

The Link



Dec 2023//Jan 2024



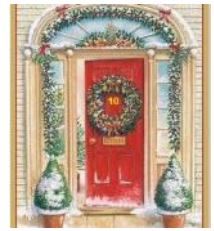
His Birth Gives Us

H**O****P****E**

in our villages, towns & cities

Shanklin United Reformed Church www.shanklinurc.co.uk

View From Number 10

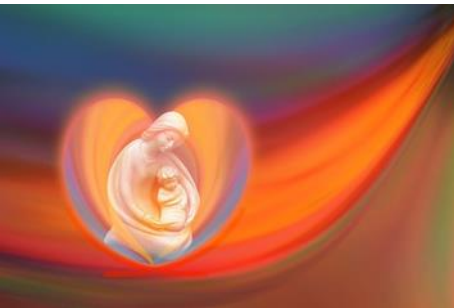


Shine your light!

This Christmas, we once again celebrate how light came and shone into the darkness of our world as Jesus was born in Bethlehem. New hope was birthed with the coming of God's promised Messiah and good news of great joy for all people was announced by the angels to a bunch of bewildered shepherds.

Right now, the world seems a very dark place with some terrible conflicts raging and the international community struggling to know how best to respond. How does one root out the evils of terrorism and yet care for the innocent and vulnerable ones caught in the middle of the battle? With all the worries over the cost of living, the refugee crisis and growing concerns over the changing climate and its devastating effects, there is such need for some good news.

The arrival of the Saviour of the world in such a humble setting reminds us that our God of power and might chooses to work in a counter-cultural way to speak into our desperate human situations.



The Prince of Peace arrived in the muck and mire of it all and soon himself became a refugee with a threat to his life in the very earliest of days. Ultimately, he took the very worst that the rebellious world could throw at him as the precious Son of God was crucified in shame on a pagan cross.

Matthew explains how Jesus' ministry fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah that the people living in darkness would see a great light (Matthew 4:12-16 quoting Isaiah 9). Light dawned in the person of the holy child of Bethlehem; a fresh era of hope began as he brought God's love quite literally down to earth and lived it out as a true beacon of hope.

He claimed to be the light of the world and audaciously exclaimed

“Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” (John 8:12). What an invitation! – to find a meaningful and navigable path through the shadows, pitfalls and challenges that life on earth presents; to have our way illuminated by one who truly is *“the way, the truth and the life”* (John 14:6).

We are invited to walk in his footsteps and to discover on that adventure what it really is to be human - women and men made in the image of God. Jesus’ followers are truly enlightened by the Holy Spirit and by the Word of God which acts as a lamp for our feet and a light for our path (Psalm 119:105).

The church today carries the baton and is called to be the Light of the World (Matthew 5:14). We must not retreat into our safe spaces and hide that beacon of hope that is the Gospel. We are commanded to be courageous and to hold out the word of life like shining stars in the darkness among a warped and crooked generation (Philemon 2:14ff).

It is great to see how Christians across the nation have caught the vision to take the Good News of Jesus’ birth outside the building and into the community with the Shine Your Light initiative, uniting churches in reaching beyond their walls. We are prayerfully considering what we can do here in addition to the various plans already in place to celebrate and share about the birth of Jesus.

Individually we have a responsibility to be his witnesses and let those around us know the reason for the season. Do be praying for opportunities to share with your friends and neighbours what Jesus means to you and let your light shine. Christmas Hope Magazines will be available to give away.

May you know God’s blessing over this Christmas season,

With love in Christ,



Prayer



Prayer Breakfast – Saturday 6th January at 08:30

Let's start the New Year together with prayer as we gather for a light breakfast at church. We'll spend some time in worship and praying for the various activities planned for the weeks ahead and seeking guidance over priorities for 2024.

Please do come and join us.

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=ZTlXZzBLWnkrWTNBZ2JBK1o0K2ZXdz09](https://us04web.zoom.us/j/3242665584?pwd=ZTlXZzBLWnkrWTNBZ2JBK1o0K2ZXdz09)

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, normally 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

Please note that in **December (but not on Christmas Day) this will be held at Eileen's flat** as Roy and Melodie are away. They will be back for 1st January 2024 and will find out if anyone would like to get together for prayer.

Thought

During our prayer time on Saturday 21st September, 2023, I wrote down what I felt had challenged me earlier that day whilst reading an article giving insights into the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector which said about the danger of becoming self-righteous to any degree.

I acknowledged that in my own strength I could not guarantee not being guilty of this or any other sin for that matter, at the same time confessing the times when I have fallen short. It is only through the Lord's grace. As I turned to our Songs of Fellowship, a line from Brian Houston's hymn/chorus entitled "We are Called to be Prophets to This Nation," sums it up:

"Lord, without your power, its's all good intentions."

Brian Houston (from SoF 1576), © 1999 Thank you Music
CCLI 40715

Eileen

Christmas Activities & Services at Shanklin URC

Saturday 9 th	10:30	Church Open (see page 6)
	19:30	Shanklin Town Brass Band Christmas Concert (see page 41)
Friday 15 th	19:00	Light Up a Life
Sunday 17 th	10:30	Carol Service & Nativity
Saturday 23 rd	15:30	Messy Christmas
Christmas Eve	10:30	Encounter Café Service
	23:00	Carols on the Steps
	23:30	Christmas Communion
Christmas Day	10:30	Christmas Day Service

Church Open Morning

9th December

With

- Crafts
(*children's and
adults*)



- Refreshments
*Drinks, Cake,
etc...*



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

ENCOUNTER

Usually 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 24th December
– café serving from 10:15**



Real Advent Calendar

We have some 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**

Good News for All!

At this time of year when we remember the coming of our Lord Jesus as a babe into this world and as believers, we also look to His coming again in glory, what better time to give 'good news of great joy' to family, friends and neighbours!

This month's edition of the monthly 'Good News' paper (available to read online at www.goodnews-paper.org.uk/viewlatesteditionspage.htm) has several great articles relating to Christmas, including the headline

article 'Finally - There's Room at the Inn' about the efforts of a Lancashire church to help the homeless

Other contributions include:

- **Christmas Message by J John** - Evangelist J John tells the truth about Christmas
- **Christmas Miracles Saves Mother** - A single mother wanted to end her life until Jesus intervened
- **Angel Encounter** - Pre-Christmas angelic encounter saves driver from horror crash
- **Santa's Tomb** - Archaeologists believe they've found the tomb of the original Santa - St Nicholas
- **Bear's Baptism** - Bear Grylls gets baptised in the same river as Jesus
- **Christmas Morning Encounter** - Baseball legend came to Christ on Christmas morning

Do take a copy to pop in with your Christmas greetings!
God's blessings to you for Christmas and the New Year.





Friday 15th December 19:00 at the URC

A short reflective service to remember loved ones at Christmas – invitation cards will be available to pass to friends and neighbours



Brian will be travelling to the USA again in January for another Board Meeting of PRMI – he will leave the Island on 10th January ready to fly with Paul Stokes to North Carolina on 11th.

The Board meets together from 12th - 16th and then he'll stay for the opening part of the **Dunamis Fellowship International**, leading Bible devotions on the morning of 18th before flying home to arrive back early on 19th. Your prayers would be much appreciated

Connection Quiz

1. Who won the women's FA Cup in 2023?
2. What was the name of the RAF's British 'jump jet' aircraft?
3. Where did The Beatles have a ticket to?
4. What is a piece of land surrounded by water?
5. What river flows through Paris?
6. What is the Spanish for 'three'?
7. And so, what is the **connection** between the answers to questions 1 - 4?



Answers are on [page 56](#)

Shanklin URC Bookshop

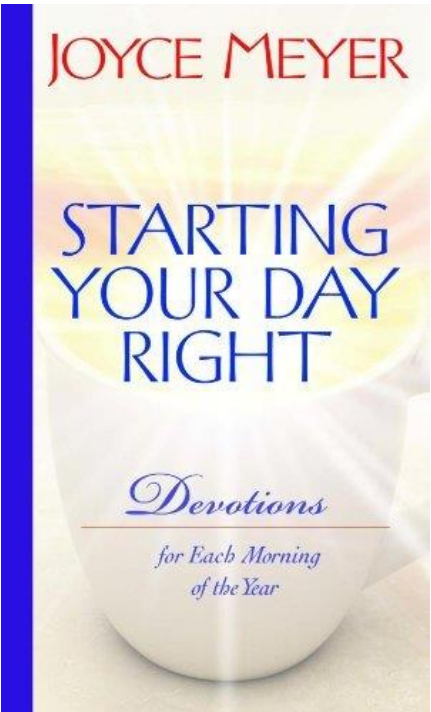
During December the church bookshop will continue with its normal opening hours up to, and including, Wednesday 20th. It will then be closed from Thursday 21st until mid-February. This break allows the annual stocktake to be carried out and gives the bookshop volunteers a well-deserved break.

As a new year approaches, people sometimes look for a different source of daily Bible readings. There are several books available as well as a variety of on-line resources and apps.

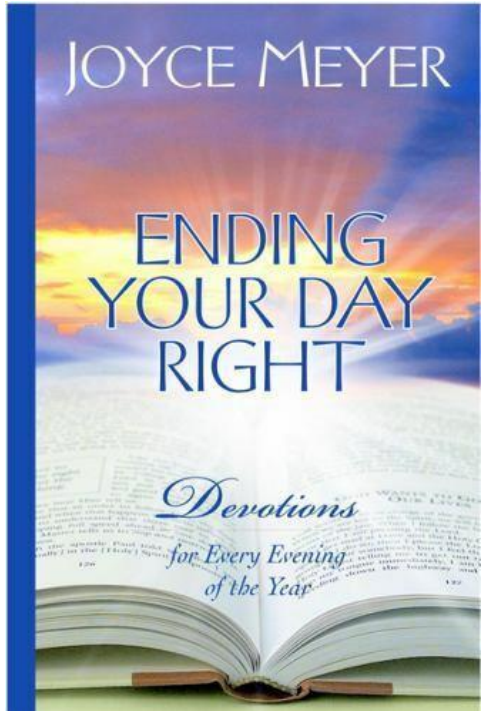
One of the books available in the bookshop is 'How Great is our God' which has a year of daily readings on the nature of God. There is a short Bible verse for each day Monday to Friday and one for the weekend. The verse is followed by comments on the verse. The book draws on the writings of a variety of different authors, e.g. A W Tozer, Charles Colson and J I Packer. There are brief comments about each author at the back of the book along with a topical index and scripture index. This paperback book costs £8.99.

The bookshop also has one copy of a previously-owned devotional book by Joyce Meyer. It is really two books combined in one – at the front is 'Starting Your Day Right' and when you turn the book over and start at the back there is 'Ending Your Day Right'. There is one page for each morning of the year and one page for each evening. Each devotional begins with a Bible verse and is followed by comments relating to it. This hardback book is priced at £9.00.

At the beginning of this year the publisher of 'Every Day With Jesus'



Bible reading notes made changes to the content and distribution of the notes. From January 2024 further changes are being made. They are stopping the print edition and replacing it with a new app which is being launched on 1st January. The app will be free to download with versions available for both iPhones and android phones and there will be an option to read or listen to each daily devotional. There will also be a choice of two versions; one using the writings of Selwyn Hughes and one using contemporary writings by new contributors.



For people who don't want to use the new app (or can't access it) a new yearlong 'Every Day With Jesus' devotional book is going to be published for people to purchase (costing £19.99). This book will use the original writings by Selwyn Hughes. Selwyn Hughes was a young Welsh miner who left the mines to study theology. He went on to become a preacher, evangelist and minister. In 1965 he was asked to help his congregation to study the Bible and in response he began writing notes on postcards. A couple of years later the first official monthly 'Every Day With Jesus' was printed and given away free. After his death in 2006 his writings continued to be distributed. Later on, as new technologies became available, email subscriptions and e-books were introduced along with new contributors.

Save the date...

Men's Breakfast

- Saturday 3rd February at 08:30**
- at Viv's Cooking, 9 High Street Sandown**



Christmas Appeal for 2023



This year we will be supporting the work of Release International supporting persecuted Christians in Egypt. Please give as you are able to bless our brothers and sisters going through very challenging times.

Once again, we encourage you to send **just one Christmas card** to the whole church family and post it on the noticeboard - and to give what you may have saved to our Christmas Appeal. We don't need to send cards to the people we see week by week, and we don't want anyone to feel left out. Let's greet everyone together!

Apologies

In the article we wrote for the November edition of The Link, we mentioned in the section, Phase 1, on Page 14 that a wonderful lady by the name of Christine buys items from the charity shop at which she works and donates them to the Mother and Baby Unit. However, Christine has asked us to correct that statement as she has not paid for the items she has donated. Our sincere apologies for this misunderstanding on our part and, as Christine kindly explains, the charity shop where she works sometimes receives baby accessories or items which they are not permitted to sell so, if they are suitable, Christine passes on these donations to us to put forward to the Centre. Once again our apologies for this mistake and misunderstanding.

We continue to be greatly blessed with various ongoing donations, not only from Christine but also from other members of our Church Family, and which we pass on to the Mother and Baby Group.

Love and Blessings to All

Thank you so very much.

Ann and Rod Foster

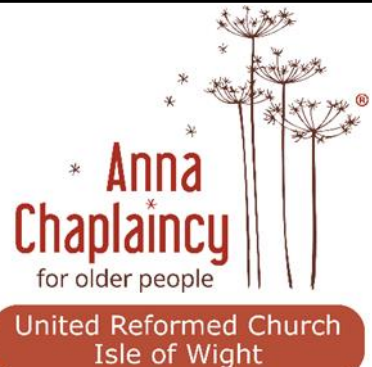
An Evening With Ruth Fazal

On 7th November we were blessed to welcome talented musician, composer and worship leader Ruth Fazal to Shanklin. She shared her faith journey and how she had been led to take an interest in the people of Israel. Her testimony and songs were very moving as was the Zoom call with a friend in Israel who is an Orthodox Jew.



The Church was packed as friends from various Island congregations joined us for an evening of moving worship and story with much prayer for the situation in Israel and Gaza. May those prayers continue as we see the news each day.

On Sunday 3rd December we will be commissioning Carol Turner as an Anna Chaplain as she joins a team of people (mainly Anglican) supporting the older generation on the Island and encouraging them in their spiritual lives. Do please pray for her as she develops her skills in this area and serves our local community.



New Year All Island Worship Event

Friday 2nd February at 19:15

at True Vine Church

Come! Let's worship Jesus together

See what He is doing through his people on our Island!



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



BRASS
BAND



FOREST
CHURCH



STORY
STORY
STORY

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:



Shared Worship in The Bay



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

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------|--|
| 3rd December | 17:00 | Shanklin URC
<i>Tea, Chat & Prayer</i> |
| 10th December | 16:00 | Methodist Church, Shanklin
<i>Carol Service</i> |
| 17th December | 16:00 | St Blasius Church, Shanklin
<i>Carol Service</i> |
| 24th December | 17:00 | Carols at Daish Hotel |

No meeting on 31st December

Our Cancer Journey

Ish and Irene Smale



WHEN THE ROAD IS ROUGH AND STEEP

ISH AND IRENE'S TESTIMONY CONCERT

ADMISSION FREE.

**WHERE ISHMAEL AND IRENE BRING THEIR BOOK
'OUR CANCER JOURNEY' TO LIFE
AN HONEST AND UPLIFTING TIME OF STORIES AND SONGS TO ENCOURAGE
ANYONE GOING THROUGH DIFFICULT TIMES**

DATE

TIME

VENUE

27th Jan 2024

14:30

Shanklin URC



The testimony concert will last approx. 75 minutes

**As this is a free concert an offering may be taken
to help support Ish's ministry.**



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



Continues over Christmas & New Year

What a Blessing! And a Challenge!

Seeing Imtiaz again since before Covid was once more an inspiring experience and it was a joy to see many of our own church family at the Monday morning meeting at URC, and also other Christians at Christ Church on the Sunday afternoon for 'Christians Working Together in the Bay'.

We were shown some videos of Imtiaz's ministry in Pakistan, both when he was a part of Release International and now that God has called him to focus on this country that is so much on his heart, both being called to encourage and support believers there in the challenges they face and to reach out with the love of God to the people of Pakistan and in our own nation. Also, to encourage and equip the church to stand firm in these days of much shaking in the world.

As a church we are supporting Imtiaz in his vital ministry, and it was great that many of you signed up to receive his news and prayer letters.

On the Sunday morning, Imtiaz challenged us as believers not to be conformed to this world, but to be transformed by the Holy Spirit's power and equipping to live Godly lives in our ungodly world. The second thing God had laid on his heart to share was the command of Jesus that we are to love one another in the Body of Christ, as He has loved us – again such a challenge – we are all different, but as believers we all serve our Risen Lord and by the Godly love we show one another – a sacrificial love – it says in Scripture that 'All men will know you are my disciples', (John 13:35).

If you missed the service and are able to access YouTube, I do commend it to you (from Sunday 12th November 2023 and available at www.youtube.com/watch?v=fJCOaoeCnDc - or to find it manually, go to YouTube and search for Shanklin URC, and select the 'Live' tab).

Another challenge following Imtiaz's visit was to consider restarting the **Prayer Group for the Persecuted Church** again. Sadly during Covid it was not possible for us to meet, but knowing that the persecution of our brothers and sisters continues apace (said to be

300 million at present and growing), how can we just stand by, although we know many of you pray faithfully at home – for which we thank you. God willing, and having spoken with our Pastor, Brian, we hope to start again in 2024. We used to meet monthly on Monday mornings, but do let me know if this is not possible for you. We will give more details nearer the time – in the past the first Monday of the Month has worked well (except for Bank Holidays).

One of the prayers in the Anglican Communion service says, 'We are the Body of Christ and individually members of it'.

The Body of Christ in many parts of the world is suffering (see separate news from Release International) - may we reach out with commitment in prayer and support to stand with them in their times of trial.

Please also see Robin's article about Imtiaz's visit on [page 32](#)

Blessings in our Lord Jesus

Jane H



LIONHEART IS ON THE MOVE

LIONHEART 
FESTIVAL

**TICKETS ON SALE
IN THE NEW YEAR**


**URBAN
SAINTS**
WESTBROOK

**JOIN US AT WESTBROOK
26-28TH JULY 2024**

LIONHEARTFESTIVAL.CO.UK



**FREEDOM
IN CHRIST**

Living in Harmony?

The glittering world attracts us away from true happiness, especially at this time of year. But we know that true happiness is only found in knowing God and knowing His goal for our lives.

To achieve this harmony we must seek to act in faithful obedience to our Creator; only then can we be fully in union with God and be content with His will for our lives. Here are a series of devotionals which Neil Anderson has given on this topic:

Knowing God's Concept Of Happiness

"Godliness with contentment is great gain" (1 Timothy 6:6)

The world's concept of happiness is getting what we want. All merchandising is based on this idea. To be happy, we need a flashier car, sexier cologne, or any number of items that are better, faster, or easier to use than what we already have. We watch the commercials, read the ads, and pursue all the latest fashions, fads, and fancy doodahs. We buy into the lie that we're not happy until we get what we want.

God's concept of happiness is summed up in the simple proverb: "Happy is the man who wants what he has." As long as you are focusing on what you don't have, you'll be unhappy. But when you begin to appreciate what you already have, you'll begin to experience the joys of life. Paul wrote to Timothy: ***"Godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that"*** (1 Timothy 6:6-8)

You already have everything you need to live a joyful life. You have Christ. You have eternal life. You are loved by a heavenly Father who has promised to supply all your needs. No wonder the Bible repeatedly commands us to be thankful: ***“Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus”*** (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)

If you want to be happy, learn to be thankful for what you have and not covet what you don’t have.

Father, today I want to seek first Your kingdom and Your righteousness, knowing that You will add to my life all that I need. Thank You.

God's Goal For You

“Make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love” (2 Peter 1:5-7)

A good summary of God's goal for you is found in 2 Peter 1:3-10. Your primary role is to diligently adopt God's character goals - goodness, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love, and apply them to your life. Focusing on God's goals will lead to ultimate success: success in God's terms. Peter promises that, as these qualities increase in your life through practice, you will be useful and fruitful, and you will never stumble. That's success!

Notice also that there is no mention in this list of talents, intelligence or gifts that are not equally distributed to all believers. Your worth isn't determined by those God-given traits. Your worth is based on your identity in Christ and your growth in character, both of which are equally applicable to every Christian. Those who are not committed to God's goals for character will never fulfil their primary purpose for being here. According to Peter, they have forgotten who they are. They are out of touch with their true identity and purpose in Christ.

God loves you and will never leave you. You are forgiven by God

and are His child. You have established your identity in Christ and live today in union with God. You are becoming increasingly characterized by the fruit of the Spirit. If you believed everything that is true about you, would you be successful? Would you feel good about yourself? Should you feel good about yourself? Of course!

God has not called you to be a failure, so follow His scriptural formula and be the success He has called you to be.

Thank You, Lord, that I can do all things today through Your Son, Jesus, who strengthens me.

Living In Harmony

“I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:38-39)

When I was born physically I had a father. As Marvin Anderson's son, is there anything that I could possibly do which would change my blood relationship to him? What if I ran away from home and changed my name? Would I still be his son? Of course! We're related by blood and nothing can change that. But is there anything I could do which would affect the harmony of our relationship as father and son? Yes, indeed! The harmony of our relationship was interrupted countless times by my behaviour.

In the spiritual realm, when I was born again, I became a member of God's family. God is my Father and I enjoy an eternal relationship with Him through the precious blood of Christ: **“For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect” (1 Peter 1:18-19)**

I am a child of God, in spiritual union with Him by His grace that I received through faith. My relationship with God was forever settled when I was born into His family. But is there anything I can do which will interfere with the harmony of my relationship with God?

Absolutely. Living in harmony with God is based on the same issue as harmony with my earthly father: obedience. When I don't obey God, the harmony of our relationship is disturbed, and my life is usually miserable as a result.

I love my heavenly Father and I want to be in harmony with Him, so I strive to obey Him. But even when we are in disharmony because of my disobedience, my relationship with Him is not at stake because we are related by the blood of Jesus Christ. Paul was convinced that nothing could separate him from the love of God (Romans 8:35-39). Jesus said, ***"My sheep listen to My voice; I know them, and they follow Me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of My hand"*** (John 10:27-28)

Focus on your obedience to God so you may live in harmony with Him.

Thank You, heavenly Father, for the eternal relationship I enjoy with You because of the precious blood of Jesus. Teach me to obey that I may live in harmony with You.

Totally Alive

"Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day"

(2 Corinthians 4:16)

You are comprised of at least two major parts: your material self and your immaterial self. The outer man is your physical body, and the inner man is your soul/spirit that includes the ability to think, to feel, to choose (mind, emotions and will are often collectively identified as the soul), and to relate to God (spirit). Your body is in union with your soul/spirit, and that makes you physically alive.

As a Christian, your soul/spirit is in union with God as a result of your conversion, and that makes you spiritually alive. When God created Adam, he was totally alive - physically and spiritually. But because of Adam's sin and subsequent spiritual death, every person who comes into the world is born physically alive but spiritually dead. Being separated from God, you lacked the presence and wisdom of God in your life, so you learned to live independently of God, centring your

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interests on yourself. This learned independence from God is characteristic of the flesh or the old nature.

When you were born again, your soul/spirit was united with God and you came alive spiritually, as alive as Adam was in the garden before he sinned. As the epistle of Ephesians repeatedly declares, you are now in Christ, and Christ is in you. Since Christ who is in you is eternal, the spiritual life you have received from Him is eternal. You don't have to wait until you die to get eternal life; you possess it right now! Our hope does not lie in the preservation of the outer man. It lies in the developing nature of the inner man. Our soul is in union with God and we are being renewed day by day.

We will eventually lose our physical life, but not our spiritual life. Our emphasis should be on what is eternal, not on what is temporal.

Lord, I won't lose heart over setbacks in my life, because my hope lies in my eternal union with You. Thank You.

Neil Anderson

***Freedom in Christ Ministries
Daily Devotionals***

Used by permission

Over the festive season and in the coming year let us set our focus solely on our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ ...

“Since then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.” Colossians 3:1-4

Father God, thank you that in Christ we are Secure, Accepted and Significant. When we are tempted away from your truth help us to remember who we really are. By your Spirit guide us in paths of righteousness each day. Amen

Robin

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I have included six of each of Neil's **Who I Am in Christ** biblical truths above; for the full version from Neil, see the December/January edition of The Link from last year ~ or just ask me to let you have them!



The
United
Reformed
Church
Wessex
Synod

Safeguarding Training

A full-day training session will be held in person at Havant URC on Saturday 9 March 2024 @ 10:00

Alternatively, virtual sessions will be held on Zoom between 18:30 - 20:00 in 3 parts on
Thursday 22 February 2024 (part 1)
Thursday 29 February 2024 (part 2)
Thursday 7 March 2024 (part 3)

You will need to attend either the full day or all three Zoom sessions to gain a certificate.

For more details, please see the posters on our notice board and speak to Robin or Dave if you have any questions.

Open the Book Update

An Open the Book training course was held on 4th November, preparing three more storytellers to join the St Francis team, and one for Dover Park, Ryde. During the day, the participants watched a full assembly, then acted one out themselves. It was lovely to see their enthusiasm and enjoyment. Poor Melodie who, together with Christine, organised refreshments, was quite envious that there are now seven members in the St Francis team, but still only four for St Blasius.



Meanwhile, the Ryde team was telling the story of Moses over three weeks. For the first instalment, six older children donned costumes to play the part of slavedrivers, midwives, Miriam and the servant of Pharaoh's daughter. The smallest child in the hall was dressed as Moses. The watching children were invited to be the people of Israel and mime building Pithom and Ramses. They then joined in Jochebed's actions as she weaved a basket, covered it in tar, put her baby inside and placed the basket in the bullrushes, leaving Miriam to watch over it.

After Miriam fetched Jochebed to look after her own baby, the narrator read: 'And when he was old enough, he was adopted by Pharaoh's daughter.' Jochebed put down the doll and brought out the little lad. He skipped and jumped when presented to Pharaoh

and smiled out at the children in the hall. He was so lovely that we decided to bring him out at the beginning of the following week's assembly to show that little Moses had grown into a man. Here he is after being told by God in the burning bush to put his hand into his cloak.

Julie



Christmas 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. It falls on a Sunday this year.

- Brian will also be leading Carols in the community:

Friday 8 th	11:00	Tile House
Thursday 14 th	19:00	Beatrice Court
Friday 15 th	11:00	Springfield Nursing Home

Thank You

Thank you so much for the love, support and prayers for Mike and I, and my dear sister, Wendy, in the loss of her husband, our dear brother-in-law, Colin. He and Wendy have worshipped in our church in years past when visiting the Island.

In their church in Exmouth they were part of a singing group that gave them much joy, having met in a choir that was formed to sing in some evangelistic meetings held at Ryde Town Hall many years ago! I was particularly moved by one of the worship songs we sang a few days after hearing dear Colin had gone to be with the Lord – ‘There is a Higher Throne’ (Eileen’s favourite song!). Such beautiful words and the second verse says

‘We’ll honour Him in perfect song where we belong’
Kristyn Getty & Keith Getty Copyright © 2002 Thankyou Music
CCLI 40715

With Colin’s love of singing God’s praises, these words are such a blessing and comfort, and so fitting for him.

With such love

Jane & Mike



Saturday 23rd December

15:30 - 17:30

Free fun for all the family

- no unaccompanied children please

Do come along and explore the story of Christmas through a Messy Church experience at Shanklin URC. This is a fun way of learning for all ages - in a hands-on way. There will be several craft activities to choose from followed by a short celebration with songs, prayers and the chance to join in telling the Nativity story, and then some yummy food all together.

Come as a family; bring the grandchildren along - any combination is fine! Enjoy it together.

For more information - speak to Yvonne Sparks or Brian and Janet Harley





To love and serve Persecuted Christians

Ugandan Christian convert set on fire

A woman in eastern Uganda has been hospitalised with serious burns after her Muslim husband discovered she had converted to Christianity and reportedly set her on fire.

H, a 32-year-old mother of three in Uganda, is still receiving hospital treatment after her husband threw petrol and a lighted match on her, a friend of the victim told Morning Star News.

After accepting Christ on 3rd May while her husband was away on business in South Sudan, She regularly attended a small group fellowship with the friend who had introduced her to the gospel and other Christians. After the group's meeting on 17th October she went back home to find her husband had returned from a trip to South Sudan.

'I got scared upon seeing him, because I had some gospel tracts and a small New Testament Bible which I could not hide,' N told her friend, whose identity is withheld for security reasons.

Upon seeing the Bible and other Christian literature, her husband became furious, left the room and returned with a container of petrol, she said, pouring it on her and setting her on fire, after tying bedsheets around her.

H's daughter alerted neighbours who rescued her and took her to a regional hospital. A week later she was transferred to a hospital in Kampala for more specialised treatment.

Still hospitalised in Kampala, H has third-degree burns on much of her body, with nerve damage and multiple red spots on her skin, local Christian sources told Morning Star News. Her husband is believed to have fled to South Sudan.

Please Pray

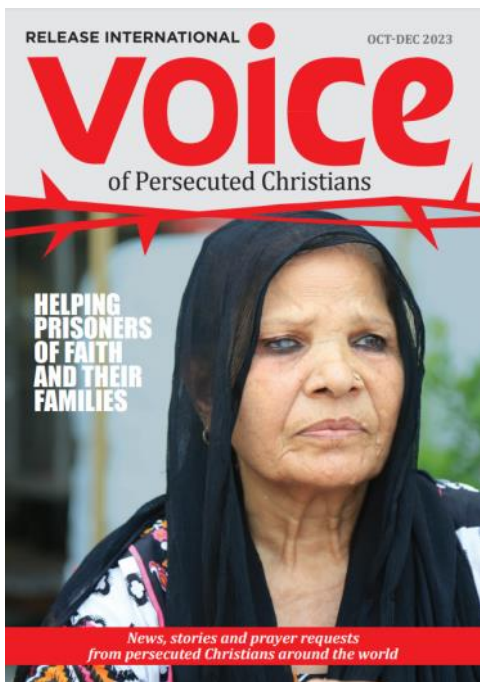
- *Pray for complete healing for H and that, upon release from hospital, she will be able to find safe accommodation as none of her relatives are Christians. Ask God to look after her three young children who have come under the care of their paternal grandmother.*
- *Pray for God's mercy for her husband and that he will come to repentance and faith.*

This shocking story is not in isolation - as also shared by Imtiaz when with us. A huge price being paid by those who have come to faith from other religions and who are determined not to turn back from following Jesus.

Release's Christmas Appeal is for Christians around the world facing oppression and violence, please see their current magazine (on the trolley at the back of church and online at releaseinternational.org/magazines/) or visit their appeal website releaseinternational.org/campaign/thumleima/. Any gift can bring encouragement, pastoral care and practical support to our precious brothers and sisters in Christ.

Blessings in Jesus' Name.

Jane H



Source: Release International

Caring 4 God's People



We were blessed to have a wonderful visit from Rev Imtiaz Trask over the weekend of 11th/13th November. Having just returned from Pakistan (where he had been ministering for 7 weeks), on Sunday 12th he spoke at our morning service with passion about the importance of Christians not conforming to the pattern of this world but being transformed by the Spirit to love one another. He also spoke at three other events about his ministry to the people of Pakistan. His primary aims being to minister to persecuted Christians and also to share the Gospel with Muslims.

If you would like to know more about Imtiaz as he continues to “Care for God's People” he will be producing regular prayer letters, which I will distribute. Please let me know if you would like to receive either printed or electronic versions of these.

Many of you will know that Imtiaz has recently left Release International after 16 years and he is working independently under the banner of **Caring 4 God's People**. As a church we have agreed to support him financially in this venture. If you would like to help out individually, let me know and I can put you in touch with him.

Robin



Street and School Pastor Update

Street Pastors have had a busy year with 38 patrols carried out on the Island from January to November so far this year. This includes 4 patrols at the loW Festival, 2 during Cowes week and covering the Scooter Rally weekend in Ryde.

The Night-time Economy has changed since Covid and now we are finding that we are needing to start earlier in the evenings which means we finish earlier now, usually around midnight. Anti-Social behaviour and drugs are the two main concerns at present as there has been a massive increase in incidents involving youths and adults around these issues.

During these patrols we have had many conversations with members of the public, door staff and police. We find that sometimes people just need to say things that are affecting them at that time to someone who they don't know.

Two Stories from Patrols

Recently we had a conversation with a male whose friend had been found drowned in the river Medina. They had both been out drinking that night and were walking along the river. The male we spoke to had decided to leave his friend as he wanted to get home and his friend didn't. Unfortunately, the following morning his friend was found in the river deceased.

When we met the male a couple of days later at the bus station, he had been out drinking again to try and forget the feelings of guilt and anger he had for leaving his friend. He said he just needed to tell someone about how he was feeling and thanked us for listening.

On a patrol recently we found two males at 01:00 on a Sunday morning, Jimmy, and Dan were sat on the steps outside Newport Library. It was Jimmy's 22nd birthday and he had been out drinking with some mates. Dan hadn't been drinking as he was working the following morning and needed to get up at 05:00 to go to work. Jimmy was extremely intoxicated and had been sick on the steps and was constantly falling asleep. Dan was trying his hardest to get Jaimie up as he needed to get him on the bus back to Ryde. Whilst we sat with Jimmy, Dan tried to call Jimmy's parents to see if they

could come collect him, they had both had a drink at home so were unable to drive. Dan also tried his parents but unfortunately his dad refused to come collect them both and a taxi was not an option as they had no money for one. Dan warned us that Jamie can get a bit aggressive when drinking but we couldn't leave Dan struggling with him. After a while, we managed to get Jimmy talking and between us and Dan we managed to get Jimmy up and over to the bus bay for the Ryde bus. We kept Jimmy talking, moving and gave him water to drink. After about another half an hour, the bus arrived and thankfully Dan managed to walk Jimmy onto the bus and seated. During all this we kept the Prayer Pastors updated so they could pray Dan would get Jimmy home okay. Dan was very thankful to us for helping him and said he couldn't have managed with Jimmy if we hadn't of helped and wouldn't have known what to do.

If we had not been able to get the lads on the bus then it was more likely Jimmy would have been picked up by the Police or taken to A&E by ambulance, which is a huge cost to the NHS. It currently costs the NHS around £2,500 to deal with an intoxicated person being taken to A&E.

Our main thing we are known for is giving out lollies/chocolates and we often get called 'Sweet Pastors'. These not only work well as ice breakers to speak to people but also as a distraction if people are trying to fight etc.

The regular team members get to know the door staff on the pubs and clubs, and we have many good conversations, laughs and even some singing and dancing sometimes in the street with them.

We are not there to preach to people but show the love of Jesus on the streets. We will pray for people if they ask for it and sometimes, they ask us to remember them in our prayers.

School Pastors are currently mentoring students and patrolling at break times in Ryde Academy, Medina College, and Carisbrooke College. We are also patrolling at lunch time in The Bay, Secondary school and hope to start mentoring there by Easter. Mentoring can be anything from students struggling with anxiety, Resilience, bullying, transgender, self-harm, and bereavement. Since Covid there has been a huge increase in students struggling with mental

health issues. The mental health counselling services like CCAMHS, Youth Trust and Barnardo's are so back logged that waiting times for an assessment is currently around 6-8 months for these services, so schools are having to step in which means School Pastors always have a waiting list, which now unfortunately the schools are having to prioritise who we need to see first.

Recently I met a lad on a street Patrol who remembered me from when he went to Carisbrooke College. He struggled at school and was in isolation a lot (taken out of lessons and sat by the head teacher's office to work alone). He left in school in 2019 with very poor GCSE grades and couldn't get into college. He was very happy to tell me he got a job in McDonalds and is now working there full time and hopes to work his way up to team leader and then hopefully manager. He said he hated school but was always happy to see us and chat as we were not like the teachers.

Street and School Pastors could not function without the fantastic volunteers we have and knowing we are covered on each patrol by Prayer Pastors either at the bases or from home is vital in the work we do.

We have some exciting things planned for the future, working alongside the Police and Door Staff, including helping to produce a vulnerable person's training package that various organisations can use in the night-time economy.

As a charity we rely on donations to keep us going, whether this be in the form of money, sweets, water etc. We only have three paid staff, Ella (Administrator), Suzanne (Street Coordinator) and Sally (School Coordinator). Everyone else that is involved in the charity is a volunteer, including the Trustees.

We would really like to have more teams out covering Newport, Ryde, events and at school, so if you would like to volunteer, please get in touch.

Please email sp@iowstreetpastors.org.uk, or use the contact form at iowstreetpastors.org.uk/contact/

Thanks

Suzanne

A ‘Constant Joy’ nets a Lundie Memorial Award

Matilda Willis, aged eight, has been named October’s recipient of the Lundie Memorial Award.

Matilda, who attends Sutton Coldfield URC, enjoys Messy Church sessions. So inspired by them, the eight-year-old approached the organising team with some ideas of her own.

Some of her ideas included making daisy chains to decorate the cross and creating bug hotels and making seed bombs for a session entitled “wonderful earth”.

Encouraged by Matilda’s enthusiasm, the team now include her in their planning meetings.

As well as putting forward ideas, Matilda also helps to set up Messy Church sessions and tidy up after, demonstrating the various skills and benefit she has to offer.

Richard Broughton, Children and Young People’s Contact for Sutton Coldfield URC, nominated Matilda and describes her enthusiasm as ‘a constant joy.’

When told she was October’s winner, Matilda said: “I was surprised, I love Messy Church and help out of love rather than needing recognition for it but it’s nice to have won.”

If another young person is considering being involved in the life of the church, Matilda’s advice would be to, “Let your parent know so that they can help support you, it can be something you do together”.

Each Lundie recipient receives £100 to use in the life of the church.

Matilda is considering using it to build on the church’s “wonderful earth” sessions and to get some bird feeders for the church and hopefully, buy each child who attends Messy Church a small gift for Christmas.



Source: URC News

urc.org.uk/a-constant-joy-nets-a-lundie-memorial-award/

A Word

My child I love you

I gave blood so you would be forgiven

I chose you to do my will

I chose your name. And your body.

I chose your family.

I chose your life Be strong in me.

Give me your worries and fears

For I The Lord will give you peace

I love you sons and daughters

Repent and have faith. and you will be forgiven

Love your brothers and sisters

For I The Lord chose their names.

I chose their lives.

I chose their bodies and their families

Do not judge them. Because I made them to be them

Be patient for not all of them have let me in yet

Spread the Gospels.

Pray. repent. and forgive

Hannah

FOCUS

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

**Secret storytelling helps young converts
learn about Jesus**

In the Muslim-majority Southern Philippines, Christians can face persecution and opposition. An undercover community of Christians are sharing stories from the Bible to disciple and encourage the next generation of the church.



Sharing stories from the Bible is one way local Open Doors partners are supporting courageous Christian children

Ten-year-old Wahid* has already learned a powerful truth – words that he can cling to in the difficult times ahead. Where Wahid lives in the Southern Philippines, choosing to follow Jesus can be very dangerous. While a lot of the country’s population is Christian, his region is mostly Muslim – and anybody who decides to leave Islam for another faith can face death threats and being disowned by their family and community.

But Wahid is finding a valuable new community – a group of Christians sharing stories from the Bible. Wahid and other young secret believers come with their parents to this undercover group, led by Open Doors local partners, and together find comfort and inspiration as they read the Bible together.

The group meets twice a month, sharing stories about the heroes of faith and how God takes care of His children. Each time someone tells a story, they learn how to disciple others, ensuring that everyone learns these important lessons.

Learning about God’s faithfulness

“At this very young age, there are dangers that they will face but these children don’t easily give up,” shares Faith*, a local Open Doors partner. Recently, the children have read about God’s faithfulness to Hagar and Ishmael in Genesis 21. “This story reminds the kids that, even when things are hard, they can get strong by sharing their stories and knowing that God helps others through them,” Faith says. “By telling this story, they’re not just talking about the past. They’re spreading hope and understanding in their community.”

Wahid and Ramsi*, another young believer, resonate deeply with this passage. “God won’t leave us, and He helps us when we’re in need,” Ramsi says.

The secret meetings wouldn’t be possible without the support of the parents who want to see their children grow in their new faith. “Even though there’s danger,” Faith says, “the parents support their kids, showing how faith can help families stick together, cope and overcome tough times.”

Beacons of hope

Looking ahead, the group wants to help even more people understand the Bible. More kids are interested in hearing these stories, and they want to reach out to them. The stories can help everyone see that we’re all connected – and support these children as they face persecution or opposition.

The Link - December 2023/January 2024

In the Muslim-dominated area where these gatherings take place, numerous secret believers know they live in a region where openly declaring their Christianity can lead to expulsion from their homes or even death. Faith notes that in a region where danger and faith often intersect, these children from this Southern Philippine tribe are like beacons of hope. “Their whispered stories, admirable faith and unity show how people can be strong regardless of the circumstances,” she explains.

Shamira*, one of the young participants, says she looks forward to each gathering and testifies to the power of fellowship. “I thank God for the times we meet,” she says. “I always wait for the day we come together again. It's amazing to know that God can do many things.”

Every Christian child should be protected, provided for and given an education to give them hope for the future – and programmes like this one help to make that happen. Wahid, Ramsi and Shamira are part of the next generation of the church, but they are also vital members of the church today. Your prayers and gifts can help strengthen and encourage them, and contribute towards the future of the global church.

**Names changed due to security reasons*

Please Pray

- For these children and their families to have the courage, boldness and will to deepen their faith despite the challenges they face
- That these gatherings would multiply throughout this part of the country and beyond and foster a deep sense of unity and mutual support among the participants
- That God would use the faith of these young believers and their parents to make a life-changing difference in the broader community.

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

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)

## **Nigerian Mother Accused of Blasphemy Faces Three Years in Prison**

Rhoda has been detained for over a year after she was accused of blasphemy for defending Deborah Samuel – a student who was also accused of blasphemy and murdered by a mob in 2022. Rhoda's court case is scheduled for 27<sup>th</sup> November – please pray that she will be released and reunited with her family.

Thye Nigerian Christian mother of five has been detained for more than a year without trial and faces up to three years' imprisonment after being accused of blasphemy.

Rhoda Jatau, a health worker from northern Bauchi State, was arrested on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2022 after she reportedly forwarded a 'blasphemous' WhatsApp message to colleagues. In the message, she condemned the killing of Christian student Deborah Samuel who was stoned and burned to death for alleged blasphemy by a mob one week earlier.

Rhoda was arrested and taken from her home in Katanga, Warji Local Government Area, before she also could be attacked by a mob. When the attackers could not find her, they targeted Christians in the neighbourhood –injuring at least 10 people and damaging properties. Rhoda's family was forced to flee their home and now live elsewhere.

### **Rhoda's pleas for bail repeatedly denied**

In December 2022, Rhoda was charged with 'intention to disturb the public peace in which the content of the video is a blasphemy of the Prophet Mohammed which seriously incited disturbance and caused the breach of peace of the community that led to the destruction of many shops and houses in Warji Local Government Area of Bauchi State'. The charges carry a sentence of up to three years in prison and possibly a fine.

Her case is scheduled to be heard on 27<sup>th</sup> November when she will have been in detention for one-and-a-half years. During this time, several requests for bail were denied because of the possible risk of riots, according to her lawyer Joshua Nasara in a press statement.

## **Blasphemy in Northern Nigeria punishable by death**

Blasphemy laws are in place across the whole of Nigeria. While blasphemy in southern Nigeria is punishable by imprisonment, in the 12 northern states that are governed by Sharia (Islamic law) it can carry the death sentence.

Both the European Union and the United Nations have repeatedly raised concerns and called on the Nigerian government to repeal the laws.

In their most recent letter to Nigeria's government, UN Special Rapporteurs highlighted the cases of Deborah Samuel and Rhoda Jatau. They sent the letter in August 2023, and have recently published it in the absence of a formal response from the Nigerian authorities.

They called on the government to repeal the blasphemy laws, which, they wrote, 'legitimise negative and violent social attitudes towards members of religious minorities and encourage and lead to acts of violence against them by individuals holding extreme religious and political views'.

### **No action taken against mobs who attacked Deborah or Rhoda**

"Rhoda Jatau legitimately exercised her right of freedom of expression and freedom of religion or belief in a peaceful manner," says John Samuel, Open Doors legal expert for sub-Saharan Africa. "It is unacceptable that she is being prosecuted for merely sharing content that condemns the violence against Deborah, while no action is being taken against those involved in the mob violence following the disclosure of her alleged blasphemous WhatsApp message. Nor has action been taken against those involved in the mob violence that took the life of Deborah.

"The way the mob violence against both Deborah and Jatau is handled clearly shows the concerning culture of impunity against perpetrators of violence in parts of Nigeria. The legal criminalisation of blasphemy, which is against the Nigerian constitution and international human rights standards, has contributed to the increase of mob violence."

*Source Open Doors*



# Dates For Your Diary

| Day | Date                 | Time                             | Details                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-----|----------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Sun | 3 <sup>rd</sup> Dec  | 10:30<br>17:00                   | Morning Communion - including the commissioning of Carol Turner as an Anna Chaplain (see <a href="#">page 13</a> )<br>Shared Evening Worship @ SURC                     |
| Fri | 8 <sup>th</sup> Dec  | 11:00                            | Carols at Tile House                                                                                                                                                    |
| Sat | 9 <sup>th</sup> Dec  | 10:00<br>19:30                   | Open Church <i>until about 12:00</i><br>STBB Christmas Concert (see <a href="#">page 41</a> )                                                                           |
| Sun | 10 <sup>th</sup> Dec | 10:30<br>16:00                   | Morning Worship - Ellen Robinson Speaking<br>Evening Worship at Methodist Church                                                                                        |
| Thu | 14 <sup>th</sup> Dec | 19:00                            | Carols at Beatrice Court                                                                                                                                                |
| Fri | 15 <sup>th</sup> Dec | 15:00<br>19:00                   | Carols at Springfield Nursing Home<br>Light up a Life Service (see <a href="#">page 9</a> )                                                                             |
| Sat | 16 <sup>th</sup> Dec | 11:00                            | Music Team at Sandown Christmas Fair                                                                                                                                    |
| Sun | 17 <sup>th</sup> Dec | 10:30<br>16:00                   | Carol and Nativity Service<br>Shared Evening Worship at St Blasius                                                                                                      |
| Sat | 23 <sup>rd</sup> Dec | 15:30                            | Messy Church - Jesus' Birthday Party (see <a href="#">page 29</a> )                                                                                                     |
| Sun | 24 <sup>th</sup> Dec | 10:30<br>17:00<br>23:00<br>23:30 | Encounter Café Service (see <a href="#">page 7</a> )<br>Carols at Daish's Hotel (see <a href="#">page 28</a> )<br>Carols on the Church Steps<br>Christmas Eve Communion |
| Mon | 25 <sup>th</sup> Dec | 10:30                            | Christmas Day Service for all ages                                                                                                                                      |
| Sun | 31 <sup>st</sup> Dec | 10:30                            | All Age Worship - led by Malc Stevens                                                                                                                                   |
| Sat | 6 <sup>th</sup> Jan  | 08:30                            | New Year Prayer Breakfast                                                                                                                                               |
| Sun | 14 <sup>th</sup> Jan | 10:30                            | Morning Worship - with Nigel Cox                                                                                                                                        |

|            |                            |              |                                                                                        |
|------------|----------------------------|--------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Sun        | 21 <sup>st</sup> Jan       | 10:30        | Roy Wilson Speaking                                                                    |
| <b>Thu</b> | <b>25<sup>th</sup> Jan</b> | <b>19:30</b> | <b>Church Meeting</b>                                                                  |
| Sat        | 27 <sup>th</sup> Jan       | 14:30        | When the Road is Rough and Steep with Ish & Irene Smale (see <a href="#">page 16</a> ) |
| Sun        | 28 <sup>th</sup> Jan       | 10:30        | Encounter Café Service                                                                 |
| Fri        | 2 <sup>nd</sup> Feb        | 19:15        | All Island Worship Event (see <a href="#">page 13</a> )                                |
| Sat        | 3 <sup>rd</sup> Feb        | 08:30        | Men's Breakfast (see <a href="#">page 11</a> )                                         |

***No Bible Bite on Tuesdays 19 and 26 December and 2 January***

## **Christmas is Coming**

Just a reminder that there are catalogues for Alternative Gifts at church (see last month's magazine for different ministries/societies that operate these wonderful schemes).

Those available at church (in the lobby or on the trolley) are **Samaritan's Purse**, **Barnabas** and **Love Russia**, whilst also available online is the **RNLI**.

Although we are living in difficult times for so many in our nation, these wonderful alternative gifts from as little as £5, can provide great support to those in other countries who have so little, or alternatively, helping to rescue those in difficulties at sea around the UK and Ireland.

## **Shoebox Appeal**

Thank you so much to all who gave shoeboxes, separate items or money towards 'Samaritan's Purse Operation Christmas Child'.

Sandra Snell at 'time of going to press' has 121 shoeboxes to send on their way with support from 'Altitude' Church, our own URC and some given from other individuals. Sandra is very grateful for our church's partnership in this and for the lovely items, knitted or bought. This will bring much joy to many dear children.

If you are able to go online at [www.samaritans-purse.org.uk/what-we-do/operation-christmas-child/](http://www.samaritans-purse.org.uk/what-we-do/operation-christmas-child/), there are some very moving videos of children receiving their boxes – heart-warming to view!

# The Link - December 2023/January 2024

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| 45 |    |    |    |    |    |    |  |    |    |    | 46 |    |    |

## Across

- 1 Held on 23<sup>rd</sup> December (5 6)
- 6 DC's electrical partner (2)
- 9 Tree, Acer Pseudoplatanus (8)
- 10 Sandown Park racecourse is in this Surrey town (5)
- 11 Not off (2)
- 12 'United' city in Yorkshire (5)
- 14 Chemical symbol for Iron (2)
- 15 - Sauvignon, red wine grape (8)
- 16 3.142 or 22/7 (2)
- 17 Barn or Tawny, for example (3)
- 19 Birthplace of William I (7)
- 21 Thanks, slang (2)
- 22 One of Santa's helpers (3)
- 26 Personal pronoun 'you', en français (2)
- 27 Short pole with a broad blade at one or both ends used in boats (6)
- 30 Coastal town on River Seine (8)
- 32 A person smells with it (4)
- 34 C'est nous, en français (2)
- 37 A Renault car, with impressive views? (6)
- 39 Worn over the ears to protect from the cold (8)
- 41 Not applicable *initials* (2)
- 42 An agricultural packed pile (8)
- 43 An African poisonous snake (5)
- 44 Not off (2)
- 45 Monaco's most famous district (5 5)
- 46 ... - - - ... *Initials* (3)

## Down

- 1 Will you be kissed under this plant this Christmas? (9)
- 2 Connected with God (6)
- 3 Edible starchy tuber from tropical countries (3)
- 4 Science of growing vegetables, fruits, flowers, etc. (12)
- 5 City in Lower Normandy (4)
- 7 24<sup>th</sup> December (9 3)
- 8 Soft lustre on a surface (5)
- 11 A spherical object or shape (3)
- 13 Not easily bent; or a dead body (5)
- 14 Without cost (4)
- 18 'The' en français *m* (2)
- 20 North or Irish, for example (3)
- 23 A group of these is a pride (5)
- 24 Mr Sheeran, singer (2)
- 25 Arthur -, 1975 Wimbledon winner (4)
- 27 French capital (5)
- 28 Garden weed, that's edible (9)
- 31 'The' en français *f* (2)
- 33 Turn or whirl round quickly (4)
- 34 Welsh town that became a city in 2022 (7)
- 35 Stick of coloured wax used for drawing (6)
- 36 A parent's sister (6)
- 38 Northern French port (6)
- 40 Detachable front covering for a mobile phone (5)
- 43 Sound a dove makes (3)

**Have Fun!**

# 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.

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

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

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



## Connection Quiz

### Answers

1. Chelsea
2. Harrier.
3. Ride (or was it Ryde?).
4. Island
5. Seine
6. Tres
7. Connection: The first letter of each answer spells out **CHRIST**.





# The (annual) Christmas Trivia Quiz

1. Who was crowned King of England on 25<sup>th</sup> December 1066?
2. To whom did an angel say, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news..."?
3. Why did Mary & Joseph travel to Bethlehem?
4. What cake is traditionally eaten in France at Epiphany?
5. In which country do Advent Calendars have their roots - and when?
6. Whose eyes are all aglow in '*The Christmas Song*'?
7. Which celebration was '*Jingle Bells*' originally written for?
8. In which country did the carol '*Silent Night*' originate?
9. In the Tudor mince pie, how many ingredients were used?
10. What is 'Happy Christmas' in Spanish?
11. In which Christmas song do '*the kids start singing and the band begins to play*'?
12. In '*The 12 Days of Christmas*' how many swans are there?
13. In which film was the song '*White Christmas*' originally featured?
14. Which cake, traditionally eaten at Christmas, originated from a city in Scotland?
15. What was the Christmas number one in 1984?
16. Which of Santa's reindeer is named after the Roman god of love?
17. According to Google, when was the first recorded celebration of Christmas?
18. When was the first Christmas card sent?
19. Which was the first country to issue a Christmas postage stamp, and when?
20. In which country did tinsel originate?

## Can You Guess The Year?

- The men's FA Cup was won by Arsenal
- The film *Shaun the Sheep Movie* was released in the UK.
- The Shoreham air crash happened.
- And UK No. 1s included:
  - Adele with 'Hello'
  - Jess Glynne with 'Hold my Hand'
  - King with 'Years and Years'
  - Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Choir with 'A Bridge Over You'

*Answer next issue*

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

1. Which team won the men's Football World Cup in 2018?
2. In what year was the Battle of Waterloo?
3. What is the capital of Moldova?
4. What did the Romans call Bristol?
5. What was the nickname was given to King John?
6. What is the name of the main French Channel Island?
7. When was the film 'Love Bug' released in the UK?
8. Who wrote the book 'Wind in the Willows'?
9. When and where were the first post boxes installed?
10. Which English brewery makes the beer *Spitfire*?

*Answers next issue*

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

**Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> January**

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 1994

- Last month's crossword ↓

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

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

1. Westlife with the song '*I Have a Dream*'
2. Nikki French with '*Don't Play That Song Again*'
3. Montevideo
4. Henry
5. Tony Hatch
6. Henry IV
7. The UN
8. 21<sup>st</sup> October 1971
9. Potassium
10. 2015 - won by Chelsea

## 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**



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*Day off:*      *Monday*

**Secretary:**      **Robin Wightman**



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

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