

the NEW Messenger

SEPTEMBER &
OCTOBER 2019

Let us not become weary in
doing good, for at the proper
time we will reap a harvest
if we do not give up

Galatians 6:9



Third Avenue

CHURCH & COMMUNITY

GILLINGHAM METHODISTS | *Part of the North Kent Circuit*

Sunday Preaching plan for Gillingham & Hartlip

Third Avenue | Morning | 10.30am

Hartlip | Evening | 6.30pm

SEPTEMBER 2019

01 Sep Rev Robin Selmes

Rev Robert Zachar

08 Sep Rev Robert Zachar | 10.30am
Pet Blessing | 3.30pm

Rev Robin Selmes
Holy Communion

15 Sep Rev Robin Selmes
Holy Communion

Rev Canon Penny Foreman
Harvest Festival

22 Sep Harvest Festival | All Age
Led by Rev Robin Selmes

Rev Tony Graff

29 Sep Judith German

Local Arrangement

OCTOBER 2019

06 Oct Rev Robin Selmes

Lesley Trott

13 Oct Derek Gallagher

Margaret Bowerman

20 Oct Rev Robin Selmes
Holy Communion

Rev Robin Selmes
Holy Communion

27 Oct Rev Robin Selmes

Anthony Brown

Hello & welcome to the latest edition of the New Messenger...

August and the summer have finally given way to September and a fabulous hint of Autumn. I say fabulous as I am still sitting in my garden enjoying the sunshine but loving that I can wear a cosy comfortable jumper.

I am thinking back on all the amazing summer activities our church has enjoyed. The Junior Heroes Holiday Club, the Summer Fun, the Youth Events, the Worship Group weekend away, and last but not least our special sharing time during our summer Sunday services. Our thanks to everyone involved in making all of these events a huge success.

This season brings a host of new beginnings, challenges and changes; the start of the Methodist New Year, the start of a new school year for our young people and the starting up again of our clubs and activities. A time to look forward to meeting up with each other in our different groups to share our summer holiday stories and to plan for future activities.

Although our summer of fine weather and fun activities has drawn to a close we can look forward with anticipation to all that our

Autumn season has to offer. We have a new 18-30 club, our Brownie pack will be celebrating its 70th Birthday, we are holding our first ever Pet Blessing and we also have our harvest celebrations to plan and prepare, to name but a few.

So, as the green leaves turn to gold we can look back on our summer with joy and look forward with excitement to all that is changing and new this autumn. So, put the kettle on and spend a moment with a cuppa reading about some of our summer activities and have your diaries to hand to pencil in events still to come.

I hope you enjoy reading this magazine, and if you do, then why not get involved and write an article or pass on something you have found interesting.

Helen



You can contact us anytime by email: messenger@gillinghammethodists.uk
by post: New Messenger | Third Avenue Church & Community
Gillingham | ME7 2LU or come and chat to any of the team.
Deadline to receive articles for the **NOV | DEC** edition will be **20 OCT 2019**.

A message from our Minister Rev Robin Selmes...

Life is 'an endless cycle of beginnings and endings; of comings and goings, of saying hello and saying goodbye'.

How time flies! Another Methodist Year ends and a New Year begins, full of promises of change, growth and new experiences.

Endings and beginnings are important. When you arrive at the end of another year it is good to pause and celebrate the moment – and to look back and survey the path we have taken. In one way it helps us to understand our journey and our identity. As a church we need to continuously refresh our sense of who we are, what we stand for and why we do what we do.

By looking back, we are also able to relive our joys and mistakes, through this we learn and grow as individuals and as a church. There are always lessons to be learnt, and sometimes that means reflecting upon the changes that we have made because even those changes should not be seen as static.

Yet it is important that we do not stand still but move forward and progress. A recent Top Gear programme reminded me of this when they talked about the coat of arms of Australia. On it there are two indigenous creatures, a kangaroos and emu, both have something in common—they seldom move backwards. Kangaroos, because of the shape of their body and the length of their strong tail, can bounce along with forward movement, but they cannot shift easily into reverse. Emus can run fast on their strong legs, but the joints in their knees seem to make backward movement difficult. Both are symbols that the nation is to be ever moving forward and making progress. As we look back we cannot redo or undo the past (and we would not want to), but by God's grace we can press forward and serve God faithfully today and in the future. That's why it is

important that we

accept endings to allow for new beginnings; because we have a God of new beginnings, a God who promised to make all things new and to be with us always.

New beginnings always provide an opportunity for a fresh start. When I was at school I remember how glad I was to get a new exercise book. It gave me an opportunity to start afresh, with no blots or mistakes or curled up pages or football stickers plastered all over the front cover. I recall how neat the first pages were, how blue and clean the front cover was but it was not long before the work started to look a bit messy, and old habits crept back in, peeling football stickers stuck on the front cover and I longed to be at that moment to start again.

As a Christian, we continually have the opportunity to start afresh. God offers forgiveness and a new start whenever we require it. As a church, as we enter into a new Methodist Year, it encourages us to think about things in a new way. As we do may we rejoice and open up our hearts and minds to all that God has in store for us. How exciting it is anticipating that God is going to do a new thing and that we are prepared to be part of it. Dream dreams and have big visions and be prepared to be part of the dream and vision.

What is God calling us to do next? Be open and responsive and we will be blessed.

I pray that as we move into a new year that God will continue to bless our ministry and guide us as individuals and as a community.



Robin

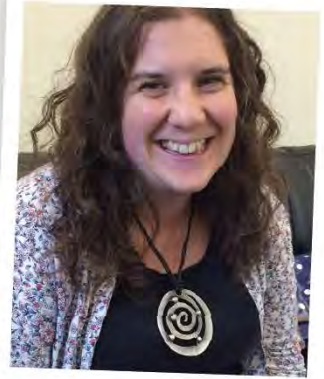
A message from our Youth Pastor...

After a break over the summer we are coming back to a new school year and our groups are re-starting.

We will be starting up a **new group this term – for those in our church between the ages of 18-30**. This group will be meeting every other Wednesday night in the foyer from 7-9pm starting on the 4th September. We have a growing number of young people who are hitting this age group and there is a need for this group. It is still in the development stages, so a programme, isn't fully formed yet, but will happen as the group gets together and decides what they want to do. If you are interested in knowing more about this group, please come and speak to me.

All our other groups: **Bible study, Youth Club, Youth Café and our Sunday Squad** groups will be starting up again as normal. One change is that the age group for our Spirit Squad group is changing – it used to be for those in school years 5-8 and will now be for those in school years 4-7, with year 8s going to God Squad.

Please pray for all our young people as they start new schools, college, jobs and school years and for our groups as we start up again this term.



God Bless ~ Helen x

hello!

Are you **18 to 30?**

YEP!

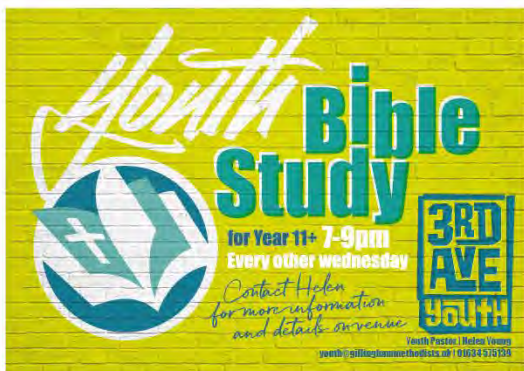
Then why not join our new group

yeah!

Third Avenue
CHURCH & COMMUNITY
GILLINGHAM METHODISTS | Part of the North Kent Circuit

EVERY OTHER WEDNESDAY IN THE FOYER
7-9PM } STARTING 4 SEP 2019

youth@gillinghammethodists.uk for more info



Youth Bible Study
 for Year 11+ 7-9pm
 Every other wednesday
 Contact Helen for more information and details or venue
 Youth Pastor: Helen Young
 youth@stjohnsbarnetbaptists.org | 01844 916130

3RD AVE YOUTH



3RD AVE YOUTH CAFE
 Mondays, Thursdays and Fridays 3-5pm
 A place to hang out, have refreshments and play games
 The Green Room | Third Avenue Church & Community | Hoppisite 1488
 Youth Pastor: Helen Young
 youth@stjohnsbarnetbaptists.org

3RD AVE YOUTH



wednesday night Youth Club
 The Green Room | 7-9pm
 Every other wednesday
 Youth Pastor: Helen Young
 youth@stjohnsbarnetbaptists.org

3RD AVE YOUTH

On June 30th our fantastic Youth led our morning worship with a theme of 'Tolerance'. Rebecca wrote the message, delivered by Cheryl, and in case you missed the service, we have printed it here. Thank you Rebecca...

Romans 14 is an interesting chapter of the bible, titled 'the weak and the strong' and contains one of the main messages of the service: Tolerance. Keep that in mind...

In my research I have realised that people have come to fear tolerance, that it has become a synonym with accepting wrong doing and faults, when this is not the case. There is always a time that we need to be tolerant and a time where God calls us to be intolerant. The bible is filled with this message, almost as much as it expresses love, and in truth they go hand in hand.

Jesus was an outsider, went against social

norms and broke bread with the poor, the criminals and the hated. He showed tolerance towards these people, not agreeing with their life choices but accepting that life had pushed them towards the situation, and the intolerance of the Religious leaders, that were meant to help, prevented them from receiving what they needed.

People from all walks of life hold different views and act differently in certain situations, tolerance is to understand their reasoning and why that opinion is held and then accept that said differences don't necessarily define us. It is not to accept the faults of others nor is it to prevent conversation or change. The people of God will always be flawed until the end of time, but that does not mean that striving towards a better society and life should cease. This is the message of Jesus: that we should be tolerant to enable us to help others but that tolerance should not be taken so far that the recipient abuses the kindness. Jesus was a model of tolerance, he did not condone indecency, hypocrisy, and other forms of evil. Now, let's look at Jesus himself, it is established that he is far from what people assumed the Son of God to be. So much so that he ended up on the cross. With a little more tolerance to his abnormal actions we could have learned much more from the living God and perhaps, whilst trying to prevent this speculation from sounding like blasphemy, delayed or prevented his painful sacrifice. Luke 15:2 states that Jesus Christ stood out

as vastly different. That his opposers said “This man welcomes sinners and eats with them”. And for this he was scorned, because people weren’t tolerant to his actions, to the sinners. Instead they preferred to judge, much like we still do, despite there being no right for us to judge one another.

Returning to Romans 14 where we had previously heard that frivolous matters are not of concern when all in the end will kneel before God on even ground. I encourage you to look through the chapter for each verse contains an interesting aspect of faith, and not just the stuff about vegetarians. Personally, and quite stereotypically, Romans 14:7 is my favourite verse because it resonates with my view on life and what it means to me and for others. Whilst verse 23 talks about certainty with faith and to act without it is a sin. This is not about anxiety or undermined minds but to prevent people from simply following a trend to act out of peer pressure. At least that is my interpretation of it, and everyone in this room after having read the chapter will hold a different view on it. So I encourage you whenever I see you next, to discuss with me or anyone else who you don’t often speak to, in a civil tone, although maybe

heated, for that is what tolerance is. I ask you not to judge, for belief in those opinions makes them strong in faith in God’s eyes. Are you strong or weak in faith? Will you not judge and tolerate? Our church, before my time, was created from a merger of several different churches, where each one held differing views which don’t always go together but we are still a family and still have a good outreach into our community. I commend those who work towards it, I wonder there reasons and if that makes them strong?

Finally, I want to bring up the second theme of our service: Patience, which Cheryl needed a lot of to deal with me when delivering this message and I commend her for it and her bravery in speaking to you all.

Thank you all for listening to this message, for some it requires patience to sit through. And remember tolerance and patience are similar: to tolerate someone’s ideal, first you must be patient to understand and then secondly, you mustn’t judge. It is you who determines if your faith is weak or strong by doing these acts in faith and belief that you are doing what is right. Peace from God.

Rebecca Elliot

All Creatures Great and small God loves them all
Pet Blessing

**SUNDAY 8
SEPTEMBER 2019
3.30PM ON THE
CHURCH GREEN**
(If raining the service
will be held in the
Community Hall)

Third Avenue
CHURCH & COMMUNITY
GLENESHAM METHUENETS | Part of the North West Circuit

All pets great or small (and their owners) are very welcome!



JUNIOR HEROES HOLIDAY CLUB



“ Our Children had a great time. We really appreciated all the time, effort and creativity put into the week. ”





Over 30 children aged 4-11 from our Church fellowship, Brownies, Blue Sky and Barnsole Primary school attended, which ran from 9.15am – 1pm. The community hall was transformed into a **Superhero Hideout** hosting Batman, Superman, Wonder Woman & Captain Marvel. It even had a life size telephone box!

Each morning we started with our “Junior Hero” & “God’s People” theme songs. Then led by Super Rev we played lots of silly games and team challenges to earn points for each team. Then it was time for some Super Jokes and some Amazing facts like “ Did you know a snail has more teeth than any other animal in the world!”

This was then followed by our “Superhero Talent Agency”. Each day the children showed off their wonderful talents including Singing, Dancing or playing instruments just to name a few. Those not chosen for the final celebration stepped into our telephone box to be splatted by our kryptonite bombs which contained either water confetti or sweets. Our talented team with the help of our puppets “Bert and Lucy” then presented and explored our theme “The armour of God”

This was followed by our popular workshops, over the 4 mornings we had Games, Water Rockets, Drumming and a Puppet workshop.

In the other rooms they made Pizzas and Gingerbread men, took part in craft activities making worry

monsters, belts of truth and colourful hats and masks. They especially enjoyed the junk modelling on the last morning, making some amazing things from rockets to jet packs. In the Green Room we had creative storytelling based on the daily theme. It was a fantastic time, with everyone involved having an exciting and action packed week of fun!

At the end of the final morning we had a celebration. This the involved theme song, Bert and Lucy, the final of our talent contest (We even splatted a parent with a water bomb!) and then this was followed by a BBQ afterwards and wonderful homemade cakes. Lots of parents and grandparents came to see what the children had been doing and to support them at this celebration.

Finally, a big thank you goes out to all the leaders and helpers, who gave up their time. We had over 20 leaders and helpers making up the holiday club team. Well done to everyone concerned for the excellent team working and commitment shown!



“What a wonderful, lovely fun packed week.”

Get more out of your Bible

There are some of us for whom the Bible is more than just the words written on the page. There is a wealth of information just waiting to be unearthed, if only we knew how or where to dig a little deeper? So to help you open up the Bible I extend an invitation to you to 'stand inside' the text, as if you were living at the time of the author and seeing the world from their eyes. There are generally four types of criticism which may be used to open up the Bible: Source criticism, Redaction criticism, Form criticism and Literary criticism. Read on to learn how to open the bible for yourself.

Source criticism: This is the process of identifying where a text has come from, or which version of the text came first? Source criticism tries to identify the sources upon which a text relies, whether these are oral or written sources. It also considers potential human sources used to influence or compile the text of biblical books.

Source criticism may be helpful when

considering the multiple sources used to compile the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. The dominant theory is termed Two Source Hypothesis. This states that there are a number of references to the Gospels of Luke and Matthew stemming from the Gospel of Mark and another source named "Q Gospel". This "Q" source contains a collection of Jesus' sayings and quotations not found in the Gospel of Mark. It is however likely that they were inspired by the early Church's oral tradition of passing stories to each other; since early Christians would be expecting Jesus to return from heaven quite soon, removing the need to for written texts.

The example below shows the relationship between Matthew, Mark & Luke for the passage concerning The Destruction of the Temple and Signs of the End Times. An explanation of the colour codes used is given after the table, although further reading is encouraged via the website addresses given.

Matt 24:29-31

²⁹ "Immediately after the distress of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken."³⁰ "Then will appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven. And then all the peoples of the earth will mourn when they see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory."³¹ And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.

Matt 13:24-27

²⁴ "But in those days, following that distress, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; ²⁵ the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken."^[c] ²⁶ "At that time people will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. ²⁷ And he will send his angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of the heavens.

Luke 21:25-28

²⁵ "There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. ²⁶ People will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken. ²⁷ At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. ²⁸ When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

Colour code explanation:

Triple tradition will be coloured black (text occurring in all three Gospels)

Double tradition (any text that occurs in Matthew or Luke but not in Mark) will be coloured **blue** in Luke (because it agrees with Matthew) and **green** in Matthew (because it agrees with Luke).

Agreements between Matthew and Mark, but not Luke, will be coloured **red** in Matthew and **blue** in Mark.

Agreements between Mark and Luke, but not Matthew, will be coloured **green** in Mark and **red** in Luke.

M (unique Matthean material) will be coloured **blue** in Matthew (only).

K (unique Marcan material) will be coloured **red** in Mark (only).

L (unique Lucan material) will be coloured **green** in Luke(only).

Both the so-called minor agreements (of Matthew and Luke, but not Mark) and the "Q" material will appear as double tradition material (**blue** in Luke and **green** in Matthew).

Further reading on source criticism can be found in these websites:

www.textexcavation.com/fourcolors.html
www.hypotypothesis.org/synoptic-problem/

Redaction criticism: "The prime requisite for redaction criticism is the ability to trace the form and content of material used by the author concerned or in some way to determine the nature and extent of his activity in collecting and creating, as well as in arranging, editing, and composing." - Perrin, Norman; What is Redaction Criticism? Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969, p. 2.

Redaction criticism examines the way various pieces of the original text have been assembled into the final literary composition, by the author. The arrangement and modification of these pieces of original text can reveal something about the author's intentions and

the means by which they hoped to achieve them. Editing a text before publication is a common practice. In the first stage there is a skeleton text, which is embellished and polished until it is ready for publication. Terry Pratchett (of Discworld fame) once said that he would spend a great deal of time polishing a text until he was happy with it, often revisiting parts of books and rewriting them completely many times over. For the Bible authors there must have been a similar polishing of the text in order to shape it around the central theme, or ideas that they wished to convey to their intended audience.

For example: Mark is a creative author – there are twelve healing miracles of Jews, and one of a Gentile. Matthew, in comparison uses the Jewish method of commentary called midrash (The purpose being to bring the text up to date for readers of each generation; it is a kind of interpretation and also a work of reconciliation – explaining an original narrative by the insights of a later age). Matthew also enlarges on the Gospel of Mark and arranges his material in blocks against an Old Testament background to show how Jesus fulfils Messianic expectations. Luke in his Gospel shows that in his day Christianity was now at home in the Roman Empire, where tiled houses (Luke 5: 19) replaced earlier dwellings that had roofs made of straw (Mark 2: 4) ^[A]

Luke 5: 19 | When they could not find a way to do this because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and lowered him on his mat **through the tiles** into the middle of the crowd, right in front of Jesus.

Mark 2: 4 | Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they **made an opening in the roof** above Jesus **by digging through it** and then lowered the mat the man was lying on.

Form criticism: This type of criticism explores the relationship between specific forms of words or literary patterns (such as love poems, parables, sayings, elegies, legends) and the

life-setting they are used in. The content of a given narrative text is an indication both of its form – miracle story, controversy, or conversion story – and of the narrative text’s use within the life of the community. This narrative may change over the course of time to meet the needs of the community it serves. (If something is topical now, it may have no meaning at a later date, or may be viewed as outdated in time due to its content matter. An example being that in the last 30 years, there has been a steady decline in tolerance towards racism and its now lack of acceptability in modern society).

Form criticism is most associated with the work of the German scholar Martin Dibelius (1883-1947). He suggested that there are at least five forms of text in the gospels: Paradigms, Tales, Myths, Legends and Exhortations. In science and philosophy, a paradigm is a distinct set of concepts or thought patterns, including theories, research methods, starting points for beliefs, and standards for what constitutes legitimate contributions to a field. In a biblical sense, a **paradigm** would be a relatively authentic story, giving the setting for an authoritative statement of Jesus, using his true words; such as Mark 3: 31-35, when Jesus’ family comes looking for him. A **myth** however would be a story that has been made up to explore a truth, rather than tell it directly; for example Matthew 4: 1-11, the story of Jesus’ temptations by the Devil. ^[B]

Mark 3: 31-35 | ³¹ Then Jesus’ mother and brothers arrived. Standing outside, they sent someone in to call him. ³² A crowd was sitting around him, and they told him, “Your mother and brothers are outside looking for you.” ³³ “Who are my mother and my brothers?” he asked. ³⁴ Then he looked at those seated in a circle around him and said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! ³⁵ Whoever does God’s will is my brother and sister and mother.”

Matthew 4: 1-11 | ¹ Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the

devil. ² After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. ³ The tempter came to him and said, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.” ⁴ Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’” ⁵ Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. ⁶ “If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down. For it is written: ‘He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.’” ⁷ Jesus answered him, “It is also written: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’” ⁸ Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour. ⁹ “All this I will give you,” he said, “if you will bow down and worship me.” ¹⁰ Jesus said to him, “Away from me, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.’” ¹¹ Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.

Literary criticism: This includes the placing of words carefully to create effect and enhance the meaning of the text. This criticism can be broken down further into: Tail-Head Linkage: Which involves the restatement of an action from one sentence (the tail) at the beginning of the next one (the head). Repeating the information slows down the story and builds suspense because something surprising or important is about to happen; and Parallelism: Patterns of repetition – making a point and then again a few lines later to reinforce a message.

Let’s look at the story of Potiphar’s wife and Joseph in Genesis 39: ¹² She caught him by his cloak and said, “Come to bed with me!” But **he left his cloak in her hand and ran out of the house.** ¹³ When she saw that **he had left his cloak in her hand and had run out of the house,**

Text in **red** above: *Tail-Head Linkage* – the text at the end of verse 12 is repeated at the beginning of verse 13 adding to the suspense and informing the reader that something is

about to happen in the story. At this point the story is slowed down (in the proceeding verses) to allow for expansion of the story, whilst at the same time not losing the story's flow.

Text in blue below: Parallelism – The text is repeated a few verses away from the original inclusion to reiterate the point, and back up what has already been said so that idea is lodged in the reader's mind.

¹² She caught him by his cloak and said, "Come to bed with me!" But he left his cloak in her hand and ran out of the house. ¹³ When she saw that he had left his cloak in her hand and had run out of the house, ¹⁴ she called her household servants. "Look," she said to them, "this Hebrew has been brought to us to make sport of us! He came in here to sleep with me, but I screamed. ¹⁵ When he heard me scream for help, he left his cloak beside me and ran out of the house."

In the full story (below), we find out that, rather than letting the incident go as Potiphar's wife had done before, she concocts a story blaming Joseph for attempting to force himself on her. This false accusation leads to Joseph's imprisonment, setting the scene for his eventual rise to fame in a famine struck Egypt.

Genesis 39: 7-20 | ⁷ Now Joseph was well-built and handsome, and after a while his master's wife took notice of Joseph and said, "Come to bed with me!" ⁸ But he refused. "With me in

charge," he told her, "my master does not concern himself with anything in the house; everything he owns he has entrusted to my care. ⁹ No one is greater in this house than I am. My master has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?" ¹⁰ And though she spoke to Joseph day after day, he refused to go to bed with her or even be with her. ¹¹ One day he went into the house to attend to his duties, and none of the household servants was inside. ¹² She caught him by his cloak and said, "Come to bed with me!" But he left his cloak in her hand and ran out of the house.

¹³ When she saw that he had left his cloak in her hand and had run out of the house, ¹⁴ she called her household servants. "Look," she said to them, "this Hebrew has been brought to us to make sport of us! He came in here to sleep with me, but I screamed. ¹⁵ When he heard me scream for help, he left his cloak beside me and ran out of the house."

¹⁶ She kept his cloak beside her until his master came home. ¹⁷ Then she told him this story: "That Hebrew slave you brought us came to me to make sport of me. ¹⁸ But as soon as I screamed for help, he left his cloak beside me and ran out of the house."

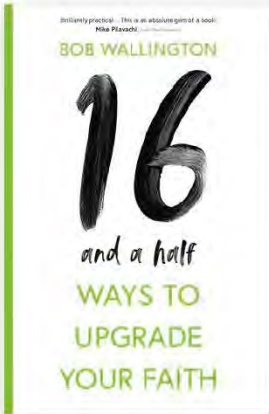
¹⁹ When his master heard the story his wife told him, saying, "This is how your slave treated me," he burned with anger. ²⁰ Joseph's master took him and put him in prison.

Sources ^[A] www.oxfordbiblicalstudies.com/article/opr/t94/e1597
^[B] w.thetablet.co.uk/student-zone/religious-texts/biblical-criticism/form-criticism

Ian Watton



Book & Film reviews... *from Parish Pump*

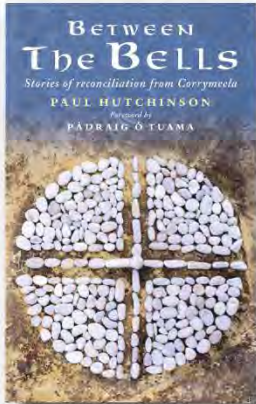
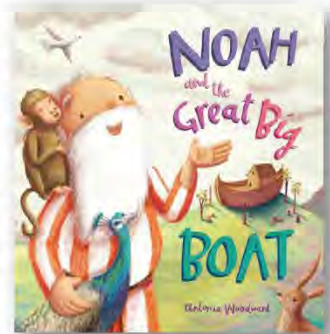


16-and-a-half Ways to Upgrade your Faith | Bob Wallington SPCK | £9.99

Bob Wallington is the youth pastor at Soul Survivor Watford. Growing up within Soul Survivor church, he is well-known within the church community and on the summer conference scene. What I love about this book is that it gives you simple, really practical ideas for putting Christian faith into action.

Noah and the Great Big Boat Antonia Woodward Lion Children | £7.99

This is a delightful picture book. It retells the story of Noah, who builds a great ark to keep animals that God sends to him safe during the great flood. Imagine Noah's excitement when the big boat comes to rest and once more the animals can roam the earth. Young children will enjoy it.



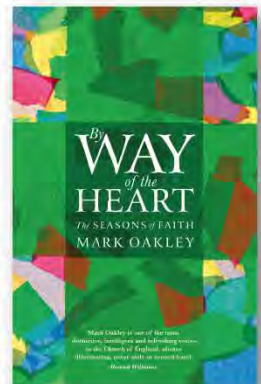
Between the Bells – stories of reconciliation from Corrymeela Paul Hutchinson & Padraig O Tuama | Canterbury Press | £12.99

Corrymeela - a Christian community committed to reconciliation, is bounded by bells. Twice a day – morning and evening - a large bell sounds out over the site. This is a call to attention, a call to pause, a space to reflect on God, self, neighbour, stranger. This book recounts the varied experiences of many whose lives have been changed by their visit to Corrymeela, and the changes they have effected in others. Narrated by the former Centre Director of the Corrymeela Community, it is full of wild and beautiful and funny stories that linger in the heart. Each story

shows an aspect of the reconciliation journey and captures various encounters - sad, challenging, inspiring, strange - that roam from the epic to the everyday.

By Way of the Heart – the Season of Faith Mark Oakley | Canterbury Press | £12.99

These fifty reflections traverse the landscape of the Christian year, with its oases of celebration, its desert stretches of emptiness, its days of abundance and seasons of lament, and its affirmation of the ordinary and the everyday. For all who wish to understand their own story in the light of God's bigger story, this will be a book to turn to again and again.





MOVIE MOMENTS

Nick and Carol Pollard from EthosMedia.org share thought-provoking reflections on the latest films.

Created for love?

Toy Story 4 is bright, colourful, funny, exciting and engaging from the opening scene to the closing credits (don't leave too early or you'll miss even more funny and poignant scenes). It is a family film in the widest possible sense of that word, with something for everyone, whatever your age and life experiences.



Ostensibly it follows the familiar simple story arc of toys going missing and being rescued. But this film also delves more deeply into themes of rejection and restored hope. From Gabby Gabby, a doll who was discarded because of her disability, to Duke Caboom who was unwanted because he didn't live up to the media image, the film explores what it feels like to be devalued and rejected. These mini storylines are resolved as the toys find a restored hope. Gabby Gabby develops empathy for a lost child and, in turn, finds the total acceptance she sought. Duke Caboom develops a renewed confidence in his abilities and rediscovers the value he had lost.

Most significantly, wrapped around these many short stories is the overall narrative of Forky, a toy created out of rubbish by a little girl who needed a friend. In contrast to the others, Forky is not rejected by others, but by himself. "I'm not a toy", "I'm trash" he says as he repeatedly throws himself into rubbish bins. How is that story resolved? By Forky discovering that he is unique and beautiful in his own way, because his value does not come from what others think of him, or even what he thinks of himself, but from the fact that he was created for a purpose and is loved by his creator.



At a time in our culture when many are struggling to find a sense of self-worth, perhaps there is much we can all learn from Forky's journey of self-discovery.



ETHOS MEDIA.org

EthosMedia.org provides free resources to help people explore spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues through the latest feature films.

In cinemas now

He gave us eyes to see them:
St Michael the Archangel
by Bartolomé Bermejo

God ⁱⁿ
the Arts

The National Gallery at Trafalgar Square in London houses one of the finest collections of European paintings in the world. It is home to 2,300 works spanning the centuries of artistic creation. During this year we shall be journeying through the gallery to explore one of those treasures each month.
By Rev Michael Burgess.

When the Sanctus in the Anglican Eucharist, we are affirming that our worship here on earth is caught up in the worship offered by the angels in heaven. They praise God around His throne of glory, but they are also agents of His care and guidance in our lives. Leading them is the archangel Michael, and we celebrate his feast with all the angels on 29th September.

Churches were often built in his honour on high places: St Michael's Mount in Cornwall, Mont St Michel in Brittany, and Glastonbury Tor.

St Michael's influence extends both high and low because he is the prince of the angelic host. He is ready to slay the dragon as we read in the book of Revelation. He is armed to fight for light and right over might and darkness.

St Michael's triumph over the devil is the theme of this month's painting by a forgotten Spanish artist, Bartolomé Bermejo. He died in Barcelona around 1501, and only 20 paintings of his exist. Seven are in the National Gallery, and his work has been given a special exhibition there until the end of this month.

As we look at the painting, we can think of St Michael the archangel in Revelation or Milton's 'Paradise Lost' where he leads the 'flaming warriors' who defeat the devil. He dominates the canvas in his glorious armour. At his side is the patron who commissioned this work, and at his feet the vanquished devil, like a nightmare creation of Bosch.

We know only too well that St Michael's battle is reflected here on earth, where the vulnerable and the innocent are threatened by the forces of violence. Light or darkness, truth or falsehood, protection or oppression – those are the mighty opposites that come home to us as we ponder this painting, and pray:

Lord, give thy angels every day, Command to guide us on our way.'





An Invitation to Training Events

The Family Trust is offering two training events, both at:

Third Avenue Church and Community, Third Ave, Gillingham. ME7 2LU

On Saturday 21st September,

9am to 12 noon

ASD and ADHD training

We will start at 9am with free bacon butties.

There will be the opportunity to talk to others who work with children.

From 10am till 12 noon, Tina Collins (SENCO in Maidstone and member of Kent Advisory Service for special needs) will be leading a session based around ASD (Autistic Spectrum Disorder) and ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder).

We will be learning about these conditions which can help us to have strategies to keep our 'special educational needs' children engaged at Kingsquad and in the other places where we work.

If you can't make it at 9 am, please come along by 10 am for the training.

Training Day for Children's Workers

On Saturday 16th November,

9.30am to 2.30pm

We are holding a Training Day for anyone working with children, whether paid or voluntarily. We will be looking at Storytelling, Praying with Children, Games and Action Songs. Please bring your own lunch and we will provide tea and coffee. We hope to have the local Christian book shop there, selling useful resources.

Please let us know if you are coming so we can get enough bacon and rolls! It will also be useful for creating a register and printing handouts.

For more information and to book your place, please contact:

karen@familytrust.org.uk or phone 01622 577960 (ext. 2010)

Maidstone Office
4 Buckland Road,
Maidstone, Kent,
ME16 0SL

Medway Office
Gillingham Methodist
Church, Third Avenue,
Gillingham, Kent, ME7 2LU

Swale Office
Parish Hall, Green Porch
Close, Milton Regis, Kent,
ME10 2HA

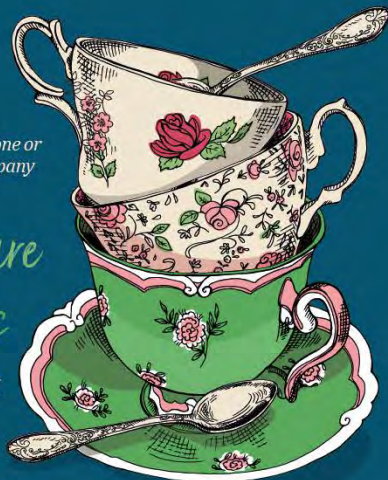
01622 577960 familytrust.org.uk Charity no: 1162296 Company no: 09453991

tea at 2

Especially for
those living alone or
in need of company

You are warmly invited to share
tea & cakes with friends

Wednesday 11th Sept & 9th Oct
between 2pm & 3.30pm



Everyone
welcome

Every
Friday
Open to all

Oasis

A safe place to
explore & share,
to exercise & relax,
to talk & be heard



Talking Point
12pm to 1pm

Chrysalis
1pm to 1.30pm

Listening Ear
from 1.30pm

Friends of Kent Churches Sponsored Ride & Stride

This event takes place on Saturday 14th September 10am - 3pm. Our church will receive cyclists and walkers from around the local Kent area; sign them in; offer tea/coffee and biscuits and send them on their way to their next church. Anyone who wishes to cycle, walk or sponsor and has not already signed up please see Lynda who has forms and details.



Hartlip Methodist Church & Retreat Centre

We continue to be blessed with our preachers and also our goodly supply of people willing to play the organ for our services where other churches struggle to find someone to play.

Also at the beginning of July we were blessed by those who provided for, ran stalls or attended our Strawberry Tea. Perhaps not quite our busiest tea on record but that didn't affect the funds raised or the enjoyment of those who came. Thanks to all our supporters!

Next year the chapel celebrates 200 years of worship. We are hoping to follow up as much of the history as possible. Some of you may have in your possession or in your memory parts of the history we know nothing about. We would be interested to hear/ see anything you have that would be of interest. If you have any older family members who are or were local do ask them for their memories too! Also if you're having a summer declutter do look for items that might be relevant please. I'm sure Mark, Derek or Heather will pass things on to Hartlip.

Summer shows off our church and in particular the garden in a really good light. The Retreat Centre is traditionally quiet in August and this

allows for any work that may need doing. However the garden grows apace, especially with mixture of sun and rain we have had in the last month. Thanks to anyone who has been involved, led by Andy and Glenis Davison who spend many hours working there. Thanks to all those involved in the running of the Retreat Centre, a team led by Heather and Derek Gallagher. Congratulations too to Heather and Derek on celebrating their Golden Wedding in August.

Our services continue to bring a variety of preachers from near and far. This month we have had a visit from the Chairman of the Plymouth and Exeter Methodist District (who happens to be son-in-law to our own Brian and Joan Davies). I think we all enjoyed his lively delivery of the message, re-enacting the parts of the different characters in the story but also getting over a deeply thought through point. It was good to have him in the pulpit. Thank you Graham for including preaching in your visit with Alison.

Our **Harvest festival is on 15th September.** On the **16th September we will be having our sale of produce at 7pm.** This is a not-to-be-missed event if past years' experiences are repeated! The entertainment generated by the event is matched only by the money raised for charity. Also, an advance date for our **Retreat Sunday** which we will celebrate this year on October 13th.



Our **Gift Day** was a huge success as members met together in the Retreat Centre on Saturday, June 8th for a Fish and Chip supper, followed by Jill's famous fresh cream strawberry meringues! The theme, this year, was "The Seaside" and the room was decorated accordingly. Afterwards, we had a lot of fun figuring out the answers to a quiz before singing a selection of seaside songs. The next day, our **Chapel Anniversary** was a very happy occasion, as we welcomed back our friend and former minister, Rev Lynda Cooke, to take our evening service. She joined us for the Anniversary Tea beforehand and the tables were almost groaning under the weight of a delicious array of homemade treats! The floral displays in the Chapel were a stunning backdrop to a very joyful service. We were pleased that so many of our friends were able to join us for that special occasion and we nearly raised the roof with our singing! The Praise Choir from Third Avenue sang "You Raise Me Up" during the service and this was very much appreciated by the congregation.





Hartlip Gardens Open Day was held on Sunday, June 16th and we provided the Ploughman's lunches for the many people who visited the ten gardens that were open around the village. Our own Chapel garden, lovingly tended by Glenis and Andy Davison, was a riot of colour and people were able to admire it while eating their lunch. It was a very successful and busy afternoon.



Summer at Hartlip

At our **Strawberry Tea** on Saturday, July 6th, visitors were treated to a delicious selection of cakes and scones followed by strawberries and cream. The weather was fine and it was lovely to see people sitting outside, enjoying the gardens and chatting together. It was, again, a very busy afternoon but we know that people really look forward to this annual event and always enjoy the food, fellowship and hospitality. That's what makes all the hard work worthwhile.





Hartlip

Methodist Church
& Retreat Centre

Harvest Festival

Sunday 15 September | 6.30pm
led by Rev Canon Penny Foreman

Sale of Produce

Monday 16 September | 7pm
after short service led by Rev Robin Selmes
All proceeds given to charity



Conference
2019

27 June - 4 July
Birmingham

Memories of Conference

Margaret Bowerman



On the day after my birthday this year I made my way to Birmingham, to the NEC area, the Birmingham Hilton Metropole to be precise: the venue for this year's conference.

The Opening of Conference on the Saturday was when we were first addressed by our new President and Vice-President Reverend Barbara Glasson and Professor Clive Marsh. They told us snippets of their stories both personal and spiritual. It was both informative and challenging. One skill Barbara was taught by her father was how to carpet a car. This year they are encouraging us to share our stories too. Between them they have written a book between them **So What's the Story?**, a very readable book, perhaps even better if shared with a group !

The singing is always wonderful at Conference. I believe capacity for the Saturday and Sunday events at the Hilton is 625. That's over 600 Methodists singing together.

On Sunday Presbyters and Deacons were welcomed into full Connexion before going out to various churches for ordination. This included Ray Borrett who candidated from our own circuit.

In addition to matters such as finance, stewardship, property and similar matters which are usually approved with little or no amendment, because of all the work done in advance, there were a number of other major areas of business. The work of Deacons was examined by a major report this year and the issue of their proclamation of the gospel and it was affirmed that preaching was a part of the work of a Deacon. How this will work out in

practice is yet to be fully worked out as some of our deacons already preach in our pulpits as local preachers, others currently don't.

3 Generate's President Jasmine Yeboah was active throughout Conference, in her own role, helping with the Worship and generally giving a young person's perspective alongside other young people who were at Conference. A breath of fresh air.

Onjali Rauf was another lady with boundless energy and drive whom many of us met at one of the fringe evening. She was promoting her book **The Boy at the Back of the Class**, another good read, officially this is a children's book but has a lot to say all of us.

The Marriage and Relationships report **God In Love unites Us** was presented and discussed and recommendations are coming to District Synods in September. Reverend Ken Howcroft who chairs the task group will be leading us in our deliberations at the South-East Synod. Individuals circuits can raise issues by sending memorials to Conference. There were important issues relating to the main topics of Conference and world issues such as climate change but the discussion on one particular memorial relating to Safeguarding training really made everyone think.

The Conference Digest can be downloaded on www.methodist.org.uk/conference This also gives you links for more detailed information on particular areas of interest.

Methodist
Church
Sloley
150th
Anniversary
1869-2019

Summer Festival



Where do we start with the highlights from the **Sloley Tour 2019**, from Singing to Dancing, from walking to swimming to eating. Every single part of the 5 days we spent together was incredible, the only way it can be described is like going on holiday with all your family and just smiling and laughing the whole time.

Throughout August the dedication seen from everyone is so special to see, especially when sometimes it adds up to nearly 7 hours a week. Being able to sit and listen, laugh and cry watching it all come together on the Saturday night is a great feeling but it couldn't be done without all the dedicated family of Frosts who look after us from the moment we get there, till the minute we leave, making us feel more welcome than ever year after year.

The few days after the amazing concert, we did so many things which allowed us to bond even more as a group, learning new things as we went along such as: Ruth loves making porridge, and that everyone's favourite topping is bananas and honey; Mark Wootten loves making silly jokes, having people giggling even

after the tiniest bit of sleep; Heather has brilliant general knowledge...and there are so many other things which would take too long to list.

We went to the beach and swam in the sea! We swam in the pool, we went on walks (lots of walks!) we ate and ate and ate and most importantly we laughed whilst doing all of these things.

There were people missing this year that we thought and prayed about at many moments over the weekend: Janet, Peter, Cyril and Eileen you were missed immensely.

The Sloley Summer Festival is something I will never forget and I'm sure I won't stop talking about it for months to come as it is such a great experience for so, so many different reasons. There is so many thank yous I could say to everyone, but I just want to say a massive thank you to everyone who prayed for and supported us while we were away and we are now refreshed and ready to lead worship for the next year. Thank you again to everyone.

From Issy x





We're off!



Starship Enterprise!



Breakfast



Sloley Chapel



...Preparing for the concert!



Lunch



Fun before the concert



Surprise 'Mr&Mrs'



Walcott Beach



Outdoor Swimming Pool



Rule Britannia



Jelly Baby Parade



And did those feet...



Home for the Weekend



Ranworth Broad



The Gang

Knife Angel coming to Rochester

The Knife Angel will be on display at Rochester Cathedral from the 2nd September until the 29th September. It will be located in the gardens of Rochester Cathedral.

The Knife Angel is recognised as the National Monument against violence and aggression. It will be the focal point for 28 days of education, reflection, remembrance and prayer in Medway, as it provides a powerful visual symbol of the dangers of carrying a knife.

A collaboration between the Home Office, all 43 UK police constabularies, families of victims and the British Iron Work Centre, this awe-inspiring piece is created from over 100,000 blunted and seized blades.



Dean Phillip Hesketh says: "We are fortunate to have the Knife Angel coming to Rochester Cathedral in September. It has already visited many other cathedrals and has provided a valuable opportunity to raise awareness of the devastating effects of knife crime. We hope that it will bring people together in Medway to address what is becoming a national crisis."

**Rochester Cathedral
Facebook**

the **BIG** Questions

Our monthly **DISCUSSION GROUP**

A place of open discussion and exploration
on the questions of **Life and Faith**

The Missing Commandment: Love yourself TUES 3 SEPT

Beliefs around Death TUES 1 OCT



7.30pm in the **FOYER**
All are welcome

Drama Group News...



As I write this article we have just finished three performances of the musical 'South Pacific' which many people thought was one of the best amateur shows they had seen. It was well received by our audiences & we had a good review by the NODA (National Association) District representative. Thanks to your support we are now able to give the Church another £750.

We now have a few weeks rest before starting rehearsals for the February 2020 panto which I am reliably informed is to be Aladdin - more details in the November magazine. Before then some of us will be working in the hall on general stage maintenance.

Keith Jackson | www.stpaulsdramagroup.co.uk

14th Gillingham

At the end of this summer term, Gillingham East Rainbows, Brownies, Guides and their leaders gathered at Tyland Barn for an exciting wildlife event, where the girls had lots of fun bug hunting and pond dipping.

In the pond they found baby fish, pond snails and a newt. In the wood piles they found woodlice, spiders, worms and beetles and in the meadows they saw grasshoppers and butterflies. A brilliant experience for them all and together with their memories they took home a wildlife insects and mini beasts badge. Our thanks to Kent Wildlife Trust for organising and hosting the event. I'm sure the girls will now be on the lookout for the hidden wildlife waiting to be discovered in their gardens and on their summer.



WE DISCOVER, WE GROW

Girlguiding



Brownie Birthday!



Our Brownie pack is 70 years old this year and are holding a special birthday celebration afternoon tea on **Saturday 12th October 2019**. If you have had any involvement or connection in any capacity with our Brownies, past or present; either as a Brownie, a leader, a helper, a parent, a supporter or member of Girlguiding then we would love to hear from you, to listen to your stories and especially so that we can extend to you an invitation to our tea party. Please contact **Helen Garland** (the current Snowy Owl) on 01634 576404 for details and so that we can work out our catering needs.

Please note that this event is by invitation only.

We are pleased that our friend David Brock, one of the organists at Hartlip, has agreed to write a series of articles for the New Messenger on 'Hymns', with the third, printed here, on the rousing hymn...

God's Spirit is in my Heart

The first verse and refrain of this hymn are an adaptation of Alan Dale's version of Luke 4.18-19 in his **New World: The Heart of the New Testament in Plain English** (1967). Hubert Richards wrote the tune and added verses 2, 3 and 4.

Alan Dale was a Methodist Minister and spent six years soon after his ordination as a missionary in China. He retired to Dartmouth, where he died in 1979. He married one of my father's many cousins and, as Mum and Dad retired to Dawlish, also in south Devon, they were able to enjoy several visits.

The refrain of the tune Go Tell Everyone is lively and bright, but the opening lines are pitched rather low in both Hymns and Psalms and Singing the Faith. However, that need not be a problem with transposers on electronic organs!

David Brock

God's Spirit is in my heart
He has called me and set me apart.
This is what I have to do,
what I have to do:

*He sent me to give the Good
News to the poor
Tell prisoners that they are
prisoners no more
Tell blind people that they can see
And set the down trodden free
And go tell everyone the news that
the Kingdom of God has come
And go tell everyone
The news That God's Kingdom has come.*

Just as the Father sent me
So I'm sending you out to be,
My witnesses throughout the world,
the whole of the world:

*He sent me to give the Good
News to the poor...*

Don't carry a load in your pack,
You don't need two shirts on your back
A workman can earn his own keep,
Can earn his own keep:

*He sent me to give the Good
News to the poor...*

Don't worry what you have to say,
Don't worry because on that day
God's Spirit will speak in your heart
Will speak in your heart:

*He sent me to give the Good
News to the poor...*



Lola News...



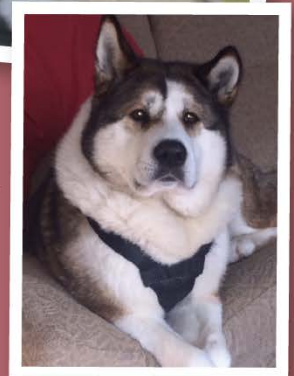
Hello, Lola here, hope you are all well? I have been to visit the Kiddywinks children, some of them are leaving to fulfil the next big step in their lives at primary school. It was a special time and good to see how they have grown over many visits. I also had a sleepover at Mason and Steph's house recently. I was able to explore new sniffs and met up with Caesar the boxer dog next door! We had the occasional bark over the garden fence. I'm glad we had a warm summer and plenty of places to walk and time with Trudy. And hope you have all had a healthy happy summer.



Woofwoof.... love Lola x

Lola | A Poem by Trudy

Lola is my friend, companion, throughout my day.
She brings me joy in every possible way.
There are self-help books by the dozen
In case I'm feeling depressed.
The bookshops and libraries full to the brim
Because these days we often get stressed.
Psychologists, counsellors waiting to help
Now people can be cured by the letter
For me Lola, I know is what makes me feel better.
Lola spends her day making people's lives so much richer
For me she makes me smile, just look at her picture.



Congratulations



Heather & Derek Gallagher
celebrated their Golden Wedding
Anniversary in August



Jenny & Mike Silver
celebrated their
45th Wedding
Anniversary in June

Pen Friends Wed!

This was the headline in Shirley and John Austin's local newspaper on Saturday 19th September 1959, when they were married at Downsview Methodist Church, Thornton Heath, Surrey. When John was doing his national service in Egypt, he wanted someone to write to and his friend suggested his girlfriend's cousin Shirley. They first met when he came home after his national service and the rest is history! This September they celebrate their Diamond Wedding Anniversary.



Phyl Martin Celebrates her 100th Birthday

Phyl had a fabulous two day celebration for her 100th birthday. On her actual birthday she had the ceremony of receiving and opening the long awaited card from the Queen, plus a further one from the Department of Work and Pensions signed by Amber Rudd MP! All that day neighbours and friends popped in to see her with flowers gifts and cards - it was a day of so much love and joy and plenty of cake and coffee. Day two was the surprise family party - again a wonderful day, where Phyl enjoyed all the fuss and attention. Third Avenue (St Paul's) has been a huge part of Phyl's life and she really enjoyed being a member, flower arranger, steward and part of the Women's Fellowship and Drama etc. The family wish to say a big 'thank you all' for your kind wishes and gifts. God Bless!

Reflections on Psalm 139

Derek Gallagher

David

139 O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me.
2 Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising; thou understandest my thought afar off.

Having been blessed with deeply committed Methodist parents, I was always conscious of 'The Word of God' from a very early age, albeit read to me from the King James version – there being no modern versions of the bible translations around in the 1950s. I think that's why the children's hymn 'Tell me the story of Jesus, I love to hear' still has a soft spot in my heart.

Over the years many passages from both the Old and New Testaments have provided both favourite and comforting words which have served as a foundation to my spiritual life. They have also formed the bedrock of my daily attempts to follow the wisdom of the Rule of St Benedict. The daily round of prayer and reflection required within The Rule are centred firmly on the Psalms. One Psalm stands out to me as being very special and pivotal to everything I perceive as God's love for me, for us all. **This is Psalm 139.**

Psalm 139 is attributed to King David, and according to the Jewish tradition, belongs to the 5th book of the psalms (the last 44 psalms up to Psalm 150). In a way I sometimes like to imagine the psalm could also have been written by Christ himself years later to his Father – such is the personal nature of the words.

I am not sure when I first realised the beauty of Psalm 139 – maybe in my late 20s? To me it speaks of God's superb and wonderful care for us as individuals – it shows that each one of us is precious to him and it reminds us that even if we do think of him or forget him – he does not forget us. To me Psalm 139 is a warm blanket that God wraps around us as a measure of the assurance of his love and care for me and you.

This Jewel in the Crown of all the psalms is split into four sections:

- How God knows me
- How God stays close to me
- How God made me
- How God tests me

In so doing it reflects the omniscient and omnipresent nature of God. Which means that we can't have it both ways – once we allow God into our lives he will show himself, if we allow, in every corner of our lives? And if, and when we turn our back on him, whether we like it or not – he is still there with us (v 1-13)

1000 years even before the birth of Christ, so over 3000 years ago, David, without any scientific or technical knowledge was able to perceive that we were **'fearfully and wonderfully made'** (v 14). I think we can link this with Genesis 1:26 – Then God said, **'And now we will make human beings: they will be like us and resemble us'**. Incidentally, what I like about that verse is that it speaks of 'us and we' – a first sign to us, perhaps, of the Trinity? Either way it shows us as unique and special.

Then, to me follows one of the most wonderful verses of the psalm which shows that despite all that we imagine we are entitled to or think is likely to happen to us, God in fact is very much a part of the way our lives are planned out – **'Your eyes saw my body, In your book they were all written, The days that were ordained for me, When yet there were none of them'** (v 16). This phrase reminded me of the lovely prayer from the New Zealand Prayer Book – **'Eternal God, grant to us this day and every day, such readiness and delight in following Christ, that whether our lives are short or long, we shall have lived abundantly'**.

This emphasised to me that our days are ordained and, maybe, that helps us to understand a little that we are not all generally ordained to live our three score and ten. I think of my sister taken from us just two days before her retirement. Over time I realised (rather than becoming bitter about the whole thing) that that was 'her life' – she had been faithful to God and he had been faithful to her. In fact, she had probably packed more into her ordained days

for God in her 59 years than some folk might do in 80 years!

However, pivotal to the phrase **‘all your days were ordained’** is the fact that God has chosen me and has chosen you – I find that amazing. Fortunately, the bible reminds us of that fact on many occasions:

Deuteronomy 7:6 – **‘For you are a holy people who belong to the Lord your God. Of all the people on earth, the Lord has chosen you to be his own special treasure’.**

Colossians 3:12 – **‘Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tender-hearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience’.** This is a firm reminder you cannot have one without the other! Having been chosen by God we continue to fulfil Christ’s mission here on earth as His disciple, through love and compassion for others.

And John 15:16 – **‘You did not choose me. I chose you’**

And amazing though it is, that God watches over us from conception to death there is more, for in that time the psalmist points out the need to praise God for the vast and precious thoughts about each individual human being – **‘If I would count them, they are more in number than the sand’** (v 18).

And it is with that understanding and realisation that God is always alongside us that we can be confident to ask God in our prayers and daily doings to **‘Search me, God and know my heart, Try me, and know my thoughts, see if there is any wicked way in me, And lead me in the ever-lasting way’** (v 23-24).

To me Psalm 139 forms a spiritual journey for anyone trying to understand the nature of God and ultimately his relationship with us and us with him. This is why over the years I have formed the habit that wherever I am, in a church, abbey, cathedral or indeed and especially, an hotel room anywhere in the world, I turn over the pages of any bible I find to the awesome Psalm 139, and leave in an

obvious place, on the bed, for instance, in the hope that someone somehow might read it and also be moved by its wisdom and reassurance. In terms of hotel rooms, I have always been grateful to the Gideon Bible Movement whose mission is to initially leave bibles in as many hotels as will accept them. A great example in this country is the Premier Inn chain of hotels, so that’s a lot of bibles and a lot of opportunities.

My habit of leaving the bible open at Psalm 139 has caught the imagination others over recent years (including an Anglican Archdeacon) so I loosely formed a sort of spoof **139 Club**.

This club currently is made up of twelve members with notable members from Third Ave: Helen & Paul Garland, Ruth & Mark Frost, Anne Boulwood, David Johnson, Rebecca Elliott and Manny Amoah. Each member appointed (by me, of course, the 139 Club self-appointed Chairman!) is expected to evidence their act of leaving a Bible turned to Psalm 139 by virtue of taking a photograph on their mobile phone and circulating it to all other members or at least to the Chairman. The whole act of locating a Bible anywhere they happen to be, turning it to Psalm 139 and photographing the page in situ is called **139ing**. Our youngest members, Rebecca, David and Manny were recruited in Norfolk when they joined the annual Worship Group visit on mission to Sloley in August last year. They soon set about 139ing. When they left the weekend accommodation many rooms and kitchens were the venue for open Bibles left for the next arriving residents to read.

O Lord you have searched me out and known me. You know everything about me -- what was, and is and is to come in my life. For you are an all knowing, all seeing, all powerful and ever present God. Your thoughts about me are too vast, too numerous, and too wonderful to understand, yet I know that I am yours and that you are watching ceaselessly over me.

So search me O God and know my heart. Test me and know my thoughts. See if there are any offending ways in me. Then cleanse me and lead me in your way everlasting. Through Jesus Christ Our Lord. Amen



Every Tuesday in
the Blue Room 1-3pm
All are Welcome



Our local preachers value your prayers as they preach in different Churches around the Circuit...

01 Sep	Derek Gallagher Ian Watton Judith German	St Luke's Swanscombe Bearsted
15 Sep	Margaret Bowerman Brain Davies Trish Robb Karen Willing	Newington St Luke's Strood Spital Street
22 Sep	Anne Boultonwood	Dene Holm
29 Sep	Karen Willing	Hextable
06 Oct	Mandy Harris Karen Willing Colin Waldock	Burham Larkfield St Luke's
13 Oct	Trish Robb	Kingswood
20 Oct	Colin Waldock Margaret Bowerman	Dene Holm Hope Street
27 Oct	Brian Davies	Hope Street

Fun and Games...

Holy Cross Day (14th September) is when the Church celebrates the Cross as a symbol of triumph, as the sign of Christ's victory over death. It began back in the fourth century, when Helena, mother of the Christian Roman Emperor Constantine, travelled from Rome to Israel to seek out places of special significance to Christians.

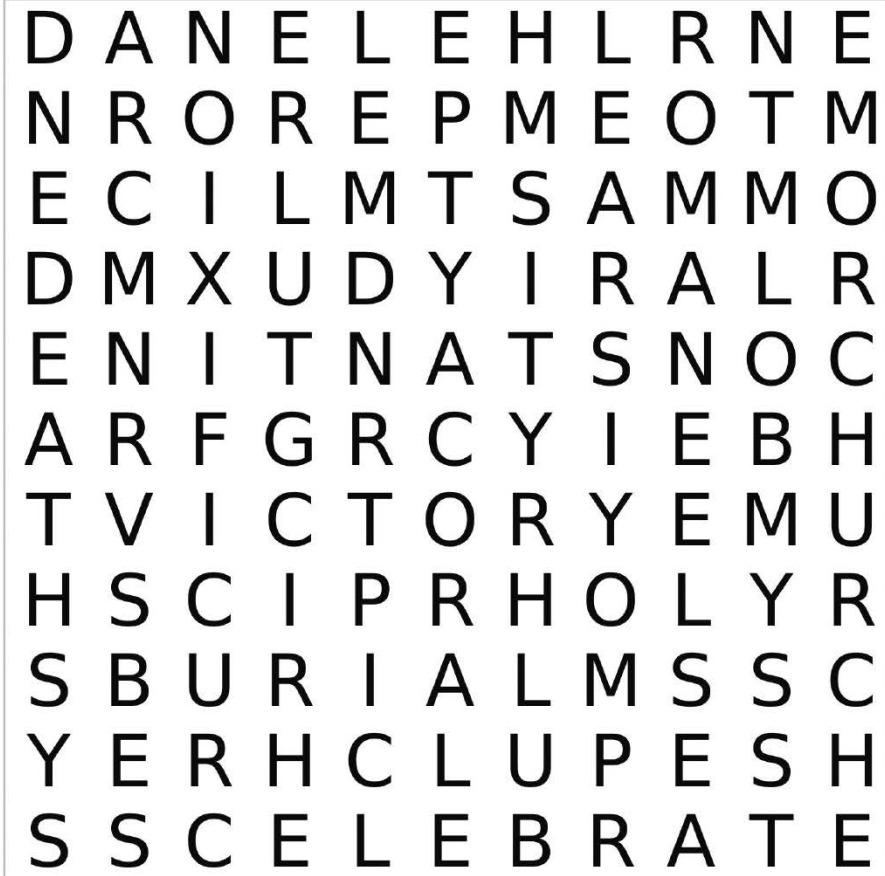
Much of Jerusalem had been destroyed by the Romans in 135 AD, but even so, Helena located what she believed to be the sites of the Crucifixion and of the Burial (and modern archaeologists think she may well be correct). The sites were so close together that she built one large church over them - the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. And that church, built in honour of the Cross, was dedicated on 14th September 335.

Holy
Cross
Day
Celebrate
Symbol

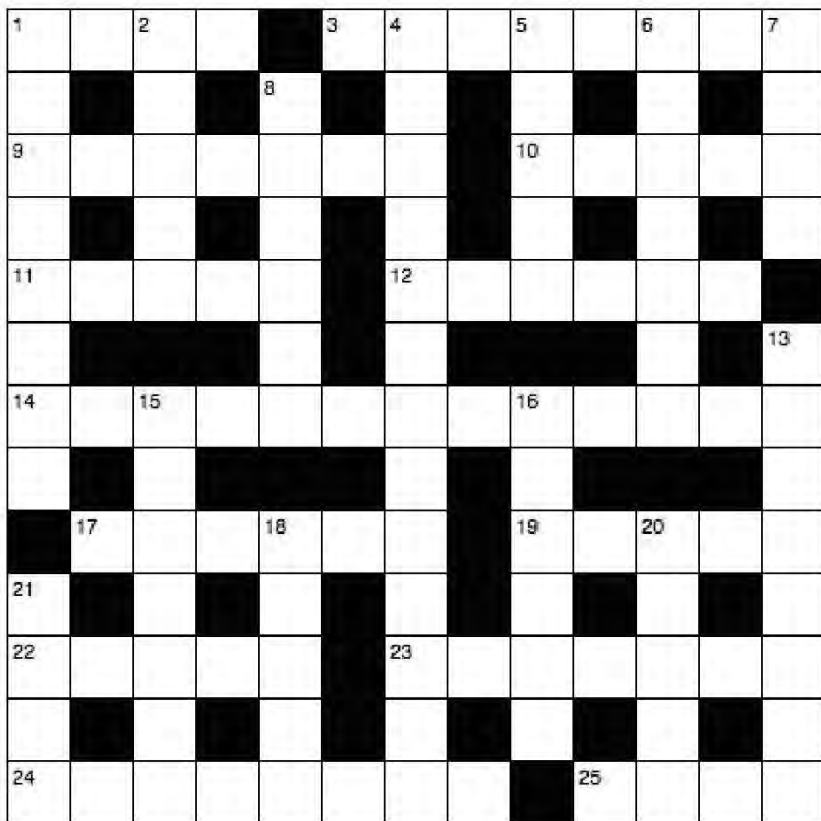
Triumph
Victory
Death
Helena
Roman

Emperor
Constantine
Rome
Israel
Site

Crucifixion
Burial
Sepulchre
Church
Sign



Crossword



Across

- 1 'A little later someone else saw Peter and said, "You — are one of them"' (Luke 22:58) (4)
- 3 Giving (1 Peter 2:5) (8)
- 9 They came to Jerusalem seeking an infant king (Matthew 2:7) (3,4)
- 10 'An athlete... does not receive the victor's crown unless he competes according to the —' (2 Timothy 2:5) (5)
- 11 Pacifist, temperance advocate, open-air preacher, leading 20th-century Methodist, Donald — (5)
- 12 'Come quickly to — —, O Lord my Saviour' (Psalm 38:22) (4,2)
- 14 The God of Abraham, — — —, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus' (Acts 3:13) (5,3,5)
- 17 Sear by intense heat (Revelation 16:8) (6)
- 19 'It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust — —' (Psalm 118:8) (2,3)
- 22 Goods (Nehemiah 13:15) (5)
- 23 i.e. train (anag.) (7)
- 24 Surrounding area (Luke 24:50) (8)
- 25 'Righteousness will be his — and faithfulness the sash round his waist' (Isaiah 11:5) (4)
- Down**
- 1 Elegant and creative (Exodus 31:4) (8)
- 2 'Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all —, but we will all be changed' (1 Corinthians 15:51) (5)
- 4 'I... delight to see how orderly you are and how firm your — — — is' (Colossians 2:5) (5,2,6)
- 5 Enlist (2 Samuel 24:2) (5)
- 6 Of the Muslim faith (7)
- 7 Sharp intake of breath (Job 11:20) (4)
- 8 Woven cloth (Ezekiel 16:13) (6)
- 13 Plentiful (Romans 5:17) (8)
- 15 CIA char (anag.) (7)
- 16 Paul and Silas stopped him committing suicide after an earthquake in Philippi (Acts 16:27–28) (6)
- 18 One of the ingredients in the making of incense for the Lord (Exodus 30:34) (5)
- 20 Episcopal headwear (5)
- 21 Inhabitant of, say, Russia, Ukraine, Poland, Slovakia or Bulgaria (4)

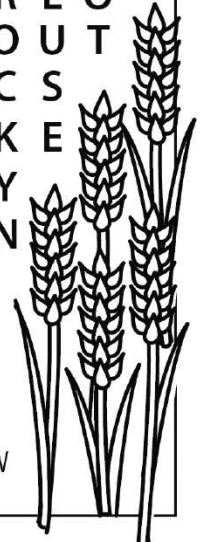
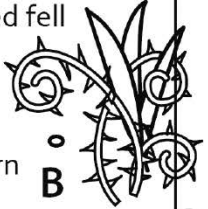


Mouse Makes

Read the story in Mark 1:1-20



Once there was a man who went out to sow corn. As he *scattered* the seed in the field some of it fell along the **path** where it was stepped on and **eaten** by the birds. Some of it fell on **rocky ground**, when the plants sprouted they **dried** up because the soil was dry. Some of the seed fell among **thorns** which grew up with the plants and **choked** them, and some seed fell in the **good** soil; the plants grew and produced corn - a **hundred** grains each!



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

JESUS • TEACH • LAKE • CROWD • GATHERED • BOAT • SHORE
 PARABLE • LISTEN • SOWER • SOW • SEED • PATH • BIRDS • ATE
 FELL • ROCKY • GROUND • SOIL • SUN • SCORCHED • ROOT
 WITHERED • THORNS • CHOKE • GRAIN • GOOD • SPROUT • GROW
 THIRTY • SIXTY • HUNDRED • HEAR • EARS

Smile

School Blues

A little girl had just finished her first week of school. "I'm just wasting my time," she said to her mother. "I can't read, I can't write, and they won't let me talk!"

Toothy grin

While working for an organisation that delivers lunches to the elderly, I used to take my four-year-old daughter on my afternoon rounds. She was unfailingly intrigued by the various appliances of old age, particularly the canes, walkers and wheelchairs.

One day I found her staring at a pair of false teeth soaking in a glass. As I braced myself for the inevitable barrage of questions, she merely whispered, "The tooth fairy will never believe this!"

Say it slow

On a beautiful late summer's day, two American tourists were driving through Wales. They reached Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwyllyllantysiliogogoch (yes, that place in Wales) and stopped for lunch.

Still gazing in fascination at the place name on the sign outside, one of the tourists approached the waitress and said: "Before we order, I wonder if you could settle an argument for us. Can you pronounce where we are, very, very, very slowly?" "Sure," the girl shrugged. She leaned over the counter and said: "Burr-gurr-king".

Parish Pump

Puzzle solutions...

Sudoku Easy...

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

Intermediate...

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

Crossword...

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

Word Search...

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

There is no charge for this magazine, but if you are able, a contribution of at least **60p** would help towards the cost of production and enable us to distribute to the wider community

Many thanks



Rev Robin Selmes

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