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## Dear Friends,



We have just **celebrated Easter** and its true meaning for us. Nothing could stop our celebration this year. The resurrection of Jesus **changed everything** for the world and caused the cruel cross to become a triumphant symbol of hope and new life (see the thatching of the cross pictures).

The Easter story is the **crowning proof** of Christianity and the **pivotal** story of our faith. We are still in the Easter season but following Ascension Day on 18<sup>th</sup> May, we shall be celebrating **Pentecost** on 28<sup>th</sup> May.

We will remember that the gift of the Holy Spirit was given on that day. After the disciples were commissioned, they were empowered by the Holy Spirit to serve and preach the Gospel. At that first Pentecost, the Holy Spirit was poured out onto those first disciples. As a **consequence**, through the miraculous Acts of the Apostles that took place, the **Church** was born and what was soon to be called Christianity spread far and wide. And so, **everything** changed.

Pentecost for us today is the celebration of the Holy Spirit coming into our lives too. It celebrates the **transforming** power of the Holy Spirit and his **continuing** presence in our midst giving us a **deeper** sense of God. This is the gift of God available to all of us – to encounter the Spirit of truth, who is also the Spirit of Christ, and to know his presence within us.

At the time of writing this letter, the **coronation of King Charles III** is still to take place and this newsletter will be coming out around that time. So there is not much to say in this edition until next month after we have watched it in all its splendour. However, there is one part of the ceremony that I am looking forward to particularly seeing which relates to

Pentecost. It is the custom of the new monarch being **anointed** with oil for the empowering by the Holy Spirit for **service**.

Our late Queen had often spoken of the guidance and strength of the Holy Spirit during her reign to **equip her** for her role, and to **prepare her** spiritually and emotionally.



A central part of her coronation service in 1953 was a sacred ceremony carried out under a canopy and thus screened from view. It was the **anointing** with oil. The sacred act symbolically sets people apart for service and pours out the **life and power** of God. Her life was to become empowered by the Holy Spirit for an **extraordinary**

role. At the beginning of her reign the Queen asked people around the commonwealth to **pray** for her, that, 'she may **faithfully serve** God and her people'. She pledged that to her dying day she would be God's anointed servant. God **answered** those prayers.

At our King's coronation he will be reminded that he is not alone in this **monumental** task. The archbishop will quote from the book of the Acts of the Apostles, where Jesus says, 'you will **receive power** when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will be my witnesses everywhere and to the ends of the Earth'. Those words, spoken by Jesus to his first century followers, **echo** through the ages, to promise God's power and presence to his followers **today**. And this shall be so for our new King. Soon we shall celebrate both **Pentecost**, enabled for us by Jesus our Servant King, and the start of our new **King's life of faith and service**. **God save the King**

With love in Jesus Christ; our Servant King  
**John**

## Sunday Worship

**MAY** 10.30am unless specified

- 7 Revd John Lee, Communion
- 14 Alan Mossman & Jackie Wood, Christian Aid Week
- 21 Karen Fakes and church band
- 28 Revd John Lee, Pentecost



## Knit and Natter

Mondays 11am–2pm on these days:  
 May 8<sup>th</sup> & 22<sup>nd</sup>

## Weekday Worship

Tuesdays at 12.15pm on these days:  
 May 9<sup>th</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup>

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Printed by The Alpha Xperience  
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**Deadline for next issue:  
 Sunday 14 May**

REMEMBER IN  
YOUR PRAYERS



We pray for all those members and church friends who we know are in need of your love and healing.

Brenda; Menna; Erica; Tony and Anita; King Charles and The Royal Family; Donald Burten; Karen Fakes and Family; Nigel Coming; Antony; Sylvia; Family of Lin Adams; Sam and Erica; Jasper; Family of Joyce; Jenning Giles; Don Stockwell and his family. Please let them know that you are present in their lives.



Flowers from the church have been passed on with our love to:

April: Hilary, Julia, Diane, Jackie.

Almighty God, On the occasion of the crowning of King Charles III, we, the people, pray for him. We thank you for him and for the calling on his life and we recognise the weight of responsibility that puts upon him. We know that he will need your help, Lord. We know that he will face many challenges, as did his mother, Queen Elizabeth. We pray that in all the days he serves as King, he will be aware that first and foremost he serves you, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. May his reign be one of wisdom, vision and integrity, inspired by your Kingdom values. May your name be honoured and glorified throughout this land, Lord, as we pray, **God save the King!**



**Give, act and pray this  
Christian Aid Week.**

We won't stop until everyone has the chance to live a full life, free from poverty. We are united in hope that, with your help, more young people will be able to transform their lives.

Soaring costs are affecting people here and around the world.

**Families in Malawi are paying  
the price of this global crisis.**

Food, fuel, fertiliser and school fees have doubled in price in the last 12 months. And hard-working farmers are seeing their harvests fail as the climate crisis brings increasingly erratic weather.

**Malawi Cyclone Update**

The impact of the recent Cyclone Freddy in Malawi has been devastating. Floods have washed away crops, over 500,000 people have been displaced and hundreds have lost their lives.

Christian Aid Week is at its most powerful when a disaster happens. Through you, we will be there long after the flood waters recede, helping families build back. Your gifts this May will continue to support the pigeon pea project and other vital work around the world.

**Christian Aid Week:  
14-20 May 2023**

**EMBRACE the Middle East**

**7 May** The Cairo suburb of Ezbet El Nakhl includes extremely poor informal settlements. Violence against women is prevalent and our partners at the Salaam Centre provide medical, psychological and legal services for women experiencing domestic abuse. They run workshops to educate men about women's rights and help women confront issues of community safety.

**14 May** This week (15 May) Palestinians will mark Nakba Day, commemorating the displacement of their forebears in 1948. In the West Bank today, a new generation of Palestinians is growing up amid political violence. East Jerusalem YMCA provides mental health first aid and ongoing counselling for traumatised children.

**21 May** Tahaddi is an organisation providing healthcare and education within the deprived area of Hay El Gharbeh in Beirut. One of their projects is the Embrace Eye Health Fund, which aims to prevent sight loss by offering ophthalmic treatment to those who would not otherwise be able to afford it.

**28 May** Around 140 children with special educational needs benefit from the Swedish International Relief Association's schools in Bethlehem and Jericho. Children with learning difficulties such as dyslexia are often underestimated, but SIRA aims to show that, with the right support and opportunities, everyone can succeed.

**ST MUNGO'S EVEN LESSER**

On the 20th day of April  
In the Year of Our Lord  
2023

To Uncle Eustace  
Rector  
St James the Least of All



Dear Uncle Eustace,

In Christian humility I must take exception to your comments concerning "your own little dilemmas" (re: our ecumenical service), assuming that they were somehow less acute than your own (concerning your joint choir festival arrangements.)

May I point out that our "little dilemmas" were neither LITTLE, nor mere DILEMMAS. Dear Uncle, these tricky problems waxed extremely LARGE amongst the clergy and congregation at St Mungo's even Lesser!

Indeed, even today there are those who will not speak to their neighbours, despite our Rector quoting scripture until his socks fell off! No, our hurts are not to be sneered at.

Darren

PS Did it take as many hours for your congregation/visitors to warm up again at the pub, after the service, as it took hours to chill, singing in icy St James the Least of e really cannot say.

**ST. JAMES THE LEAST OF ALL  
from The Rectory**



My dear Nephew Darren

I am afraid we shall have to agree to disagree on yet another topic – although I suspect the list of items that we agree to agree on would be considerably shorter. I like to think my appreciation of hymns resembles a connoisseur of fine wines savouring a grand cru claret, yours seems to

resemble a Russian female tractor driver who is a Hero of the Nation.

We at St James the Least are more than happy with *Hymns Ancient & Modern* – the original 1861 edition, naturally - the later editions display a dangerous tendency towards modernism. Sadly, St. Paul was not able to sing 'Onward, Christian soldiers', but I am sure he regretted the fact that it had yet to be written. The hymns our grandparents pretended to sing when they were in church are quite good enough for the ones we pretend to sing when we sit in the same pews.

At least when we come to the last verse, we know that we can then sit down, mission accomplished. The last time I attended your church, just as I saw the last words and therefore the finishing line of one of your choruses

coming into sight, we were told it would be splendid to sing the thing another three times. At least it gave me another analogy to use when I next preached on eternity in hell.

And your method of singing would plunge our congregation into an existential crisis. What do they do with their hands when they don't have books to hold and are obliged to look at a screen? To be deprived of being able to hold a book in church is like a smoker who is trying to give up being unable to grasp a cigarette when in the pub.

The ladies do not know whether to clasp their handbags, which then makes it look as if they suspect the rest of the congregation of theft, or to hold some flowers, which looks a little too matrimonial. The men experiment

with putting hands in pockets, which they then realise looks scruffy, so they try to hold on to the pew in front, which is inevitably too low, so they have to adopt some form of half crouch, which makes them look as if they have recently had hernia operations.

Your choral tradition – if I can flatter it with such a description – also seems to require half an hour before the Service spent singing for our congregation, that time is more usefully spent discussing Government incompetence, livestock prices and why Miss Threlfall always wears a red felt hat with her tangerine coat.

Should we ever have a joint Service, I can't imagine how we'll all get through the first hymn together.

Your loving uncle,

Eustace

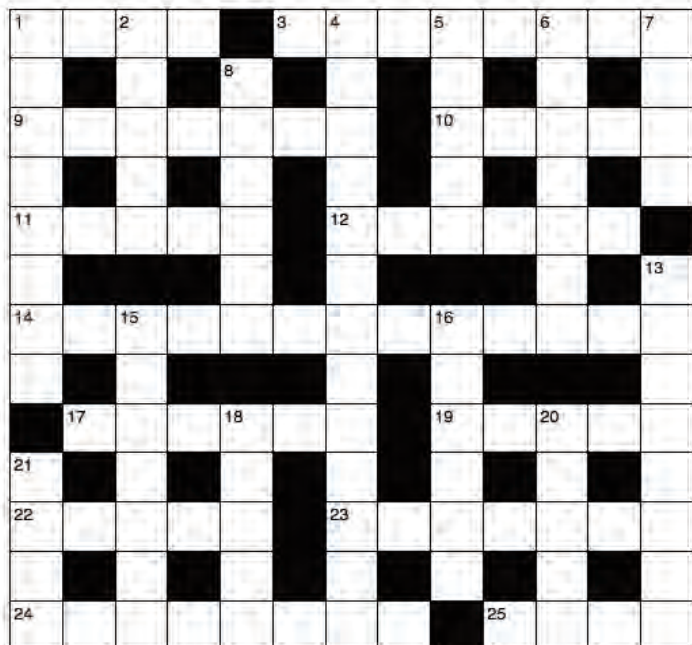
# CROSSWORD

## Across

- 1 'Therefore let us — passing judgment on one another' (Romans 14:13) (4)
- 3 'I — these persons here present' (Marriage service) (4,4)
- 9 According to a prearranged timetable (Numbers 28:3) (7)
- 10 Group of eight (5)
- 11 The cell into which the Philippian jailer put Paul and Silas (Acts 16:24) (5)
- 12 — Taylor, pioneer missionary to China (6)
- 14 Otherwise known as the Eucharist, Breaking of Bread, the Lord's Table (4,9)
- 17 'So that after I have preached to others, I — will not be disqualified for the prize' (1 Corinthians 9:27) (6)
- 19 Attend to (3,2)
- 22 Approximately (Acts 4:4) (5)
- 23 Tea rite (anag.) (7)
- 24 Rule of sovereign (8)
- 25 Test (anag.) (4)

## Down

- 1 The name of the street where Judas lived in Damascus and where Saul of Tarsus stayed (Acts 9:11) (8)
- 2 'The playing of the merry —, sweet singing in the choir' (5)
- 4 'We have been saying that — was credited to him as righteous' (Romans 4:9) (8,5)
- 5 Dr Martyn — Jones, famous for his ministry at Westminster Chapel (5)
- 6 Port at which Paul landed on his way to Rome (Acts 28:13) (7)
- 7 Observe (Ruth 3:4) (4)
- 8 Minister of religion (6)
- 13 'I am — of this man's blood. It is your responsibility' (Matthew 27:24) (8)
- 15 'Greater love has no one than this, that he — his life for his friends' (John 15:13) (3,4)
- 16 Archbishop who calculated that the world began in 4004BC (6)
- 18 No one can — the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit' (John 3:5) (5)
- 20 Establish by law (5)
- 21 Product of Gilead noted for its healing properties (Jeremiah 46:11) (4)



## Church Family news

Gill has recently been in touch with 2 daughters of church members

### Jacquita – daughter of Rosemary King

Mum has had a series of falls the more she has the harder it becomes as she is becoming weaker

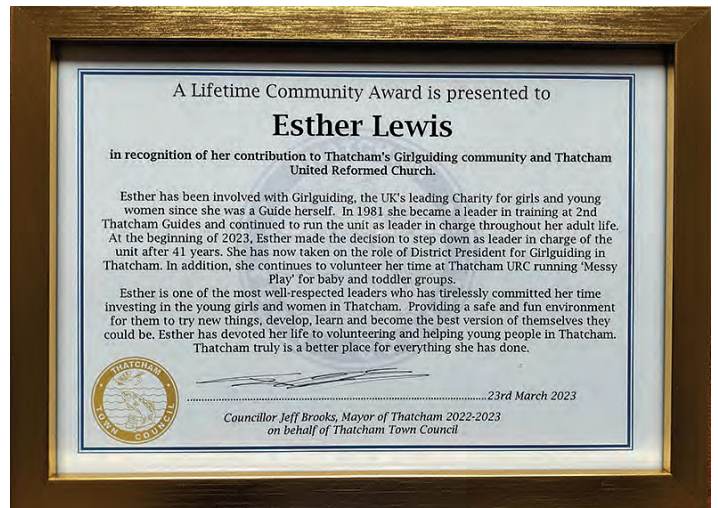
But she enjoys life at the home taking part in all the activities

The staff at the home are so kind they even had me in so we could all exercise together encouraging mum to stay as mobile as possible

Please thank everyone for their prayers – I appreciate it Xxx

### Maureen – daughter of Margaret Gill

Hi Gill - we are both well, Mum has settled now and even put weight on ... I will chat to her Wed when I visit – it is slightly more difficult now as Mum no longer walks and is in a wheelchair, so will need to arrange wheelchair taxi – not insurmountable:) I will let you know. Thank you for thinking of her. How are you? Any more motorbike tours ?



# All in the month of May

250 years ago, on 10th May 1773 that Britain passed the Tea Act, which favoured the British East India Company over the American colonies, which led to the Boston Tea Party in December, which escalated into the American Revolution and the establishment of the USA.

150 years ago, on 1st May 1873 that David Livingstone, Scottish missionary and explorer, died. Best known for his search for the sources of the Nile, and for going missing (and being found) in Africa.

100 years ago, on 26th-27th May 1923 that the first Le Mans 24 hours endurance motor race was held.

90 years ago, on 2nd May 1933 that the first modern sighting of Scotland's Loch Ness monster was reported in the Inverness Chronicle.

80 years ago, on 16th-17th May 1943 that the RAF launched Operation Chastise, which became famous as the 'Dambusters' Raid'. Bouncing bombs were used to bypass anti-torpedo nets and breach dams, which caused catastrophic flooding in Germany's Ruhr Valley.

75 years ago, on 14th-15th May 1948 that Israel was declared an independent state as the British mandate in Palestine came to an end. Next day the Arab-Israeli War began with the invasion of Israel by Egypt, Transjordan, Lebanon, Syria and Iraq.

70 years ago, on 29th May 1953 that New Zealand mountaineer Edmund Hilary and Sherpa Tenzing Norgay became the first people to reach the summit of Mount Everest.

60 years ago, on 27th May 1963 that the folk/blues album 'The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan' was released. It included the hit song 'Blowin' in the Wind'.

50 years ago, on 17th May 1973 that the Watergate hearings began in the US Senate and were televised nationally.

40 years ago, on 20th May 1983 that the journal Science reported the discovery of the HIV virus that causes AIDS.

25 years ago, on 23rd May 1998 that in a referendum, the people of Northern Ireland voted to accept the Good Friday Agreement. 75% were in favour of a Northern Ireland Assembly.

15 years ago, on 12th May 2008 that the Sichuan earthquake took place in China. More than 69,000 people were killed, over 370,000 injured, and nearly five million made homeless.

10 years ago, on 27th May 2013 that Bill Pertwee, British comedy actor best known for his role as the Chief ARP air raid warden William Hodges in Dad's Army, died.



**Commitment for Life**

The United Reformed Church | Christian Aid

Supporting Bangladesh

*The fuels that we dug from your earth drove revolution and let us build industries and create new things. Let us give thanks for the benefits they brought, but accept that it is time to let them go. And having given thanks, let us build a future where you guide us through wind, tide and sun to energy that does not exhaust your earth. We pray for a renewed and renewable world, where politicians are willing to embrace new ways and we are prepared to let go of practices that do not serve your Kingdom. Amen*

## Crossword Answers

ACROSS: 1, Stop. 3, Call upon. 9, Regular. 10, Octet. 11, Inner. 12, Hudson. 14, Holy Communion. 17, Myself. 19, See to. 22, About. 23, Iterate. 24, Monarchy. 25, Stet. DOWN: 1, Straight. 2, Organ. 4, Abraham's faith. 5, Lloyd. 6, Puteoli. 7, Note. 8, Cleric. 13, Innocent. 15, Lay down. 16, Ussher. 18, Enter. 20, Enact. 21, Balm.



Changing the name from 'St Mark's Parish Church' resulted in a big increase in the number of men attending services

If I had known how wonderful it would be to have grandchildren, I'd have had them first. -L Wyse

Unfettered inquisitiveness, it is clear, teaches better than do intimidating assignments. - Augustine

When you talk, you only repeat what you already know, but if you listen you may learn something. - Amish school proverb

## Wordsearch

King Charles was born at 9.14pm on 14th November 1948 at Buckingham Palace. He has been heir-apparent to the throne since he was three years old.

He is the first monarch in British history to have earned a university degree. He can speak Welsh. He is a qualified pilot and diver. He is a keen watercolour painter, a published author and played the cello at Cambridge. As Prince of Wales, he founded about 20 charities which raise about £140million each year for good causes. Aged 73, King Charles III is the oldest monarch ever to be crowned in British history. He became King on 8th September 2022, after the death of his mother, the Queen, in Balmoral. As King, he is also now head of the Commonwealth.

R T T C R I H U R H H T E T  
O O U E R B E O L T A C T  
L L H B A L M O R A L H A L  
O I A T R S L H S W A S L W  
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buckingham cello  
palace charles  
throne balmoral  
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pilot oldest  
diver  
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cambridge  
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commonwealth  
november  
heir  
university

## Easy sodoku

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	9		8	6	1

Don't worry about what people are thinking of you. They aren't thinking about you, they are thinking about themselves. -



We invite you to join us at

## Vintage Adventure

A time of fun, making friends, singing, informal Christian worship, activities, drinks and homemade cakes

For the young at heart in our community

Inclusive and dementia friendly

Led by the Churches in Thatcham



Theme: Back in time to our Sunday School songs!

Thursday, 18 May 2023

2.30pm – 4.00pm

Thatcham Methodist Church (RG18 4QL)

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



SUNDAY 7 MAY 2023

TIME: 2.30 TO 4.30PM

TICKET: £7.50

BRITISH SCHOOL HALL  
CHURCH LANE, THATCHAM RG19 3JL

t	h	o	m	e	i	s	l	d	n	g
i	r	u	y	r	d	w	l	a	n	w
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f	o	t	b	l	i	n	d	o	a	o
d	h	a	i	r	y	h	t	r	h	y
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clothes  
Laban  
hunt  
Esau  
twins  
away  
Grasper  
skin

boys  
run  
home  
Rebekah  
important  
Hairry  
arms  
old

tricked  
Jacob  
food  
blind  
son  
Isaac  
blessing  
goat

## Chair Based Exercises

at Thatcham Methodist Church

Every Week Commencing  
Wednesday 26th April 2023 -  
Wednesday 24th May 2023

Tea/Coffee 11.15 Class 11.45-12.45  
Cost £5.00 per session

All are Welcome

## INTERMEDIATE

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

# Holy Week: Palm Sunday, Sam brings the garden alive, Maundy Thursday,



# Sunrise Worship, Easter Breakfast, Easter Celebration, thatching the cross



# Katherine Gun

## *Katherine Gun, the young woman who tried to prevent a war by breaking the law*

The 20th anniversary of the start of the war against Iraq has recently passed (20th March 2003). What have we learnt from that illegal war? Well, there is one name that everybody should know, that of Katherine Gun. The story of her attempt to prevent the war was told in the film *Official Secrets*, directed by Gavin Hood and broadcast on the BBC in March this year. It revealed just how corrupt and deceiving our political leaders can be when it suits their aims.

On 31st January 2003, a 28-year-old female linguist, Katherine Gun, whose work entailed listening to foreign intercepts at GCHQ, happened upon an email from Frank Koza, head of the Regional Targets Section of the National Security Agency (the US equivalent of GCHQ). That email effectively required GCHQ to spy on the United Nations, with particular attention to several non-permanent nations of the Security Council, namely Angola, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Chile, Guinea, and Pakistan. This was so that they could be 'persuaded' to swing the vote in favour of a war against Iraq.

It is well-known that Tony Blair's government was in agreement with the US administration under George W Bush and David Cheney. When it became clear that the required nine votes at the UN would not be achieved (only four were known to be in favour of a war), the US and the UK decided to invade on the claimed link between Saddam Hussein and Al Qaeda, as well as the presence of WMDs, both claims believed by some to have been false at the time and now known to have been false.

Katherine Gun was so incensed at these 'dirty tricks' that she decided to expose the contents of the NSA email to the Press. Eventually, via a friend of Katherine and a contact of the said friend, it reached Martin Bright, journalist on the Observer. It was published in that newspaper on Sunday 2nd March. Following interrogation of staff at GCHQ, Katherine confessed to having leaked the email. She was immediately suspended.

Previously in mid-February that year, Katherine had taken part in the "million" strong anti-war march in

London. As she said later, she tried to prevent a war but failed. Eventually, on 13th November 2003, she was charged under the Official Secrets Act 1989. A suggestion that she plead guilty with the prospect of getting a lenient sentence was refused by her, because she did not want a criminal record for ever on her life for what she considered to be the wrongs of governments.

Many people urged the government to drop the case. Among them were Reverend Jesse Jackson and Daniel Ellsberg (the US government official who leaked the Pentagon Papers in relation to the Vietnam War and was charged in 1973 under a US Espionage Act). The case against Ellsberg was dropped because of US government misconduct and illegal evidence gathering.

The case against Katherine Gun went to court on 25th February 2004. No sooner had the trial started that the prosecution withdrew the charge, because the defence had demanded publication of documents that provided grounds for the charge. Such disclosure would have revealed spying by the UK on certain diplomats on the UN Security Council in order to blackmail them into supporting a war against Iraq.

An attempt was made in 2017 to prosecute Tony Blair, Jack Straw (Foreign Secretary) and Peter Goldsmith (Attorney-General) for a "crime of aggression". Two judges said that there was no crime of aggression in English law under which the former prime minister could be charged. The judges recognised that a crime of aggression had recently been incorporated into international law but said it did not apply retroactively.

The Chilcot Report concluded that "that peaceful alternatives to war had not been exhausted, that the United Kingdom and the United States had undermined the authority of the United Nations Security Council" and that Tony Blair had not been "straight with the nation".

The sad facts are that the fall-out from the war against Iraq, preceded by the war against the Taliban in Afghanistan and followed by the war

against Syria, remain with us today – millions made homeless, mass migration, shortage of supplies, massive debt and widespread mistrust of the USA and UK.

Katherine Gun exposed the governmental 'dirty tricks' in 2003.

Hopefully, there will be another 'Katherine Gun' who will disclose similar dirty tricks in the future before another illegal war is declared and hopefully 'she' will be successful next time.

**Roy Tubb**

## URC celebrates its jubilee



**Faith – Hope – Love – Since 1972**

Members, ministers and friends of the United Reformed Church gathered in London on 15 April to mark the denomination's 50th anniversary.

Around 1,200 people attended the rail strike-postponed celebrations at Methodist Central Hall Westminster, the same place that English Congregationalists and Presbyterians gathered on 5 October 1972 to vote the URC into being.

Decorations created by members of the URC hung around the hall, a sounding trumpet heralded the beginning of the service, as in 1972, celebration of communion, and artwork from across the denomination was displayed in colourful presentation.

Led by the Revd John Bradbury, General Secretary of the URC, and the Moderator and Moderator-Elect of the URC General Assembly, the Revds Fiona Bennett and Revd Dr Tessa Henry-Robinson, the service reflected the denomination's past, present and future, as well as its place in the world Church.

The Revd Richard Church, former Deputy General Secretary (Discipleship) who four years ago helped to start conversations about how to celebrate the URC's 50th anniversary said: "It's great to be here and it's great to see that it's actually happened and I'm massively admiring of the people who have gone through two false starts to get us to this point, but then the URC is a church that's used to false starts.

"We thought we were being set up for the unity of the wider Christian body in the country and it hasn't quite worked out that way. So, this is a good 50th birthday party."

Former General Secretary the Revd Dr David Cornick, URC and Council for World Mission (CWM) scholar Victoria Turner, and the Revd Professor Jooseop Keum, CWM's General Secretary, each delivered a sermon, and a specially formed Jubilee Choir sang 'Always trust the star that guides us on the way', Neil Thorogood's winning poem in the 50th Anniversary Worship Resources Competition, in a setting by Scott Stroman.

Other music in the service also included Colin Thompson's competition-winning hymn, 'God of the Pilgrim Way'.

The range of those leading worship reflected all generations within the URC, both lay and ordained, including Church Related Community Workers and leaders of the URC Youth Assembly.

Lundie Memorial Award winner Poppy Thorpe and trainee minister Joe Amoah read from scripture, while Karen Campbell, URC Secretary for Global and Intercultural Ministries, performed her own poetic cry of welcome – 'A table for all'.

The Revd Margaret Ali, Minister of Islington and Rectory Road URCs, said: "It's a pleasure to be here. I think I am adding colour to the URC because it's a diverse church and I represent diversity. That's what I am here for and praising God, and I'm able to do ministry wonderfully."

Two hundred and forty people also toured Church House, the URC's London office and Lumen URC to experience the wide-ranging life of the URC, represented by different ministries, exhibitions, and creative and learning opportunities for all ages.

**Source: URC News Update**



# A historical look at Coffee Break

The following article was written by Janice Baldwin following on from a conversation with June Baker last year. I would just like to add that, since I took on responsibility for Coffee Break last March, it has continued to grow and we regularly welcome 15-20 people, including a few new faces who have become regulars. Each week we have a stall selling my hand-made greetings cards, plus notepads etc, paperback books and a jigsaw puzzle library. All proceeds from the stall go to the building fund while coffee break takings go to the general church fund. I would like to add my own thanks to John for all his help in setting up each week as well as being available to chat to visitors. Also to Cath who has become my 'right-hand woman' in the kitchen, freeing me up to keep on top of the premises cleaning. Sam, Dorothy and Diane also help out, particularly if I am away.

I know that Roy has been submitting various items of historical interest to the newsletter, but if anyone else has particular memories which others might find of interest, please let us know.

**Gill Mossman**

The history of Coffee Break is to be found in Roy Tubb's book, *Thatcham URC200 the history of our church from 1804-2004*, without which my memory would have been insufficient to have written this.

The Reverend Arthur Baker, with his wife June and their three children: Andrew, Rowena and Gwyneth, visited Thatcham Congregational Church on 27 January 1974 to 'preach with a view': Arthur was duly inducted to the ministry of Thatcham Congregational Church on 21 May 1974.

That was 48 years ago! and Thatcham was then just a village, with local general stores in the High Street and the Broadway - remember Mrs Abrey's grocery store in the Broadway, Green's greengrocer and flower shop in the High Street, almost opposite Mary Lay's parents' florist shop (if my memory serves me

correct)! No Kennet Centre as such, were there even public conveniences? Yes, I think there were, but they weren't very nice.

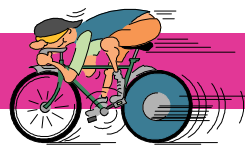
There wasn't a Waitrose - I don't think the John Lewis Group had even been formed. The Co-operative store was then on the Bath Road almost opposite the Catholic church hall and there were quite a few pubs: the King's Head, the White Hart, the Chequers, the Plough, etc. The male population were well catered for, but for women and their children, there was very little apart from such activities that the Christian churches offered - and that's where Coffee Break comes into play!

June Baker had been shopping and was feeling thirsty. She had a key to the British School kitchen (the old one, that now has been transformed into the entrance hall and vestibule) and called in to make herself a cup of coffee - and that modest cup of instant coffee formed the foundation of Coffee Break which, apart from the Covid period when everything closed down, flourishes to the present day. 1974 to 2023 is quite good going, and Gill Mossman has taken charge, now that she has retired.

We should say a warm 'Thank you' to Rosemary King for all her help over the years, as she is now in a residential care home in Woolten Hill. Many others have also been involved over the years, Phyllis Read in particular. Tess Smith and Sheila Cooper were also very involved in various ways over the years.

However, there is so much more history to the URC and the British School, which could form the basis of several separate articles: not just Coffee Break, but 'Knit & Natter', the famous 'One Way Club' for all young people, including physically and mentally disabled young adults and our then flourishing 'Boys' Brigade', Doreen Pickersgill's 'Girls' Brigade', Phyllis Read's 'Social Circle' and 'Women's Own'. Is it only the Brownies' who still meet in the British School?

**Janice Baldwin**



Please review mention of M. L. K. (Introduction, Prayers & 2nd film separation parts! - for N/L production! T'kyou. G

All of us were better informed by Esther's presentation, which was largely inspired by Tear Fund & Traidcraft.

Starting with the film *Climate Crisis on the Frontline*

Depicting crop failures, farming in the future will encounter extreme damage and loss of produce.

More resilience will be needed to entail better business.

Prayer for a fairer future on earth, fields for the poor.

Hymn: For the Fruits of his Creation

Readings: Luke 10:25-37

Introduction \_\_\_\_\_

1 John 4:9-11, 19- Loving One Another

Hymn: When I Needed a Neighbour

The climate crisis and the Samaritan:

Encounters on the journey to Jericho-

Experts of the Law, the Priest & the

Levite went past on the other side,

(not one of us), they had their

own plans for the day.

The Samaritan, although of a

different race, showed kindness in his

actions.

JUSTICE is what love looks like in

practice - transfixing, leading to

protocol practices.

Who is my neighbour? If I don't stop,

what will happen to me? (Martin

Luther King)

What about our climate crisis?

Hymn: Broken for Brokenness

The impact on countries like Ethiopia

and Kenya with an acute water crisis!

\*How can we as a church help those

who need our help?

We have the robbers in our society,

fossil fuel emissions, oil and gas,

temperature rises, and being driven

deeper into poverty.

A need to look at our life style, making

changes in our way of life.

How can we play our part?

. Our government prioritising putting

money into a Global Fund.

. Choosing an ethical bank.

. Travel to church, walking, cycling.

\*Having an Environmental (Climate)

Policy

\*Adopting the Synod lead by

becoming an Eco Church

We must choose not to ignore the

climate crisis.

Hymn: Broken for Brokenness

Prayer

Film: How Fair Trade is Tackling

the Climate Crisis.

Campaigning for South, and West

Africa sustainable prices.

Support the Global 19 agreement.

Action is in our hands to share like

the Good Neighbour.

\*Our global and local resources -

combine with our fellow churches.

G

Coming soon to a street near you!

## Street golf



*Wessex Synod – Big Day Out – Save the Date  
Our 2024 Big Day Out will be Saturday 4th May 2024  
at Hollycombe Steam in the Country.*

## What the papers say...

### REPENT OR LEAVE, UGANDA TELLS CofE AFTER VOTE FOR GAY BLESSINGS

By Ewan Somerville, *Daily Telegraph*, 11th February 2023

The Church of England has been told to "repent" or leave by the third largest Anglican country, as the row over same-sex blessings intensifies.

General Synod, the Church of England's legislative body, voted on Thursday for vicars to be allowed to give gay couples, including those in civil marriages and partnership, prayers of blessing for the first time.

Priests will be able to choose whether to use the blessings, known as Prayers of Love and Faith, accompanied by pastoral guidance.

The historic move was hailed by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, as "a new beginning", while the Church's house of bishops and LGBT Christians signalled a "moment of hope".

However, less than 24 hours later, the conservative Church of Uganda, home to an estimated eight million worshippers, has become the first to call publicly for the 156-year-old Anglican Communion to split with its mother church. The Archbishop of Uganda condemned "the suicidal path the Church of England has now taken", and asked directly: "Do you have the integrity to step out of the Anglican Communion because you have departed from the Anglican faith?"

The Most Rev Stephen Samuel Kaziimba claimed that "the only significant difference between a wedding and a service of 'blessing' is the terminology used", adding that, "in practice", the CofE is changing its doctrine of heterosexual marriage and "even offering to bless that sin".

The archbishop's statement said: "That is wrong. As [the] Church of Uganda we cannot accept that. God cannot bless what He calls sin... There is no way we are walking together."

"We pray for them to repent. And, if they refuse to repent, then we call on them to have the integrity to form their own Canterbury Communion... the Church of England has departed from the Anglican faith and are now false teachers."

The Daily Telegraph understands that the Church of Nigeria is in talks to issue a similar rebuke. It comes after this newspaper reported how the Global South Fellowship of Anglican Churches (GSFA), which claims to

represent 75% of Anglicans, warned the result had "triggered a widespread loss of confidence" in the Archbishop of Canterbury. On Monday, 12 of the 42 global Anglican provinces will meet to discuss "resetting the Anglican Communion", according to GSFA, including official advice for churches to split and survive without CofE funds.

### EU PLANS TRUMP-STYLE BORDER WALL TO CURB INFLUX OF MIGRANTS

By Joe Barnes, *Brussels Correspondent, Daily Telegraph*, 11th February 2023

The European Union has agreed to the de facto funding of Trump-style border walls in a stark hardening of the bloc's migration policy.

EU leaders engaged in a bitter discussion that dragged on to 3am yesterday at a European Council summit over the influx of migrants from the Middle East, Africa and Asia.

Eventually an agreement was reached "to immediately mobilise EU funds and means" to help countries bolster "border protection capabilities and infrastructure".

The decision was criticised by civil liberties groups while Dunja Mijatovic, the Council of Europe's human rights commissioner, said member states had to "urgently address the serious human rights violations against refugees".

Asylum applications in EU countries reached about 100,000 in November for the third consecutive month, while illegal arrivals hit their highest last year since 2016. Calling for EU funding to build physical borders, Viktor Orban, the Hungarian prime minister, said the only problem with his country's own wall was that it was not high enough. Xavier Bettel, Luxembourg's prime minister said the whole concept was "wrong". "I thought Europe was to be able to take away the walls. That's part of our history," he added.

Olaf Scholz, the German Chancellor, argued legal migration was essential to boost the bloc's economic growth and said attempts to curb it were unwise. In an attempt to appease critics of walls, Ursula von der Leyen, the European Commission's president, said funds would not be used for fence-building and that leaders had only agreed to pay for infrastructure like cameras, watch towers and vehicles.

But Karl Nehammer, the Austrian

chancellor, said the agreement meant countries would be able to use EU funds to purchase personnel and vehicles, freeing up their own money to "strengthen the border fence". The International Rescue Committee responded by saying: "These decisions fly in the face of what is needed or what works." The reality is that building walls or funding drones, surveillance tech and more border guards, will not stop people risking their lives in search of safety and security in Europe."

Senior European officials previously criticized Donald Trump for extending and reinforcing the US-Mexico border fence when he was president.

### THE REASONS WHY MARRIAGE STILL MATTERS

Mick Brown asks why we are so scared of commitment

*Daily Telegraph*, 11th February 2023

Marriage, my father used to say, is an institution, usually pausing for a moment before adding his little joke - "and who wants to live in an institution?" Well, apparently, he did. He was married to my mother for more than 40 years until his early death, and as far as I could tell very happily, despite the inevitable ups and downs.

Perhaps it was my parents' example - and love, of course - that encouraged me to marry at the age of 23. We have remained married for the past 48 years, with no regrets, nowhere near the length of time necessary to receive the murmurs of approval and congratulation that often come on television programmes when elderly couples reveal a union of 60 or more years. This week, I attended a 100th birthday lunch for a friend who had been married for 70 years until the death of his wife - lots of murmurs of approval and congratulations there. During the war, she had worked at Bletchley Park and having signed the Official Secrets Act had kept to herself exactly what she did until the day she died. It's said that a marriage should have no secrets but what happened at Bletchley Park is obviously an exception.

Why do people get married? Because they fall in love is the obvious answer. Beyond that, for security, to raise children, to honour a formal commitment made in the presence of family, friends, community and, in some cases, whatever God you may happen to believe in. Until now, not many of us would have put reducing our likelihood to get diabetes at the top of the list.

However, that is the conclusion of

the report published this week by researchers at the universities of Ottawa in Canada and Luxembourg, which suggests that even an unhappy marriage may help prevent heart disease and type 2 diabetes.

Scientists examined data over a period of 11 years from the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing on 3,335 adults aged 50 to 89 who did not have diabetes at the start of the study. Seventy-six per cent of people in the analysis were married or living together. The study found that being married or living with a partner was linked to healthier blood sugar levels.

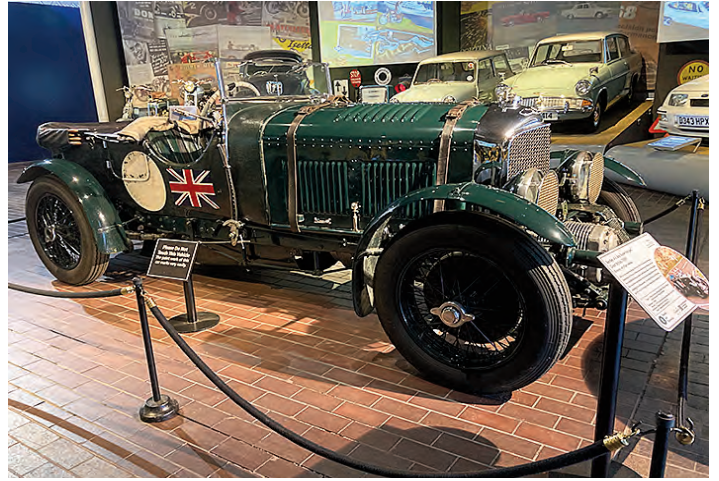
Couples were questioned on the degree of happiness and contentment in the marriage - whether they felt supported in the union and understood each other's feelings, or conversely whether they got on each other's nerves and criticised each other - compared with blood sugar level,

The study concluded that the quality of the marriage did not make a massive amount of difference to the average levels of blood glucose; it was simply being in a marriage that appeared to have a protective effect against type 2 diabetes, preventing people's blood sugar rising dangerously.

So even if the rows about loading the dishwasher or squeezing the toothpaste in the middle might drive you to distraction, don't even think about walking out. The report joins the growing body of evidence that testifies to the health benefits of marriage. Figures released last year by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) show that married men and women of all ages consistently had the lowest mortality rates between 2010 and 2019, and a lower premature death rate than those who are single, divorced or widowed. So yes, few people marry thinking about their blood glucose levels or pondering mortality. But then again, nowadays, fewer people are thinking of marrying at all.

According to the ONS, the rate of marriages between men and women fell to a record low three years ago. A total of 213,122 heterosexual couples tied the knot in 2019, which is down 50% from the peak in 1972 and the lowest number since 1888. Fewer people are choosing to marry in a church; not even 20% walking down an aisle that same year (a separate ONS survey shows that nearly a quarter of all couples who live together are not married or in a civil partnership). Annual number of marriages and divorces

# Mike's birthday visit to Beaulieu



**Bible Bite** A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in Genesis ch. 25:19-33, 27:1-42

Isaac and Rebekah had twin sons - Esau ('Hairy') and Jacob ('trasper'). When the boys were born, God said...

Esau is older but Jacob will be more important.

The boys grew up...

Esau liked to go out to hunt, but Jacob stayed at home.

When Isaac was old and blind he told Esau: "I want to give you my special blessing; first catch me some food."

But Rebekah went to find Jacob: "You could have that blessing."

But Esau is hairy and I am not.

Use goat skin to cover your arms and wear Esau's clothes.

Here is your food, Father.

Jacob was tricked by the goat skin and Esau's clothes.

Are you really Esau? Come nearer.

May God bless you richly, my son.

Then Esau returned: "I'm sorry, I already..."

You must run away or Esau will kill you. Go to my brother Laban's home.

Jacob!

## *I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud* By William Wordsworth

I wandered lonely as a cloud  
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,  
When all at once I saw a crowd,  
A host, of golden daffodils;  
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,  
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

The waves beside them danced; but they  
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:  
A poet could not but be gay,  
In such a jocund company:  
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought  
What wealth the show to me had brought:

Continuous as the stars that shine  
And twinkle on the milky way,  
They stretched in never-ending line  
Along the margin of a bay:  
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,  
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

For oft, when on my couch I lie  
In vacant or in pensive mood,  
They flash upon that inward eye  
Which is the bliss of solitude;  
And then my heart with pleasure fills,  
And dances with the daffodils.



# Facebook favourites

Please submit your Facebook favourites to [thattham.urb@ntlworld.com](mailto:thattham.urb@ntlworld.com)  
Be sure to download them and then send as attachments – copying and pasting into an email will not work!

