

The Link



September 2023



Shanklin United Reformed Church www.shanklinurc.co.uk

View From Number 10



Reaching out with the Good News

The primary purpose of the church is to be a witness to Jesus Christ and to help others find him – Jesus commissioned his first disciples to go and make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:18-20).

Today we must not lose sight of that essential part of our life and work - sharing the Good News with others so that they too might find new life in Christ and eternal salvation. **HOPE Together** has a vision to use Easter 2024 as a major period of outreach in the UK and I'm sure we'd want to jump at that opportunity to share in things. They are releasing a new short course entitled **Alive** looking at five resurrection appearances of Jesus to help people explore the astonishing truth that Jesus came back from the dead.

You can read more about this at:

www.hopetogether.org.uk/Groups/399115/Alive_Easter_2024.aspx

The Talking Jesus research in 2022 showed that 45% of the UK population believe that Jesus rose from the dead! 16% are totally convinced but a further 29% believe but have some uncertainties about this. Easter is a great opportunity to reach that 29% and help them fully realise the transforming power of the resurrection of Jesus now and for eternity!

We need not wait till then, of course. This new term presents us with many opportunities to explore faith – our Encounter Harvest special, Messy church and regular meeting points like The Well and CatURpillars give us great chances to talk about why we do church.

One resource that has been such a blessing to us for nearly 30 years is **The Alpha Course**. We have used it many times over this period and it has brought much fruit as lots of people have been helped in getting to know Jesus and making a start on the path of discipleship – it is just a beginning, hence the name.

Do please pray about this – maybe it's for you to find out more about what it means to follow Jesus - or for a friend or neighbour who has

questions. Consider who you might invite along – you are welcome to come with them.

Blessings in Christ,



Make sense of life

Explore some of the big questions

The Alpha Course



Wednesday afternoons at 15:30

From 27th September

In our downstairs rooms

A practical introduction to the Christian faith

Come for tea and cake, a short video presentation and time for questions and discussion

For more info talk to Sheilagh or Brian

Rev Brian Harley ☎ 862485

brianharley58@gmail.com

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.

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

ENCOUNTER

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

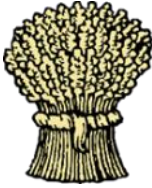
**A café style meeting place to drop in
and enjoy some refreshments**



**...a relaxed time of Friendship, Fun, Food
and exploring Faith...
with craft, songs, challenges, prayers...**

**EVERYONE is welcome
– why not bring a friend?**

A Harvest Special will be on 24th September led by Brian



Harvest 2023



At the July church meeting the following programme was agreed upon:

- On Friday 22nd September we will hold a “fish and chip” fellowship supper, please see below.
- On Sunday 24th September we will hold a Harvest Encounter Café service led by Brian.
- On Saturday 30th September we will hold a Messy Harvest event led by Yvonne and the team. Please speak to Yvonne or Brian if you can help out.

Harvest Appeal

Church Meeting also decided that our harvest appeal should be in support of a locally based “family” project and Rod & Ann Foster undertook to look into the Mother and Baby Facility housed in the Lodge at the Winchester House YMCA building. Here is a summary of their detailed report (*huge thanks to Rod & Ann*):-

This project, which began in 2014, seeks to support mothers between the ages of 16 to 25 (and their babies) who are either classified as homeless, those who cannot live with their families or those where their homes are in crisis ~ they are usually referred by the Council. Those who are placed there are helped to take responsibility for their own welfare and to learn ‘life skills’ which will aid them in the future. By its very nature, this is a protected environment for the occupants and therefore security and confidentiality are paramount.

- The ongoing needs of the facility fall into 4 main categories:
- Financial donations to help them maintain and improve the facility
- Mother & Baby Items (especially disposable nappies, sizes 3-6)
- Household Items for the accommodation (ranging from tea towels to fridges & freezers, please ask Rod & Ann for more details)
- Volunteers to help out (especially in the areas of Life Skills training; Arts and Crafts; Cooking; Home Maintenance etc.)

On behalf of the Elders, in the weeks before and after our own Harvest Celebration, envelopes will be provided for cash donations to this Harvest Appeal, which will be passed onto the organisers of the project.

If you would like to know more about the work of the Mother and Baby Facility or would like to donate any new and second-hand items which might be of use to them, please speak to Rod & Ann Foster.

If you have some spare time, why not consider volunteering with them?

As usual, during our service on Sunday 24th, we will be collecting food and non-perishable gifts for the IoW Foodbank to help support those on the Island who have been hit hardest by the cost-of-living crisis. Look out for details of the items most needed this month.



Harvest Supper on Friday 22nd September @ 18:00

Sue W will put up a sign-up sheet during September and will coordinate our food order from the Paramount Café, which will be delivered to the church. This will consist of four choices (with prices) including a vegetarian option. Unfortunately, Paramount cannot provide a gluten-free option but please do come and join in with us and 'bring your own'. Please look out for further details. The 'ticket price' will cover the cost of the food and refreshments will be provided.

We hope to see as many faces as possible so do consider inviting a friend along. If cost is an issue, please still sign up to come and speak to Brian who will make the necessary arrangements.

All monies will be collected on the evening ~ please hand these to Sue, thanks.

It would be good to have some "cakes" after the meal ~ if you can provide some of these please speak to Sue.

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.

News from the URC Finance Committee



URC Finance Department

9th August 2023

Ministry And Mission Fund - Annual Letter To Local Churches

To: All members and adherents of United Reformed Churches and our Local Ecumenical Partnerships

Dear Friends,

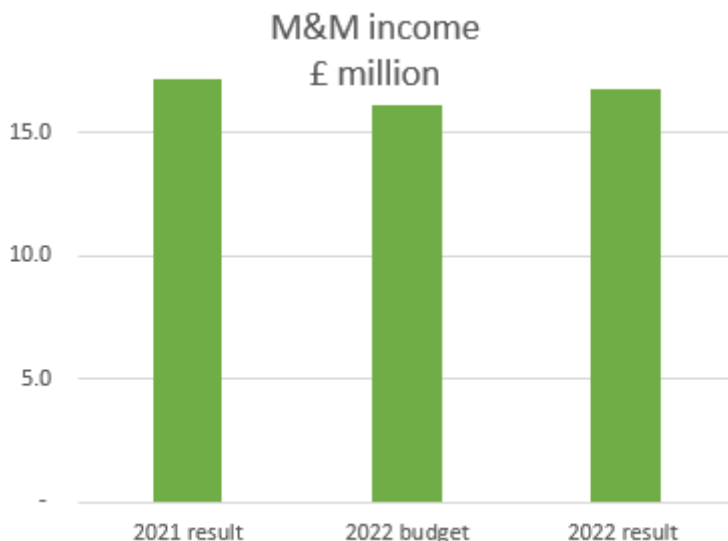
When will normal service be resumed?

As we are writing this letter and closing off the URC's accounts for 2022, the country is still torn with industrial disputes, mostly notably with Health Service workers, rail industry workers, teachers etc. etc. Whatever your view as to the wisdom or justice of such action, we suspect all of us are affected by the disruption to some degree.

In church life too, are we back to "normal life"? Some churches no doubt have returned to something like their pre-Covid level of activity and attendance numbers. Quite a few have recommenced their activity but find their numbers have reduced. Some churches have found re-opening too difficult and have decided to close.

Whatever the "new normal" was to be, we suggest its arrival has (like many trains) been disrupted, delayed, or cancelled all together.

The URC's finance officers had concerns that the late arrival of the return to normality would impact very significantly on the giving to the M&M Fund in 2022. However, the churches responded magnificently and the giving to M&M was £600,000 ahead of budget. It was also only 2.5% down on 2021's result.



So, thank you to all who continued to contribute to your local church, thank you to all those churches who met their commitment for 2022 in full, and thank you to all those who, in adversity, continued to treat the M&M Fund as the first priority and paid what they could.

With normal service not yet resumed, 2023 is not going to be an easy year either. We now have the added disruption of high inflation, pushing up wages and overhead costs. As the Spirit directs and as our means allow, can the churches once more respond to the call of our gracious, loving and ever-generous God?

Again, thank you all!

If you have any questions or comments arising from this letter, please speak to your church treasurer who has been provided with more detailed information. If they are not able to help directly then they can get in touch with the finance team at Church House.

Yours in Christ,

Ian Hardie (Immediate Past Treasurer)

Vaughan Griffiths (Deputy Treasurer)



On Sunday 23rd July Brian shared information about child sponsorship through Compassion, with the help of his friend Lisa Leaf in Brighton...



Sponsor a child and change a life

Sponsor a child today and give them life-changing support including food, education and health-checks. Child sponsorship with Compassion is an opportunity to come alongside a local church, and together, bring hope and lasting change to a child in poverty.

Begin with a child, sponsor them for £32 a month and empower them to overcome poverty.

See how child sponsorship can change one life

“As a child, poverty began to speak to me, I felt I was nothing, that I didn't matter ... nobody cared to know my name”

I got the news that a young lady, Heather, she was just 15 years old, a teenager, she had decided to sponsor me. I cannot find the words to describe the joy that filled our home. 'Richmond you've got a sponsor, you can now go to school.'

Do look at the website for more details

www.compassionuk.org

£32 per month is a big commitment - you might consider sharing the cost with someone else or working together as a Home Group. It can really change a life...!



Shared Worship in The Bay



Share Sunday evenings with friends from various local congregations across The Bay

- 3rd Sept 17:00** **Bring & Share Tea and Chat**
Shanklin URC, High Street
...thinking about our future work and witness
- 10th Sept 18:30** **Sandown Baptist Church**
Station Avenue
- 17th Sept 18:30** **Church of the Sacred Heart**
Atherley Road, Shanklin
- 24th Sept 18:30** **Lake Methodist Church**
Sandown Road
- 1st Oct 18:30** **Christ Church**
Broadway, Sandown



**Operation
Mobilisation**

with guests from OM

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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





Harvest Special...

Saturday 30th September

15:30 – 17:30

Please let Yvonne Sparks know if you can help.

Discipline (Discipl(in)e)

As a follower of our Lord Jesus Christ's teaching, I found the word discipline in some scripture I was reading: Hebrews 12 : 7

Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father?

It made me aware of how similar the word disciple is, and how to be a true disciple of Christ we have to have Jesus (in) us, through the Holy Spirit, in order to endure to the end in our faith.

A good father disciplines those he loves.

Blessings,

Lavinia.



True Fulfilment

Neil looks at how Christians can achieve the true fulfilment God wants for their lives:

Using Your Unique Gifts and Abilities

**“Keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.”
(2 Timothy 4:5)**

For the Christian, true fulfilment in life can be summarized by the popular bumper sticker slogan, "Bloom where you're planted." Peter put it this way:

“Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.” (1 Peter 4:10)

Your greatest fulfilment in life will come when you discover your unique gifts and abilities and use them to edify others and glorify the Lord.

God allowed me to understand this vital principle before entering the ministry while I was still employed as an aerospace engineer. I knew God wanted me to be an ambassador for Him where I worked, so I started a breakfast Bible study in the bowling alley next door. My announcement about the Bible study had only been posted in our office about an hour before a Jewish fellow pulled it off the wall and brought it to me. "You can't bring Jesus in here," he objected. "I can't do otherwise," I said. "Every day I walk in here Jesus comes in with me." He was not impressed with my response!

One of the men who found Christ in the Bible study took over when I left Honeywell to enter seminary. A few months later I went back to

visit my friends in the Bible study. "Do you remember the Jewish fellow?" the leader asked. "Sure, I remember him," I said, recalling his brash opposition to our Bible study. "Well, he got sick and almost died. I went to the hospital and visited him every night. Finally I led him to Christ."

I was ecstatic at the realisation that I had become a spiritual grandparent. The sense of fulfilment was exhilarating. And it all happened because I started a simple little Bible study where I worked in order to do what Paul told Timothy to do (see above)!

Father, I want to bloom where I am planted and resist the defeating temptation to compare myself to others.

Fulfilling Your Unique Role

“We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: be reconciled to God.” (2 Corinthians 5:20)

God has a unique place of ministry for each of us. It is important to your sense of fulfilment that you realize exactly where that place is.

The key is to discover the roles you occupy in which you cannot be replaced, and then decide to be what God wants you to be in those roles. For example, of the billions of people in the world, you are the only one who occupies your unique role as husband, father, wife, mother, parent, or child in your home. God has specially planted you to serve Him by serving your family and the community where you live.

Assuming the responsibility of our primary roles is too challenging for some, but it is the only path of fulfilment. You will never be fulfilled trying to become something you're not. You occupy a unique role as an ambassador for Christ where you work and live. These are your mission fields and you are the worker God has appointed for the harvest there. Your greatest fulfilment will come from accepting and occupying God's unique place for you to the best of your ability. Sadly, so many miss their calling in life by looking for fulfilment in the world.

Find your fulfilment in the kingdom of God by deciding to be an

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ambassador for Christ in the world ~ as Paul said:

**“Keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.”
(2 Timothy 4:5)**

Lord, keep me sensitive to the ministry You have for me in the ordinary places of my daily life.

Neil Anderson

Freedom in Christ Ministries

Used by permission

Let us be a people who constantly lift our eyes to the Lord and pray for His guidance in our daily walk. Here are a few of the many biblical references to doing His will, let us mediate upon them ...

“Not everyone who says to me, “Lord, Lord,” will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.” (Matthew 7:21)

“Obey them not only to win their favour when their eye is on you, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart.” (Ephesians 6:6)

“Now may the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.” (Hebrews 13:20&21)

Lead us, Heavenly Father, Lead us.

Help us to do Your will wherever You have placed us, supporting all whom we come into contact with ~ to be Christians witnesses to Your Kingdom, for Your glory. Amen.

Robin

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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



Do Look Out For...

A **new publication** from **Elam Ministries**, '**Iran and Beyond**', which shares about how Iran's Church is growing and how in this season of suffering, as the government continues to oppress its' people, Iranians are more open than ever to hearing about the God who conquers through suffering: '**Jesus, the lion who is the lamb who was slain.**' The one who loves them and laid His life for them. **Do take a copy** and be blessed and encouraged in the testimonies of those who have encountered Jesus.

And do please pray for our brothers and sisters in prison in Iran for their faith and their families for whom life can be very difficult.

Other new resources to take a copy and pray through are the **Sept/Oct Open Doors magazine and prayer diary.**

All of the above will be available in the Church or the entrance lobby.

Also do please continue to pray for the Church and believers in **Nigeria.**

There is continuing violence targeted against Christian communities there, which has led to mass killings of our brothers and sisters in Christ from terrorists and extremists.

“Every indication suggests Nigeria is at a pivotal point in its history,” says Release International's partner in that country. Terror groups Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa continue to defy the authorities, and Fulani militants attack Christian villages with impunity. In 2022, reports indicate Fulani militants ***killed more than 6,000 Christians and destroyed 17 villages.***

*The violence has driven more than **two million people from their homes.** Along with that has come increasing lawlessness. “Kidnapping for ransom has now become the major money earner for terrorist groups, while the numbers of victims of rape and people living with disabilities due to attacks continue to grow among the Christian communities,”* says Release International's partner. *“Hundreds of thousands of children in these Christian villages are unable to go to school or access good education.”*

Source:Elam Ministries/Release International

Advance Notice!

Samaritan's Purse will again be taking out to many needy countries thousands of shoeboxes from the annual '**Operation Christmas Child**' Shoebox Appeal.



Now can be a good time to look out for suitable items in the summer sales. There will be leaflets available (at the back of the church) with suggestions for gifts, which because of custom regulations, need to be new, as well as other restrictions. Details of what can and cannot be included are available at www.samaritans-purse.org.uk/what-we-do/operation-christmas-child/what-goes-in-my-shoebox/ . Collection points will be announced on the OCC website in due course, but we know that the '**National Collection Week**' will be 13th – 20th November 2023.

Thank you to all who responded last year – if you wish to just donate one or two gifts or give money for transport, that would be equally welcome – every gift is one that's sent with love.

If you want, you can pack a shoebox online; you can still help share God's love with children around the world even if you don't have time to shop for and pack an Operation Christmas Child shoebox gift. With a few clicks of your mouse or swipes on your touchscreen, you can build a shoebox online. Make it your own by choosing from a list of gifts, then add a personal letter and photo. They will pack your shoebox and send it for you for just £20 + £5 project donation per box. Each shoebox gift built online is a heartfelt expression of God's love to children in need. Just go to shoebonline.samaritans-purse.org.uk/ for more details.

Do ask (or go to the website) if you'd like to know more.

Thank you in advance and **God Bless You.**

Jane H



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. In Thomas the Tank Engine, which engine is number 2?
2. Which fashion designer popularised the mini skirt?
3. Which prison reformer was featured on the £5 note between 2002 & 2016?
4. Who was UK Prime Minister 1976 - 1979?
5. What is the **connection** between the answers to questions 1 - 4?
6. And bonus question... where was the cover photo taken?
Hint: it's in Shanklin - and your editor spends a lot of time there



Answers are on [page 55](#)



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



Precious Life Giving Water

How blessed we are to have clean running water in our homes and although there are issues with our rivers and seas at times, we can feel assured that when we turn on our taps, what comes out will be good for us.

Not so in many parts of the world. **Samaritan's Purse** ministers in many countries where the need for clean, germ free water is paramount.

Dr Franklin Graham shares in his recent update of such a situation in **Cambodia** as follows:

Lessons in Living Water – sharing Jesus through safe water in Cambodia

Dear Friend,

In the last pages of the Bible, the Lord reveals the New Jerusalem, flowing with “a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb” (Revelation 22:1).

But the concept of pure water can be hard to grasp in Cambodian villages where generations of children have grown up drinking out of stagnant ponds or mildewed rain barrels, and waterborne diseases are a fact of life.

Cambodia is just one of many places around the world where Samaritan's Purse is working to provide safe drinking water—not only to promote public health but also to help illustrate the deeper truths of Jesus Christ:

“He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water” (John 7:38).

I hope you will be encouraged by reading the stories of several students whose lives and futures have been transformed through our safe water projects in Cambodia. Samaritan's Purse has provided filters and latrines at these village schools, and teachers now share lessons about the vitality of clean water, sanitation, and hygiene.*

As waterborne diseases have become less of a threat, student

attendance has improved, and the Lord has opened doors for our teams to explain to hundreds of children how much Christ loves them, and how they can have a relationship with Him.

We are working in a province that was one of the last holdouts of the Khmer Rouge regime, in villages that do not yet have churches. Yet many of these children are reading their Bibles and discovering the power of prayer.

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God” (Matthew 5:8).

On behalf of these children and other around the world in great need, thank you for supporting the work of Samaritan’s Purse through your gifts and prayers.

May God bless you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Franklin Graham', written in a cursive style.

Franklin Graham

* Please look out for the newsletter at the back of the Church (and available at www.samaritans-purse.org.uk/article/lessons-in-living-water/), which has in it the lovely story of these dear Cambodian children and also details of how you can give to this amazing work if you felt stirred to do so.

Also, a new **Samaritan’s Purse Alternative Gifts Catalogue** will be available in due course and I do have the current one if you’d like to peruse it. Why not give money towards a village well or the other clean water projects as a gift in honour of your loved ones’ birthdays, Christmas, etc. in thanksgiving for our clean running water, and if you are stuck with what to give!

Blessings in Jesus’ Name

Jane H

Source: Samaritan’s Purse

Riches Beyond Measure!

How many different translations of the Bible might we have on our shelves – hopefully not gathering dust, but being well used?

For countless people groups in the world, they have not yet had these riches that we have of owning any part of Scripture. **Bible Society** has had a bold vision since 2018, to complete **1,200 Scripture translations by 2038**.

In **2022**, despite worldwide upheavals, many dear people were blessed with God's precious Word. The following article from Bible Society gives the exciting news!

Scripture translations for 723 million people completed last year – Thank You!

22 June 2023

Bible Society teams around the world completed Scripture translations in 81 languages used by 723 million people in 2022, despite global disruptions caused by Covid, economic instability and the war in Ukraine.

This was achieved thanks to the kind giving of Bible Society supporters. Thank you!

From Brazil to Bangladesh, 57 language groups – a total of 100 million people – received first Scripture translations. This included 14 first full Bible translations.

Five million Ethiopians, who speak Arsi Oromo, and 6,000 Indonesians on the island of Tagulandang who speak Sangirese, are just two examples of communities who can now access the Bible in their heart language.

New or revised translations were completed in another 25 languages used by more than 623 million people. These are crucial as languages change over time and Scripture translations can become outdated and hard to understand, particularly for younger generations.

Last year, Bible Society teams also completed Scripture portions in 20 sign languages.

As of the start of 2023, the full Bible is available in 733 languages spoken by 5.9 billion people. Over 70 per cent of these were translated by Bible Society teams.

About 5.9 billion people now have the full Bible in their own language. But that leaves more than 1.5 billion without the full Bible in their heart languages. And 51 per cent of the world's languages, most of them spoken by smallish groups of people, still have no Scripture at all.

With your support, Bible Society teams aim to make the Scriptures available in every language so that every single person in the world can more easily engage with the word of God.

Since 2018, Bible Society teams worldwide have been focused on a bold vision – to complete 1,200 Scripture translations by 2038. So far, thanks to the kind giving of Bible Society supporters, 133 translations have been completed and 333 are in progress.

Bible Society is a wonderful work of **God**, with **Bible distribution**, **Bible a Month Club** (supplying Bibles every month to different communities or specific needs through monthly giving), the wonderful **Open the Book** school presentations (several of our Church family being involved in this ministry) and, as mentioned above, **Bible translation**. **Any gift**, in thanksgiving for our own bibles would be greatly appreciated. There are a few copies of the **Bible a Month** leaflet for **Autumn 2023** at the back of Church – or go to www.biblesociety.org.uk/get-involved/bible-a-month/ - and if you wished to donate, Bible Society can be reached:

- Online: www.biblesociety.org.uk/
- email contactus@biblesociety.org.uk
- Telephone: 01793 418222 (or Freephone 0808 178 4921)
- Post: Stonehill Green, Westlea, Swindon SN5 7DG

If you wished to know anymore, I should be very happy to speak with you.

Yours in Jesus' Wonderful Name

Jane H

Source: Bible Society

Ryde URC - An Eco-Church?

By Derek Finch

What, you might ask, is an Eco-Church? The Eco Church movement is an organisation dedicated to getting Christians and Christian churches and denominations to recognise that we have a special, one could say God given duty, to look after the environment and to protect the world that God created. Not only to protect the environment but to go further and provide leadership to all people and be a driving force in environmental protection and restoration locally, nationally and globally. In particular those churches that 'sign up' to being Eco-Churches are set the challenge of meeting a set of standards, Bronze, Silver and Gold, in various aspects of their environmental stewardship and leadership.

Why should we as Christians be putting our effort into 'saving the planet', should we not be 'saving souls'? Yes of course we should be seeking to save souls and our primary focus should be on the kingdom of God, not the kingdoms of this world but, theologically, looking after this world, which is, after all, God's creation and gift to us, is also part of our Christian duty.

Firstly it is a duty to God. If you are given a beautiful and valuable gift by someone it is hardly a sign of gratitude to treat it disrespectfully, trash it thoughtlessly and act as if it has no great value. So what does it say about our respect for God if we treat the world that He created, and declared as good (1), as if it can be destroyed without thought or consequence. If we truly love God then we must love what he has created and gifted to us and so cherish and protect it.

Secondly as St. James wrote in his letter to the churches (2), simply meeting someone's spiritual needs when they are suffering physical needs is not enough, we must first meet their physical needs then we can truly meet their spiritual needs.

Finally We are told that we must look after our own bodies because they are the temple in which the Holy Spirit has its dwelling and, if we destroy the environment, which is where our bodies have their dwelling, we are damaging those bodies just as surely as if we were

taking a slow poison. Indeed in polluting and destroying the delicate balance that sustains life on this planet we are surely slowly poisoning ourselves as well.

So just what are the issues that Eco-Church is seeking to address? No doubt we are all aware of the current Global warming/climate change issues and its relationship to so called greenhouse gas emissions: the rapid changes to the climate, rising sea levels, increasing frequency of severe weather events and wild fires. But perhaps less well known is the danger posed by the mass extinctions that are underway not just of large charismatic plants and animals but of more mundane but no less important species. For instance there has been a massive decline in some species of insects and other invertebrates. That decline in turn threatens global food supplies which rely on those invertebrates either as foundations of food chains or as providers of vital services such as pollination or waste disposal.

Whilst some of these extinctions can be laid at the door of global warming many others are caused more directly by habitat destruction, over use of pesticides or other destructive farming practices. Other global issues, also exacerbated in part by global warming to be sure but also by greed and ignorance, are loss of habitat, loss of fertile farm land and of available fresh water. Without major changes in land and water use practices very many more people will die in the next 50 years of drought and famine.

Even here in the United Kingdom, degradation of farm land is already affecting food production and causing other environmental issues. Whilst over extraction from aquifers and pollution is destroying what were once thriving river systems. Air pollution is not restricted to greenhouse gases either, we pump waste gases into our atmosphere at ever increasing rates without thinking of the consequences. We may have dodged a bullet with CFCs causing a hole in the ozone layer but other pollutants are causing harm, from nitrous oxides from diesel and other exhausts which contribute to breathing difficulties that cause lung damage and soot particles that increase the melting of the ice caps and glaciers. Not only do we have environmental problems with land, water and air pollution but our inappropriate use of artificial light causes environmental issues

for many nocturnal plants and animals as well as hiding the glory of the night sky from many town dwellers.

Make no mistake the environmental issues facing all of us are urgent, great and serious. But all is not lost: we can 'do something about it'. Just as we are all in part responsible for the problem we can all do something to help fix it. I on my own cannot reverse global warming or stop global plastic pollution but collectively we can act to reduce our contribution to the problems, we can seek to persuade others to join us in doing so and in applying pressure on the politicians, leaders of commerce and industry and world leaders to implement solutions to these issues. Which is where Eco-Church comes in.

As an Eco-Church we are making a public statement that we are trying to 'do our bit', that rather than give up we are going to make what changes we can not just as a church but as individual members of the church. We are not ignoring the problems but rather are trying to find out what we can do and where possible doing it. This will entail thinking about what we can do, praying for guidance and wisdom, stepping out in faith and making our selves heard by those who can act on our behalf: locally, nationally and globally. Our voice will be magnified by working with others in other churches and faiths as well as secular organisations that share our concern for God's wonderful creation and gift. Our aspiration as a church should not just to achieve bronze, then silver and gold awards but to make a difference to peoples lives and life attitudes so that we can all look at the way we look after the gifts God has given us and be satisfied that we are demonstrating our gratitude for those gifts.

So what are the challenges we face and how do we turn them into opportunities? We are a small congregation and do not have a strong financial position so cannot, at present, make expensive changes, indeed any costs we incur must be carefully and prayerfully thought through. but this is in itself an opportunity, firstly it means we cannot rush wilily-nilly into throwing money at the problem bust must like others seek to find the best answers and seek sources of help. It also gives us the opportunity to ask others both inside the church and outside to contribute and, thus, buy into our environmental activities Fancy sponsoring a bug hotel any one? We are in the main an elderly congregation which limits our ability to carry out some

physical labour but this to can be an opportunity to get others involved whether it be in planting wild life friendly plants or constructing, putting up bird boxes or even perhaps digging a small wild life pond. We have limited knowledge about what is the best way forward to meet our Eco-Church goals but this gives us the opportunity use our premises to hold open meetings and information sessions with local council members or candidates and ecologically minded organisations thereby bringing local people into the church and raising our profile as an Eco-Church. We are weak in a society driven by strong forces, but this gives us the opportunity to step out in faith and to let the Holy Spirit demonstrate her power for it is God's creation and, if we go forth in faith, He will prosper our work. And we will be worthy stewards of His world, a world that He pronounced as good so in His name let us work to restore it to that status.

Notes: 1 Genesis 1:2 James 2:14-17

For further information please go to their website:
ecochurch.arochoa.org.uk/

*From Ryde URC's magazine 'Contact', for August/September 2023
Used by permission*

Thank You

I want to thank you all for the love and kindness showed to me over my birthday weekend. Just being with part of my family and my brothers and sisters in the Lord was wonderful. During the bring and share lunch my daughter said some lovely things which I can never aspire to but hopefully, with God's help, can display some small element of.

Singing the beautiful song 'There is a Higher Throne' on two Sundays lifted my spirit greatly. The description of Heaven within the limits of imagination and language of 'emerald courts & sapphire skies' is so beautiful and the final words of the chorus '*All glory, wisdom, power, strength, thanks and honour are to God our King who reigns on high forevermore*' inspires me on with my faith journey and blesses me tremendously.

Thank you again & God Bless you all

Eileen

Please join us in praying and fasting on the 1st of each month

for a meaningful and just global climate agreement at the UN climate talks.

Why? Christians owe it to future generations and those already impacted by climate change, to respond. We trust that God will use our prayers to influence politicians, build a powerful platform for change, strengthen our campaigning and inspire others.

Where? You can pray and fast at any time of day, on your own or with others. Check our website to find or add venues where people are praying together, and for suggestions on further action.

How? Resources, including worship, reflective prayers and monthly prayer points are available.

www.prayandfastfortheclimate.org.uk

Pray and Fast for the Climate is supported by



The M

Pray and Fast for the Climate

members of the Faith for the Climate Network



**HOPE FOR
THE FUTURE**

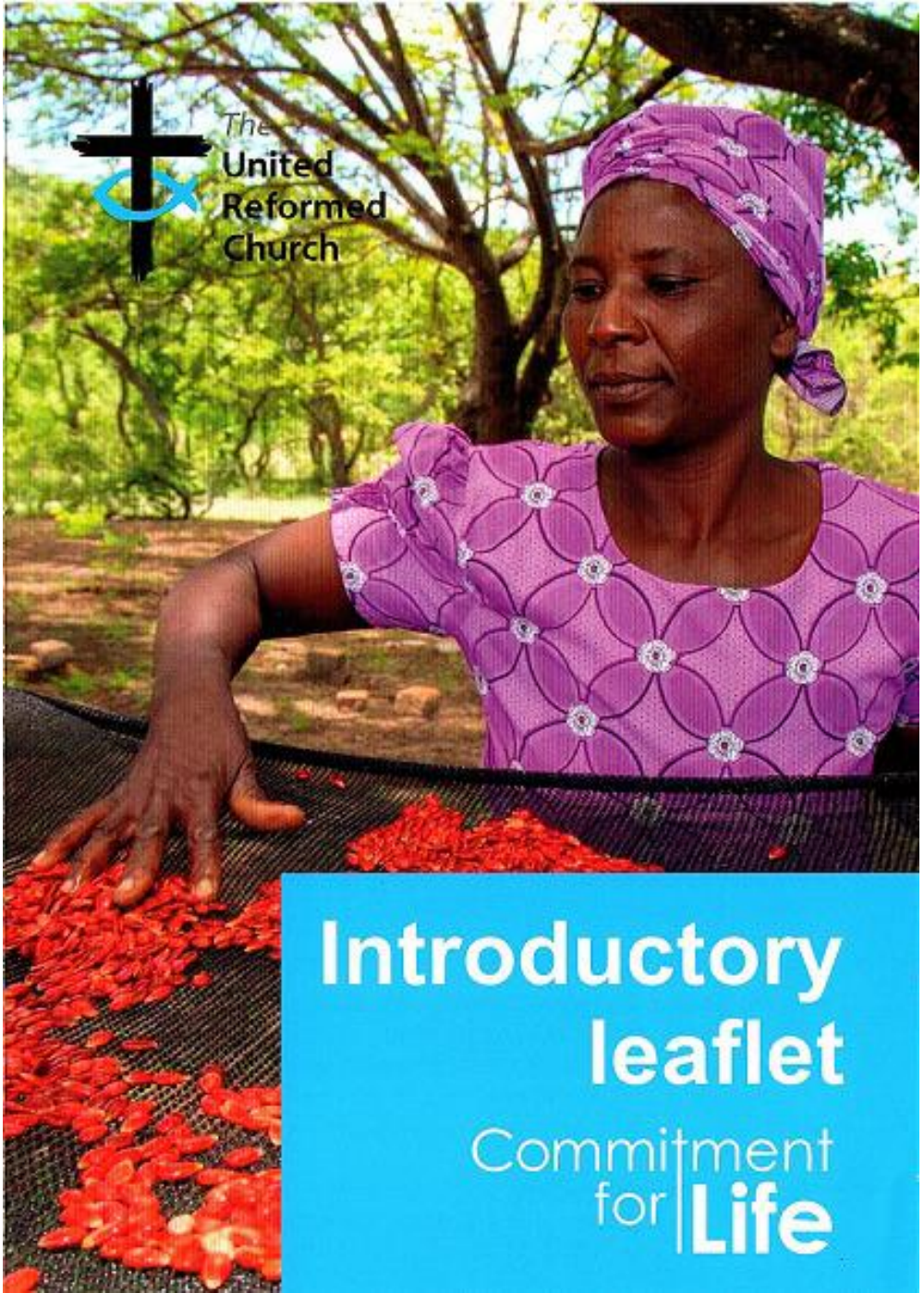


Methodist Church



**THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND**





The
United
Reformed
Church

Introductory leaflet

Commitment
for **Life**

What is Commitment for Life?

We are the United Reformed Church's global justice programme. We support the work of our partners Christian Aid and Global Justice Now. We enable local congregations to pray, advocate, and take action for the most vulnerable people. By linking with the poorest regions, you can make a real difference.

What happens when your church joins?

Your church chooses one or more of the three regions to support. You'll receive updates and resources about your chosen region.

- Bangladesh
- Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory
- Zimbabwe

We encourage you to hold an annual Commitment for Life service. Share more about the partners in your chosen region.

Your church appoints a Commitment for Life link person or contact, who will then receive from us our bi-monthly Moving Stories by email and three mailings per year.

Mailings include:

- Posters and leaflets
- Go-with Greta/#Connect2 materials
- Regional updates
- Info on campaigns and promotional items
- Ideas for prayer and worship services
- Links to further resources on our website.



Giving

There are several ways your church can make a difference:

- Pray for your region 'without ceasing'
- Stand up for global justice through action and advocacy
- Hold an annual Commitment for Life service
- Use our Collection envelopes. Gift Aid can be added via your church
- Consider leaving a legacy
- Host social, educational and children's events

75% of income goes to support Christian Aid partners in the three regions. 5% goes to Global Justice Now to support its brilliant work against poverty. 20% goes to education, grants, administration, and advocacy.

Bangladesh

This region faces debilitating trade deals and unpayable debts. There is an over-dependency on natural resources. The impact of climate disruption is making things far worse. But you can help local communities to face climate disruption. You can support farmers to improve their harvest, and women to participate fully in vital decisions through our Christian Aid partners.

Zimbabwe

Political instability is an ongoing concern in Zimbabwe. Most Zimbabweans face socioeconomic crises and every year. Millions rely on food aid. Drought, floods, and erratic rainfall patterns are costly. Ruined infrastructure and a broken economy mean many cannot grow enough food. Church partners focus on food security, nutrition, HIV, health and gender equality.

Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory

The persistent failure to secure a lasting solution to the conflict deepens inequality and poverty. Violence and despair persist. Christian Aid has worked with the poorest people since the early 1950's. Today, our partners work with more than twenty Israeli and Palestinian organisations to protect human rights and build peace based on justice for all.

Want to be part of the programme?

If you are interested in the programme we would love to hear from you.

Mail: Commitment for Life, 86 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9RT

Telephone: 020 7916 8638

Email: suzanne.pearson@urc.org.uk

For more information, visit the Commitment for Life website:

www.urc.org.uk/cfl

The September edition of *Reform* magazine is out on 27th August

You can play 'Top Trumps' with the September issue of the magazine as A Good Question asks: 'Who is your favourite disciple?' Our four contributors come up with a surprising group of personal favourites. Who is yours?

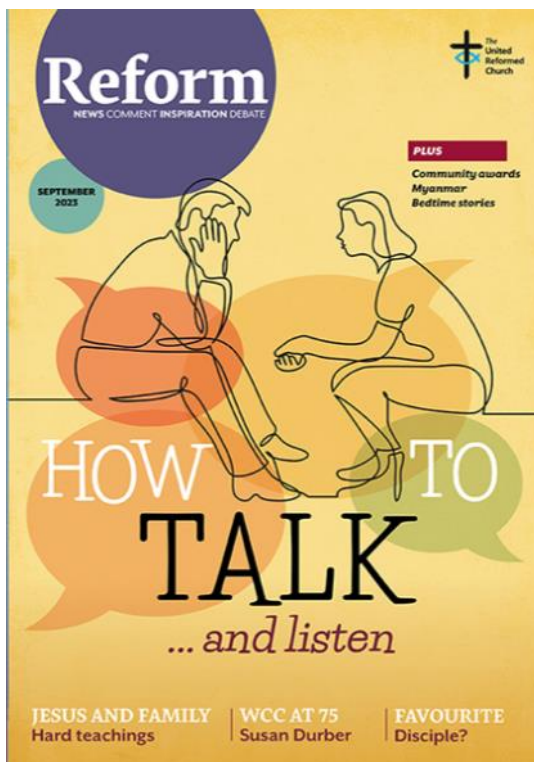
Elsewhere, Editor Steve Tomkins talks to therapist Kathryn Mannix about talking, and regular contributor Paul Kerensa wants to keep reading bedtime stories.

The Rev Dr Susan Durber celebrates the 75th anniversary of the World

Council of Churches and the Rev Pek Muan Cuang shares his first-hand experience of life for Christians in Myanmar.

Alongside our other regular columns, Laurence Wareing introduces a local project supporting asylum seekers in Lancashire – the first of the 2023 URC Community Project Award winners.

Don't miss out, [subscribe to *Reform*](https://reformsubs.co.uk/our-plans?campaignkw=reform%20subs) at <https://reformsubs.co.uk/our-plans?campaignkw=reform%20subs> or for a free sample copy, [please email the Reform Team](mailto:reformsubs@urc.org.uk) at reformsubs@urc.org.uk



Fines, fun and forgiveness – the setbacks and celebrations of summer camps in Central Asia

Have you been at a camp or festival this summer, or getting ready to attend one? For many of us, they're a regular feature of our calendars. It's the same for believers worldwide, but in many places like Central Asia, they happen against the backdrop of persecution...



Summer camps in Central Asia are a key part of the support provided by Open Doors local partners in the region (illustrative image)

Camps and festivals are well underway here in the UK, but in many places worldwide, holding summer events can be dangerous – as one camp in Central Asia discovered a few weeks ago.

It was held by a registered church, but due to restrictions around summer camps, the secret police closed it because the gospel was being preached (in some Central Asian countries, it's illegal to evangelise to under 18s). The pastor was imprisoned for a week, during which time he endured several rounds of interrogation. He and his church have since each been fined the equivalent of around £450.

But there is good news elsewhere, because a summer camp for men who come from a Muslim-majority region that can be hostile to Christianity did go ahead safely – and to huge success.

Most of those who attended the event are believers, with others going to discover more about Christianity. The programme featured games, activities and extended meals, and talks on a variety of topics, including forgiveness – and it's here that one young person was particularly impacted.

Yousef* grew up hating his father, who beat him and sexually abused his sister when they were younger. He had recently been told that his father didn't want to see him anymore. On arriving at the event, Yousef had been making plans for revenge, but after hearing about forgiveness, he decided to let go of his bitterness and forgive him. "That was a powerful moment," shares a local partner.

A travelling miracle

It's not the only encouraging news. We regularly ask you to pray for summer camps in Central Asia, given the dangers, and when local partners involved in the camps heard about this, they wanted to let you know the difference your prayers make.

"Dear brothers and sisters, thank you very much for your prayers," said a partner. "We greatly appreciate your support and help with prayers and means and care. We feel your love and care and thank you and praise the Lord and God the Father for your obedience."

"We really feel your prayers for the camps which we are organising," said another partner. "Just yesterday, we had problem with tickets to travel, and today God already provided tickets for His children! It was really a miracle for all of us!"

**Name changed for security reason*

Please Pray

- Give thanks for the camps that have already taken place – pray that they will have a lasting impact on all those who attended
- That those involved with the closed camp will not be discouraged, but will be galvanised in their faith
- That more scheduled summer camps taking place in Central Asia will be safe and involve precious times of fun, friendship and deepening faith.

Source: [Open Doors](#) - Used by Permission



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**



Mental Health First Aider Training

Shanklin URC

26 & 27 October 2023

Time: 09:00—17:30

Participants must attend both days to complete the course and gain a certificate.

Mental Health First Aiders have:

- An in-depth understanding of mental health and the factors that can affect wellbeing.
- Practical skills to spot the triggers and signs of mental health issues.
- Confidence to step in, reassure and support a person in distress.
- Enhanced interpersonal skills such as non-judgemental listening.
- Knowledge to help someone recover their health by guiding them to further support — whether that's self-help resources, through their employer, the NHS, or a mix.

**For more information and to book your place please contact:
development@urcwessex.org.uk / 023 8067 4513
*Bookings close on Monday 16 October 2023***

Who Will Save Me?

I am lost at sea, adrift in a vast ocean barely managing to keep my head above the water. Desperately treading water, each time I crest a wave I scan the horizon for a vessel to come to my rescue.

I crest a wave, scan the horizon to see if there is any hope. I see ships, am I hallucinating?. I drop down into the trough of the wave, come up again Yes! Yes! There are vessels, atop the next wave I see I am going to be saved. Up on the next wave I count the ships, there are twenty of them racing towards me. Up again, I can't believe what I am seeing, they aren't just racing towards me they are actually racing each other to see who gets there first.

The first boat reaches me, a hand reaches out, a voice says 'if you become a member of our church, we will save you', I am stunned, I don't know what to say. The boat turns away, the next boat reaches me, again a hand is held out, a voice says 'If you follow our way of doing things we will save you'. My head is beginning to spin.

Yet a third boat comes near, another hand, another voice 'If you follow our doctrine we will save you'.

I am losing hope of being saved as boat after boat approaches, another hand, another voice, they all turn away, they are circling around me still reaching out, still asking questions.

I give up, I will just sink beneath the waves. I crest one more wave, preparing for my fate.

I see a figure coming towards me He is walking on the water, I rub my eyes in disbelief. It's true He is there walking on the water, He reaches out a hand and simply says 'take my hand I will save you'

I know I am truly saved.

There are many denominations.

But only one **Jesus**

George Port

June 2023

CHRISTIANS WORKING TOGETHER IN THE BAY

Tea, cake chat & prayer

Sunday 3rd September

17:00 at Shanklin URC
in the High Street

A bring-and-share tea - plus a relaxed opportunity to think about our future shared work and witness in The Bay - ending with a short time of worship.
All are most welcome

Sequel to the testimony I shared in the August 'The Link'

(with apologies to those who have already heard my story)

2009 was a devastating year for me. In April that year I went through the hardest thing I had ever faced in my life – and later in that same year, I received yet another shattering blow. It wasn't long after that when I started having extreme headaches off and on, behind my right eye. They were particularly noticeable because I had never been susceptible to headaches. They increased in intensity whenever I straightened up after bending down – and also when driving over bumps.

I went for a CT scan in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, in November 2009, but before I had the result, the Lord spoke to me about forgiving. So, I made a drastic decision to forgive – which was tough – especially when one of the parties concerned continued to hate me. However, when the result of the scan showed 'something' – it was not clear what – part of me said, as I had done a few times since April, "I am not worried – I don't even care if I die."

I had various other scans and investigations in Zimbabwe and South Africa and it was ascertained that it was a non-malignant meningioma or tumour, rather than an aneurism, but that its growth would need to be monitored. If it grew too much, it would put more pressure on my brain and cause serious complications.

In September 2010 the Lord faithfully spoke to me again, this time through Dr Michelle Strydom (who teaches that 'No disease is incurable' and 'Healing begins with the sanctification of the heart'), she, together with her co-worker, Tammy van Rensburg, prayed with me and challenged me to look at the other areas of relationship breakdown in my life – all of which (relationship breakdown with others, with God and with self) contribute to the stress that causes most illnesses in the world. I had forgiven others, but what about my relationship with the Lord and with myself? When Tammy said that maybe I need to "forgive the Lord", it hit home that I did have hardness of heart toward the Lord and that I did not now fully trust Him. (If you had read my testimony in the August link, you may be saying – how is this possible when she had been so convinced how

good God is?!) I had often thought, “Where were you, Lord, when these things happened that caused me so much excruciating pain?” The Lord helped me to see that it grieved Him that I viewed Him with suspicion, when His thoughts towards me were **only** of love. I should have, at this stage, remembered from five years earlier how **good** God is!!

Next, I had a further shocking revelation. And this, having thought that I had dealt with all that was necessary – relationship breakdown with others and with God! I had been walking with the Lord for forty years, and a long time previously he had shown me how important it was to realise that I am fearfully and wonderfully made, and to love how the Lord had made me. But as I mentioned earlier, I had often felt during this season of trauma that I didn’t care if I died. The revelation I had was an offshoot of this when one morning I woke up actually thinking, “I hate myself”! The light dawned that I owned thoughts that were from the pit of hell. I told Roy and repented, then together, after my very emotional day, we broke that stronghold.

So, when we went to Johannesburg to have gamma knife surgery in December 2010, I expected that the meningioma would have disappeared. I had repented in the areas the Lord had shown me and had received much prayer for healing. It was a bit of a shock to discover that, not only had it not disappeared, but also it was now too big and too near my optic nerve to deal with by gamma knife. I was advised to have it surgically removed within the next three months.

I would have had it done then and there in South Africa, but the costs were exorbitant. So, we knew we would have to explore other avenues. Before we left Johannesburg, we were ministered to by a couple who are involved in a healing ministry. As had many others, they commanded the meningioma to go, and I was able to voice the concern that had been niggling at me for some time: “Am I acting in unbelief if I pursue having surgery?” Their answer gave me so much peace: They said, “That meningioma **is going**, even if it has to be cut out!”

To cut a long story short, we tried pursuing a couple of options, but it quickly became clear that the only viable one was a hospital chain in India (called Wockhardt Hospitals), and specifically Goa, for neurosurgery. It was a third of the price quoted in South Africa and

there were no hidden costs - **everything** was included - even for Roy to stay with me in the hospital. There were many amazing things that the Lord did which I won't go into, but the main confirmation of the Lord's Will that we should go to India came through an unsolicited gift of half the costs, the day after we prayed that He would show us definitely if we were to go. Every other provision fell into place for our trip.

So, very early on Saturday 5th March 2011 we landed in Mumbai, caught the plane at mid-day to Goa and were welcomed into Wockhardt hospital by early afternoon. Roy had a one-hour hair-raising ambulance ride with me to have an urgent MRI scan, so that the neurosurgeon could plan the operation. Roy, in sitting position in the back of the ambulance, could see the crazy traffic that we were racing and weaving through, with the ambulance's siren blaring, while I lay nonchalantly on the stretcher in my hospital-issue pyjamas, feeling that this was all just a big adventure.

Sunday came, and the sense of adventure left. I learned that I would definitely have to have the operation, and Dr Koshy George, the neurosurgeon, was "not looking forward to it"! The meningioma was deep and very vascular and he had asked another neurosurgeon from another state to assist him, even though he himself was exceptionally experienced, having performed over 7000 neurosurgeries. I had to undergo many different procedures (scans, blood tests etc.) to be ready for the surgery, which was to take place the next morning, Monday, at 07:00. On top of it, after some deliberation, it was decided that I needed to have my head completely shaved. I had not even considered the fact that neurosurgery would at least require partial, let alone complete, baldness!

The surgery took seven hours, which Dr Koshy, when he excitedly called Roy from our private ward to see me in ICU, said was pretty quick! He was also delighted at how the tumour had "behaved so beautifully" coming out easily, bit by bit – they were working through a small fissure in my brain to get to it. He said "It is very obvious that people were praying!" Up to this point I did not even know that Dr Koshy was a Christian! I knew that his wife had a relationship with the Lord, because of what she had shared when she had come to meet us the day before about her burden to intercede for Dr Koshy's

patients. But when I heard him talking boldly about the Lord Jesus to other hospital staff, I knew that the Lord had blessed us with a Christian doctor – in India! He even told me that he knew he should get help from another neurosurgeon because of the Gospel’s account of Simon of Cyrene’s being called upon to help Jesus to carry His cross.

I was some sight in the ICU – a very swollen eye, oxygen, monitors, pipes in and out, bandaged and hairless! But I could tell I was fine – all my faculties intact – including my sight! That was the afternoon of the 7th March. Two days later on the 9th, the Lord met with me.

- He said that, contrary to my fears, I would have a **wonderful** testimony! He **would** get the glory. I had the overwhelming assurance that “it was indeed all about **him**”.
- The bare bones of a scripture came to mind – After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will raise us up – and this spoke to my heart that I would be coming out of ICU on the third day. My progress was indeed miraculous and the hospital staff said it was a record for someone to be able to leave ICU after surgery like that in so short a time, because I **did** go back to our private ward the next day, the tenth! I later found the context of that scripture in Hosea 6:1&2 "Come, let us return to the **Lord**; for he has torn us, that he may heal us; he has struck us down, and he will bind us up. After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will raise us up, that we may live before him." I **had** been struck down so that He could heal me! That growth represented unforgiveness, resentment towards the Lord and self-hatred – and it was **gone**!
- And then a third thing happened – I felt the **joy** of the Lord, such as I had not known for years! I was not at all concerned about my appearance, or the bruising as it showed up all over. I joked that I had come to Goa for a fancy haircut and to participate in a Beauty Pageant!

We had a wonderful time in the hospital! I loved the staff, doctors, nurses and housekeepers (all of whom, incidentally, were extremely compassionate and efficient). I had my thirty-three stitches (staples) taken out ten days after the operation and four days later was discharged. I did not even need to go back for a check-up before we

left Goa to fly home on 31st March. In the meantime, the Lord opened doors for us to meet and stay with wonderful Christian believers during the last ten days we still had in Goa.

I went for my follow up MRI scan on 13th February 2012 and that showed my head to be **completely** normal. There was no hint of tumour regrowth – typically, they tend to regrow. Dr Michelle Strydom says that this is ever a possibility for meningiomas when their spiritual roots of hatred of self (yes and this was the hardest thing for me to recognize!), are not dealt with. (I believe that the renewal of the mind I was walking through, highlighted in her teaching, removed most of these roots even before the surgery.) Plus, there was no sign of scarring from the neurosurgery. I now know why I had successfully (though very cautiously) already been able to wean myself from anti-convulsion tablets – according to the nudge I believe I had from the Lord – despite the fact that I had been firmly instructed to take them for at least two years!

May you, too, be challenged with these words:

(Hosea 6:1 ESV) “Come, let us return to the **Lord**; for he has torn us, that he may heal us; he has struck us down, and he will bind us up.

(Hosea 6:2 ESV) After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will raise us up, that we may live before him.

(Hosea 6:3 ESV) **Let us know; let us press on to know the Lord; his going out is sure as the dawn; he will come to us as the showers, as the spring rains that water the earth.”**

Have you ever considered that this Scripture, obviously referring to Jesus' death and His resurrection, also clearly pertains to the Jewish people after the Holocaust? In 1945 after the Holocaust, they had been devastatingly ‘struck down’ and left as if dead? But a remnant of devastated survivors managed to stagger, against enormous odds, back to Israel – the only land they could call their own, the land promised to them by the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob – His Land, which He instructed them to steward. After two days (two years) many had regrouped in His Land, which was being ‘revived’, and on the third day (three years later in 1948), the nation of Israel was ‘raised up’ - her rebirth!

Melodie

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 in 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/viewlatesteditionpage.htm) has several great articles, including the headline article '**Accident-prone farmer lives to tell nuclear tale**' - All about the farmer's tale of God's protection.

Other contributions include:

- ➤ **Rugby World Cup Special** - The Christian faith of six World Cup players
- ➤ **Terminator's Termination** - Arnold Schwarzenegger's fear of death - and how he could find peace
- ➤ **Supermodel Success** - Former Vogue cover girl now follows faith not fashion
- ➤ **Football Manager's Real Boss** - Promotion winner Darren Moore gives God the glory
- ➤ **Man With No Legs or Arms** - Nick Vujicic stays positive because he knows Jesus
- ➤ **Coronation Street Star** - Channique Sterling-Brown says faith is right up her street

Good News... for a change

FOCUS

on our Christian Brothers and Sisters being persecuted for their faith

Two years after Taliban takeover, football is helping restore the happiness of 40 Afghan girls

This week marks two years since the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan. Thousands have since fled the country, with many settling in a country neighbouring Afghanistan where an idea by Open Doors local partners is bringing joy to a group of young Afghani girls...

Five times a week, 40 girls gather to play football – and it makes them so happy.

It may sound like your typical football club, but this particular initiative is anything but that, making the girls' joy all the more precious and remarkable.

Conquering fear through football

The Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan two years ago rocked the country and dealt a devastating blow to the lives and freedoms of countless Afghans, including women and girls, as well as religious minorities like Christians. For believers, following Jesus already came with great danger, but the Taliban's takeover put them at even greater risk, forcing them from the country or deeper underground.

In the months that followed, Christians were among thousands to flee the country, with many relocating to a country neighbouring Afghanistan. But for many, it led to more challenges. "The situation for them is very difficult," says Brother Ismael*. "In our region, governments do not officially recognise the presence of such a large

number of refugees and don't provide the necessary social support to them.”

It's here that Open Doors local partners have been able to help – not only with practical aid including food, clothing, medical care, blankets and hygiene items, but the provision of football. The impact on the 40 girls – plus around 100 boys – has been transformative, particularly given the desperation many of them had been feeling.

“The shocking reality is that three out of every ten of these refugee children say they want to end their lives because they spend most of their time indoors out of fear,” continues Brother Ishmael.

The initiative is open to Christians as well as Muslims and those of other faiths and none, providing a gateway to build relationships with parents. This in turn has led to the provision of practical aid and opportunities to share the gospel – and already people have come to know Jesus! A house group of 15 - 20 people has already been formed from the football initiative.

And with the Women's World Cup well underway, drawing widespread attention and excitement, the girls' happiness at being involved has likely increased!

Hope inspired by happiness

The Taliban's takeover has had a seismic impact upon the lives of countless Afghans. The stories that we share, and those that hit the news, only scratch the surface at what the group's rule means for people and their futures.

But the happiness of these 40 girls is a reminder that hope can still be found amid the pain, upheaval and loss, and it's just one of the many ways in which your prayers and support are contributing to the amazing things God is doing among Afghan refugees. Thank you, and please keep your Afghani family in your prayers.

**Name changed for security reasons*

Please Pray

- Give thanks for the wonderful impact this initiative has had upon the children

The Link - September 2023

- That it will continue to have a transformative impact on the families of Afghan refugees
- That these refugees will soon be able to return to Afghanistan and live freely.

Information

- Afghanistan is number 9 in the Open Doors World Watch List 2023 and despite dropping from first place to ninth, Afghan Christians remain in grave danger
- There are just thousands Christians in Afghanistan – out of a population of almost 41 million.
- Main threats: Islamic oppression and dictatorial paranoia
- Given that many Christians have been forced deeper underground and must keep their faith hidden, it's difficult to get an exact idea of how many believers live in the country, but it is estimated to be in the thousands.
- “The Taliban are conducting a door-to-door search to find us. God alone knows who has informed them about the whereabouts and identities of the believers. If they find us, they kill believers on the spot.” - A secret believer from Afghanistan.
- “It is our great desire to join with our brothers and sisters and worship God together, but now this is not possible,” says the secret believer. “We can only meet our pastor in the dead of night, so no one can identify him or us.”
- Although conversions usually happen as a family unit in Afghanistan, if a woman decides to convert to Christianity on her own, discovery can bring violence, house arrest, forced marriage or sexual abuse. Women and girls already suffer acute oppression and discrimination under the Taliban. Following Jesus can severely exacerbate this.
- Please keep praying for your brothers and sisters in Afghanistan. Your prayers make an enormous difference to those following Jesus no matter the cost.

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

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

Exciting Times

When Eileen became our Open the Book prayer partner, she said she wished we were going into Haylands School, because her grandchildren go there. Some months later, the deputy head of Dover Park, which already had OtB, heard she had been appointed Head Teacher of Haylands. One of her first actions was to go to the office staff at Dover Park and ask how to contact us. Eileen was delighted when we began taking the Word of God to Haylands every week. One Thursday afternoon, she called at her daughter's house. Eileen's granddaughter ran out excitedly to meet her saying, "I was a disciple in Open the Book today!"



Beryl (*in the centre of the photo on the previous page*) is one of the storytellers serving Haylands. She has some neighbours whom she does not actually know well. However, over the past two years, Beryl had been smiling at them in the street and this had progressed to passing the time of day. One day Beryl was out shopping when she saw the mother with one of her daughters.

At our next rehearsal, Beryl excitedly told us: “It struck me that I could share about Open the Book with her, as her daughter attends Haylands school. The little girl didn’t seem to know me - as I’m dressed up when she would see me at school, I wasn’t worried about that! But when I explained to her Mum that we tell a Bible story, her daughter’s face lit up and she said: ‘I love Bible stories!’

I wondered if they had any Church connection. The mum said that she herself wasn’t ‘religious’ but that her daughter was definitely spiritual.

The child said she had a book of Bible stories and that was what she loved reading.

So I said I was so happy to hear that she loved reading Bible stories.”

“The girl then said she wanted to be a Christian and that was what was even more surprising - I want to know how she would have the knowledge to use that phrase There is no doubt I will see this family again from time to time, so I will be ready to be proactive to continue a conversation as possible. I will look out for opportunities to invite them to my church, especially to children’s activities.”

Another person who could barely contain her excitement, works at one of the schools served by Open the Book. As soon as the first storytellers arrived, she blurted out something which we, frustratingly, cannot fully disclose. Here is the redacted version!

A child in the school said to a member of staff that something was going to happen the following day. This thing was very special to the child, and the staff member asked the child how the child knew this. ‘Because I prayed about it last night,’ replied the child. The person told other staff members about this, and everyone was astonished. The staff had arranged for this thing to happen the next day, but

nobody had told any of the children.



The person who told us about this is not a committed Christian, but she kept saying that the child's family had nothing to do with religion and she was certain that the only way the child could have known about praying was through Open the Book.

On Saturday August 19th, 16 people gathered at SURC for training. Half of these were completely new to Open the Book. Here they are (in the photo on the next page) presenting Jesus calling His disciples and Jonah about to be swallowed by a rather small fish

As a result, a team to serve St Francis was formed. We are still praying for more to serve St Blasius, finally taking the Word of God to the South of the Island!

If you know anyone who might be interested in joining this exciting ministry, please put them in touch with Melodie.





Connection Quiz Answers

1. **Edward.**
2. **Mary Quant**
3. **Elizabeth Fry.**
4. Leonard **James** Callaghan.
5. Connection: They are the **four successive monarchs of England from 1547 to 1625.**
6. This issue's cover photo is of... Rylstone Chalet (the home of Shanklin Town Brass Band) in Rylstone Gardens, Shanklin.



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!

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

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					

Last month's Sudoku - how did you do?

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

Across

- 1 Birthplace of King William I (7)
 5 A region, or part of a town (4)
 7 See 3 down (5)
 8 Mowgli's ursine friend (5)
 10 Require something (4)
 11 Honey producing insect (3)
 13 Sword or a surface-to-air missile (6)
 14 He '*phoned home*' (2)
 16 Swedish group who went to Waterloo in 1974? (4)
 18 Used on road surfaces (6)
 20 Your afternoon drink? (3)
 21 Town in Flanders, home to the Menin Gate (5)
 22 A temporary interval of quiet or

inactivity (4)

24 French for 'the' *m* (2)

25 Entire (3)

26 Structures over things (7)

28 Quality of being hot (4)

29 Highest in a card suit (3)

30 Adam's partner in Eden (3)

31 Break up and moving earth (7)

32 Repair (4)

Down

1 Second month of the year (8)

2 Represented UK in Eurovision in 1969 (4)

3 (and 7 across) EU (8)

4 3.142 or 22/7 (2)

5 Queen 1702 until 1714 (4)

6 '- Pandy', BBC TV series 1950 - 1970 (4)

9 What you row a boat with (3)

11 Jesus' birthplace (9)

12 Long and distinct period (3)

14 Matched or surpassed an achievement (8)

15 Thanks, slang (2)

17 '- *Love*' 1972 Elvis song (7)

19 1970 FA Cup Winners (7)

20 - Eliot, poet, playwright, etc (2)

23 *Moi, en anglais* (2)

26 What you do at an auction (3)

27 Droop (3)

Can You Guess The Year?

- Tottenham Hotspur win the FA Cup beating Manchester City.
- The film '*Chariots of Fire*' is released in the UK.
- Rupert Murdoch agrees to buy The Times
- And UK No. 1s included:
 - Queen & David Bowie with '*Under Pressure*'
 - Shakin' Stevens with '*Green Door*'
 - The Specials with '*Ghost Town*'
 - Bucks Fizz with '*Making Your Mind Up*'

Answer next issue

This Issue's 'Pot Luck' Quiz Questions

1. What was The Beach Boys' first UK number one?
2. Who represented the UK at Eurovision in 1974?
3. What is the capital of Azerbaijan?
4. Who first narrated Thomas the Tank Engine on UK TV?
5. Who wrote the theme song to Eastenders?
6. Who succeeded William II as king of England?
7. Who was the first actor to play Doctor Who (on BBC TV)?
8. When was the Tower of London first opened?
9. On the periodic table, which element is Ar?
10. When was the men's FA Cup started?

Answers next issue

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

Sunday 24th September

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 **1979**

- Last issue's crossword ↓

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

Last Issue's 'Pot Luck' Quiz Answers

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. 312m or 330m to top of antenna <i>Eiffel Tower website</i> | 6. William II |
| 2. The New Seekers | 7. 23 rd November 1963 |
| 3. Zagreb | 8. 1 st February 2013 |
| 4. Bernard Cribbins | 9. Silver |
| 5. Mike Batt | 10. 24 th May 1956 (won by Switzerland) |

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** 16:00 **Prayer for Israel** on the Church Zoom
- Tuesday** 14:00 **Bible Bite** ministry in church
- refreshments and fellowship from 13:30
Broadcast live on YouTube
- 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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