Andy Braunston helps us see in his reflections on worship over the next week, shapes and forms us into the people God would have us be.

Evangelism is also utterly central to our call as a Church – if we are not

proclaiming the good news and baptizing new Christians we are failing to offer a fullness of life and human flourishing to all we encounter. We would do well to

reflect far more carefully on this as a tradition, which Nick Stanyon helps us do in his series of reflections.

We are nothing if we are not giving witness to the Good News in the midst of the world – seeking to ensure the values of the Kingdom shape life in the world today as much as possible. Roo Stewart spends a week enabling us to ponder helpfully, with reference to some of the work of the Joint Public Issues Team what shape our call to witness might take.

Service is where the Gospel takes concrete form in the way in which we

serve all those made in the image of God (ie everyone!) as we encounter them and their needs in the life of God’s world. Marie Trubic concludes this series and helps us reflect from the perspective of a Church Related Community Worker on how we might embody this.

It becomes so easy to subsume everything under that word ‘mission’, and actually hide away from our central call – or hide away from aspects of it that we are less comfortable with than others. Without any of these dimensions of the life of the Church we are not fully who we are called to be, and I pray that this series will focus our minds on these primary elements of the call to be the Church and individual disciples.

John

The Rev’d Dr John Bradbury,
General Secretary

Transending Mission

Facebook favourites

Please submit your Facebook favourites to thatcham.urb@ntlworld.com
Be sure to download them and then send as attachments – copying and pasting into an email will not work!

