

The Link



August 2023



Shanklin United Reformed Church www.shanklinurc.co.uk

View From Number 10



The Next Great Awakening...

Later this month I will once again be travelling to Black Mountain in North Carolina for the Board Meeting of Presbyterian Reformed Ministries International (PRMI). I am grateful to the local churches supporting me in this wider work of ministry, which is helping advance the Kingdom of God in various parts of the world.

I have been involved with the Dunamis Project since it came to the UK in 2000, and GEAR has partnered with PRMI over the last two decades as sister organisations. The focus is very much on equipping, deploying and sending Spirit-filled witnesses to Jesus Christ – seeing disciples growing and using their gifts in his service.

The ministry moved its base to Brad Long's home area when he became Executive Director in 1990, and they acquired the land to create the Community of the Cross in 2003. This is located on 24 acres of hilly land ten minutes' drive from the town, and it provides the administrative and spiritual support base for PRMI's involvement in the worldwide advancement of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The log house provided an initial meeting place, but an extra building was soon added to offer more office and meeting space. After a large fire in 2018, the rear of the log house has now been remodelled and extended to provide a larger meeting room and two more bedrooms.

In the summer, meals are enjoyed in the large, screened porch in front of the house, overlooking the river which flows along the edge of the land - a beautiful relaxing vibe between business sessions!



The new Prayer House was dedicated in January during the Dunamis Fellowship

International gathering which followed the Board meeting. After a few hiccups, they have recently been able to begin ministry there. The plan is now to build more accommodation on site, as resources allow, as most participants in programmes currently have to stay elsewhere in the locality.



The Board is made up of 12 men and women, mostly American or Canadian - including one Chinese lady and a black church leader. The president is based in Nicaragua. We meet in person twice a year and have other interim meetings, sub-committees and prayer gatherings on Zoom. When I joined, the first two meetings were hybrid ones and I dropped in from home – burning the midnight oil when they had evening sessions, five hours behind our time zone.

A significant focus of PRMI is now around preparing for the next Great Awakening, having discerned that the Lord is on the move in various parts of the world, and we all need to be ready and prepared to receive and disciple those who come to faith. These are exciting times in the global church. It is so good to be connecting with the bigger picture and seeing the work of the church in places like South Korea, South America, Indonesia, and among the Chinese community in New York – much of which is truly inspiring.

You can find out more about what is going on at www.primi.org/

Please pray as Paul Stokes and I fly out on 21st August – we return overnight, landing on 28th. We have been friends since college days in Cambridge and it's been great spending quality time with him again – he now works for PRMI from his base in Plymouth (UK).

Blessings in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Brian".

Prayer



Tuesday Prayer at 19:30 - this is still being held via Zoom using the same account as for other activities and groups :

[https://us04web.zoom.us/j/3242665584?
pwd=ZTlXZzBLWnkrWTNBY2JBK1o0K2ZXdz09](https://us04web.zoom.us/j/3242665584?pwd=ZTlXZzBLWnkrWTNBY2JBK1o0K2ZXdz09)

Meeting ID: 324 266 5584

Password: 936536.

Text Prayer Network – this has proved a really efficient method of getting prayer needs around. So, if you have an urgent and important issue that needs immediate cover, please text Lou on the number below with your prayer request and she will mobilise a team of intercessors by forwarding the message to the group. Each of the team will pray and then delete the message.

Lou Jupe - 07474 273119

or, as a back-up - Jean Cunningham: 07854 324809

If you'd like to be added to this network, please get in touch with Lou and she will brief you on the protocols.

Prayer for Israel – is held each Monday at 16:00 at Roy, Melodie and Carol's home and on the church Zoom. Please contact Roy & Melodie for details: melodieroywilson@gmail.com or ☎ 866912

**Prayer Breakfast Saturday 12th August
from 08:30 – 10:00**

Please do join us for an informal summer prayer gathering. We try to hold a special prayer event in the months between our Church business meetings to ensure we keep seeking the Lord.

We will eat and chat for half an hour and then move into a time of prayer and worship.

Prayer Sabbath – please keep Friday 20th – Saturday 21st October free for a 24 hour prayer event. Meetings are on Friday evening and Saturday morning and late afternoon. Look out for more details.

ENCOUNTER

**On the last Sunday of each month
at 10:30**

**A café style meeting place to drop in
and enjoy some refreshments**



**...a relaxed time of Friendship, Fun, Food
and exploring Faith...**

with craft, songs, challenges, prayers...

EVERYONE is welcome – why not bring a friend?

**The gathering on 27th August will be led by
Malc Stevens**

Thank You

I just really want to thank the church family for all the love, visits and help over these last few months since losing Richard. I still need prayer especially as there are meetings going on, and hopefully I will then be able to register Richard's death and get the full death certificate. Just a big thank you to those who have listened, to me let me cry, and have been true friends all round.

Tracy

Stepwise

Discipleship Development for Everyone



It's not too late for people to sign up for the online Stepwise group, 'Faith Filled Life'. The start date has been delayed to enable more people to join the group and we really encourage people to sign up.

Stepwise is an excellent opportunity for you to consider your own discipleship and to explore and enrich your personal faith life.

The online group will meet on Zoom on Monday evenings, as per the times and list of dates on the poster on the opposite page.

Bookings: a participant form is available from the website detailed on the poster, or from Brian or Christopher (editor of *The Link*).

Connection Quiz

1. Who played 'Callan' in the 1967 - 72 TV series?
2. What's the name of the character played by Harry H Corbett in the BBC Comedy 'Steptoe and Son'?
3. Who was the Bard of Stratford upon Avon?
4. Who was the 27th US President?
5. What is the **connection** between the answers to questions 1 - 4?
6. And bonus question... where was the cover photo taken?
Hint: it was in a town in Normandie that has an 'embroidered' connection with 1066 - and your editor was there recently



Answers are on [page 35](#)



Stepwise

Faith Filled Life

On Zoom

Mondays, 19:00 – 21:00

Introductory session – 2nd October 2023

8 further sessions:

October 23rd,
November 13th
December 4th
January 2024 8th, 29th
February 19th
March 11th, April 1st

Please do not be put off joining if you cannot attend every session.
You will receive a link by email before the introductory session.

Complete a participant form available on the Synod website

www.urcwessex.org.uk/discipleship

Please book before 12th September 2023

Contact: Ruth Heine
bookings@urcwessex.org.uk
Tel: 023 8067 4513



A Testimony

Nahum 1:7 “The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; He knows those who take refuge in Him”

During the Sunday service at the beginning of July, when we sang “**I will sing of the goodness of God**” a personal testimony immediately came to mind. It was a time, in ‘a day of trouble’, when I realised that I was absolutely convinced that **the Lord Is Good!** I felt a fluttering in my stomach as of the Holy Spirit encouraging me to share so I prayed for an opportunity, but it didn’t come during that service. I was relieved when I realised that my opportunity would come in 2 days’ time at Bible Bite. Roy and I would be leading, with Brian teaching on Psalm 51. It was the perfect opportunity. In order to be open, transparent and broken before the Lord as David was in Psalm 51; in order to receive His Forgiveness, we do need to know that God is good – and true to His Word. Adam and Eve seem not to have been convinced of these things, because Satan was able to challenge their concept of God in the garden of Eden with “did God really say...”? And since then, everyone in the human race defaults to doubt His goodness until we are set free from sin and our minds are reprogrammed to be assured that He has our best interests at heart – and that He is true to His Word.

In Zimbabwe during our courtship, Roy & I broke up a number of times. Roy was worried about his children feeling abandoned by their Dad if he were to remarry (they were living with their Mum) and each time I realised that he was not able to make a commitment, I would break up. But then he would start our relationship again and so it went round and round. Finally, our pastor challenged Roy that he must make up his mind – he couldn’t keep me in limbo forever. Roy realised he was definitely too unsure to make the commitment to marry me, so this time he was the one who ended our relationship. And that’s when I really knew I had to lay it down completely. Well, I cried for a whole day and Roy waited with me where I was living with Mum (who was away at the time) and Carol. Carol was at work and Roy left as soon as she got back. I told Carol what had happened and she asked me if I was angry with God. Isn’t it strange how a question can bring crystal clear clarity! In an instant

I absolutely knew that – despite the tears – God would bring me through it victoriously because **God Is Good** – I had no doubts.

I had an encounter with the Lord sometime prior to this. Being in my mid-forties and single all my life, I had always hoped that one day I would marry. I struggled with feeling left on the shelf – and ‘deprived’. One day the Lord clearly showed me that He loves me so much that I would be fulfilled whichever path He led me on – even if it were singleness. He also gave me the opportunity of staying with a godly couple whom God had clearly brought together, yet they were clearly struggling with issues – so I had been reminded that the joys of marriage come hand in hand with (sometimes enormous) challenges that single people do not face. Consequently, for the first time ever as far as marriage or singleness was concerned, I was genuinely able to say “Lord, I am willing to embrace whatever You have for me”. The revelation of His love was so special. Roy’s breaking off our relationship when we were so close to being married was the test of my belief about God’s goodness!

My recollection from one of the daily readings in “My Utmost for His Highest” by Oswald Chambers always stays with me: “Unless we can look the deepest darkest fact full in the face without discrediting God’s character, we don’t know Him”

As you can see, in His own timing (only some months after that) God saw to it that we did marry!

Psalm 51 ends with verses 18 & 19, which read in the Passion Translation:

“Because You favour Zion, do what is good for her. Be the protecting wall around Jerusalem. And when we are fully restored, You will rejoice and take delight in every offering of our lives as we bring our sacrifices of righteousness before You in love!”

These verses can easily be glossed over because they seem to represent a change of subject. However, I was really excited about the insight the Lord gave me concerning a further aspect of His Goodness. He gives us the ability to intercede effectively because of our own brokenness, pain and sin! Because of his brokenness, pain and sin, David was in the place of being able to fully identify

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with and intercede effectively for Jerusalem – “... do what is good for her. Be the protecting wall around Jerusalem...” How good is that! May our own experiences lead us also to intercede effectively!

May we sing (as Jerusalem will also be able to sing one day): “And all my life You have been faithful, And all my life You have been so, so good, With every breath that I am able Oh, **I will sing of the goodness of God** ... I love Your voice You have led me through the fire In the darkest night You are close like no other...”

Melodie



It was a great sadness that this major Christian gathering on the Island had to be cancelled, along with other events, due to adverse weather over the July weekend.

Seeing the rain teeming down on Friday evening, it did feel like a bit of a relief, although the Saturday kept pretty fine. It was the high winds that brought a safety risk with the large stage and various marquees on an exposed site.

A huge amount of work had gone in and much of the site work had been done when the decision was made on the Thursday morning. Over 80 volunteers had been briefed and prepared for their various roles over the weekend but thankfully the decision came before any groups had travelled over. Insurance sadly did not cover the loss.

Our prayers are with the leadership team and the trustees as they look to running a smaller event later in the year and plan for 2024.

Building Works this month

Work has begun on the secondary glazing to the large windows in the church. Apart from The Well, on Wednesdays, please avoid coming into the building during weekdays so the men can get on.

After 6th August, the projection screen will be removed to allow scaffolding to that window, and we may have a Sunday or two without a screen. A new large TV screen will then take its place.

We need to clear space in the balcony for scaffolding to go up for those windows be done. Please claim anything that you have a stake in, or it may get dumped.

If you are able to help with the **clear out on Friday afternoon of 11th August** and getting items to charity shops and to the dump, please speak to Malc or Pete.

80th Birthday Party – come and join the fun

Eileen reaches a milestone birthday on 11th August and has asked if we might have a **bring-and-share lunch on Sunday 13th** to help her celebrate.

Please do note this date and bring something towards a buffet lunch so we can join her and the family in a party.

Baptismal Service

Saturday 2nd September

14:00

on Shanklin Beach

- opposite the crazy golf



Please save the date and come along to celebrate with Hannah Jupe and Terry Ogier as they make a public declaration of faith in Jesus.

Do please speak to Brian if you feel the Lord is calling you to take this step of commitment.

July Open Air Worship

It was good to welcome Caz and friends, Dylan, Ali and Ollie, from Niton for a Living Waters music night at Rylstone in July as they led us in worship and shared songs, readings and prayers.

Around 70 attended from around The Bay and beyond.



Rylstone Open Air Concerts

The last open air concert of 2023 will be on:

Sunday 10th September at 15:30

and will feature

Shanklin Town Brass Band



Thank You

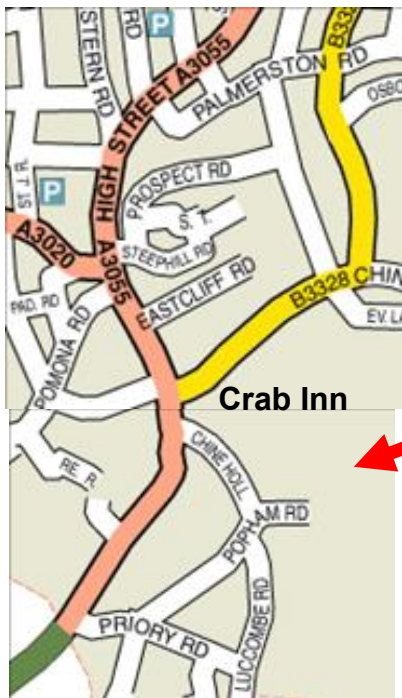
Richard and Letitia Ash-Lameer are pleased to report that Letitia's broken leg is healing well, she no longer has a support brace and is able to weight bare (carefully).

We want to thank you all for your support and prayers and especially for those who visited us and bought us wonderful meals.

CHRISTIANS WORKING TOGETHER IN THE BAY

warmly invite you to join us for

Worship in the Open Air



Each Sunday 19:30
at Rylstone Gardens
(turn left just past the Old Village)

An informal service for everyone led
from the bandstand by local Churches

Until 27th August

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FUNDRAISING IN SUPPORT OF HELP *for* HEROES

BBQ

CHARITY NO
1120920

We are holding another BBQ on the date below. Please come and support our armed forces, thank you

When: 16th September 2023

Time 16:00 - 19:00 (Food from 17:00)

Venue: 93 Lushington Hill, Wootton Bridge, PO33 4NR (next to Wootton Bridge Car Boot Field)

Huge variety of homemade cakes for sale, bric-a-brac, crafts for sale, children's lucky dip, sweets stall, guess the weight of the cake and tombola.

RSVP (for catering): Miriam or Malc: 07891 935221 or 883811

A suggested price list will be available for food.

All proceeds go directly to the above charity



You are welcome to Living Well Together

**A safe place for friendship, support and
refreshing – here at Shanklin URC:**

Wednesdays 11:00 – 13:00

Free refreshments and craft activities

Just drop in at any point



Swift Nesting Boxes in our Tower?

At a recent Church Meeting we shared about the possibility of installing nesting boxes behind some of the slats in our bell chamber. My cousin Robin is the Conservation officer for BCP Council just across the water and he spends much of his spare time pursuing the same interests. He came over



with a friend from Hampshire Swifts to check the feasibility of this, and also met Bill Croydon at Aspire to look at their tower. Both places seem very suitable sites for a pilot project, and they hope to be able to install five boxes in each location in time for next season – by April. Our own Robin and Sue have had two boxes fitted to their house and there is activity!!

Here is an article that explains the importance of the work.

Brian

Swifts really are birds of the air. They eat, sleep, drink and mate on the wing, landing only for brief periods when breeding, in nooks and crannies in buildings or rock-crevices during the period May to August. Young birds, on leaving the nest site, do not breed until they are three years old, so they have no need to land, anywhere, in that time.

Swifts migrate here from Southern Africa to northern latitudes in the spring – a journey typically of around 6,000 miles. They arrive with us in early May, find their previous mate and if they locate their old nest site, breed quickly. The young fly the nest site in August then both adults and young depart our shores in late-August, flying back to Southern Africa.

Swifts are unobtrusive, often silent and fantastic housekeepers. Quite often nest sites in houses go unnoticed by occupants, as the birds go about their business rapidly and quietly. Even when feeding young they may only visit to feed three or four times a day. The family will roost together at night in the nest space which the adults keep scrupulously clean. The only time anyone may be aware of Swifts in their area is during the summer, when they gather in small parties, wheeling around the sky, sometimes flying low down over

roof-tops socialising and bonding with each other, with their high-pitched calls.

Swifts used to be more numerous but, unfortunately, their population in the UK has dropped by 65% in the last 25-30 years. They continue to decline at an alarming rate. Swifts, like many other of our once common breeding birds, are now on the Red-list of Birds of Conservation Concern. The reason for this decline is simple – holes in buildings are being blocked when older, wooden fascias and soffits (eaves) are replaced by tight-fitting plastic. Birds are therefore excluded; birds which have used the same clean nest site for years and years no longer have a home. Not only that, new spaces are limited so the numbers successfully breeding go down.

Hampshire Swifts is passionate about Swifts. We are trying to change the fortunes of these beautiful and enigmatic birds by encouraging as many churches to install purpose-built nesting sites in suitable locations. Already we have fitted Swift-boxes to houses on the Isle of Wight this year and we are looking at working with the United Reformed Church to install specially designed and fitted boxes behind louvres high-up in the church tower. The church will be in good company. Winchester Cathedral has an array of Swift-boxes in the bell-tower and a good proportion are already occupied. Other churches where boxes have been fitted recently include St Mary Magdalene (New Milton), St Mary's Church (Twyford) and Christ Church (Winchester). Swifts are already nesting in one or two older buildings in Shanklin and there are reports of parties of birds wheeling around the town. Swifts are very good at finding holes in buildings; their very success depends on this so, once fitted, there is every chance that we shall see Swifts using the boxes in the tower. To help in the process we will be fitting a "call-player" which emits a sound that copies a Swift-call, and has proved successful elsewhere, attracting birds soon after being installed.

For more information about our work and how you can help, please see the Hampshire Swifts website:

www.hampshireswifts.co.uk

Bob Lord

Hampshire Swifts



Refresher Safeguarding Training

Part 1 - 19 October 2023

Part 2 - 2 November 2023

Part 3 - 16 November 2023

Virtual sessions on Zoom

19:00 - 21:00

A full day's training for all individuals working with children, young people and adults at risk. Also important for Ministers and Elders of the Church. The course covers:

- **Policy and Programme**
- **Premises** (risk assessments, security, accidents and first aid, fire safety, Transport)
- **People** (recruitment, working together culture, communication online & phones)
- **Protecting Children and Adults at Risk** (forms of abuse, recognising signs of abuse, responding to concern or disclosures, reporting structures)
- **Paper Trails** (forms, records, registers,)
- **Safer Church Culture**

Certificates are presented to those completing this training course.

Trainers - Phil Ray and Ruth White, Children's & Youth Development Officers

**For more information and to book your place please contact:
bookings@urcwessex.org.uk / 023 8067 4513**

Good News for All!

'Good News' is a contemporary outreach newspaper used by churches and missions to take the good news about Jesus Christ into communities across the UK.

Every month, Good News reaches thousands of readers with true stories of how God is changing the lives of those who put their trust in his Son, Jesus. Using jargon-free language, it also explains how everyone can find a personal relationship with Jesus.



Copies are available at the back of church - and is such a great resource for people to read and then pass on to others!!

This month's edition (also available to read online at www.goodnews-paper.org.uk/viewlatesteditionspage.htm) has several great articles, including the headline article '**Hero Risks Life To Save Others**' - about the ex-soldier who saves lives, driven by the love of God.

Other contributions include:

- **Scientist Encounters God** - World-class scientist changed by Jesus
- **Paul Simon Gets Spiritual** - Legendary singer's new album explores God, heaven and forgiveness
- **Kids TV Pirate Shares Greatest Treasure** - CBeebies' Gemma Hunt rewrites Bible stories for kids
- **Lord Says Prayer Is Key** - Former Lord Chancellor says prayer sustained him through career
- **Social Media Star Finds Reality** - Oli London says Jesus has saved him
- **Blind Surfer Conquers Huge Waves** - How Derek Rabelo surfs by faith

Good News... for a change

LOL = Laugh Out Loud



The Bible story which always makes me 'laugh out loud' is found in John Chapter 9. Do read it again, it's hilarious! And that was the story we presented at St Blasius school on 11th July. St Blasius has asked for a team to regularly present Open the Book from September, so this was a one-off to give them a taster. We arrived at 08:00 to set out the props. As we were rehearsing, a support assistant brought in a little girl with special needs, and explained to her what we would be doing. That child plus 5 others were later dressed as disciples of Jesus and a crowd to take part in the story.

Before it started, the children seated in the hall were invited to join in various interactions. Every time Roy read "I have a question", the children repeated it and drew a question mark in the air. But the bit they liked best was pulling a face and saying "Yuk" when Jesus spat on the ground, made mud, then rubbed it on the blind man's eyes. "It was really messy" (Yuk) read Roy, as 'Jesus' wiped his hands down his tunic.





A helpful bystander drew water from the well for the blind man to wash. The week following this presentation at Haylands School in Ryde, I asked the children what happened after the blind man washed away the mud. The little boy who answered responded with the exact words from the script: "He was blind no more".



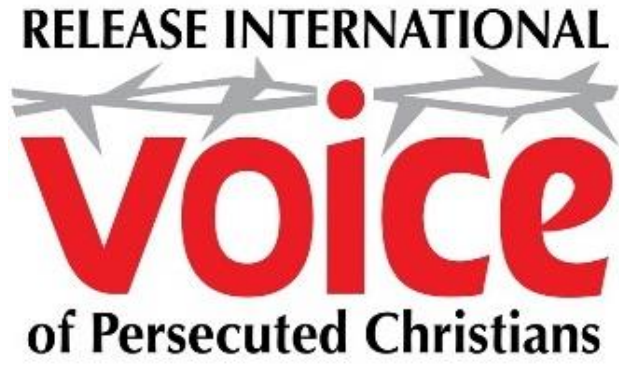


Back at St Blasius, the crowd gathered round the man (who could now see) and bombarded him with questions. A strict religious leader asked how Jesus could be on God's side. It was the Sabbath,

so Jesus was breaking God's law. The children in the crowd were encouraged to put up their hand as each question was asked. The third child didn't need prompting – her hand shot up as soon as Roy read "I have a question." The poor man was overwhelmed and finally shouted out: "I don't know the answers to all your questions, but I do know this. Once I was blind and now I can see. Who but someone sent by God could do a thing like that?" Exhausted, he went and sat by the well. Jesus turned up and also had a question. He asked: "Do you believe God sent me?" The man was delighted to say he did. At which point Jesus said "Then, no more questions." And everyone shouted 'Hooray'.



Back in May some of us took a morning service at Sandown Methodist Chapel. Praise God, 2 ladies came up afterwards and said they were interested in joining an Open the Book team. They, and about 20 others, came to Newport Congregational Church on July 8th for an 'Air and Share'. The Bible Society had arranged for our Regional Development Officer, Steff Shepherd, to come from the mainland and lead that event. Rev Hugh from St Catherine's had brought along 2 of his congregation and said there were 2 more who were keen to take assembly at St Francis School, Ventnor. As a result, there will be a training day at Shanklin URC on Saturday 19th August after which we hope to set up 2 new teams. That will be another 300 children for whom the Bible will regularly be brought to life in a fun way they can understand and will remember. Do you know anyone who might be interested in joining us, praying for us or helping to make props and costumes?



“To love and serve Persecuted Christians”

Prayer Alert: Urgent Request from Nigeria

A Release International partner in Nigeria has messaged us, asking for urgent prayer for his country and particularly vulnerable Christian communities that have recently come under attack.



‘Please pray for our country Nigeria and [particularly] for Plateau state and also some parts of Benue state where the Fulani herdsmen have recently been fighting the communities,’ he said.

‘Many are recorded dead and many more are displaced. In the Mangu area of Plateau state, a curfew has been imposed by the state government.’

He added that the federal Government had deployed the army in these communities to try to restore peace.

Updates

Thank God that the wife and son of the late Chinese Christian

lawyer **Dr Li Baiguang** have made it to safety in the US.

Dr Li, who defended the religious freedom and human rights of ordinary citizens, died at the age of 49 under suspicious circumstances in China in 2018.

His wife and son, Hanmei 'Hannah' Xu and Qingxin 'Pure Heart' Li, are presently seeking asylum, according to our partners, ChinaAid and Voice of the Martyrs Korea.

'Since Dr Li's sudden death in early 2018, his wife has been closely controlled and monitored without freedom of movement by agents arranged by the Communist Party of China in order to prevent her from having contact with anyone overseas,' said Bob Fu, head of ChinaAid.

ChinaAid also reports that several leaders of the **Golden Lampstand Church** in Linfen who have been falsely accused of fraud will go on trial on 21st August.

Chinese authorities used dynamite and heavy machinery to destroy the church's building in 2018.

This faithful house church has steadfastly refused to join the government-sanctioned church and as a result the congregation has faced intense persecution.

Pastor Wang Xiaoguang and his wife Pastor Yang Rongli (pictured right) have been detained for more than two years. **They are said to be weak in their health but still pray for each other in prison and miss each other greatly.**



Prayer & Praise

Pray for an end to the violence in northern and central Nigeria,

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particularly Plateau and Benue states

Ask God to comfort all those bereaved, injured or displaced by the recent attacks and pray that the military will be effective in stopping further violence

Thank God that Dr Li's family have made it to safety in the US. Pray that they will be granted asylum

Praise God for the Golden Lampstand Church and the faith of leaders Wang Xiaoguang and Yang Rongli. Pray for recovery in their health and for justice to prevail at their trial in August

Pray for the acquittal and release of the many other detained believers in China.

Our brothers and sisters throughout the world are facing '**trials of various kinds**'. As we give thanks to God for the freedom we have to worship and our comfortable church building, do please remember those who are paying such a heavy price for following Jesus and may it spur us on in our discipleship to be those wholly committed to our dear Lord Jesus, who gave up the glory of Heaven and suffered the most cruel death, that we might be saved.

Do please take the excellent resources from **Release International**, **Open Doors**, **Barnabas** and **Elam** - so very helpful with daily prayers for our persecuted Church Family.

Please also visit their websites - useful for further information and praying for any new situations that may arise.

- Release International: releaseinternational.org/
- Open Doors: www.opendoorsuk.org/
- Barnabas: www.barnabasaid.org/gb/
- Elam: www.elam.com/

Blessings in Jesus' Name

Jane H

Source: Release International

Shanklin Town Brass Band



is 30 Years Old this year!
and is holding a...

30th Birthday Concert

on

Saturday 14th October

19:30

Shanklin United Reformed Church

Admission Free

Retiring Collection in aid of SURC



Maturity

In this month's article, Neil looks at our foundational need to grow in maturity as Christians ~ by seeking to know God better through scripture ~ only then are we able to live out our faith daily. Neil goes on to suggest 10 outpourings of our faith which would show such maturity ...

An Intact Belief System

“If you point these things out to the brothers and sisters, you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus, nourished on the truths of the faith and of the good teaching that you have followed.”
(1 Timothy 4:6)

One problem with Christian maturity is trying to base spiritual growth on practical sections of the Scriptures and spending too little time internalising the doctrinal sections. Each of Paul's letters tends to fall into two major parts. The first part is generally doctrinal, such as Romans 1-8, Ephesians 1-3, Colossians 1-2, etc. These sections reveal what we need to know about God, ourselves, sin and salvation. The second half of each letter is the practical section: Romans 12-15, Ephesians 4-6, Colossians 3-4, etc. These passages describe what we need to do to live out our faith in daily experience.

In our zeal to correct the problems in our lives - doubt, temptation, satanic attack, conflict in families, friendships and churches which are falling apart - we jump to the practical instructions of God's Word. We want a quick fix, a rule or instruction, which we can apply like a plaster to make things better.

Perhaps you have already discovered that a sticking plaster approach to daily living doesn't work. Why not? Because when you

don't understand the truth of your position in Christ, you have no ground for success in the practical arena.

How can you **“Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer” (Romans 12:12)** without the confidence of knowing **“since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:1)?**

When your basic belief system about God and yourself is shaky, your day-to-day behaviour system will be shaky. But when your belief system is intact and your relationship with God is based on truth, you'll have very little trouble working out the practical aspects of daily Christianity. Show me someone who knows who they are in Christ and who is filled with the Holy Spirit, as taught in the first half of the Epistles, and I will show you someone who will instinctively live according to the second half of the Epistles. It will be the "natural" thing to do.

Loving Father, I desire to know what I need to know about You so I can live the way You desire for me to live.

Do It Anyway

“Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.” (Galatians 6:10)

People are unreasonable, illogical and self-centred.

Love them anyway.

If you do good, people will accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives.

Do good anyway.

If you are successful, you will win false friends and true enemies.

Succeed anyway.

The good you do today will be forgotten tomorrow.

Do good anyway.

Honesty and frankness make you vulnerable.

Be honest and frank anyway.

The biggest people with the biggest ideas can be shot down by the

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smallest people with the smallest minds.

Think big anyway.

People favour underdogs but follow only top dogs.

Fight for the underdog anyway.

What you spend years building may be destroyed overnight.

Build anyway.

People really need help but may attack you if you help them.

Help people anyway.

Give the world the best you've got and you'll get kicked in the teeth.

Give the world the best you've got anyway.

Lord, I purpose today not to listen to my detractors or look to the left or the right, but to stay on the clear, sure path You have set before me.

Neil Anderson

Freedom in Christ Ministries

Used by permission

Let each one of us seek to grow and help one another along that path ...

“For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience” (Colossians 1: 9-11)

Dear Father God, thank You that we may call You our Father, and thank You that You have given us the means by which we may be mature followers of Your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, that we might produce fruit for Your Kingdom.

Help us daily to support our fellow Christians and to live in our community as “People of the Way” being witnesses to Your

Kingdom, for Your glory. Amen.

Robin

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Harvest Plans

22nd – 24th September 2023

Church Meeting agreed to the idea of having a fish and chip supper on Friday 22nd September to bring the church family together.

Sue Wightman has kindly agreed to look into this, draw up a sign-up sheet and coordinate the food order from a local chip shop. Please look out for details. This is very much a social time so we may plan a welcome activity and could perhaps have a few items of home-spun entertainment to round things off. Please speak to Brian if you have ideas or offers for that.

We will then have an Encounter Café Service for all ages on the Sunday morning – and Harvest Messy Church will follow the weekend after on Saturday 30th.

It was felt at the last church meeting that the financial gifts this year should go to local community projects to help feed families who are struggling with the cost-of-living crisis. We are looking into the best way to do that.

We will also encourage everyone to once again bring contributions to the loW Foodbank who do great work in that area.



FOCUS

on our Christian Brothers and Sisters being persecuted for their faith

Fresh crackdown on Christians in Iran with arrests of more than 50 converts

There is a fresh and aggressive crackdown on Christians in Iran, with more than 50 converts arrested in the past seven days – and the number could well rise.



Tehran, the capital, is one of the five cities in Iran where the wave of arrests have occurred

Your urgent prayers are needed following the arrests of more than 50 Christian converts in a wave of incidents over the past seven days in Iran, and there are fears this could rise.

This fresh and aggressive crackdown on believers in their homes and house churches has occurred in five different Iranian cities: Tehran, Karaj, Rasht, Orumiye and Aligoudarz. At least 51 are believed to remain in detention, whilst others have been released on bail.

Morality police return to the streets – with greater aggression

It's unclear what accounts for this crackdown, but it coincides with the morality police being more visible and aggressive on the streets, having withdrawn to an extent following the protests that emerged in the wake of Mahsa Amini's death whilst in custody in September 2022.

“The reason for this sudden surge in nationwide arrests of Christians is not clear at this stage,” says Mansour Borji, advocacy director for Article 18, which lobbies for Christian freedom in Iran. “What is obvious is that Iran has begun a fresh crackdown on civil liberties, and the traditionally vulnerable groups, like Christians, are on the front line of those targeted.”

Highlighting the return of the morality police to Iran's streets, he added that ‘overall there seems to be a renewed or more aggressive crackdown on groups the regime feels threatened by’.

The news comes after it emerged that Pastor Nadarkhani – whom many of you have been praying for – has had new charges levelled at him, just months after being released from prison.

House churches viewed as a threat

Iran is number eight on the World Watch List, with the latest report, released earlier this year, highlighting a slight increase in persecution against Christians. The country is ruled by an increasingly strict Islamic regime, which views the existence of Iranian house churches as an attempt by Western countries to undermine Islam and their authority. This is why many of the charges levelled against Christians centre around crimes ‘against national security’.

Thank you for your continued support for Iranian sisters and brothers. Please continue to uphold them in prayer.

Please Pray

- For an end to this crackdown and the sudden arrests, and that all those arrested will be freed without charge

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- That those in prison will be guarded from harm and that they, and their families, will feel God's close presence with them
- That the authorities' hearts towards Christians will soften and that there will be greater religious freedom in Iran.

Further Information

- Iran is number 8 in the Open Doors World Watch List 2023
- Almost everyone in Iran is Muslim – there are believed to be about 1.2 million Christians in a population of more than 86 million (1.4%).
- Main threats are Islamic oppression & dictatorial paranoia.

How are Christians persecuted in Iran?

- Iran is ruled by an increasingly strict Islamic regime, which views the existence of Iranian house churches as an attempt by Western countries to undermine Islam and their authority. Christians who have converted from Islam face the greatest risk.
- Iranian Christians may be banned from education, lose their jobs and find it very difficult to get back into employment. For women, the situation is even more precarious because Iranian law grants women few rights. If discovered as a Christian, they are likely to be violently punished or divorced by their husbands and have their children taken away from them.
- There is an ancient history of Armenian and Assyrian Christians in Iran; these are protected by the state, but treated as second-class citizens. They are not allowed to let Christians from Muslim backgrounds attend their services, nor are they allowed to worship in Persian, the national language.
- It's no surprise that many Iranian believers feel forced to leave Iran and try to start a new life elsewhere.

19th July 2023

Source: [Open Doors](#) - used by permission

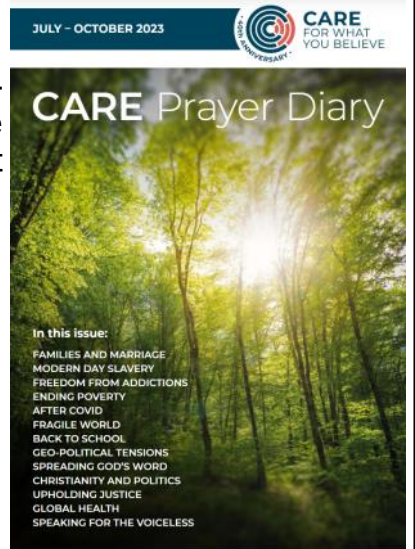
Care Prayer Diary

The new **Care Prayer Diary** (July - October 2023) is now available at the back of the church - and online at care.org.uk/our-publications/prayer-diary.

The following topics are covered:

- Families & Marriage
- Modern Day Slavery
- Freedom from Addictions
- Ending Poverty
- After Covid
- Fragile World
- Back to School
- Geo-Political Tensions
- Spreading god's Word
- Christianity & Politics
- Upholding Justice
- Speaking for the Voiceless

This such a helpful 'tool' for prayer - do take a copy - and for anyone you might feel would be helped by it.



Connection Quiz Answers

1. **Edward Woodward.**
2. **Harold Steptoe.**
3. **William Shakespeare.**
4. **William Taft.**
5. **Connection: They are the four successive kings of England from 1042 to 1100.**
6. **This issue's cover photo is of... La Cathédrale Notre-Dame de Bayeux - and a brightly coloured Renault Twingo.**



The Puzzle Pages

Sudoku

A numerical placement puzzle!

To solve it you need to fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3 x 3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.

Enjoy!

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

1		2		3		4		5		6			7
						8							
9									10		11		
						12							
	13								14	15			16
17					18				19		20		
21			22					23					
		24									25		
26								27					
			28		29			30					
31				32							33		

Last month's Sudoku - how did you do?

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

Across

- 1 First book of NT (7)
 5 Road in Shanklin, next to Rock Shop (6)
 8 French for island (3)
 9 Capital of Normandie, France (5)
 10 Eager to see something, "I'm all..." (4)
 12 A jolting collision - and the 6th Mr Men book (4)
 13 A cunning plan (4)
 14 US TV show set in a hospital in the Korean war (4)
 17 Insect that makes 3 down (3)
 18 Baked -, popular food item, especially on toast (5)
 20 New - used in compound words (3)

- 21 @ (2)
 23 O Come All - Faithful (2)
 24 See 4 Down (6)
 25 British air force *initials* (3)
 26 Thanks, slang (2)
 28 Not Happy (3)
 30 First of the 'Mr Men' (6)
 31 Not No (3)
 32 First 'Little Miss' (5)
 33 12 months (4)

Down

- 1 Second book of NT (4)
 2 Make a person's hair untidy (6)
 3 Sweet substance made by 17 across (5)
 4 (& 24 across) Home of The Wombles (9)
 5 Berlin is this country's capital (7)
 6 Cooker brand (3)
 7 A reproductive cell (3)
 11 York river (4)
 13 Animal kept at home (3)
 15 Waterproof jacket (6)
 16 City on River Seine estuary (8)
 17 AAA is a small one (7)
 19 Game - and match, tennis (3)
 22 Seashore (5)
 27 Don't go (4)
 29 Two people (3)

Can You Guess The Year?

- Arsenal win the FA Cup beating Manchester Utd.
- The film '*Moonraker*' is released in the UK.
- Thorpe Park in Surrey opens
- And UK No. 1s included:
 - Blondie with '*Sunday Girl*'
 - The Buggles with '*Video Killed the Radio Star*'
 - Cliff Richard with '*We Don't Talk Anymore*'
 - Art Garfunkel with '*Bright Eyes*'

Answer next issue

This Issue's 'Pot Luck' Quiz Questions

1. How tall is the Eiffel Tower (in metres)?
2. Who represented the UK at Eurovision in 1972?
3. What is the capital of Croatia?
4. Who narrated The Wombles on BBC TV in the 1970s?
5. And who wrote the theme song to The Wombles?
6. Who succeeded William I as king of England?
7. When was Doctor Who first broadcast on BBC TV ?
8. When was the '*Shard*' in London opened?
9. On the periodic table, which element is Ag?
10. When was the Eurovision Song Contest started?

Answers next issue

Please note that the **deadline** for contributions for the next magazine is:

Sunday 20th August

Contributions can be emailed at anytime up to the deadline day to the editor at:

surc.thelink@btinternet.com

Last Issue's Solutions

- Guess the year: it was 1970

- Last issue's crossword ↓

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

Last Issue's 'Pot Luck' Quiz Answers

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Cappadocia, Türkiye | 6. Jaguar |
| 2. 1994 | 7. Arnold Ridley (played Private Godfrey in 'Dad's Army') |
| 3. Ljubljana | 8. 11 th June 1981 |
| 4. Evacuation of troops from Dunkirk | 9. Gold |
| 5. Princess Elizabeth | 10. 12 th April 1992 |

Sunday Service

- Morning** **10:30 Morning Worship** in church
Broadcast live on YouTube
- **Holy Communion** on 1st Sunday of each month
 - **Encounter service** on last Sunday of each month

Weekday Activities

- Monday** 10:00 **Prayer for Israel** on the Church Zoom
- Tuesday** **Bible Bite** ministry in church
on summer break, returns 5th September
- 19:30 **Prayer Meeting** on Zoom
- Wednesday** 11:00 **Living Well Together**
- Friday** 10:00 **CatURpillars**
- Saturday** 10:30 **Coffee Morning** on Zoom
– a chance to catch up and have a chat

Details of any other services/activities that we hold will be posted:

- inside the church
- on our Facebook page
- and on our website

Minister: **Rev Brian Harley**



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Day off: *Monday*

Secretary: **Robin Wightman**



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Shanklin URC is a member of the **Evangelical Alliance**

www.shanklinurc.co.uk

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