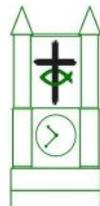
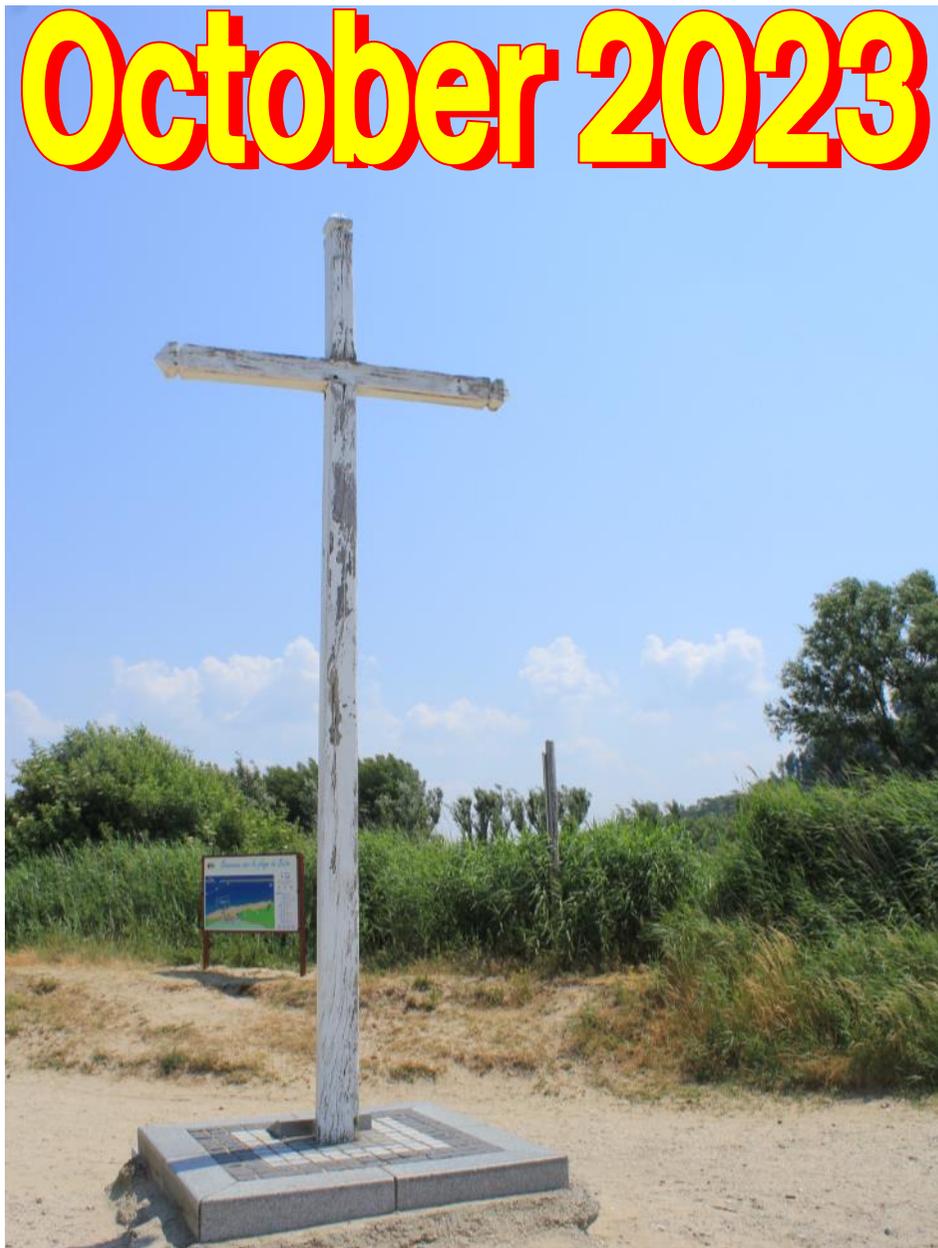


# The Link



# October 2023

Shanklin United Reformed Church [www.shanklinurc.co.uk](http://www.shanklinurc.co.uk)



# View From Number 10



## A brave and kind presence in a hostile world

I have served on the Council of Evangelical Alliance for the last 10 years and have just come back from a 24 hour meeting at High Leigh.

The team are looking at the next decade and seeking to make strategic decisions. This introduction from the papers explains:

*“Since our formation in 1846 there has rarely been a greater need for the Evangelical Alliance to be focused, prayerful, compassionate and resilient than now. We are facing choppy waters in the next decade.*



*It is vital that the church stands firm on God’s word in this time of incredible challenge both culturally and spiritually. And yet, the chaotic cultural and societal context provides exciting and profound gospel opportunities. The Evangelical Alliance must seek to understand the cultural stories shaping our world, while offering the distinctive, powerful and truly good news of Jesus in the midst of economic and social turmoil.*

*The church needs the Evangelical Alliance to play its part as a brave and kind presence, helping unite and represent the evangelical church for the next decade.”*

Much of our time was spent exploring the priorities going forward. A significant development over the last few years has been the **Being Human** project, which seeks to make a positive contribution to our confused culture and to point to a better story for human flourishing,

*“Being Human is here to help everyday Christians live out and share the biblical vision of what it means to be human.*

*Being Human offers a new lens as an innovative way to engage with our cultural conversations using four key aspects of humanity: significance, connection, presence and participation.*

*Digging into the foundations of our cultural stories, authors Jo Frost and Peter Lynas expose the cracks in our culture's understanding of what it means to be human. From what the media communicates about our self-worth, to how institutions prize some voices over others, we can see the impact of our culture's shallow stories all around us, as they fail to help us live our lives to the full.*



*By contrasting our cultural narratives with the story of the Bible, we can see how cultural truths have been fractured and isolated from the fullness and richness of who God is and who God created us to be. The lens helps us understand what it means for every human being to bear God's image and find their full humanity in Jesus, rooted in the family of God.*

*Ultimately, we recognise that only in Jesus can we live truly fully human lives.”*

It has been great to be part of the discussion along the way. Peter and Jo have done various podcasts and now have produced a book and a short study series to help churches engage and to find confidence in getting our story across in the often-hostile culture. These are launched on 12<sup>th</sup> October, and I commend them to you. Take a closer look on the website – [www.beinghumanlens.com](http://www.beinghumanlens.com)

Let us celebrate what it is to be women and men made in the image of God and help others find their place in God's great family. We need to be good news people in a world of bad news.

Blessings in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Brian' with a long, sweeping underline.

Peter Lynas and Jo Frost launching the new book at Evangelical Alliance Council Summit in September





# 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?**

**Join us on 29<sup>th</sup> October – café serving from 10.15**

## **Prayer Ministry Team**

As many of you know the Prayer Ministry team restarted in May and during that time many folk have received prayer.

I try to make sure that there are two groups of two available to pray for others after the service. Some members of the team now feel it is right to stand down which is fine. After all some things are just for a season. However, that leaves the team short. So, on some Sundays there will only be one team of two, although others in the team will be looking out for those who may need prayer.

If you feel called to be a part of the team please have a chat, phone or email me to talk about being part of the team.

Sue Wightman.

## **A Word of Testimony**

My dear brothers and sisters,

May I first of all say a huge ‘thank you’ to all you dear friends who helped to make my 80<sup>th</sup> birthday service such a blessed time. I was amazed at the love and prayers at the service – the atmosphere was incredible.

From the moment I left the prayer room at the back of the church and walked towards the front, I had a terrific sense that God was going to do something special. I felt a tremendous feeling of the Holy Spirit moving around the church, so much so that I could not stop weeping, even through the worship and as the service progressed. Then Rob called me up onto the stage and together with Sheilagh, Graham and Roy prayed for me. Earlier in the week I thought maybe I would receive a card and maybe everyone singing ‘Happy Birthday’, so I wrote down a few thoughts in case!

After prayer, in which more weeping, I started to speak. As I looked out on the assembled friends, an incredibly overwhelming feeling of love and compassion came over me for the fellowship and I had to try hard to stop the tears! Then I felt the Lord say to me, “This is My family, this is your family and I want you to look after them!” I thought, ‘Dear Lord, I am 80 tomorrow!’ Then later I remembered what Bob from the Priory had said to Jane earlier. “Tell Mike to remember Moses,” – forty years in preparation in the palace in Egypt, forty years in the wilderness where at 80 years old he was commissioned by God for service and to lead God’s people out from slavery in Egypt and to fulfil God’s purposes for his life. No-one is ever too old to be used in God’s service.

At the church service on 17<sup>th</sup> September, Brian spoke about forgiveness and as I listened it reminded me of a part of my life from many years ago, I will try to be brief.

When I was nine years old, my dad, who was a retained fireman on the Island, left mum and I to go to America. We were to follow, but that never happened. As a vulnerable young lad, I couldn’t understand what I’d done wrong. Why did he leave mum and I? However, he kept in touch over many years but I didn’t ever see him again.

For many years from when I was ten, my mum gave hospitality to some folk who were on the Island for a mission. Sadly, although part of the team, one of them sexually abused me on a number of occasions, but I didn't dare tell anyone, even mum. I tried to get on with life, 11 Plus, secondary school, work as an electrical engineer, etc. and I put the thought of what happened behind me, or so I thought.

Then approximately ten years ago, I had a letter from the person concerned and he wanted to see me and to ask my forgiveness. In the meantime, he had been in prison for some years for similar offences with other children but had now been released. So, I told Jane about the episodes of abuse and as we prayed it became clear that I should go to the mainland and meet him. When having seen him for lunch, he then asked my forgiveness for what he had done all those years ago.

I said to him, "You have done wrong, but you served your punishment and I forgive you because Jesus forgave me at Calvary ('...all have sinned and fall short of the Glory of God')."

I was able to shake his hand and as I said, "I forgive you," it was like a huge weight had fallen from my shoulders and I felt a new person.

The moral of this story is that if you know and love Jesus and you have any situations that you need to forgive someone for, please don't hang on to them. Pray about them and as the Lord gives you the strength, to forgive and in that find peace and your burdens lifted, knowing God calls us to forgive as He has forgiven us.

### **In closing:**

- **Always be available**, no matter what your age might be,
- **Listen intently** to the Lord,
- **Do what He tells you** to do without holding back.

In that you will be blessed with His presence, His peace and His guidance in your life in a wonderful way.

With love in the Lord and blessings to you.

Mike H

PS: Thank you so much, dear Church family for all the wonderful presents and cards (almost 60!) – I was overwhelmed! And especially also thanking dear Melodie for making the delicious cake for us all to share after the service!

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## **The Power of Your Prayers**

All too soon the summer holidays are over and children have gone back to school. Some will have gone back to familiar surroundings and friends; others will have started new schools, maybe with new classmates. There will have been a mixture of emotions and attitudes that children will have had as they consider the term ahead. The support and encouragement of family and friends will have helped to smooth their way and given them confidence.

The Church of England Mothers Union have issued the following very helpful prayers, which can be used with or for our children, grandchildren and for Christian communities to uphold children as they navigate their school years.

1. ***Pray for their happiness and stability to accept change.*** *Even if children are going back to familiar territory, the new school year can bring all kinds of questions and concerns. There are new friends, new teachers and new anxieties.*
2. ***Pray for an easy transition, focus and understanding.*** *With every new school year, children have the challenges of a new curriculum and different styles of teaching with new teachers.*
3. ***Pray for teachers, that they may have patience and understanding and grace.*** *Teaching is one of the hardest and most important jobs. A teacher can play a pivotal role in a child's life for this year and many years to come.*
4. ***Pray for classmates and friends.*** *What children absorb from the world outside home comes in a large part from their friends. Pray for healthy friendships based on good intentions and morals.*
5. ***Pray for a happy home, good communication easy transitions, co-operation and sleep!*** *As the summer holidays end, homes will need to have a new schedule. There are early morning wake-up calls, adjusting to long days of learning at school and extracurricular activities.*

**Hand prayers** – this idea uses simple actions as a reminder of prayers during the day:

**Thumbs up** – thank God for the good things

**Thumbs down** – ask for God’s help with the things that are worrying.

**Entwine fingers together** – thank God and pray for school friends

**Stroke one hand with the other** – a reminder that God is always with you.

Source: Mothers Union

### **Protests have died down, but the church is still alive.**

Almost a year has passed since a young Kurdish woman tragically died at the hands of Iran’s morality police, sparking the biggest wave of unrest Iran has seen since the 1979 revolution.

As 2023 has progressed, many have asked what happened to this widely publicised movement & whether anything has changed in Iran.

**In short, protests have died down for now. The church, meanwhile, is more alive and active than ever.**

The protest movement lost momentum after hundreds of protestors were brutally killed by security forces and around 20,000 protestors were arrested. While the regime hasn’t been overthrown, the unrest has caused:

1. **Deeper frustration among the people:** Across all strata of society, Iranians are more angered than ever by the daily oppression they face and the brutality through which the regime clings to power.
2. **Greater openness:** As people’s political hopes have been frustrated, more Iranians recognising the true and lasting hope offered in Christ.
3. **Growing courage among believers:** Iranian Christians have become more acutely aware of the pain and needs of their neighbours and have grown in courage to proclaim Christ.

We continue to fervently pray and call for a day when all Iranians will be able to live free from oppression and fear. At the same time, we believe that true freedom for Iranians is found in the Gospel of Christ, as proclaimed through word and deed by the increasingly alive and

**The Link** - October 2023

*active church.*

The church has shone as a beacon of hope at this time and in the face of great hostility and persecution, Gospel seeds are being planted all over. Please pray these will bear fruit in the months and years to come. **All** this ministry has been possible because Jesus is alive and at work through the partnership of Christians throughout the world.

We have two wonderful new publications from **Elam** – their inspiring magazine '**Iran and Beyond**' – this issue '**The Lamb-ness of Jesus is shaping many hearts**' – their magazines come maybe once or twice a year and contain moving testimonies of how God is transforming Iranian lives – do take the latest one or read online at [www.elam.com/magazine](http://www.elam.com/magazine), but also do look at the magazine rack opposite the church office for previous editions – still totally relevant with inspiring articles.

Also, the very helpful resource '**Iran 30 – Discover, Pray, Transform**' Prayers for Iran for thirty days, but very relevant for ongoing prayer.

This is an updated edition and so do please take one, even if you have had the previous booklet. These will be at the back of church, as also the new magazine.

Also to look out for is the quarterly **Release International magazine (October – December 2023)** with news, stories and prayer requests from persecuted Christians around the world.

A very large part of Christendom is being persecuted because they love Jesus, often at the cost of their lives, their families, their homes and many other daily discriminations. Will we stand with them in their hour of need – with informed prayer, support and giving as able... they are a part of the body of Christ, our brothers and sisters and have so much to teach us.

Thank you for any support you feel able to give.

Every blessings

Jane H

*Sources: Elam & Release International*



Saturday, 28<sup>th</sup> October 2023

19:00

**Shanklin URC**

**High Street Shanklin PO37 6LA**

*Teams of up to 6 People - donation entry fee  
(tell your friends)*

## **We Rest On You, Our Shield and Our Defender**

I was reading an article recently which I would like to share with you using my own words:-

Edith Gilling Cherry was born on the 9<sup>th</sup> February 1872, in Plymouth, Devon. At only 16 months old she suffered paralysis and then a stroke at the age of 12. Her faith, however, was very strong and she expressed it in a volume of poems entitled 'The Master's Touch'.

She is best remembered for the poem she wrote in 1895 based on 2 Chronicles 14:11 - 'And Asa cried to the Lord His God,' "O Lord there is none like you to help, between the mighty and the weak. Help us, O Lord our God, for we rely on you, and in your Name we have come against this multitude. O Lord you are God; let not man prevail against you."

Edith wrote a hymn inspired by Asa's prayer which has stirred many followers of our Lord Jesus Christ which reads as follows:

*We rest on Thee, our Shield and our Defender!  
We go not forth alone against the foe;  
Strong in Thy strength, safe in Thy keeping tender,  
We rest on Thee, and in Thy Name we go.*

*Yes, in Thy Name, O Captain of salvation!  
In Thy dear Name, all other names above;  
Jesus our Righteousness, our sure Foundation,  
Our Prince of Glory and our King of love.*

*We go in faith, our own great weakness feeling  
and needing more each day Thy grace to know:  
Yet from our hearts a song of triumph pealing,  
We rest on Thee, and in Thy Name we go.*

*We rest on Thee, our Shield and our Defender!  
Thine is the battle, Thine shall be the praise;  
When passing through the gates of pearly splendour,  
victors, we rest with Thee, through endless days.*

*Edith G. Cherry (1872 – 1897)*

*Public Domain*

*CCLI Song Number: 2689139*

In the early years of King Asa's reign, he is confronted by an enemy with a vast army but he shows his dependence and reliance is totally in the Lord. He prays in faith as he goes forth in battle saying, "We rely on you, and in your Name we have come against this multitude. O Lord you are our God."

For information, Edith passed away in 1897, aged 25, in Plymouth.

May this scripture and indeed the wonderful words of the hymn inspire us to seek our dear Lord's help as we go forth in His wonderful Name.

God bless you.

Eileen

**Make sense of life**

**Explore some of the big questions**

***The Alpha Course***



**Wednesday afternoons at 15:30**

**From 27<sup>th</sup> 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 or [brianharley58@gmail.com](mailto:brianharley58@gmail.com)

## **Scripture Union Transformers Holiday 2023**

By Rachel Waddell

Tom, Aimee, Ben and I, along with my sister, Sarah (our holiday leader!), and her family, spent just over a week at the end of August in a boarding school in Dorset, helping to run a Scripture Union computing and technology holiday for 14- to 18-year-olds. We had 15 young people, 13 team and four children attending this year. We were missing two key team members and started the week with a medical emergency, but, as always, team stepped into the breach to fill gaps and make the holiday happen, and the young people had a great time. In the 23 years I've been involved with Transformers, I've seen time and time again the positive impact it has in the lives of young people who don't have friends with similar interests at home – the geeky Christians, if you will! – and who find “their people” in a loving and supportive environment at Transformers. The enthusiasm of the team is second to none – there were many issues and complications during the week, but team willingly step in to do whatever needs to be done to make the holiday the best it can be for the young people.

There are two spiritual sessions each day – a morning bible study session where we looked at three Psalms and the context in which they were written, and an evening worship and workshops session where we discussed (and tried!) various aspects of Christian living. My sister, Caz (no doubt many of you know her!), and her family joined us for the final session of the week and talked about the impact God has in their lives and what the things we'd thought about during week look like for them. There was time afterwards for the young people to chat with a team member, do some meditative and contemplative activities, and write verses and encouragements for other holiday members.

We run four technical activities – Music Recording, Photography, Programming and Video Production – and the young people can choose up to two activities to do during the week. I'm always astonished by the quality – and quantity! – of the projects produced, and we celebrate the week's achievements and everyone's talents and interests in the Talent Show on the last night. This year's projects included two lovely songs written and recorded by the

young people, with accompanying videos; two (somewhat bizarre! But that's the hallmark of a Transformers video project!) short films in which Aimee had a starring role; a bird flocking simulation, a helicopter game and a car racing game from the Programming activity; and some lovely photos taken in the beautiful grounds around the school.

Thank you so much for all your prayers – they were much needed and greatly appreciated! Things will be a bit different next year as we're combining with our sister holiday, Livewires, which runs a similar programme for younger kids (12s to 15s). The two holidays were originally one which split when it got too big; both holidays have shrunk over the past few years, and we feel the time is right to rejoin as one holiday. We believe that this change will have benefits for both holidays: a wider range of technical activities, opportunities for 18-year-olds to join as junior team working with the younger end of the age range, and a later bedtime for the 15-year-olds at Livewires! The age range will be 12 to 17 so please pray that the two teams will gel well; that our young people, including any 18-year-olds who join as junior team, will settle into a new environment; and that God will guide the planning so that all young people across the full age range get the best experience.

*Pictured right: Ben demonstrating his programming project at the Talent Show*



## Beach Baptisms

We had a good crowd of people on the beach and on the revetment at the beginning of September when Terry and Hannah made a public declaration of faith.



Loads of people stopped to see what was happening and we trust that the Good News of Jesus reached a few ears that afternoon. We had a chance to chat with quite a few people around us as we explained what was happening and apologised for interrupting their peace for a few minutes.

We sang a couple of songs and, after the wet part, many of us gathered around to pray for both of them – as we did again in the church on the Sunday. It was great to welcome most of Hannah's family – her uncle Leon helped Brian with her baptism.



# 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**



## News from Uganda

Rev Martin Sebbugo celebrated his 75<sup>th</sup> birthday in mid-September after a time of severe illness and a period in hospital. He wrote with thanks for our prayers:

*Greetings to all of you my friends at Shanklin URC. I thank you so much for keeping your spiritual hands up praying and interceding for my healing. I am now happy to inform you that I was officially discharged from Mengo Hospital yesterday so, it is time now to put them down since the battle is won.*

*I am feeling very well, strong and energetic looking forward to resuming my pastoral duties on Monday. Thanks so much brethren for loving me, my family and the Ministry of the Lord at Kalasa. This is what our Lord Christ Jesus wants to: "Love one another just as I have loved you, you must also love one another." (John 13: 34).*

*Let's keep in touch.*

*Blessings, Martin*



### Connection Quiz

1. What is shown in F1 to signify that the race has been stopped?
2. Who was the fictional nemesis of Captain Scarlet and the primary recurring Mysteron?
3. What colour is Thunderbird 2?
4. What are the colours on the Swedish flag ?
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 Normandie

Answers are on [page 51](#)



# Shared Worship in The Bay



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

**1<sup>st</sup> Oct 18:30 Christ Church**  
 **Operation Mobilisation** Broadway, Sandown  
**with guests from OM**

**8<sup>th</sup> Oct 18:30 St Blasius Church**  
Church Road, Shanklin

**15<sup>th</sup> Oct 18:30 Shanklin URC,**  
High Street, Shanklin

**22<sup>nd</sup> Oct 18:30 Shanklin URC,**  
High Street, Shanklin

**With guest from Moldova - International Mission to Jewish People**

**29<sup>th</sup> Oct 18:30 Sandown Baptist Church**  
Station Avenue  
**Monthly Prayer Focus**



## 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](mailto: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 in church - and is such a great resource for people to read and then pass on to others!!

This month's edition (available to read online at [www.goodnews-paper.org.uk/viewlatesteditionpage.htm](http://www.goodnews-paper.org.uk/viewlatesteditionpage.htm)) has several great articles, including the headline '**Doctors Astonished**' - All about how the consultant points to heaven when asked to explain Rev's recovery.

Other contributions include:

- **All Trick And No Treat** - Two ex-witches warn of the danger of spirits and spells
- **Tyson Fury's Biggest Fight** - Champion boxer tells how he beats depression with prayer
- **Shawn Mendes** - Fame nearly drove pop star to quit, till he found faith
- **CBeebies Star** - Children's TV presenter says job is answer to prayer
- **Are Aliens Real?** - Editor has an out-of-this-world answer for UFO enthusiasts
- **Evidence For Bible Hero** - 3,000-year-old pottery is first find linked to Gideon

## Good News... for a change

## **An Urgent Call**

### **Ephesians 5:14-16 MSG**

“<sup>14</sup>Wake up from your sleep, climb out of your coffins; Christ will show you the light!

<sup>15</sup>So watch your step. Use your head.

<sup>16</sup>Make the most of every chance you get. These are desperate times!”

...And how much more so in these days in which we are living!

We find that we are being challenged much in this regard through God’s Word as we read it daily; in our ‘Israel Revealed’ discussions (we have just finished going through the course with our fourth group finding that each time we have done it we are further challenged and amazed at what the Lord uncovers); and in our times of worship and prayer in our home with a few others. During a recent worship event held at Windmill Farm, Clanfield, Oxfordshire, a three-day gathering organized by Brenda Taylor of Dovetail Ministries with 3 worship leaders from Israel, including Arni Klein (120 people altogether attended it) we were further stirred.

This event was (effectively) time set aside to be before the Lord, much like the ‘Galilee Worship Gatherings’ we have previously attended in Israel; instead of anticipating specific topics for prayer and teachings, nothing was scheduled in advance for these days. The worship was deep and (we believe) pleasing to God, especially as this large group was caused twice by the Holy Spirit to be in absolute silence for 20-30 minutes! Then afterwards, we were challenged afresh by the messages, teachings and testimonies that came forth because folk had been prepared to put aside their personal agendas and share what the Holy Spirit had been ministering to them.

We all left the meeting encouraged to be connected to other believers in small groups with the purpose of “dwelling in the shelter of the Most High”: Psalm 91:1 (The MSG paraphrase of this verse reads “You who sit down in the High God’s presence, spend the night in Shaddai’s shadow.” – which is quite a powerful picture of the

protection afforded from **abiding** in Him). We don't want to be numbered with the five foolish virgins who found out too late they hadn't got the needed reserve supplies of oil. (The Hebrew meaning of the word for 'foolish' in that parable is 'dull, stupid and heedless.')

A further challenge was to realise that time is very short for the UK to come into her God-given calling regarding Israel – her mandate is to be involved in the establishment of Israel. The millions around the world who purposefully joined in the 21-day 'Isaiah 62 prayer/fast' have created an awakening but there is a "sense that the Spirit is launching a concerted effort to gather the Body in the UK to arise in this hour and fulfil the calling given to it by the Lord regarding Israel. When we call for 'prayer for Israel', we do it knowing that what happens in Israel will radiate out across the globe. We have a similar sense about the spiritual calling of the UK. The uniqueness of its mandate concerning Israel gives it a potential influence far beyond its national borders." (Arni)

One of the ways God is calling believers in the UK to participate in this mandate is in seeking God as to how we can assist with Aliya (the return of the Jewish people to Israel), which was orchestrated by the Balfour Declaration in 1917 and ratified at San Remo in 1920, but then reneged upon by Great Britain in her hindering Jewish people from returning to Israel at the end of the Second World War. We, of course, are called to pray, first and foremost – and this has led our Israel prayer group to follow the course of the intercessory journey of a Swedish mega yacht, the Elida V, sailing from Sweden along the south coast of England and through the Mediterranean Sea to Israel. One in our group had a vision of an icebreaker ship, thus graphically illustrating the importance of this venture to clear away the sin and spiritual hindrances along that route.

Arni further writes: "We doubt that most of you receiving this letter need to be reminded that the time is short. It's been said that another pandemic is on the way, complete with lockdowns and draconian mandates. If we truly arise, call upon the Lord, come aside to seek His face and just abide with Him, perhaps the descent of the coming darkness can be forestalled and even lessened. In the end, isn't Father's primary desire and longing simply that we would long for Him? This was the message of our recent Galilee Gathering:

‘Long for Yeshua. Father, do whatever you need to do to bring forth this longing from the depth of our hearts...as if it were a matter of life and death...which it really is.’”

We welcome any who would want to find out more, especially regarding being part of another “Israel Revealed” group, to please get in touch with us.

Roy and Melodie Wilson

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## **Who me? Mental Ill-Health? Never!**

I have been through a season of unreasonable anxiety and fearfulness at work. sometimes escalating to panic. Unfortunately, this led to my making some errors, which is unacceptable and I was duly reprimanded. It broke my heart because I don't want to cause anybody harm. I was able to repent and seek the Lord's forgiveness. Because I mentioned to my manager that I struggle a lot with anxiety at work, she insisted I see a doctor, and then talk to someone at Employees Assistance for mental health support. A new one on me!!

In the meantime, a friend, I believe prompted by the Lord, lent me some DVDs about the Brain, how it is not static but mouldable and can be changed in a positive way. I learned about how vital gut-health is, and what is a healthy diet, and suggested supplements (enough to fill a small pharmacy), and finally tips on mental health. The mental health tips were very helpful and the fresh approach impacted me.

They use the phrase “think about what you are thinking about”. When we find ourselves thinking negatively it is possible to stop that thought and replace it with a positive one. If one persists in disputing negativity (and anxiety, fear, panic are negative), the brain will develop new pathways and begin to follow them automatically. **Positive thoughts result in positive emotions which leads positive action and behaviour.** The thing that impacted me most is that fear and anxiety are only emotions and emotions can be unreliable and untruthful. (I know there is more to this than I am saying but I'm keeping this article simple and short)

All this time I have been trying to fight my emotions when I should have been working on what I think about. It has never been presented to me in a clearer way! It seems so simple. And, of course the Christian has an added advantage of the Sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God.

Having done “Freedom in Christ” I developed several “stronghold busters” mostly on fear and I try to meditate on them and confess them daily. But we have to go through testing also to produce the fruit!

For example, one night shift I was working with a new member of staff and I felt unaccountably anxious and fearful, because I didn’t know how much he knew and if I would be able to rely on him. Before going on duty, I made a conscious effort to change my thinking and adopt positive thoughts and I found I was suddenly feeling better and more positive. It worked!

Having a positive mind set is certainly Biblical: Isaiah 26:3-4 ‘You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you. Trust in the Lord for ever, for the Lord, the Lord himself, is the Rock eternal’.

I believe the Lord allowed the mistakes at work to wake me up. But getting to a state of good mental health is a slow process and it may take a long time, but it’s all in His Hands. Glory to the Lord.

Carol Williams

## **Adrian’s Tent**

Graham Hall was given a tent by Adrian Hammond a couple of years ago. Graham has since got a new tent and is keen to pass Adrian’s one on to anyone in the church family who might need one.

It is made by Vango and can sleep three or four.

It is at the church if you are interested in having a look – please ask Brian.



## **Mental Health First Aider Training**

Shanklin URC are hosting this training course on Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> and Friday 27<sup>th</sup> October 2023 from 09:00 – 17:30. There is no charge to you. You do need to attend the course on both days and for the full sessions to complete the course and to gain a certificate.

This is a recognisable certificate that would be valid in other situations including a workplace.

It is a course that will provide you with an in-depth understanding of mental health and the factors that can affect wellbeing. You will learn practical skills to spot the triggers and signs of mental health issues which will give you the confidence to step in, reassure and support a person in distress.

You will learn how to be the **first** aider. In the same way as when someone collapses and a first aider puts them into the recovery position **but** does not go onto to administer drugs, carry out surgery, a Mental Health First Aider carries out the **first** steps to helping someone recover by guiding them to further support, for example.

This is not a counselling course or a requirement for longer-term commitment to someone.

This course is suitable for parents, those working with children and young people, those who regularly come into contact with people for coffee, sports activities, clubs, societies. Those of you who are house group leaders, elders, someone who people talk to. Those of you who know people who are struggling with their mental health and you feel unable to help them. This course will provide you with a better understanding of some of the issues they are facing.

If you are interested in doing this course or would like more information, please get in touch with me. I would wholeheartedly recommend it as I have done it before.

There are spaces on the course which do need filling for it to go ahead.

Friday October 13<sup>th</sup> is the last day to register through me, please.

Carole Smith. [nelliebelle@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:nelliebelle@hotmail.co.uk) 07971 934326

# **First Aid Can You Help?**

We are looking for folk who have current first aid training or would be interested in being trained...

**If that's you...**

**Can I ask you to let me know?**

We are required to have people who have been trained each time we gather as a church.

Please do let me know if you have either been trained or would like to be involved ~ we can provide any training that is necessary!

**Please speak to Robin**



## Open the Book Update

Before every assembly, Open the Book members pray that the truths the children hear will be like seeds in their hearts. Do the children remember?



The week before schools went back, a young girl recognised Julie at Aspire. Julie asked the child 'Do you remember the puppet being lowered down through the roof?' This had been one of the last stories before the summer holiday.



The child replied: 'Yes. And when Jesus came out of the hole, the puppet was there too'. Six months earlier, the girl had seen an angel in the tomb after the resurrection. The most important story in the Bible had made such an impact on her that, yes, she had remembered.

Doors within schools today can only be opened by someone with a staff card. Following the assembly of Adam and Eve's fall, a storyteller needed to find a member of staff to be let out of the building. She spotted a teacher and went to ask him to use his pass to let her out. He responded, "Don't worry, we won't keep you here, although we'd love to."



## **The Link** - October 2023

The four of us in the Bay team (Tracy, Chris W, Roy and Melodie) would welcome others to join – in fact we really need more reinforcements! We could easily absorb two more storytellers. We have started a collection of costumes, drapes and backdrops – and we are waiting on a church decision about where we may store these and other props which we hope to collect.

We will be practicing in the church and are waiting to hear from St Blasius Academy about what stories we should present to fit in with their syllabus. The times they have scheduled will be on Tuesdays at 13:00 or 14:30 once each half term, with our first presentation being sometime in October.

Please pray about who you can encourage to join and let us know.

Melodie

## **New Moderator announced for Wessex Synod**

Rev Dr Michael Hopkins, who is currently minister at Farnham and Elstead URCs, will take up the role in March 2024.

He currently also serves as Clerk of URC General Assembly so is very well acquainted with how the church should operate. Please pray for him as he makes this transition.



## **Real Advent Calendar**

We have a box of these Fairtrade calendars which include a Christmas story booklet. Let Janet or Brian know if you'd like to buy one – they are sadly not in supermarkets again this year.

They cost **£4.50**

*With apologies for starting the season so prematurely – but its best to get these out before folk buy Barbie ones!*



# **Lionheart UK & Westbrook Urban Saints invite you to get 'Lionhearted'**

.... "OUT OF THE OVERFLOW OF WORSHIP" .....

**A TIME OF WORSHIP AND EQUIPPING.**

**JOIN LIONHEART, WESTBROOK AND FRIENDS AS ONE BODY IN WORSHIP WITH BREAKOUT SESSIONS LED BY CFAN AND KLM**

**FREE EVENT  
(SATURDAY - BRING YOUR PACK LUNCH OR PRE-PAY YOUR MEAL)**

**BE BLESSED TO BE A BLESSING**

**SATURDAY 14 October**

**11:00 - 21:00**

**URBAN SAINTS , OAKHILL ROAD, RYDE PO33 1PU**

**BOOK ONLINE VIA OUR WEBSITE. LIMITED PLACES SO BOOK EARLY!**



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Living  
Ministries



**CFaN** CHRIST  
FOR ALL NATIONS

## **A Game of Two Halves (It's a funny old game, Saint!) ~ A Testimony**

When Ann offered an “open mic” during a recent Sunday service, there was a wonderful outpouring of thanks and praise to God from many in the congregation and I almost said something myself ~ most unusual for me! Soon afterwards Darren asked me whether I had suffered a stroke at some point and I began to see that God was prompting me to give my testimony... then Patricia mentioned to me that she really enjoyed reading *The Link*, especially the testimonies and I couldn't ignore His prompting any longer, so here goes... (with apologies to those who have heard some of this before)

I have called this “A Game of Two Halves” as my story naturally seems to fall into 2 pieces:

\*\*\*

### **Part One (Annus Horribilis)**

Who am I? I'm a Londoner, a civil engineer, a husband and a lifelong Chelsea supporter, but much more than any of these, **I Am a Christian.**

I first dedicated my life to Jesus during a school journey to a Christian holiday camp in north Wales during the summer of 1968. The first “half” began with much enthusiasm and passion but gradually at first, and then with increasing speed, I began to be attracted to the things of this world. In my late teens and early twenty's, I had long hair and loved heavy rock music (just like Malc). At university, I met a student nurse and we were married before I graduated. Building a home, raising a family and progressing at work became my focus with little space left for Jesus.

Looking back now I think this was because although I knew Jesus as my Personal Saviour, I never fully recognised the need for active fellowship with other Christians - which keeps us all safe from the Devil's distractions and enables us to fully carry out Jesus' great commission.

Our dear friend, Imtiaz, once gave a graphic illustration of walking with God and how Jesus never lets go of our hands, however,

sometimes we let go of His. As my family grew and I was successful at work, life settled into a comfortable routine. Jesus, no longer at the centre, became increasingly marginalised.

*“He has shown you, O mortal, what is good.  
And what does the **LORD** require of you?  
To act justly and to love mercy  
and to walk humbly with your God”* (Micah 6:8)

I wasn't bad at acting justly and loving mercy, but I was not good at walking humbly with God!

During my walk with Jesus, I have experienced both highs and lows; I imagine that this is a common experience among us. In the lowest times, we can be riddled with doubt & low self-esteem. This was true for Moses in Exodus 3, and God told him that rather than higher self-esteem he needed a greater sense of God's presence by fixing his eyes upon Him. This is true for us today, we will find our sense of confidence and self-worth in knowing that He is there for us, He is here with us and He always will be. During difficult times, I find encouragement in the Bible, for example in Hebrews 12 we are told to:

*“run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus.....so that you will not grow weary and lose heart”*

At the beginning of 1996, I was settled and looking forward to a new year when out of the blue my life was thrown into turmoil. My first wife announced that she was leaving me and our 2 young sons for someone else and a few months later I was diagnosed with a brain tumour. I was wonderfully supported by family, friends and employers, but it was a difficult time and I became somewhat depressed.

Between these two events God had directed me to a local church in Barnet and that fellowship became a major source of encouragement and support to me.

On the night before my operation, after friends & family had left my bedside, I had an overwhelming sense of God's presence. Jesus placed these words directly into my heart,

***“don't be afraid, I am with you and whatever happens I will be***

*with you tomorrow whether here or in heaven”*

The most wonderful sense of peace and well-being came over me and all my fears fell away. I was in the Royal Free Hospital in Hampstead for 6 months (about 4 of them in a coma) but despite the doctors' worst fears the Lord was with me and I recovered. I later discovered that the minister in Barnet had been praying at my bedside almost every day whilst I remained comatose!

I was left with some disabilities and as a result, I had to retire early (**very** early at 43 ~ last month was the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary!). I have never looked back.

Jesus and His church in Barnet were behind me every step of the way, enabling and encouraging me to be more active in my walk with Him than ever seemed possible before. There have been highs and lows since but my increased maturity in Christ has helped me to face these with a spirit of love and joy.

As I look back now, I can see the Lord's hand so clearly guiding me through those difficult times, encouraging me to become more and more involved in fellowship and in witnessing to His Truth. Being an active member of a church fellowship has allowed me to hear God's "whispers" much more clearly (with the "clanging" world further in the background) and to tread the path He has laid out for me in confidence.

Actually, 1996 was **the Best Thing That Ever Happened To Me..**  
..... and then I met Sue, and the story continues.....

\*\*\*

**Part Two (the best thing that ever happened to me and Sue)**

It took quite a shock to stir me from my comfort zone and so the "second half" began.

God has since led me to take on roles in 3 very different congregations and He has provided me with all I needed along the way ...

I met Sue on a Christian dating site ~ out of character for both of us

~ and we soon both realised that God was steering us together. We were married in 2006 in Bushey Baptist Church and between us we have 5 children ~ my two sons and Sue's three daughters ~ together with 7 grandsons!

When Sue decided to retire, we wanted to move to the Island (my grandfather was born in Ventnor). We had a plan for when, where and how. Once again God stepped in bringing the move forward into line with His timing and positioning us in Shanklin where He wanted us to be. Over the last 8 years, we have both grown at an exponential rate and seem largely unrecognisable to the people we thought we were!

When we arrived, in November 2015, we planned to retire and enjoy life ~ we certainly are enjoying life but we are a little busier than we imagined!

In Shanklin, we found a tremendously warm welcome, particularly from the fellowship @ SURC ~ and we have felt supported ever since ...

I am privileged to now be church secretary here, a role that I enjoy enormously and am thankful to God, to members of the fellowship, and especially to Sue for her support, encouragement and, most of all, patience. Perhaps not surprisingly, when I was first asked to consider the role I shied away but, as usual, God knew best!

Looking at my "game of two halves" I am reminded of 2 pictures of the Prodigal Son:



© *Freedom in Christ Ministries, used by permission*

- The first as the Father runs towards his son and throws his arms around him is of a bedraggled, exhausted figure, sorrowful and believing he was unworthy and needing to "earn" favour

## **The Link** - October 2023

- The second (just moments later), is of renewal, as the son is given the best robe (acceptance), His Father's ring (authority) and sandals for his feet (restoration to the family)

Sadly, a recent survey of American Christians reveals that many associate the first picture with their Christian Walk and do not realise (as I didn't) that only by His grace are we made Children of God. There is nothing we need to do, nor is there anything we can do. **Freedom in Christ** releases us from such negative thoughts about ourselves and enables us to focus our eyes on Jesus.

**Thank You All**

*Robin (& Sue)*

### **Carols at Daish's Hotel on Christmas Eve**

Local Churches have once again been invited to go in and lead carol singing at 17:00. Jenny Dyer at the Methodist Church has asked if we can rustle up some singers again...

Please speak to her or to Brian if you are around that afternoon and happy to join in. Please note that Christmas Eve falls on a Sunday this year.



### **Messy Church Light Party**

**Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> October**

**15:30 – 17:30**

**Crafts, fun and food**



Look out for details nearer the time. We plan to include the latest story from **Patch the Pumpkin**.

# Samaritan's Purse Shoebox Appeal

This year we will again have the opportunity to support the wonderful **Operation Christmas Child** shoebox ministry. Over many years our Church has embraced this and many shoeboxes have gone from our little Island to bless dear children in countless countries where they have so little and where these shoeboxes provide an amazing gift.



Would you feel able to be part of this ministry again this year or perhaps for the first time? There are many ways to do this.

**Fund Raisers – Sandra Snell** (who is our local contact for shoebox collections) is holding three events to help raise money for the shipping costs of the boxes:

- **Coffee Morning – Monday 9<sup>th</sup> October** from **10:00 to 12:00** (including video presentation of children receiving their gifts – very moving). **Venue: 45 Alfred Road, Lake**
- **Coffee Afternoon – Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> October, 14:00 onwards** – details as above.
- **Evening Event** – three course dinner (£12.50pp), **Friday 13<sup>th</sup> October at 19:00**. Again, with video presentation. Venue as above. Please book beforehand with Sandra (☎ **408266** or **07835 486128**)

**Local collection dates** for Sandra this year are from **13<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> November**, and we will be happy to take any boxes from church to her. The national collection dates are **13<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> November**, and boxes can be dropped off at **The Entertainer** in **Newport** between these dates. As details can change, please visit [www.samaritans-purse.org.uk/what-we-do/operation-christmas-child/find-your-drop-off-location/](http://www.samaritans-purse.org.uk/what-we-do/operation-christmas-child/find-your-drop-off-location/) for up to date drop-off point information.

If you wish to give individual donations of items to go into boxes, rather than assembling a box yourself, then these will be very gratefully received, as also donations of money for Sandra to purchase items for her team of helpers to assemble. Such items/

## **The Link** - October 2023

money will be very welcome at any time. Again, I will be very willing to pass these on.

Another useful resource are pre-printed **flat pack boxes** provided by Samaritan's Purse, which can save time accessing a shoebox (especially as Shanklin no longer has a shoe shop) and then needing to wrap it. The flat packs cost £5 a box and this includes shipping costs. I will be accessing some of these from Sandra, so do see me if you'd like one.

As an alternative, 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 a shoebox – or the time to shop for and pack an Operation Christmas Child shoebox gift yourself.

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/](http://shoebonline.samaritans-purse.org.uk/) for more details. It is so easy to do - ask the editor if you'd like to know more (he has 'packed a shoebox' online himself).

### **How to Pack a Shoebox**

1. **Find a Shoebox:** Get an empty medium sized shoebox, and wrap the box and lid separately in colourful wrapping paper or use preprinted shoeboxes. Attach the boy/girl label to the top of your shoebox, mark if your gift is for a boy or a girl and select an age category 2-4, 5-9 or 10-14.
2. **Fill with gifts:** Fill your shoebox with a selection of fun toys, hygiene items and school supplies. If possible, include one or two extra special items you know a child will love such as a doll, cuddly toy or deflated football with pump. See the Gift Suggestions on the next page for more ideas.
3. **Make your project donation:** A suggested donation of £5 is essential to cover project costs, including shipping, to enable a local church or group overseas to lead a safe, well-organised children's event where your shoebox will be given to a child in

need. You can give online at *Follow Your Box* and can print out a barcode and place it inside your shoebox on top of the contents. This will enable OCC to tell you which country your shoebox gets sent to.

## What Goes in My Shoebox?

Include a toy that a child will immediately love as soon as they open the box and why not include a personal note or photo of you or your family?

### *Gift Suggestions*

- Toys - A football & pump, cuddly toys, dolls, toy cars, small musical instruments, yo-yos, skipping ropes, balls, small puzzles etc.
- School Supplies - Pens, pencils & sharpeners, crayons or felt pens, stamps & ink pad sets, writing pads or notebooks, solar calculators, colouring & picture books etc.
- Hygiene Items - Toothbrush, bars of wrapped soap, comb or hairbrush, flannel.
- Other Items - Hat, gloves, scarf, sunglasses, cap, socks, T-shirt, flip-flops, hair accessories, jewellery set, watch, wind-up torch etc.

**Do Not Include** - Toothpaste, sweets, lotions and liquids; used or damaged items; war-related items; seeds, gum, chocolate or food items; religious or political literature; medicines, aerosol cans, sharp or fragile items. Items like this will be removed from shoeboxes.

**Shoebox leaflets** are available at the back of the church – please note that the collection dates on them are the **National Collection Dates**, not the ones that Sandra uses as mentioned earlier.

**Do ask me** if I can help in any way – this is a wonderful ministry because of which many dear children have received the Greatest Gift of All – **Jesus**.

And don't forget, that **each shoebox gift becomes a tangible expression of God's love for a child in real need.**

Blessings in his name

Jane H

## Urgent Appeal

I am sure we will all have been moved by the recent terrible disasters in Libya and Morocco.



Samaritan's Purse have a wonderful ministry that quickly gets to countries overcome by such challenging events, even establishing field hospitals to care for those injured.

A report has just been received by them as follows – copies are on the trolley at church:

*On Friday 8<sup>th</sup> September, a catastrophic 6.8 magnitude earthquake decimated Morocco leaving over 2,900 people dead and over 5,000 injured, followed by a devastating flood just two days later on the northeast coast of Libya that claimed at least 8,000 lives.*

*Tremors from the Morocco earthquake were felt as far afield as Portugal while Storm Daniel swept into Libya from the Mediterranean causing two dams to burst and obliterating infrastructure and buildings in Derna.*

***Urgent help is needed to save lives.***

*Tens of thousands have lost homes, livelihoods and loved ones, creating an urgent need for basic supplies and shelter. At Samaritan's Purse, we are experienced in providing relief in the wake of major earthquakes and floods, both directly and through our partners. More recently, these include providing critical aid to victims of the Turkey earthquakes and Ukraine dam collapse.*

***You can help victims in Jesus' Name today – no gift is too small to matter.***

*Right now, Samaritan's Purse is supporting our on the ground partners who are providing victims in Morocco and Libya with*

*essential supplies, such as food, water and tents. We are also continually assessing the situation in both countries to identify further opportunities to help in Jesus' Name.*

*"Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me, for in you my soul takes refuge; in the shadow of your wings I will take refuge, till the storms of destruction pass by." Psalm 57:1 (ESV)*

*You can support those affected in Morocco, Libya and across Africa by making a donation to our Africa Crisis Relief Fund, helping us support our partners and provide physical and spiritual aid where it is most needed.*

*Will You Prayerfully Consider Making a Donation Today?*

*Every penny donated makes a big difference to people whose lives are at risk, and provides an opportunity to share God's love in times of darkness. Please join us in praying for all those impacted by these disasters, and for our partners as we provide support in this difficult time.*

**Ways to give:**

**Online** [www.samaritans-purse.org.uk/disaster](http://www.samaritans-purse.org.uk/disaster)

**☎ 020 8559 1180**

*Source: Samaritan's Purse*

Do please ask me if you'd like to know more about the amazing work of Samaritan's Purse – and if you would find it helpful, I will be sending off monies to them for this appeal and would gladly send from yourselves if this would be easier.

The trauma from these disasters is so enormous, whole families wiped out with life never being the same again. As we reach out with love and compassion, may we pray that our dear Lord Jesus will touch these lives that are so broken.

Blessing in His Name

Jane H



## Our Hope and Our Calling (Part 1)

During the pandemic lockdown, we looked at a short series of devotionals from Neil speaking of our **Hope** and our **Calling**. Having reviewed these recently, I think it is well worth having another look. Here's part one...

\*\*\*

### Our Hope

#### Persevering Through Tribulations

**“Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance.”** (*James 1:2-3*)

There certainly are a lot of distractions, diversions, disappointments, trials, temptations and traumas, which come along to disrupt the process of becoming the person God wants you to be. Every day you struggle against the world, the flesh and the devil, each of which is opposed to your success at being God's person.

But Paul reminds us that the tribulations we face are actually a means of achieving our supreme goal of maturity: **“we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.”** (*Romans 5:3-5*)

James offers similar encouragement: **“Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may**

**be mature and complete, not lacking anything." (James 1:2-4)**

Maybe you thought your goal as a Christian was to escape tribulations. But God's goal for you is maturity in Christ; becoming the person He designed you to be. And tribulation just happens to be one of the primary stepping stones on the pathway. That's why Paul says we exult (meaning to express heightened joy) in our tribulations. Why? Because persevering through tribulations is the doorway to proven character, which is God's goal for us.

Our hope lies in proven character, not in favourable circumstances or in the manipulation of others. Neither circumstances nor people can keep you from being what God wants you to be. Trials and tribulations are the most common means for bringing about His goal for your life.

**Lord, help me see my trials as stepping stones, not obstacles.  
Give me grace to persevere and develop proven character.**

\*\*\*

## **Lend Me Your Hope**

**"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." (Romans 15:13)**

*Lend me your hope for a while, I seem to have mislaid mine. Lost and hopeless feelings accompany me daily; pain and confusion are my companions. I know not where to turn; looking ahead to future times does not bring forth images of renewed hope. I see troubled times, pain-filled days, and more tragedy.*

*Lend me your hope for a while, I seem to have mislaid mine. Hold my hand and hug me; listen to all my ramblings, recovery seems so far distant. The road to healing seems like a long and lonely one.*

*Lend me your hope for a while, I seem to have mislaid mine. Stand by me; offer me your presence, your heart and your love. Acknowledge my pain, it is so real and ever present. I am overwhelmed with sad and conflicting thoughts.*

*Lend me your hope for a while; a time will come when I will heal, and I will share my renewal, hope, and love with others*

*(adapted from the poem 'Lend Me Your Hope', author unknown).*

The apostle Paul gives us the biblical basis for our comfort and hope:

**"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God. For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ." (2 Corinthians 1:3-5).**

**Lord, I praise You for the Hope you have given me. Help me to be a source of hope in all my relationships and circumstances today.**

*Neil Anderson*

***Freedom in Christ Ministries***

*Used by permission*

Here are some Bible verses which spell out the Hope we have when we accept Jesus Christ into our lives:

***"For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." Jeremiah 29:11***

***"Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer." Romans 12:12***

***"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" 1 Peter 1:3***

***"To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" Colossians 1:27***

***Dear Lord, thank you for the glorious hope we have in Your Son, our Saviour, Christ Jesus***

**Next time, Neil goes on to speak about Our Calling...**

All Bible verses quoted are from the NIVUK (UK): Holy Bible, New International Version® Anglicised, NIVUK® Copyright © 1979, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.®. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide

## Men's Breakfast – Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> November



**08:30 – 10:00 - at Viv's Cooking**

9 High Street Sandown, PO36 8DA



Vivette and Paul Fryatt are delighted to welcome us to this lovely place that they opened last year after they moved from Luton during lockdown. They have been worshipping with us over recent months with Paul's mother, Mary.

Please sign the list on the board at the back of the church if you plan to come along - and do offer a lift to people without transport.

Bring a friend to share in the fun and meet others – we'll have a brief time of testimony and prayer to finish off.

And not to be outdone:



**A Ladies' Breakfast may follow...**

**...on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> November**

Look out for details!



# FOCUS

## on our Christian Brothers and Sisters being persecuted for their faith

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### *Iranian prisoner Joseph Shahbazian freed from Evin Prison*

Thank you for praying for Joseph Shahbazian - he has now (18<sup>th</sup> September) been freed from Evin Prison after initially being sentenced to 10 years for his involvement in a house church. Please continue to pray for a full recovery from his ordeal.

He was initially sentenced to 10 years in prison for acting against state security for holding church services in his home, but it was reduced to two years in May.



Iranian Christians are thankful for the release of Joseph Shahbazian and ask for prayer that the Lord will enable him to recover from his imprisonment, and that other Christians in prison or facing detention will be encouraged and strengthened.

Thank you for your prayers for Joseph. He is now back at home with his family, but he is also suffering from a serious illness – please continue to pray for his full recovery.

## **Background**

Joseph was imprisoned on 28<sup>th</sup> May 2022 in the notorious Evin Prison. The initial accusations against him included acting against state security through his involvement in the home church of evangelical Christianity, inciting the population, and insulting holy things.

You may remember his story, alongside Mina Khajavi's and Malihe Nazari's, which was reported by Open Doors last June. They were among at least 38 Christians arrested in a coordinated operation by intelligence agents in the summer of 2020. Malihe Nazari was released earlier this year to be with her son, who has leukaemia – it is believed that the Supreme Court granted her release due to her son's condition. Mina Khajavi's sentence currently remains unchanged.

## **Acquitted of all charges – but not released**

While the Supreme Court announced in February 2023 that there was no evidence presented to substantiate the accusations levelled against him, and deemed the maximum punishment of ten years unjustifiable, his acquittal led to a reduction of his sentence to two years rather than freedom.

"It is great that both the supreme and appeal court have acknowledged the unmerited and cruel maximum punishment that was handed down to Mr Shahbazaian," says Mansour Borji, advocacy director for Article 18. "However, it is disappointing that they have failed to recognise and uphold his rights as a citizen to worship peacefully and freely without the fear of prosecution. Joseph has not done anything illegal to deserve two years in prison.

"Praying or taking part in a Bible study with other Christians is every citizen's right, according to Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which emphasises that 'everyone has the right to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance either alone or in community with others and in public or

private’.”

Having already served nine months of his prison term, Joseph had 15 months remaining until the completion of his ‘new’ two-year sentence. Additionally, he was prohibited from being a member of social and political groups for two years, and once his sentence concludes, he is to be placed in internal exile in Kahnuj city. Furthermore, he is restricted from travelling abroad for two years, though a two-year post-imprisonment exile in a remote province of south east Iran has been dismissed.

### **A concerning pattern**

The case of Joseph Shahbazian highlights a concerning pattern within the judicial system of the Islamic Republic, where Christian citizens have faced severe punishments, including long-term imprisonment and exile. Despite the defendants’ defences and requests for reconsideration, the courts have often upheld their initial judgments without giving due consideration. An earlier appeal made by Joseph had been rejected, before the partial success of the appeal.

It is notable that Christian citizens have received disproportionately harsh sentences. Their alleged crimes primarily involve participating in home churches and possessing Christian literature in their homes.

The reduction in Joseph Shahbazian’s sentence is a small glimmer of hope, but it underscores the need for greater attention to the fair treatment of religious minorities in Iran. Praise God for this reduction in Joseph’s sentence, and pray that he will be freed sooner. Please keep praying for Joseph, his family and all Christians facing persecution in Iran for belonging to a church group.

### **Please Pray**

- Give thanks that Joseph has been freed
- For Iran’s constitutional freedom of religion or belief to be a reality in the lives of Christians and other religious minorities
- For all Christians in Iranian prisons to know God’s loving comfort and closeness

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



# FUNDRAISING IN SUPPORT OF **HELP** *for* **HEROES**

## Thank You

We are constantly amazed at the generosity of all those who supported our Help for Heroes BBQ.

This year we have raised around £1,300.00 which will go to support those who are in need in our armed forces. A massive 'Thank You' to all those who helped this worthy cause.

Thanks again

Malc & Miriam

### **Connection Quiz Answers**

1. A **Red** flag.
2. Captain **Black**
3. **Green**.
4. **Blue** and **Yellow**.
5. Connection: They are the **five colours of the Olympic rings**.
6. This issue's cover photo is of... La Plage du Butin, Honfleur, Normandie (*a different photo of this location was used on the cover of the October 2017 edition of The Link*)





## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED



We are looking for volunteers to befriend care home residents across the Island. This might involve having a chat, playing a board game, reading aloud, or any other activities that a resident would enjoy.

rebecca@embracingage.org.uk  
embracingage.org.uk/isle-of-wight  
07419 338066



Registered charity no. 1160400

# Shanklin Town Brass Band



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

**30<sup>th</sup> Birthday Concert**

*on*

***Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> October***

19:30

Shanklin United Reformed Church

Admission Free

**Retiring Collection in aid of SURC**

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

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?

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

### Across

- 1 La Marseillaise is this country's national anthem (6)  
 4 Capital of Austria (6)  
 7 Woody perennial plant (4)  
 8 Pyrenean country (7)  
 10 Not out (2)  
 11 Person who steers a boat (3)  
 13 'Garden of Europe', in the Netherlands (9)  
 16 Apparatus with rotating blades for cooling (3)  
 19 7<sup>th</sup> planet from the sun (6)  
 23 Ladies' supportive undergarment (3)  
 25 We breathe it in (3)  
 26 City where the formal seat of

- the European Parliament sits (10)  
 27 Flying mammals (3)  
 28 Not night (3)  
 30 Sooty's panda friend (3)  
 31 City on the French Riviera that holds an annual film festival (6)  
 32 Capital city of 1 across (5)

### Down

- 1 Most populous city in the German state of Hesse (9)  
 2 & (3)  
 3 Village in Dorset with a castle & a 'Swanage Railway' station (5)  
 4 Make sure that something is true or accurate (6)  
 5 'Id Est' *initials* (2)  
 6 Amsterdam football club (4)  
 7 Informal word for a moustache (4)  
 9 Sheath for a sword (8)  
 12 Not off (2)  
 14 What you listen with (3)  
 15 -, upon Thames or Hull (8)  
 18 Long way away (3)  
 20 A state of worry (6)  
 21 Capital of Portugal (6)  
 22 Enlargement of a photo (6)  
 24 Capital of Latvia (4)  
 27 Noise sheep make (3)  
 29 Not no (3)

## Can You Guess The Year?

- West Ham United win the FA Cup beating Arsenal.
- The film '*Kramer vs. Kramer*' is released in the UK.
- Robert Runcie enthroned as Archbishop of Canterbury.
- And UK No. 1s included:
  - Abba with '*Super Trouper*' & '*The Winner Takes it All*'
  - The Jam with '*Going Underground*'
  - Olivia Newton John and ELO with '*Xanadu*'
  - Johnny Logan with '*What's Another Year*'

*Answer next issue*

## This Issue's 'Pot Luck' Quiz Questions

1. What was The Pet Shop Boys first UK number one?
2. Who represented the UK at Eurovision in 1975?
3. What is the capital of Bolivia?
4. Which engine is number 5 in Thomas the Tank Engine?
5. Who wrote the theme song to Coronation Street?
6. Who succeeded Richard III as king of England?
7. Which organisation has their home at Rylstone Chalet, Shanklin?
8. When was the Tower of London first opened to the public?
9. On the periodic table, which element is Z?
10. When was the men's FA Cup final first played at Wembley?

*Answers next issue*

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

**Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> October**

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

[surc.thelink@btinternet.com](mailto:surc.thelink@btinternet.com)

# Last Issue's Solutions

- Guess the year: it was **1981**

- Last issue's crossword ↓

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

## Last Issue's 'Pot Luck' Quiz Answers

- |                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| 1. Good Vibrations                | 7. William Hartnell   |
| 2. Olivia Newton-John             | 8. 1070s  |
| 3. Baku                           | 9. Argon  |
| 4. Ringo Starr                    | 10. The inaugural men's FA Cup tournament kicked off in November 1871 |
| 5. Simon May & Leslie Osborne     |   |
| 6. Henry I ( <i>his brother</i> ) |   |

## Sunday Service

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

## Weekday Activities

- Monday**     16:00     **Prayer for Israel** (see [page 4](#))
- 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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[brianharley58@gmail.com](mailto:brianharley58@gmail.com)

*Day off: Monday*

**Secretary:**     **Robin Wightman**



[robinwightman@aol.com](mailto:robinwightman@aol.com)

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

[www.shanklinurc.co.uk](http://www.shanklinurc.co.uk)

*Registered Charity No. 1130459*