

The Link



November 2023



Shanklin United Reformed Church www.shanklinurc.co.uk

***They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning,
We will remember them***

View From Number 10



Spreading the Good News across the land

Gavin Calver at the Evangelical Alliance often uses this slogan, “We are Good News people in a bad-news world!” Jesus appeared in Galilee announcing good news and after three short years he handed over the baton and then commissioned his followers to make disciples of all nations; that is the on-going mandate for the church today. We are to take the good news to the whole world.

As part of the major Church Life Review, the URC commissioned a report from *Theos* to look at congregational life across the three nations, as many local churches are sadly declining and some closing, like at Freshwater. A key observation in the report is that churches are good at community service but not so good at faith-sharing. If you are reading this online you can follow this link to read it: <https://www.theosthinktank.co.uk/research/2023/07/04/the-united-reformed-church-a-paradoxical-church-at-a-crossroads>

In the run up to Christmas (if it’s OK to use the “C” word so early!), we must think about how we can seize the opportunity to talk about the person who should be at the centre of the season. It is really the prime time to engage people in conversation about Jesus.



We showed a video in October introducing a nationwide initiative encouraging us all to share the light of Jesus in our communities over the Christmas season. The aim is to take the Good News out of our buildings into the community and to shine our light – especially over the weekend before Christmas - **Saturday 16th and Sunday 17th December.**

There is already a plan for local churches to share music in the Sandown Christmas event that Saturday and Ann B has drawn musicians together from various congregations to prepare for this.

What might we do in Shanklin? We plan to be open the previous Saturday with crafts and refreshments and we plan to host a Light up a Life service on the evening of 15th for those who have been bereaved – but how might we step out in some way...? We have plans to go into schools, care homes and to Daish's Hotel... but what more could we do?

Do please be praying about this and share your thoughts with one of the elders. Also, keep the on-going Alpha course in your prayers.

Such intentional outreach is a vital part of our work.

Rich blessings in Christ,



Join us for an evening of worship and refreshing...

Come to the waters



Friday 17th November

19:30 in the church

**Daniel and Heather Tan join with our worship team
for an open time of seeking God together
Refreshments available – see you there**

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=ZTIXZzBLWnkrWTNBY2JBK1o0K2ZXdz09](https://us04web.zoom.us/j/3242665584?pwd=ZTIXZzBLWnkrWTNBY2JBK1o0K2ZXdz09)

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 **07474 273119** (or, as a back-up - Jean Cunningham: 07854 324809) 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.

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 15:00 at Roy, Melodie and Carol's home and on the church Zoom (should you wish to join the meeting on Zoom, please contact Melodie or Roy beforehand). Please get in touch with Roy & Melodie for more details: melodieroywilson@gmail.com or ☎ 866912

Inspiring Faith

'The Underground Church is a poor and suffering church, but it has few lukewarm members.'

Pastor Richard Wurmbrand was imprisoned for 14 years in communist Romania in the 1950s and 1960s. In 1968 he inspired the founding of Release International, which today continues his ministry to serve persecuted Christians around the world in the name of Jesus.



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 26th November
– café serving from 10.15**



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.

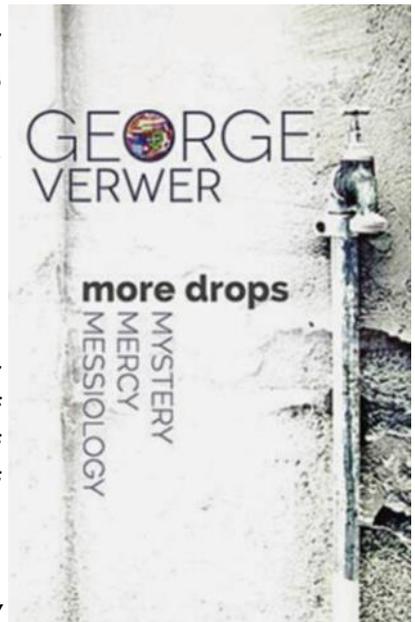
They cost **£4.50**

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

Shanklin URC Bookshop

On a couple of occasions this year there have been local shared evening meetings with guests from Operation Mobilisation (OM). As some of you will know, OM was founded by George Verwer (1938-2023) who was born in New Jersey, USA, and made a personal commitment to Christ at a Billy Graham rally. OM is probably well known for using its ship ministries to spread the gospel around the world, launching its first ship in 1971. OM is also involved in a wide variety of work including relief and development work, always seeking to work in partnership with the local church whenever they can. One aspect of their outreach and witness is the distribution of Christian books and other Christian literature. George Verwer has written several books and has expressed surprise that over a million copies of his own books have been distributed around the world in about fifty languages.

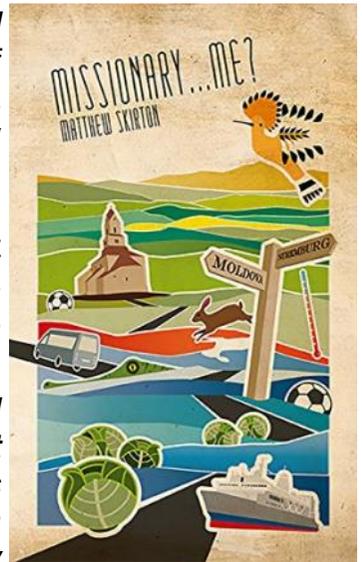
One of his books is *"More Drops: Mystery, Mercy and Messiology"*. In this book he shares from his experiences in life, including some things he regards as personal failures, and looks at how God can work through situations even when they are messy. Each chapter can be read as a stand-alone section. During his lifetime he was always keen to publish and distribute books by other Christian authors and so at the end of the book he includes a list of recommended reading by a variety of authors.



The bookshop has a previously owned copy of *"More Drops: Mystery, Mercy and Messiology"*, in excellent condition, priced at £5.

"This is a story of travel and love, crocodiles and soldiers, life and death, ships and illness, blessing and provision, ugly angels and the KGB, Dracula's castle and hoopoes, holy kisses and miracles,

answered prayers and a girl and a voice and a call ". This is the opening sentence of "Missionary...me?" by Matthew Skirton, a book published by OM. For 22 years Matthew served as a missionary with OM in Eastern Europe and Moldova. This book is written in a very easy to read style and he speaks about growing up and meeting his wife as well as his work with OM. Towards the end of his book he says of his book:

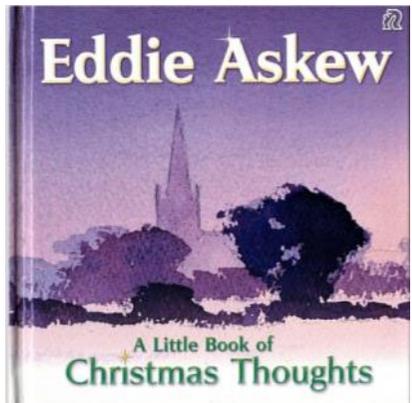


"It is simply the story of how God transformed my life, protected and provided for me and at times did some quite extraordinary things along the way. My prayer is that maybe, in some small way, this story of my life, my experiences and journey so far with God may encourage readers to (re)consider their own relationship with, and service for Him." Matthew Skirton and his family moved to England in 2015 and he now serves as the UK Chief Executive of OM.

The bookshop has a previously owned copy of "Missionary...me?", also in excellent condition, priced £2.50.

Some people have already started their Christmas shopping. The bookshop has a selection of packs of Christmas cards available. As in previous years the cards are produced by The Leprosy Mission and all contain a Bible verse.

One of the Christmas books in stock is 'A Little book of Christmas Thoughts' by Eddie Askew. It is also a Leprosy Mission publication. The book is a compilation of articles from some of his other books and brings together a collection of thoughts, prayers and meditations all with a Christmas theme. The book is illustrated with Eddie's paintings and has been divided into three sections: Advent, the Nativity and Epiphany. This is a hardback book priced £7.99



Make sense of life

Explore some of the big questions

The Alpha Course



Wednesday afternoons at 15:30

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

Connection Quiz

1. What is the name of the park in Manhattan?
2. By what name is the *aurora borealis* better known as?
3. Who represents the government in US criminal cases?
4. What is (according to Google) 'a round plane figure whose boundary consists of points equidistant from a fixed point'?
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 an appropriate photo that was taken in Normandie.



Answers are on [page 55](#)

Shared Worship in The Bay



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

5th Nov 17:00 Sacred Heart Church
Atherley Road, Shanklin

12th Nov 17:00 Christ Church
Broadway, Sandown

Guest: Imtiaz Trask - Focus on Pakistan

19th Nov 17:00 Shanklin URC,
High Street, Shanklin
Prayer Focus

26th Nov 17:00 To Be Confirmed

“We are in shock and mourning”: update from Christians in Gaza and Israel



The death toll continues to rise in both Israel and Gaza, and

The ongoing conflict in Israel and Gaza has led to hundreds of deaths and thousands of people injured or homeless. Christians in the region share what they're witnessing and how their churches are responding.

The death toll continues to rise in both Israel and Gaza, and rocket attacks and bombing are ongoing. Civilians were victims in the first attack by Hamas and continue to be stuck in the midst of the violence.

For most of us, as we see the unfolding situation on the news and online, we should do what our founder Brother Andrew advised us to do: pray for what you see and hear in the news, and pray for those affected. So let's keep praying for the people in Israel and the Palestinian Territories. Pray that peace will come. Pray for the churches in Gaza and in Israel, that they will be strengthened to help and comfort those around them and show them the love of God.

Christians in Israel

The Hamas military offensive has led to thousands of deaths in Israel. The Bible Society in Israel expresses on its website the feelings of so many of their brothers and sisters in Israel: “We are in

shock, angry, in mourning. In a few short hours, hundreds of lives were snuffed out: women, men, children, elderly. Several thousand were wounded, over a hundred were taken hostage. More than three thousand rockets were fired into the southern half of the country.

“There is not a family in the country that has not lost a family member or a friend. More than ever, we need your prayers. Prayers for those who mourn. Prayers for God to use this tragic event to cause people to seek God about their own eternal destiny. And we at the Bible Society in Israel ask you to pray that God give us wisdom in these days.

“Wisdom how to comfort. Wisdom how to pray. Wisdom and grace to be His messengers, serving His kingdom, that we do not weaken His message with our own anger. Pray with us that God will use all those leaders whose decisions in these days will determine the fate of so many people. May our loving God bring this disaster to an end.”

Christians in Gaza

Israel’s military response has also led to thousands of deaths in Gaza. Right now, Christians in Gaza are just trying to survive and to help our brothers and sisters who already have lost their homes or who cannot stay in their homes any longer. Local churches that Open Doors has connections with are providing those who found shelter in the church buildings with food and water. Pray for those churches, that these buildings indeed will continue to be places of protection.

“The street where I lived, which brought me so much happiness and held childhood memories, has now turned into complete devastation,” a Christian woman in Gaza shared. “I remember the library and the shops we were so familiar with, where the owners would call us by our names and invite us in. These places have now become ruins.

“How will we return to universities and continue our education when the roads are in ruins? Can we even access them amidst all this destruction?

“The painful end came when they told us we had 10 minutes to leave our home because it was going to be bombed by Israeli war flights.

We went to the church assuming it is a safe place.

“I hastily gathered my personal belongings and some clothes, hoping to return after the bombing, as I believed we could go back in a few hours. But the nightmare I never anticipated in my entire life became a reality - our home was bombed and destroyed, and the entire neighbourhood no longer existed. There were no more houses, just a dark cloud in the sky, and the air was thick with dust. Some of my belongings were scattered among the rubble, and I was trying to imagine where my room used to be.

“In that moment, I closed my eyes, took a deep breath, and wished it was a terrible dream, hoping to wake up from it soon.”

Pray also for her and all our other brothers and sisters who have lost everything.

Please keep praying

A pastor in Bethlehem (in the West Bank) – an Open Doors regional partner – shared on social media: “Your prayers, advocacy and support are much appreciated. [...] We are concerned about the high number of civilian casualties, irrespective they are Palestinians or Israelis. We call for the Geneva Convention and the International Humanitarian Law to be guaranteed by the international community.”

Pray for all those in Israel and in Gaza and on the West Bank who have lost loved ones, or who are waiting to hear about missing people. Pray for those who have lost their homes, and pray for all those who are now being treated for their injuries.

Please Pray

- For all who are mourning, injured or fearful to know God’s loving comfort
- For Open Doors regional partners - that they will be equipped to support their communities with wisdom and compassion
- For a miraculous end to the violence and for peace to reign.

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



OpenDoors

Serving persecuted **Christians** worldwide

Update from Rod and Ann Foster (with a few personal comments)

Good day all those in the Shanklin URC fellowship ~

Phase 1

At a recent Church Meeting, while discussing giving and donations, we suggested to Brian and the Elders and Members in attendance, that we felt there was a need, an opportunity and a challenge for us to support a local and needy Shanklin organisation. We put forward a suggestion of one that we had taken an interest in while on outreach in Shanklin town and that is the Mother & Baby Care facility. Brian suggested that we do an interview and write up a report for him and Robin to review and then submit to the Elders for consideration. We were delighted and over the moon when we heard that our proposal had been widely accepted and would be the recipient of the donation outcome over the Harvest period. We were informed that although the report was well written and informative it was too lengthy and had too much information. But Robin took on the task to revamp our report and we have to say he did an outstanding job in giving it more clarity and meaning and then it went to print in the September Link on page 6.

Now here we are approximately six weeks later and we felt that we really needed to express our thanks and feelings. We have been absolutely overwhelmed, as has Jo who is the Manager of the Centre together with her close colleague Tessa and between them they run the unit. It is hard for us to explain and express how we personally feel but our Church, the Elders and the Members have overwhelmingly gone more than the extra mile to support this project. We must mention in particular, a few names that we truly believe should be held up in prayer for their generous and valuable time and support.

Brian our Minister has backed this project 100% and then some! Tirelessly giving words of support and encouragement at so many Church meetings and functions to the point that we decided to invite Jo to attend the 30th Anniversary Concert of the Shanklin Town Brass Band. As she entered the church, she was met by Brian's introductory speech as she took her seat on the balcony behind us. Jo was shocked and overwhelmed with what Brian had said and the extent of

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what the church as a whole and the Brass Band were giving and supporting her cause and its need, to the point she didn't know what to say or do. So from us, both Ann and I give enormous Thanks to Brian for all he has done and continues to do in so many other areas. A special thanks also to Robin and his tireless communications, his help, support and advice and, in particular, the way he handles me (Rodney) personally especially as he knows I am a bit rash, rather outspoken and shoot from the hip at times!. Of course, we are indebted to the outstanding work, backing, support and giving of the amazingly talented Brass Band and the guests that night and particularly to Yvonne and Christopher, who have been incredibly supportive and caring. Huge thanks to Sheilagh and Ann at the Well. Special thanks to Pam from St Blasius for her giving and support and to the many people at church and in our home group, prayer group, the Well and Exercise classes, plus personal friends – to **those people** who have donated many items that have been needed and gratefully received by the Mother and Baby Group. All of those who are very close to us and, you know who you are, a very big thank you for all your giving and contributions.

Ann felt there is one lady in particular that we would ask to be held up in prayer and thanks and we will share with you, is Christine who also works as a volunteer at a local charity shop. This wonderful lady buys items from the charity shop (and these are large items like playpens and baby walkers) in the very bad weather and struggles on the bus to deliver them to the appropriate place. Without going into detail, she eventually got hold of Ann on the phone when she was stuck at a bus stop on a very miserable day to ask where and how she should deliver these items. I immediately got in my car and went and picked her up and completed the mission and then I said to Christine please let me drop you off at home now and she said, “No that is not necessary as I am going to the supermarket, so please drop me off at the bus stop.” In a loving way, I had to fight with Christine just to accept a lift to get her to the supermarket. It is so touching and so humbling to see that age has no limits when it comes to giving, sharing and helping as Christine does. Thank you Christine we hold you up in our prayers and thanks. Ann and I hold all our friends and colleagues and church family, Brian and the elders in our thanks and prayers.

Bless you, all in Jesus' Holy name and Thank you. Amen.

Phase 2

Outreach, church function support and giving

Ann and I have learned one valuable lesson recently which never ceases to amaze us and that is the unity between the Elders, Members and congregation of this church and the overwhelming amount of work, time, money and giving that goes on for the church and for the community is amazing. To mention just a few, but in no particular order - The Well: Bible Bite: CatURpillars: Messy Church: Alpha Course: Safeguarding and Training; Health, Safety & First Aid courses: Bookshop: Home Groups: Our Kitchen services: Quiz Nights: Open the Book: Cafe Church: Prayer Chain: Prayer for Israel and Israel Revealed: Malc and his maintenance team and supporters: The Tech team that runs streaming, sound & vision and all the electronic setups. ~ and there are many more, as you all well know.

There are so many people involved in all these different activities and projects not only giving of their very precious time, money, effort, dedication and support.

But also, they need more of us to attend and volunteer for all of these different functions and help and support them and where possible to reach out to others to support and be part of all these worthy causes and most importantly, we do this in honour and praise of our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ for his sacrifice. It is time for us to be strong. Time for all of us to step up and we know and understand that today, things are tight, difficult and many of us have constant visits to hospitals and doctors and various treatments and we have our own personal issues, problems and families to struggle with at times but here's the thing we have learned: **We are stronger if we are united and stand together in God's Holy name.** So please, if you are able, speak to Brian, Robin or Elders of the Church where extra help is needed, when, where and what is needed. I personally spoke to Robin the other day as I wanted to volunteer for one of the ongoing services we provide and Robin said he would discuss it with Brian who then discussed it with me directly and was very supportive and we talked about things in general and he asked me a question - which I answered him by saying, "Brian, I want to be the spare wheel for the Church. Everything that is in motion, everything that is on the go regularly - all of these things need a 'spare wheel'." I have told many

members in the church that if you need help please reach out and call us - if we are not attending the hospital or doctors then we are available. Perhaps there are more of us who could be included on the 'spare wheel list' to get involved with all the different and varied activities and functions going on at the Church. Just talk to Brian or Robin. Remember we are stronger together and united in the URC Shanklin under God's Holy guidance, Holy message and Holy Spirit Amen.

Phase 3

Personal Testimony from Rodney

On a very personal note - I would like to extend my love, thanks, appreciation, support and blessings to so many special people in our church who have a particularly special gift. For the past six months, I have been going through a very strenuous, hard and depressing time. Although we put up that shield and put on the armour that our Heavenly Father supplies us and every day we smile and joke and put on a friendly face, try not to complain or talk too much about our own personal problems but carry on through the day as best we can and handle all our home duties and personal issues that each and every one of us experiences every day. But I want to say a very special **Thank You** to my friends in our church who, on many occasions, have taken me to one side, either individually or at times in groups, without any prior warning or notification, and prayed so powerfully and expectantly and so spiritually that in nearly most of these times, I have been overcome and humbled with the intensity, love and words and tongues from these incredibly spiritual people in healing prayer. On odd occasions, I have reached out for prayer but on many occasions, I have just been grabbed and prayed for in passing or at a meeting. Never in my life have I felt so much power of the Holy Spirit and the tremendous feeling of love through Jesus Christ from their powerful ministry and prayer. It would be easy for me to mention the names of these caring people but, I have not asked their permission and they all know who they are. They are like a little band of heavenly Angels who appear at the right time, right place when the need is at its highest and utmost. I thank you and hold you all up in Jesus' Holy name that he may guide you and strengthen you all the more. I reach out to everyone in the church that if you have a prayer need then please,

make it known and, you will be surprised and you will be uplifted.

We are so very Blessed in this church - we are **more** than the URC we are **more** than a group and we are **more** than Family we are Shanklin URC Children of God and I so wish that we could get more of Shanklin to know, understand and accept Jesus into their lives. People often ask me how did you come to know Jesus? How does He talk to you? How do you know how to get in touch with him? How does he respond to you and how do you get his messages and what does he do for you?

Well, these are very difficult questions to answer for those who do not know Jesus. But we minister and do and say what Jesus lays on our hearts and the words he puts in our mouths at the time. Here's the thing - one point that you will all know and understand - when I have been 'dragged' off, unaware of what's going to happen when I am just busy doing my thing and not even thinking about it, then all of a sudden I could be at the church, I could be at The Well at the church, but all of a sudden I am 'dragged' off into the prayer room at the back by a group. I'm sat down on a chair closely surrounded by these people and all I feel is the touch of angels on my body, the intense vibrations from some of those hands and the heat and power generated by those hands, the different prayers and the voices in tongues all going off at the same time - it's as if you are suddenly taken by this light and for some moments you have no idea where you are or what's going on but you realise that you are suddenly in an unusual place and you feel that glow and your body stops functioning and breathing momentarily but you feel **so** alive and you feel awesome and when you walk out of that room you cannot even thank anybody for what just happened but you just wander off still not fully conscious of your whereabouts, but you do feel 6ft 6inches (1.98 metres) tall and you feel **on fire** for Jesus Christ, God and the fulfilment of the Holy Spirit. Don't let anybody tell me that it's not God's Angels at work. **Now** - try and explain **that** to a non-believer! I am sure we want so many people to receive that blessing and gift and communication from Jesus Christ, from the Holy Spirit and from God our Heavenly Father.

Thank you my praying Angels.

Rod & Ann Foster

A Sabbath of Prayer

During the **Sabbath of Prayer** held at church over 20th/21st October, I felt the Lord lay the following on my heart. I was not sure whether it was to be shared at the Healing Service on the Sunday, but it did not seem that the moment was right.

I then felt I would share it in 'The Link', hoping the word will be a blessing and encouragement to you.

“Choose you this day whom you will serve... As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” (Joshua 24:15).

“These are not days in which to be faint hearted, half hearted or distracted from the task ahead of you. Seek the lost, tend the sick, be to others My Hands and Feet...

Show love, show compassion. Show mercy...

Forgive those who have wrongfully used you...

Forgive as I have forgiven you... in that there will be healing, there will be joy and peace, there will be My power released.

Do not delay, the days are urgent, do you not see, do you not perceive – the enemy is around like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour – seeking to take precious souls before they have had the opportunity to hear of My love and sacrifice for them.

Preach the Gospel in season and out of season. Above all, seek my Face, look at Me in matters great and small, seek My wisdom, My guidance... I am the Good Shepherd; the Good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep...

I have laid down My life for you... walk in the light of that, giving thanks always.”

Blessings

Jane H

Reform Magazine

In the November edition of *Reform*, Stephen Tomkins speaks to Anthony Reddie, recently appointed Oxford University's first ever Professor of Black Theology.

They talk whiteness, the Church's role in empire-building, and the decision to roll out anti-racist training across the United Reformed Church – a process that Anthony will lead.

In the face of the Israel-Hamas war, Stephen also makes space for reflection, and there's a full report on the initial response of faith communities to the situation.

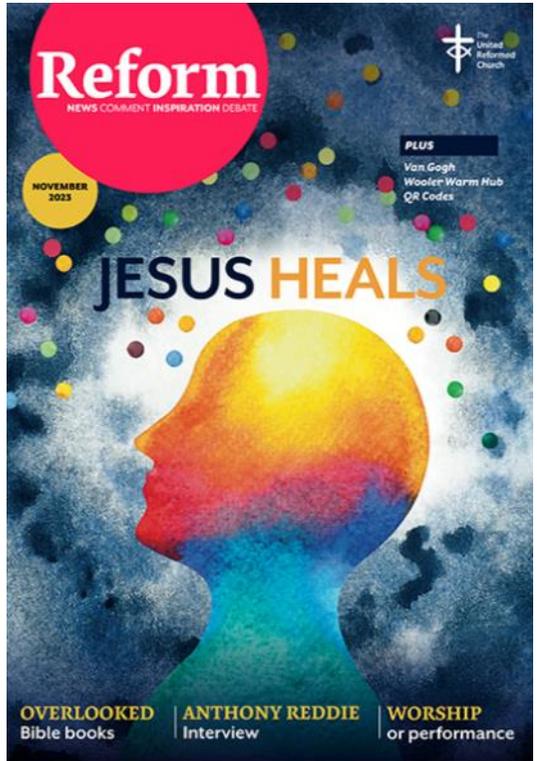
Viv Henderson learns from Jesus' role as a healer, and Barbara Bennett wonders about the difference between worship and performance.

There's also a warning about "pressing record" from preacher and comedian Paul Kerensa, and four writers make their case for a book of the Bible we should spend more time with.

The magazine is out on 30th October.

Subscribe to *Reform* at www.reform-magazine.co.uk/ digitally or in print.

For any queries, please email the *Reform* team at reform@urc.org.uk



Source URC

urc.org.uk/reform-magazine-november-edition-2/

Testimony

At the recent Sabbath of Prayer this testimony was read out by someone who I won't identify, but they have given their permission for it to be included in our church magazine as an inspiration to others.

I've been abused, rejected, no self-worth and I was [in a] very bad place. My mum and dad and my brothers aren't the greatest role models in life. [I] always believed in God since I was a child, make me feel safe and comforted. As growing up I struggled to fit. In my life make some bad, one thing I know [the] Lord will forgive all my mistakes.

I am not perfect [but] my heart belongs to the Lord. The enemy stolen so much from my relationships with my brothers/mum, a lot has happened. As I got older, [I] end up in addiction with drinks and drugs and mental health [that] would lead to me self-harming. I was at my lowest. In a very dark place and felt no way out. I really didn't want [to] be alive.

Even low, I at my lowest one, I know I give my [life] to the Lord and Lord covered me, protected me and kept me safe. He is Love and light of my life.

Even low I lead astray by enemy, God kept me safe and alive while I was stuck in addiction, because of this [I] turn away from God, all time [He] has always been with me.

God/Lord I would like to say sorry for things I've done, people I've hurt; I know you forgive us.

I am child of God who give me my life back and I am truly grateful. For anyone who felt like me - rejected, abandoned, no hope, pushed away by people – I promise in God's name I will be that voice for the lost, broken, hopeless, addicts, suicidal, self-harmers.

Let God in [to] your life and you will be true. You can [be] accepted just [as] you are.

Save the Date!

We are hoping to arrange a party from the church to this URC Wessex Synod event...

Wessex Synod

Big Day Out '24

Hollycombe
STEAM IN THE COUNTRY
hollycombe.co.uk



Children £5
Adults £8



Were you at the Wessex Synod Big Day Out in 2022?

Big Day Out '24 will be **Bigger and Better** with many **more rides** and additional programme activities provided by the Wessex Synod.

Open to all church groups, user groups, and community links

SATURDAY 4TH MAY 2024

10AM - 5PM

Book via:



An Evening of Music & Ministry With Ruth Fazal - Violinist, Worship Leader and Composer

Ruth loves the prophetic, and sees all that she does, whether playing or singing, to be a means of expressing the heart of our Heavenly Father to a world that is in so many ways crying out to see Him and feel His Presence. Ruth continues to lead worship and to speak wherever she is invited, always with the focus on Intimacy with the Father through our Beloved Jesus, and with the desire to impart something of the Father's heart for His people Israel, through her music.



In regard to her present visit in the UK she says:

“Having just arrived from Israel, I will be sharing about what is happening there, leading worship and playing violin for some intense times of soaking and seeking to hear the Lord and to receive His heart in light of all that is happening.”

And we now have the wonderful opportunity and joy of welcoming her on our Island at SURC on 7th November at 19:00.

**Come to
'The Well'**

a place for

Living Well Together

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

Wednesdays 11:00 – 13:00

Free refreshments and craft activities

Just drop in at any point



Men's Breakfast

– Saturday 4th November 08:30 – 10:00



Ladies' Breakfast

– Saturday 18th November Same time



Both will be at Viv's Cooking

9 High Street, Sandown, PO36 8DA

Full English with unlimited drinks and toast

Cost £10

Please sign the lists on the church noticeboard by the previous Tuesday if you'd like to come.

Vegan and Gluten Free alternatives are available – please indicate on the list

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.



**Our Cancer Journey ~
Ishmael & Irene Smale
When the Road is Rough and Steep**



**Ish & Irene will be here at Shanklin URC
On Saturday 27th January 2024 at 14:30
and will be bringing us this Testimony Concert**

Entry is free. Tea and cake to follow...

**Please do save the date and consider who you
might invite along**

Visitors from Organisation Mobilisation

We were blessed to receive team members from Operation Mobilisation at Bible Bite in October to share about mission around the world. They were on the Island for a long weekend doing various presentations in churches and schools.

Nori from Japan and Lip from South Korea had both spent a couple of years on the mission ship Logos Hope which stops at various ports and shares the Good News of Jesus. They shared testimony and explained how the ship ministry works – both demonstrating an amazing command of the English language!

The meeting is still on our YouTube site if you'd like to tune in and hear what they had to say – also a short video from Samuel Hughes who is from the loW and who has been serving with OM in the Ukraine for a number of years. You may recall that we supported this work as our charity focus last Christmas.



Operation
Mobilisation

Brass Band 30th Anniversary Concert

The church was packed in mid-October for a wonderful night of music from our wonderfully talented local band. This was the fourth and last of a series of concerts celebrating their 30th Anniversary;. Malcolm and Karen Lewis started the band in 1993. He also led a band at Lake Middle School where he worked for many years and introduced music to young people across the area.

Among the guests was the Island High Sheriff, Dawn Haig-Thomas from East Cowes, along with her daughter. Our church meeting decided that the collection at this event should not go to the church but to our Harvest appeal supporting a project with young families at Winchester House. One of the leaders was at the concert and was very moved by the generous response. Over £430 was collected that night bringing the total to a magnificent £967.

Don't miss the band's next visit to the church when they will bring us their annual Christmas Concert on Saturday 9th December at 19:30. Free entry – with a retiring collection.



*Co-founders of the Band Malcolm and Karen Lewis
with the High Sheriff.*

Shine Your Light



A nationwide Christmas campaign 'Shine Your Light' is calling hundreds of thousands to unite in towns, villages and cities this Christmas to take the message outdoors.

The initiative is led by the National Day of Prayer and Worship in collaboration with many denominations and key ministries; including HOPE Together, Myriad, Premier Christian Radio, Redeemed Christian Church of God and the Evangelical Alliance.

The vision for Shine Your Light is that the whole Church across England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Republic stand united to share the Gospel to the whole of

society this Christmas. Every local church and believer is being encouraged to be a light to shine to brighten up the whole country like a Christmas tree.

Shine Your Light will run on the weekend of 16 and 17 December, but with an emphasis on community events and activities, including Nativities and family focused opportunities taking place on the Saturday. These events will take place around town halls, high streets, town and shopping centres as well as other public places.

To link the national and local church together, the campaign aims to provide an online map highlighting all the events that are taking place over that weekend, with website signposting.

A specific website, www.shineyourlight.org.uk has been created with a social media campaign to run alongside. All partners of the campaign will be sharing resources via the digital resources section for use by local churches.

There will be a number of things which churches can order, including artificial candles, bespoke booklets and sound files with the official music for the weekend.

Speaking about the launch of Shine Your Light, Dr Jonathan Oloyede, Convenor of the National Day of Prayer and Worship, said: "We are inviting Christians from the North, East, South and West of these Isles to join us in Shining Their Light in their communities this Christmas. Imagine the impact of hundreds of thousands of Christians taking the message of Jesus into all public places and spaces."

Source: URC

urc.org.uk/join-thousands-in-shining-a-light-this-christmas/

Published On - 23 October 2023

Shanklin Open the Book Update – Our first presentation at St Blasius Academy



Tracy (also representing Zachariah) introduced our story and was brilliant, getting the children to participate with gusto: “Today I’d like your help with telling the story. Let’s practice.

- When you hear me say, “He wore a camel hair coat” everyone say, “Hump!”
- “He held it tight with a leather

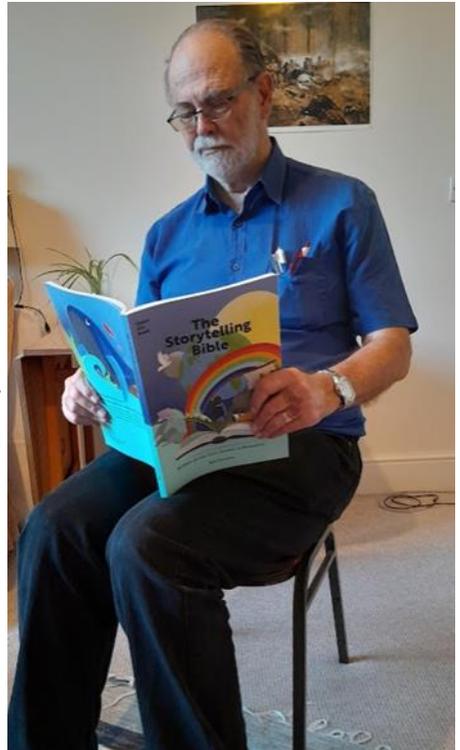
belt”, everyone pretend to tighten your belt and say, “Too tight!”

- “And he lunched on wild honey”, everyone say, “Mmmmm!”
- “And crunched on wild locusts”, everyone say, “Yuck!”

And turning to our narrator: “Let’s open the Book at the story of ‘John the Baptist’

Roy: “We have been told that one of the things you have been learning about at school is Wisdom. Is that right? Do you know what the bible tells us about wisdom?

That we are wise when we do what God wants...”





“The prophet Isaiah (a child was dressed as Isaiah) had predicted that someone would come as a 'voice in the wilderness' to make the way ready for the saviour-king God would send....”. “I baptise with water, but he will baptise you with God's Holy Spirit and with fire and will set right all that is wrong. So, John went to live in the wilderness, near the River Jordan.”

We also had children dressed up in costumes, one as a soldier and 2 as tax collectors, who came asking John questions about what they should do to be right with God.





'I have come to be baptised,' Jesus said to John. And John just shook his head. 'Me baptise you? You need baptise me!'

“So, John baptised Jesus in the Jordan River (two children lifted the cloth so Jesus could look submerged). And when Jesus came up out of the water, the Holy Spirit landed on him like a dove.”



“And Jesus heard a voice from heaven. ‘This is my son. The son that I love. I am very pleased with Him!’”

Cruising (With Open the Book!!)

When Julie and Bill were travelling on the Queen Mary 2 last month, they met lots of Christians from a wide spectrum of God's Kingdom. Some would probably not accept that others were their brothers and sisters. One claimed that the Canadian government is taking children away from Christian families and bringing them up in communes. Another would not enter a Church building because he considered all organised religion as wrong. He would only meet in the homes of believers, whilst another only worshipped via online services. There was a group of Americans who attracted notice because all the women wore long shapeless dresses and bonnets. Oddly, the bonnets were transparent. If law dictates that hair must be covered, should it be visible? They were 'German Baptists' and they did not have televisions - however they did use email.

To each, Julie talked about Open the Book and all were thrilled that the Word of God was reaching children in secular schools. When she showed him one of the videos made during Covid, the leader of the German Baptists was in tears. He went and fetched his wife and asked for her to be told all about OtB.

One of the most beautiful aspects of Open the Book is that teams are often composed of members from different denominations. It's wonderful when the school asks "What church are you from?" and we can reply that one storyteller goes to a Pentecostal church whilst another is Roman Catholic. It's a living expression of the unity of Christ's body - and it also united all the Good Shepherd's odd sheep on-board.

Julie



Anna Chaplaincy

Carol Turner has trained as an Anna Chaplain, and we plan to commission her for this work among older people in a service before Christmas. Do pray for her as she begins to explore this work, and for healing as she has dislocated her knee and is out of action for a while.

There are now 10 Anna Chaplains on the Island, and the others are under the Portsmouth Diocese of the Church of England. We are now breaking new ground and have agreed to oversee a project in our name, with a member at Ryde also exploring a calling.

You can find out more details at - www.annachaplaincy.org.uk

The Anna Chaplaincy Prayer

Faithful God, you have promised in Christ to be with us to the end of time. Come close to those who have lived long and experienced much. Help them to continue to be faithful and, within the all-age kingdom of God, to find ways to go on giving and receiving your grace, day by day. For your glory and your kingdom.

Amen

Rev Imtiaz's Visit

Many of you will remember our friend and brother, Rev Imtiaz who is visiting us this month.

He will be with us during our service on Sunday 12th November at 10:30 and also at Christchurch (Sandown) for the Bay Shared Worship at 17:00.

As a church we support his ministry financially and he has recently returned from ministering to the brothers and sisters in Pakistan and will bring news of this to us.

Imtiaz was last with us 4 years ago when his visit brought much blessing and I am sure will do so this time!

Robin

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.

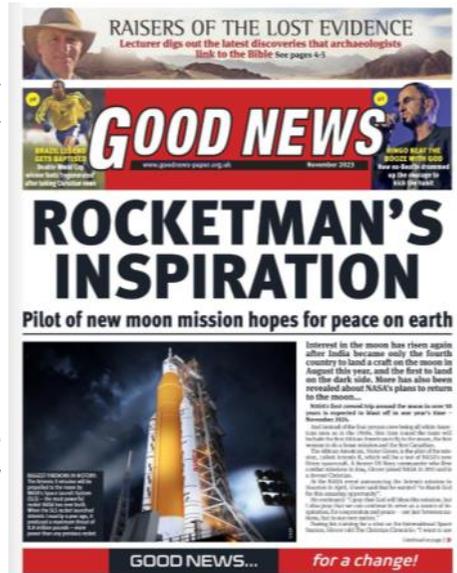
Every month, Good News reaches thousands of readers with true stories of how God is changing the lives of those who put their trust in his Son, Jesus. Using jargon-free language, it also explains how everyone can find a personal relationship with Jesus.

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) has several great articles, including the headline '**Rocketman's Inspiration**' - how the pilot of NASA's new moon mission is fired up by faith

Other contributions include:

- **Digging Out the Evidence** - Academic presents new video on latest evidence for the life of Jesus.
- **How Ringo Beat the Booze** - Ex-Beatle Ringo Starr says God helped him kick the habit.
- **Brazil Legend Baptised** - Double World Cup winner Ronaldo makes Christian commitment.
- **Festival of Remembrance** - How faith makes this annual festival special.
- **Healed From Me** - Miracle recovery from chronic fatigue syndrome.
- **Anorexia Defeated** - Finding God's love was start of sufferer's recovery.



Good News... for a change

Street, School & Prayer Pastors - Autumn News

Street Pastors

“The aim is to walk with Jesus in the times and places of greatest needs.”

Liaison with the Police and venue security company Executive Command (EC) is shaping our activities around this vision. Because of this we have benefitted from some excellent free training on first aid and the door staff perspective (both EC) and Welfare and Vulnerability Engagement (WAVE) & Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) (both Police). Thank God for these precious partnerships!



In addition, 20th October saw involvement in the police run 'Hate Crime' event in Ryde High Street. All this training helps with shaping and informing patrolling Street Pastors and interceding Prayer Pastors.

Please give thanks to God for extra patrols for the Festival, Cowes Week and Scooter Rally. Also, for two volunteer returnees, two in training and three recruits.

Please give thanks to God, and pray for:

- **Patrols in Newport on 11th & 24th November and 16th & 23rd December.**
- **Patrols in Ryde on 18th November and either 16th or 23rd December. May they light the way to Christmas!**
- **A positive decision by IoW Council in respect of manning night-time CCTV at weekends.**
- **More Spirit-filled volunteers and income to facilitate more patrols, responding to police priorities and the needs on our streets.**

School Pastors

"It has certainly been a rollercoaster of a journey since we first met in Year 7 all the way to the end. I'm such a different person, so much more confident and happy. Without the brilliant support from each of you I wouldn't be where I am today. I will never forget everything you have done for me and will be forever grateful."



This is what it's all about, thanks be to God!

Also for thanksgiving are involvement with the Archbishop of Canterbury's visit to The Bay CofE Secondary on 13th October and meeting the Pastoral Team at Ryde Academy through being an important part of the student support network. Involvement in students changing schools has again been good.

Relationships with the Pastoral Teams at Carisbrooke and Medina College continue to be excellent. Please give thanks to God, and pray for:

- **More Volunteers to address the massive needs.**
- **Mentoring in The Bay C of E, due to start next Easter (volunteer numbers permitting).**
- **Awareness-raising and finance-attracting, including more prayerful relationships with individuals and churches.**
- **Addressing, in Jesus' name, desperation among young people that sometimes leads to self-harm and for which inadequate mental health support is otherwise available.**

Prayer Pastors

Prayer Pastors support every patrol and mentoring session in Jesus' name.



Will you join our team?

Isle of Wight Street Pastors (including School and Prayer Pastors)
c/o Castlehold Baptist Church, High Street, Newport, PO30 1BH
sp@iowstreetpastors.co.uk



**The General Assembly
of the United Reformed Church
invites you to the induction of the
Revd Dr Michael Hopkins
as Moderator of the Wessex Synod**

**15:00 on Saturday 23 March 2024
at London Street United Reformed Church, Basingstoke**

The service will be led by the Moderator of the General Assembly,
the Revd Dr Tessa Henry-Robinson,
and the preacher is the General Secretary of the United Reformed Church,
the Revd Dr John Bradbury

The church address is: 20 London St, Basingstoke RG21 7NU

There is no parking at all at the church, please use public car parks. On Saturdays only the Eastlands Car park is available and near to the church.

Public transport is easy with many local buses, and the railway station is a half mile fairly level mainly covered walk.

We encourage car sharing and use of public transport as much as possible.

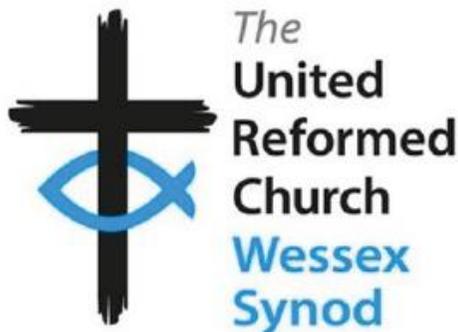
RSVP by 1 March 2024 *Email replies appreciated where possible*

The United Reformed Church Wessex Synod Office

120 Alma Road, Southampton, SO14 6UW

Tel: 023 8067 8570

office@urcwessex.org.uk



A Timely Reminder!

Sandra (Snell) invites you to a fundraising dinner in aid of the **Shoebox appeal**.



The dates have been changed from the original one in last month's **The Link**, with an additional one being added.

It might be that you receive the magazine online and so the October date will still be relevant – otherwise there's the **November** date coming up! Details are as follows:

Shoebox Fundraising Dinners **Friday 27th Oct**
and Tues 7th Nov



See the shoeboxes and donate £12.50 min donation.

All welcome @

45 Alfred Road, Lake.

Come and enjoy a 3 course meal and
hear/ see stories about the
shoebboxes.

RSVP Sandra 07835486128



Also, to say that this month sees the collection of the shoeboxes for their ongoing journey to bless countless children! **Do please** support if you are able – full details of ways to get involved are in last month's magazine (which is available to read online at www.shanklinurc.co.uk/The_Link.htm), but do please ask me if you have any questions on how to take part – just a reminder that the

The Link - November 2023

dates for **Sandra's** collection point are from **13th – 17th November** (whereas the **national** collection dates are **13th to 20th November**, and boxes can be dropped off at The Entertainer in Newport, except on Sunday) and as mentioned previously, I would be very happy to deliver other items for the boxes, completed ones or monies towards transport/goods – or to collect flat pack boxes from Sandra to make up a box. The easiest way to compile a box, however, is to do it online at <https://shoeboxonline.samaritans-purse.org.uk/> – it only takes five minutes. Ask the editor for more details about this as this is how he does it.

I should love as much help as possible for this exciting Shoebox ministry, which as well as blessing dear children with little gifts which mean **so much** to them and will more than likely be the only presents that they will have, the shoeboxes also contain a booklet about Jesus called '**The Greatest Journey**', in their own language. After receiving a shoebox gift, children have the opportunity to enrol in The Greatest Journey - which is twelve fun and interactive Bible lessons, where they get the chance to discover who Jesus is and how to begin their own journey of faith. For more information go online to www.samaritans-purse.org.uk/what-we-do/the-greatest-journey/

So many children's lives have been impacted by the good news of Jesus, which has gone on to change their lives. You can read and watch many 'Shoebox Stories' from all over the world online at www.samaritans-purse.org.uk/article-type/operation-christmas-child/.

With thanks and blessings in Jesus' Name

Jane H

PS There are a few flyers about Sandra's dinner dates available on the table in the lobby or church – do take one if interested.

CARE Prayer Diary

– October 2023 to January 2024

The new edition is now out of this very valuable **prayer resource**.

It gives a prayer for each day with a different topic each week, opening up our understanding of situations and needs for prayer in our own nation and across the globe. Copies are now available in the lobby, in the church and at care.org.uk/our-publications/prayer-diary. Also included is a leaflet asking for prayer for the **2023-24 Graduates on CARE's leadership programme**.

Graduates are placed in parliament or with an NGO Monday to Thursday. On 'CARE Fridays' they engage in Biblically based studies in our Westminster office.

Applications for next year's Leadership Programme close on **17th November 2023**.

Do you know any recent graduates or anyone in their final year at university who might benefit from this opportunity?

Visit care.org.uk/about/leadership-programme for more details.

If you would like to assure this year's Leadership Programme graduates of your prayers, you can write to them at:

**Leadership Programme,
51 Romney Street,
London SW1P 3RF**

or email mail@care.org.uk

“Lord, please continue to direct and inspire the over 350 alumni of the Programme, many now serving in positions of considerable influence in Jesus' name. Amen.”

Topics covered in the current edition are as follows:

- Compassion and Care for Life
- Children In Crisis
- Cities
- 'Lest We Forget'
- Mental Health Concerns

The Link - November 2023

- Political Issues in Scotland
- Healthcare Professionals
- Northern Ireland Challenges
- Artificial Intelligence
- Lonely People
- The Gospel and Society
- Financial Hardship
- Conflict Resolution

Do help yourself to a booklet to encourage your prayer life.

Sources: [CARE](#) used by permission

Needing Ideas?!

How quickly Christmas seems to be coming and the annual, sometimes desperate, search for suitable gifts for loved ones!

Alternative gifts are a brilliant way of solving the situation!

There are many societies - to name but a few: **Samaritan's Purse, Release, Barnabas, Love Russia, They Leprosy Mission, The RNLI** – all these and others give a wide selection of gifts from as little as £7.00 upwards to give instead of frantic shopping for yet another pair of socks, to toiletries to add to another abundance of such gifts given and received (and maybe even passed on!!).

The new **Samaritan's Purse Catalogue** is now available – copies in church – wonderful gifts for those who have so little – reaching out to families in crisis, poor farming communities, refugees and orphans, persecuted Christians, to name but a few.

For the **RNLI**, buying an RNLI virtual gift powers their lifesaving work - whether you send it to a loved one as a unique present or buy one for yourself to show your personal support for the lifesavers. Go to shop.rnli.org/pages/virtual-gifts for more details.

Do take copies of the different societies catalogues we have at church – or search online- and bring joy and hope to those who so often are without hope.

Christian Institute Week of Prayer

– Autumn 2023

The Christian Institute invites us to join them from **5th – 11th November** to pray for the many concerning issues affecting our nation at this time:

- Sunday – Authority
- Monday – Gospel Freedom
- Tuesday – Gender Ideology
- Wednesday – Assisted Suicide
- Thursday – Schools
- Friday – Society
- Saturday – The Christian Institute

Their **Week of Prayer** leaflet – on the table in the lobby, in church or can be downloaded from www.christian.org.uk/resource/week-of-prayer-autumn-2023/ - gives very helpful scriptures and pointers for prayer for each topic. The Christian Institute is a very valuable ministry, being ‘watchmen’ for our nation and is providing support for the Body of Christ in what can be challenging times to be a believer and to swim against the rising tide of secularisation in our nation. They do ask us for prayer for their work and if you would like to be informed regularly of their ministry go to www.christian.org.uk/ for their latest news and resources and how you can support their vital work.

“Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.”
Colossians 4:2

If you would like to know more, do have a word with me.

Blessings

Jane H



A Glorious Church Rising from the Ashes of Persecution

A Release International fact-finding team recently returned from Nigeria, where reports suggest more Christians are being killed for their faith than in the rest of the world put together. Yet what we discovered is not a church in despair but one that is overcoming through love and forgiveness, even towards those who have ‘betrayed’ it.

The following is an inspiring report from the Archbishop of Jos province in Nigeria:



Archbishop Ben Kwashi believes God is bringing beauty out of the ashes of destruction

For the love of humanity God is bringing beauty out of these ashes of destruction, believes Release International partner Ben Kwashi, the Archbishop of Jos.

But the price is high. The toll the violence is taking on church leaders as well as ordinary Christians is formidable.

‘I’ve done far more funerals in the last 20 years than naming ceremonies or weddings put together,’ said Archbishop Ben. ‘I’m a grieving pastor.

‘I have a church on Bauchi Road which has been destroyed four times. I have rebuilt it four times, and I will rebuild it ten times. Because I will never abandon those people.

‘And all this is happening under the nose of the federal Government in Nigeria. There seems to be no hope for justice for the Church in the north and northeast.

‘What the persecutors are bringing is destruction. They’re bringing illiteracy, they’re bringing people back to the days when they are helpless, and disease will kill them.

‘But we have a gospel that is not only able to save life but bring

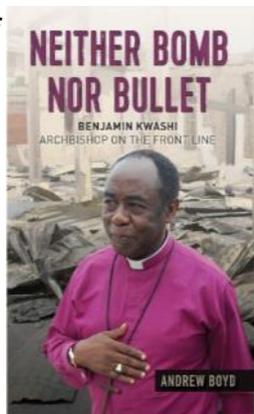
civility to humanity; that brings kindness and introduces health care, and mostly for free.

‘Those who bring this Gospel have chosen to be transformers in this life, going about the real business of change and transformation in communities where people consider their governments have forgotten them.

‘Their motive is whatever will count in eternity, whatever will count before the Lord. This kind of love is unusual. It is selfless. And they do it for the love of humanity.

‘In all this God is at work, bringing out of these ashes – literally – his beauty and his glory in the lives of His people.’

*Archbishop Benjamin Kwashi tells his story in his biography **Neither Bomb Nor Bullet**, which is available on the [Release International website](#).*



Do please help yourself to the wonderful materials from Release International, Open Doors and Barnabas to learn more of the situations our brothers and sisters face daily.

How To Pray For Nigeria

- Pray for an end to the violence against Christians that has ravaged Northern Nigeria and beyond for many years.
- Pray for protection for vulnerable communities and Release International partners who risk their lives to help the persecuted.
- That the bereaved and traumatised would find healing and hope as they attend workshops held by our partners.
- That corrupt officials in the Government and security forces would be rooted out.
- That God would convict the terrorists of their sin and open their eyes to the truth of the Gospel.
- For the success of our campaign in raising awareness and prayer in the church in the UK and Ireland.

Source: Release-International



Our Hope and Our Calling (Part 2)

Having looked at the glorious hope we have in Jesus last month, Neil goes on to speak of our **calling**...

Our Calling

Called To Be A Saint

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: the old has gone, the new is here!” (2 Corinthians 5:17)

Have you noticed that one of the most frequently used words of identity for Christians in the New Testament is saint? A saint is literally a holy person. Yet Paul and the other writers of the Epistles used the word generously to describe common, ordinary, everyday Christians like you and me. As Paul writes to the Corinthians ~ ***“To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be his holy people, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ – their Lord and ours” (1 Corinthians 1:2)***

Notice that Paul doesn't say that we are saints by hard work ~ he clearly states that we are saints by calling!

Some of us have bought into the mentality that saints are people who have earned their lofty title by living a magnificent life or achieving a certain level of maturity. No way. The Bible says you are a saint because God called you to be a saint. You were "sanctified in Christ" - made a saint by participating in the life of the only true holy one, Jesus Christ.

Many Christians refer to themselves as sinners saved by grace. But are you really a sinner? Is that your scriptural identity? Not at all. God

doesn't call you a sinner; He calls you a saint - a holy one. If you think of yourself as a sinner, guess what you will do: You'll live like a sinner; you'll sin. Why not identify yourself for who you really are ~ a saint who sins.

Remember: What you do doesn't determine who you are; who you are determines what you do.

Since you are a saint in Christ by God's calling, you share in Christ's inheritance. That which is true of Christ is now true of you because you are in Christ. It's part of your identity. You are not the great **I Am** but with Paul you can say ~

"By the grace of God I am what I am" (1 Corinthians 15:10)

Your grace and Your calling in my life are totally undeserved, but it is my privilege to claim my inheritance.

Thank You, Father. Thank You, Jesus.

A Matter Of Being Someone

"For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. (Ephesians 2:10)

Being a Christian is not just a matter of getting something; it's a matter of being someone. A Christian is not simply a person who gets forgiveness, who gets to go to heaven, who gets the Holy Spirit, who gets a new nature.

A Christian, in terms of our deepest identity, is a saint, a spiritually born child of God, a divine masterpiece, a child of light, a citizen of heaven. Being born again transformed you into someone who didn't exist before. What you receive as a Christian isn't the point; it's who you are. As I have said before, it's not what you do as a Christian that determines who you are; it's who you are that determines what you do!

"You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received

mercy” (1 Peter 2: 9&10)

“See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is” (1 John 3: 1&2)

Understanding your identity in Christ is absolutely essential to your success in living the Christian life. No person can consistently behave in a way that's inconsistent with the way he perceives himself. If you think you are good for nothing, you'll probably live as though that were true. But if you see yourself as a child of God who is spiritually alive in Christ, you'll begin to live in victory and freedom as He lived. Next to a knowledge of God, a knowledge of who you are is by far the most important truth you can possess.

After years of working with people who are in deep spiritual conflict, I found one common denominator. None of them knew who they were in Christ. None knew of their spiritual heritage. All questioned their salvation and the love of God.

Are you aware that there is someone alive and active in the world today who is dead set against you seeing yourself as spiritually alive and complete in Christ? Satan can do nothing to damage your position in Christ. But if he can deceive you into believing his lie, that you are not acceptable to God and that you'll never amount to anything as a Christian, then you will live as if you have no position or identity in Christ.

Heavenly Father, I take my stand as a child of God in Christ. Thank You for giving me this gracious and unwarranted position.

Neil Anderson

Freedom in Christ Ministries

Used by permission

Father God, thank you for the privilege of being called into Your service. May we daily walk the way of Jesus and persevere in doing Your Kingdom work. Amen

I find these devotionals useful in starting my walk with Christ each day

in the right direction!

If you would like to receive them (free of charge) go to the FIC website at: <https://www.ficm.org.uk/> and click on “Log in” which will allow you to register a new account (if you don’t have one). Complete your details and tick the box at the bottom to receive the Daily Devotionals and ask me if you need help!

Robin

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

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 31st October

15:30 – 17:30

Crafts, fun and food



We plan to include the latest story from **Patch the Pumpkin**.

Open Church Morning

9th December

With

Crafts
(children's and
adults)



Refreshments



Cake

etc...

A place to meet up on a
Saturday and have some fun
(and a chat of course)

Shanklin Town Brass Band



Christmas Concert

*A mix of festive, traditional and modern
melodies by the town's brass band*

Saturday 9th December

19:30

Shanklin United Reformed Church

Admission Free

Retiring Collection

~~~~~

[www.shanklintownbrassband.org.uk](http://www.shanklintownbrassband.org.uk)

# FOCUS

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

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### *Philemon shares the gospel, despite surveillance from Communist authorities*

Philemon was a shaman when he chose to follow Jesus. Now he spreads the gospel in Vietnam, despite surveillance from local Communist authorities. .

Not even oppressive surveillance will stop Philemon\* evangelising in Vietnam. Not after the change he's seen in his life.

He had hit rock bottom. He was deeply in debt, addicted to alcohol – and now he and his family were facing eviction.

Unable to see a way out of his problems, he bought poison with the intention of killing himself, along with his wife and two children. But the day before he planned to go through with it, he visited his sister to say goodbye – and she shared the gospel with him.

That night, Philemon threw the poison away. A journey of transformation had begun that saw Philemon and his wife encounter Jesus and choose to follow Him.

#### **How a shaman found Jesus**

Before this turning point in Philemon's life, he had been the community's shaman – a person believed to be able to communicate with the spirit world, often on behalf of other people. Philemon had studied shamanism for five years, using rituals and mantras to supposedly speak to the spirit world. He was often called to remove an evil spirit from someone who thought they were being attacked by one.

"I was like a master or a saviour to my community," he remembers. "I was very famous at that time. I succeeded in helping them but not my own family. The bank came and notified me that they will confiscate

my property. I bought poison and planned to put it in the rice so all of us would die. My wife agreed.”

If he hadn't had that conversation with his sister, where she introduced him to Jesus, that would have been the end of Philemon's story. Instead, he began to understand the Bible.

A few weeks later, two missionaries invited Philemon to hear some preaching. “The pastor shared about John 3:16 – ‘For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life’ – and something about the verse that hit me hard,” shares Philemon. “Then, my brothers called me to the stage and the pastor asked if I was ready to accept Jesus as my Lord and Saviour. I prayed and let Jesus in my life. I felt that the chain in me was broken. Even though my troubles were still there, I could feel the peace inside me.” It wasn't long before his wife also became a believer.

“The first thing I saw was God's enormous grace for my family. Instead of us being dead, He saved us. And instead of losing everything, He helped me retain my house, and He supported my children to school.”

## **Monitoring and interrogation**

Philemon immediately began evangelising, risking hostile encounters with local authorities when he travelled to remote villages. In some cases, he was warned to leave the area within 24 hours. Sometimes he was forced to leave and banned from going back. Even his relatives and friends mocked him and tried to stop him sharing the Gospel.

One time, he went to a Communist village and was immediately questioned by the authorities. He says: “This is what I told them: ‘I have brothers and sisters here, so I came to visit them. Even if you try to kill me, I will still come.’ I risked my life travelling to that place – and now we have a church there.”

Throughout his trips, Philemon and the people he went to speak to were closely monitored by the authorities. Like many countries in Communist Asia, monitoring is used to force citizens to remain in line with the official ideology of the government. But Philemon

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persevered. “God save me from addiction, and I want to share that testimony with others,” he says. “I wanted to share the love I received.”

### **Open Doors training**

Serving as a local missionary, looking after more than 30 tribal churches, Philemon became more and more aware of a problem that needed to be addressed: illiteracy. With support from local Open Doors partners, he underwent training to become a teacher. “When the participants learn how to read and write, their values and sense of worth improve,” he says. “Before attending the literacy class, they always got rejected when applying for jobs because they were not able to read or write. However, after joining the class, they were immediately employed.”

Every year, Philemon reaches around 1,500 people through his teaching. He also provides meals, because most of the participants are very poor. The influence of this training is spreading even further: hundreds of participants are now running this teaching in their own communities!

“God called me to this ministry, and He is the one who did everything for me,” he says. “I am so happy; I am happy because I can serve my community.”

But even now, his work is not easy. “I travel south, to the central and to the northern-most part of Vietnam. Monitoring and interrogation from authorities are always there, especially since I am not from those areas.”

### **Your prayerful support is vital**

Despite the risks, Philemon continues to serve others. His heart for evangelism is evident in his ministry. “The literacy project is also attended by non-believers and the classes became a place for them to know Jesus,” he says. “This project is for the community, not only for the church.”

Philemon is grateful for your part in helping the church in Vietnam and asks for continued prayer which is so essential to his work, particularly given the amount of surveillance he and the participants are vulnerable to: “I see that God is helping this project become successful. I give thanks for your support. We cannot do anything by ourselves. Prayer is

like breathing, we need it moment by moment. It is also vital when we are faced with persecution. During those times, we could feel the spiritual power that protects us and gives peace to us. We are encouraged in tough situations.”

He adds, “If we pray and build a close relationship with God, God will lead us. We become more patient in Him. So, this is why prayer is important— it brings good life results. A man asked me my secret to a fruitful ministry. I told him three easy steps: First, you pray. Second, you pray again. Third and lastly, kneel and pray to the Lord.”

## Please Pray

- ◆ Give thanks for Philemon’s ministry and for the difference it’s making to so many people
- ◆ That God will protect all who attend the courses from the effects of oppressive surveillance
- ◆ For Open Doors partners in Vietnam as they continue to serve believers.

**How many Christians are there in Vietnam?** There are 9.4 million Christians in Vietnam, from a population of around 99 million (9.5%). Most of the population is Buddhist.

**Main threat** Communist and post-Communist oppression.

**How can I help Christians in Vietnam?** Please keep praying

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

## Connection Quiz Answers

1. **Central Park.**
2. **Northern Lights**
3. **District Attorney.**
4. **A circle.**
5. **Connection: They are all lines on the London Underground.**
6. **This issue’s cover photo was taken at... the Commonwealth War Cemetery, Bayeux, Normandie**



# 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!

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

|    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |   |  |    |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|---|--|----|
| 1  |    | 2  |    | 3  | 4  |    | 5  |    | 6  |    | 7 |  | 8  |
|    |    |    |    | 9  |    |    | 10 | 11 |    |    |   |  |    |
| 12 |    |    |    |    |    |    | 13 |    |    |    |   |  |    |
|    |    |    |    | 14 |    |    | 15 |    | 16 |    |   |  |    |
| 17 | 18 |    |    |    |    | 19 |    | 20 |    |    |   |  |    |
| 21 |    |    |    | 22 |    |    | 23 |    |    |    |   |  |    |
|    |    |    |    |    |    | 24 |    |    |    | 25 |   |  | 26 |
|    | 27 |    |    | 28 |    |    |    |    |    |    |   |  |    |
| 29 |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | 30 |   |  |    |
| 31 |    |    |    | 32 | 33 |    |    |    | 34 |    |   |  |    |
|    |    | 35 | 36 |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |   |  |    |
|    |    |    |    |    |    | 37 |    |    |    |    |   |  |    |

## Last month's Sudoku - how did you do?

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

### Across

- 1 County in SW England (8)  
 6 Son of Abraham and Sarah (5)  
 9 Not off (2)  
 10 Opposite of even (3)  
 12 Capital of England (6)  
 13 Not yes (2)  
 14 'Of' en français (2)  
 15 FC, play at Goodison Park (7)  
 17 Frozen water (3)  
 20 Exempli gratia *initials* (2)  
 21 Country, capital Paramaribo (8)  
 24 Mother (2)  
 25 Treble/Bass, used in music (4)  
 28 Almost (6)  
 29 On the subject of; or concerning (5)

- 30 Father or dad (4)  
 31 Before AD *initials* (2)  
 32 Suffer something (6)  
 35 Plus (4)  
 37 Birthplace of William I (7)

### Down

- 1 Northern French port (6)  
 2 Queens Park -, football club (7)  
 3 Material comes from a tree (4)  
 4 - Boleyn, wife of Henry VIII (4)  
 5 Solitary, single (4)  
 6 Identification, shortened (2)  
 7 Somebody from, e.g. Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane... (10)  
 8 Country, capital Beijing (5)  
 11 Sign of peace (4)  
 16 Did this come before the chicken? (3)  
 18 Copper chemical symbol (2)  
 19 - Thompson, actress (4)  
 22 City in Brittany (6)  
 23 Wear one on your ear when it gets cold (7)  
 26 Country, capital Paris (6)  
 27 British broadcaster, with no adverts *initials* (3)  
 29 Eurovision winners in 1974 (4)  
 33 Lower and raise one's head slightly and briefly (3)  
 34 Snake like fish (3)  
 36 'The' en français *m* (2)

## Can You Guess The Year?

- Chelsea lost the FA Cup final to Man Utd.
- The film '*Madness of King George*' is released in the UK.
- Labour leader, John Smith, dies suddenly aged 55.
- And UK No. 1s included:
  - Mariah Carey with '*Without You*'
  - Whigfield with '*Saturday Night*'
  - Take That with '*Sure*' and '*Everything Changes*'
  - D Ream with '*Things Can Only Get Better*'

*Answer next issue*

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

1. What was the UK number one on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2000?
2. Who represented the UK at Eurovision in 2000?
3. What is the capital of Uruguay?
4. Which engine is number 3 in Thomas the Tank Engine stories?
5. Who wrote the theme song to Emmerdale?
6. Who succeeded Richard II as king of England?
7. Which organisation's home is in Turtle Bay, Manhattan?
8. When was HMS Belfast first opened to the public in London?
9. On the periodic table, which element is K?
10. When was the women's FA Cup final first played at Wembley?

*Answers next issue*

Please note that the **deadline** for contributions for the Christmas/New Year magazine is:

**Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> November**

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 **1980**

- 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. West End Girls | 7. Shanklin Town Brass Band!!!                  |
| 2. The Shadows    | 8. 1669                                         |
| 3. La Paz & Sucre | 9. It's the atomic number in the periodic table |
| 4. James          | 10. 1923 - Bolton Wanderers beat West Ham 2-0   |
| 5. Eric Spear     |                                                 |
| 6. Henry VII      |                                                 |

## 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**    15:00    **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 Toddler Group**
- 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**



10 Dracaena Gardens, Shanklin PO37 7JQ



01983 862485



[brianharley58@gmail.com](mailto:brianharley58@gmail.com)

*Day off: Monday*

**Secretary: Robin Wightman**



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

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