

The Link - March 2024 View From Number 10

As we journey towards Easter, we must try to focus on the path that Jesus trod as he prepared to lay down his life for the world. We are exploring the theme of discipleship over these weeks, and I will be leading some devotional studies at Tuesday Bible Bite based on a booklet by the late Rob Frost – **The Way of the Cross**. This will help us study some of the key aspects of what it is to follow Jesus.

My daily readings have been in Galatians over recent days and one well-known verse jumped off the page which perhaps sums up what our focus should be in this season of Lent:

"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." 2:20

As I ponder these challenging words, I must ask myself - have I truly died to the world and all it stands for? Is my life now hidden with Christ in God (Colossians 3:3). Paul says there that we as believers have been raised with Christ. We now live on another plain entirely and so should have died to worldly priorities. He urges the Colossian church – *"Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things."*

As we look to the cross of Jesus and see the amazing grace of God flowing out to us, we are encouraged to discover what it is to live by faith not by sight; to put our faith in Jesus and his death and resurrection. As we begin to understand the fullness of what God has done, it should completely reshape our priorities.

The way of the cross is one of self-denial as we look to Jesus who gave it all for us. He came to save us, and he calls us to take up our cross and to follow in his footsteps. The writer to the Hebrews calls us to fix our eyes on Jesus who went all the way to the cross for us – "Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart." (12:3).

It can be a tough road and sadly many do give up or are lured to take an easier deceptive path. Jesus warned about this. We need



one another and the encouragement and support of fellow pilgrims as we journey together on the way of the cross. It may seem unattractive at times, but it is truly the path to life. If we want to share in the glory of his resurrection, we must also be willing to partake in suffering with and for Jesus (Romans 8:17). Many pay a heavy price for this around the world today.

God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son. People of every tribe and tongue were in view as the Jewish Messiah met

his end at the hands of the Romans, after rejection by God's people and the temple authorities. From the time of Abraham, it was always God's intention to bless the nations of the world. The coming of Jesus and his death are the lynchpin in that plan.

You and I were on God's heart as Jesus died on the cross.

May we all take time this month to prepare for *"the most sacred event in the Christian calendar"*, as Rob Frost describes Good Friday. Let us step out of the rat race and press into the Lord and take a while to pause and rest in the presence of the living God as we reflect on the wondrous cross. This is the symbol of the Christian faith and serves as a constant reminder of the price that was paid to set us free from sin and set us on the path to abundant life.

We will be called to make sacrifices and to put others first as our lives are shaped and moulded to reflect the image of our Saviour and Lord. It may feel an upward struggle at times, but he gives us his Spirit to equip and empower us. Let's journey on together and not be ashamed of the cross, which is a symbol of both death and new life.

With my very best wishes for this holy season .

, ja





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

Meeting ID: 324 266 5584 Password: 936536.

Prayer Chain - please make use of this for urgent and important issues that need prayer. Phone Hazel on 865181 – or Jean on 863850 - do consider joining this if you are mostly around at home.

Text Prayer Network - this has proved a really efficient method of getting prayer needs around. So, if you have an <u>urgent and important issue</u> that needs immediate cover, please text Lou on **07474 273119** (or, as a back-up, Jean Cunningham on: 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, or would like more details about the prayer meeting, please contact Melodie or Roy beforehand: <u>melodieroywilson@gmail.com</u> or **1** 866912.

Next Prayer Sabbath - will be held from sundown on **Friday 19**th – **Saturday 20**th **April**. Please note this in your diary and keep the time clear for a dedicated time of prayer.

Lent Prayer Evening - This was held on 16th February. Please see <u>pages 16 and 17</u> for some great feedback from this wonderful evening.



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?

This month the café service will be held on Palm Sunday – 24th March – See your King comes

Text Prayer Network Update

Where it began!

Carole S had a prompting about a mobile text prayer network I felt it was right to lead it with Carole's blessing. TPN was started and it has been found to be vital in people's needs . it is a safe place to bring those sensitive and urgent prayers and to know your covered in prayer gives you peace. It's been a place of encouragement with feedback testimonies. Hallelujah

It has been such a crucial network with our family in hospital in critical conditions! I hope this encourages the URC family and all those that have been prayed for in the past and the future.

Where we are now

We have a team of 21 prayer warriors and there is room for more!! I would like to thank every single one of our team for their faithfulness throughout the last several months. If you feel you would like to be part of the network please come and speak to me, Lou. What happens is you will receive a text and then just pray it's that simple - praise be to God and all Glory To The Lord Jesus Christ

Connection Quiz

- 1. Which area of London got it's name from a statue of King George IV?
- 2. What is the name of the winning song from the 1974 Eurovision Song Contest?
- 3. What is the name of the marmalade loving bear, created by Michael Bond?
- 4. Who was the ruling monarch of Great Britain 1837 1901?
- 5. So, what is the **connection** between the answers to questions 1 4?
- 6. And bonus question... where was the cover photo taken? Hint: it was taken on the IoW

Answers are on page 47



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

3 rd Mar	18:30	Sandown Baptist Church Station Avenue
10 th Mar	18:30	Shanklin URC High Street, Shanklin
17 th Mar	18:30	Christ Church Broadway, Sandown
24 th Mar Prayer Focu		Lake Methodist Church Sandown Road, Lake

Getting Together

Walk & Talk

~ an afternoon of walking, talking, chatting and eating!

<u>All</u> are welcome to join us on Thursday 14th March @ 14:00 at the church for a relaxed social gathering of the fellowship:~

We are planning to go for a short amble before meeting back at the church around 15:15, from there we will go across to Cinders Café who are opening especially at 15:30 to provide us with tea and cake!

Those of you who prefer not to walk will be able to remain in the building (or come along a bit later) and tea/coffee will be available.

Please do let Dave or Robin know if you would like to be included in the numbers taking tea @ Cinders (for catering purposes, up to a maximum of 22).

Big Day Out (or building up a head of steam)

In May we are hoping to arrange a party of folk to go to Wessex Synod's Big Day Out at Hollycombe Steam Fair (near Petersfield) on Saturday the 4th May We plan to leave from Shanklin at about 08:00 and return before 19:30.

Please see the advert on the opposite page or visit the website: <u>www.urcwessex.org.uk/synod-big-day-out/</u> for more details.

We will order tickets centrally so please let Dave or Robin know if you would like one as soon as possible ~ lifts for individuals will be available from folk within the fellowship (at cost).

And then...

During the summer we are hoping to arrange some sort of coach trip ... watch this space





HE COUNTRY hollycombe.co.uk

Children £5 Adults £8

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

'24

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



BRASS

BAND

FOREST

CHURCH

Easter Programme – Celebrate What God Has Done!

Saturday 23rd 15:30

0 Messy Church

For families to explore the meaning of Easter

See page 41 for details

Plenty of crafty family fun

Maundy Thursday 19:00		Shared Communion Service This year at Ryde URC – followed by a snack supper – look out for details and please sign the list if you plan to go
Good Friday	10:00	Short Reflective Service
	11:15	Procession of Witness - starting at St Blasius Church <i>Pick up a leaflet or see poster for timings</i> (or see <u>page 14</u>)
Easter Day	06:30	Open Air Sunrise Celebration On the seafront at the bottom of Hope Road, followed by breakfast at the beach café
	10:30	Easter Communion for all ages
	18:30	Easter Café with a short film A relaxed evening to end this special day





Synod Big Day Out 2024 – bookings now open!

Following the success of the last Synod Big Day out at

Hollycombe Steam in the Country,

Wessex Synod have booked the site again for their exclusive use on **Saturday 4th May 2024**, 10:00 – 17:00.

There will be more steam rides open this year and additional programme activities provided by Wessex Synod.

We invite all churches, church user groups and community groups with links to URCs and LEPs in Wessex Synod to come and enjoy a day of fellowship, fun and worship.

Ticket prices are the same as in 2022:

£8 per adult, £5 per child - for up to 10 rides on the attractions

New this year are tickets for unlimited rides on the attractions:

Adult £10.50 Child £7.50

A free ticket can be booked for an accompanying carer.

Hollycombe's fabulous new café will be open this time and there will be other food and refreshment outlets. You are welcome to bring your own picnic.

We have listened to feedback and so this time the layout for the Synod activities will be more central and accessible for all. Synod activities include a large marquee with worship, stories and entertainment, as well as a marketplace with crafts, Synod Youth Executive, and church connections, forest church and a nature walk.

We look forward to seeing you there.

Please see pages 8 & 9 for more details, including how Dave and Robin will be ordering tickets centrally.

It was great fun last time with lots to do and see - they also had a brass band playing :

New Year All Island Celebration

Well over 200 people from many IoW congregations came together in February to celebrate some of the various ways God is working through the church as we work together on various shared projects.



The sung worship led by the host church True Vine was really uplifting with a packed auditorium lifting their voices in praise. The input was so inspiring.



Coming soon...

Pray The Wight - Friday 15th March at 19:30

At Newport Methodist Church, Quay Street

Please join the Wight Church Team as they lead another prayer gathering for the whole church to come together. This time, the focus will be on Youth Work .

There will be updates from School Pastors, YFC and other local ministries across the Island.

'Shadow of the Cross' Lent Resources



Where is Jesus in the Old Testament? This

Lent, dive into the Scriptures and let your mind and heart expand with the riches that are there! Come along on our 'Shadow of the Cross' journey, and you'll reach Easter with a renewed appreciation for all that Jesus accomplished on the cross.

The cross of Jesus casts a long shadow, reaching all the way back to the book of Genesis. Each week throughout Lent join us for a tour from Genesis to Malachi as Bible Society contributors point out the threads that connect the Old Testament to the events of Jesus' death and resurrection.

Each week you'll journey through a portion of the Old Testament until you come to that last week in the lead up to Easter. Then you'll be amazed as each day unfolds and the threads you've seen in Genesis, Judges, Kings, Psalms, Isaiah and more feed into the events of that unforgettable passion week.

Sign up at: <u>www.biblesociety.org.uk/resources/the-lent-encounter-sign-up/</u> and you'll receive daily devotions, as text or audio, throughout Lent direct to your inbox.



26th - 28th July

lionheartfestival.co.uk

Check out the Lionheart 2022 highlights video!

(HRISTIANS WORKING TOGETHER IN SHANKLIN <u>Good Friday</u>

Procession of Witness

Commencing at 11:15 at St Blasius Church



- 11:45 St Saviour on the Cliff
- 11:55 United Reformed Church
- 12:05 Methodist Church
- 12:20 Sacred Heart
- 12:30 St Paul's

You are warmly invited for refreshments at the end

Easter Sunday Morning

Open Air Sunrise Celebration 06:30 (the clocks change!)

on the seafront (at the bottom of Hope Road)

Followed by Breakfast

The South East Beach Café is opening especially for us





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



Church Prayer Update

We had a time of Lent Prayers on 16th February in the evening and it was a powerful time seeking God - and as always God turned up!

We had a time of worship and prayers, and we read Ephesians 6:10 -20 concerning putting upon the armour of God, which is a reminder that we are all in battle. These times of prayer are special and a unified front that comes through standing together. It is a real blessing

Thinking about all the prayer that goes on throughout the week: prayer meeting on a Tuesday is a great opportunity to meet together and cover all those needs arising in our church family and others that are in need. We are a faithful few and would like to see more come and have a taster and see that it is a much needed time together.

The prayer breakfast, which is held periodically, is always a great opportunity together as family. House-groups will also be praying weekly, which is a blessing

We have twice a year special times of Prayer Sabbath, which is a great opportunity and the last one was very moving how the Lord spoke through creativity. A very beautiful picture was painted and lots of words and blessings came forth. It was a very special time together

We have so many times of prayer, which is so very rich in itself. Prayer is the most powerful weapon one that we need every moment! Jesus showed us how to pray the Lord's Prayer; it is important. and I would invite you to come to one of these great opportunities to meet together, be it Sabbath, House-group or Tuesday prayer - or any other time - you are all more than welcome

Blessings

Lou



Dear All

Dear All, Brothers & Sisters, Church Members, Elders, and especially our very dedicated Prayer and Worship Teams. and to all those present at the prayer meeting on Friday evening, 16th February - we would like to thank Brian for his leadership, spiritual words, prayers, compassion and his musical accompaniment!

A tremendous Thank You to each other for the very powerful and spiritual outpouring of love, blessings and healing prayers. To all those in our Church Family and to those who are personal to each individual - it was indeed a very warm, uplifting, spiritual evening in the presence of the Holy Spirit.

There are so very many of our Brothers and Sisters in our Church and those who are personally connected to us externally, that truly need everyone's personal prayers, healing, upliftment and blessings.

Having been a blessed reciprocant of our dedicated prayer teams intercessions, I would humbly ask, if and when possible and to those who are able, to attend these very important prayer times at our church. If you need a lift please do reach out.

As true Christians we are stronger together to amplify our praise and thanks to God and to ask for His love and healing blessings for all of those we hold dear to us.

Amen

Ann and Rod



YMCA Mother & Baby Unit – Catch-Up and Report from Rod and Ann

A very good morning and blessings, healing, peace and joy to our URC Shanklin family, especially to those who receive and read The Link.

Since the start of all of our endeavours, thanks to Brian and the Elders and all the members of our church, the outpouring of support and giving has been truly miraculous. We thank you all and praise God for this amazing, ongoing opportunity of Christian outreach. We continue to support the Mother and Baby unit and we are constantly receiving gifts and donations for this unit. There is an ongoing need for so many everyday items and consumables such as nappies, baby creams, powders, wet wipes, baby towels and cot blankets, baby clothes of all ages up to two years.

There is always a need for cereal/soup bowls and plastic bowls and they have a specific need for a 4 slice toaster, irons, electric frying pan, wok, baking pans and utensils. Ann and I also want to thank you ALL for the love and generosity shown to us as well with your support to help us support this invaluable charity and keep it going.

We would also like to say a big Thank You to Pam Dana at St Blasius Church who also put an article in their monthly magazine and due to the response from their Minister Tony Richards, the PCC and congregation of St Blasius, it has kept Pam busy running around collecting and delivering so many wonderful items donated for the Mother and Baby Unit. It has truly been amazing to see how God works in bringing people together not only within the Bay Community but also within the Bay group of Churches. We hope that all the Bay churches, which Brian has been leading for a very long time, get together in an even more beneficial and community way to better and support each other whereas a united group, there is so much more we could do for our community and other needy charities we are all aware of in the local area. It is a fact that we are stronger all working together under God's umbrella in faith and love.

Our sincere thanks also to Sheila, Ann and Carole at the Well and all those who attend the Well, for their love and support and handling the drop-off point for the donations.

There are so many ladies and couples at our church in particular (including Shanklin Town Brass Band), that have made a major impact in our endeavours. There are too many to name individually but those people know who they are and we thank them from our hearts for their support and generosity.

If anyone needs to ask questions or would like to know anything more then please contact Ann on 07481 596958 or Rod on 07400 302423 and please, if any couple or individuals in the church are at a loss or need transportation or help we are always at the end of a telephone call.

Wishing you all a blessed, happy, healthy, peaceful and joyful new year ahead.

With love

Rod and Ann

Thank you Jesus.

Thank you Jesus for my job Thank you Jesus for my home, Knowing you are here with me Feeling I am truly free. Thank you Jesus for my faith Thank you Jesus I am safe, Always grateful for my health Future glorified - what wealth! Thank you Jesus for Sarah A daughter - none so fairer. And for a mother I miss But I know one day I'll kiss. Thank you Jesus you'll return A day that all our hearts yearn, We will see you face to face And go to a glorious place. Lavinia P

A Massive Thank You from the YMCA Mother and Baby Facility

We would like to send a massive thank you to all of you who have made donations to the YMCA Mother and Baby facility. We are eternally gratefully for all your support and kindness.

The YMCA M & B facility support young mums and babies, who are at risk of homelessness, which is temporary accommodation, where myself as Lodge Manager and one member of staff work hard to support these young people and enable them to work towards independent living, identifying areas of strength and support needs throughout their journey at the YMCA.

So far we have received numerous essential items for our young mum's and their babies, which due to lack of storage we have to be selective regarding donations but so far, we have received many items including a microwave, bedding, duvets, bed, chest of drawers, baby clothes, TV, commercial washer and dryer machines and the funds raised through Shanklin brass band celebration evening, which have enabled us to purchase a new range cooker.

I am astounded at the level of support and kindness you have all shown. Thank you so much from all at the YMCA

Kindest Regards,

Jo McGrath (Mother and Baby Support Manager)

Mother and Baby Facility Needs

The facility have a need for the following items:

- Vacuum Cleaner
- Carpet Cleaner
- Carpet Shampoo machine
- Steam cleaner

If anybody can help or have a suggestion then please contact Ann on 07481 596958 or Rod Foster on 07400 302423 or drop it off at The Well at URC on a Wednesday between 11:00 and 13:00.

Many thanks, Rod and Ann

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.



This such a great resource for

people to read and then share with others!!

This month's edition (available to read online at <u>www.goodnews-paper.org.uk/viewlatesteditionspage.htm</u>) has several great articles, including the headline article '**Alive'** - Why you don't have to have 'blind faith' to believe Jesus is alive today.

Other contributions include:

- Easter Truth Brings Peace Jewish man finds peace after vision of empty tomb.
- Even Caesar Believed Astonishingly, Caesar of Jesus' time believed in the resurrection.
- Atheist Convinced Atheist says facts about resurrection brought him to faith.
- Rev Gladiator! Original TV Gladiator trains to become a vicar.
- Liverpool Striker Cody Gakpo says Bible gives him peace and strength.
- Martin Scorsese Hollywood director films second movie about Jesus.

Good News... for a change

Shanklin URC Bookshop

The bookshop reopened on 14th February after a short break for Christmas and stocktaking.

The bookshop is open each week on Wednesdavs and Thursdays, 10:00 - 13:00. From the beginning of March it will also be open 10:00 - 13:00 on the second Tuesday of each month and on some Fridays for a shorter time.

If anyone is interested in joining the bookshop team please contact John



& Joan (e-mail address johndfrend@aol.com). Help is particularly needed on Tuesdays; it doesn't have to be a commitment to a morning every week as there is also an option to do a morning once or twice a month.

A selection of Easter cards is now available in the bookshop. The cards have been produced by the Leprosy Mission and all include a Bible verse. The cards are available singly, priced 65p and 75p.

The bookshop also has a selection of cards which are blank inside, for your own greeting, that can be used for a variety of occasions. Although they are blank they all include a Bible verse. As well as single cards there are notecard packs and postcard packs. The notecards are in packs of 10 (5 each of 2 designs) in a cardboard wallet priced £3.99. The Blessings Postcards are in packs of 15 in a cardboard wallet priced at £6.00. The postcards are produced by the Leprosy Mission and all have a colour photo and a Bible verse.

Good News! – Akram (name changed for security reasons) from Bangladesh freed after 81 days in jail

Akram from Bangladesh has been released from prison after 81 days – thank you for your prayers for him and his family.

This family of believers from a Muslim background have faced significant persecution and opposition for their faith.

Akram* from Bangladesh has been released from prison after 81 days and is grateful for your prayers.

A believer from a Muslim background, he was arrested on 16th November 2023 when his relatives and members of the community made false accusations against him. He was freed on bail on 7th January 2024 after 81 days in a local prison in northern Bangladesh.

When he returned home to his family, he spoke to Open Doors partners to express his thanks for their – and your – support.

"I am thankful to all of you for continuously praying for me and for supporting my family in my absence," he said. "You supported my wife with encouragement and prayers and supported my family with food. Because of your support, my wife was able to protect and carry our family burdens. Thank you very much for whatever you have been doing for us."

His family are very happy about his return; his children couldn't stop hugging him and holding his hand. Now Akram hopes to spend time recovering mentally and physically from his ordeal. He also asks for continued prayer for them, and that they would be able to forgive those who falsely accused him.

Please Pray

- For a full recovery for Akram, and that he and his family will adjust well to normal life
- That Akram and his family will continue to trust in the Lord and be strengthened by the persecution they've experienced
- That God will give them forgiving hearts toward their persecutors.

Source: Open Doors - used by permission

Open the Book Update – Engaged Children, Happy Staff.

Presenting stories to a hall of 350 children, requires things to be clearly visible. Small props cannot be seen by those at the back, and anything on the



floor can only be seen by those in the front couple of rows. Here, the burning bush has been put on a table and Moses' leprous hand is a large garden glove. When his staff turned into a (draught excluder) snake, it climbed up the 'tree'.

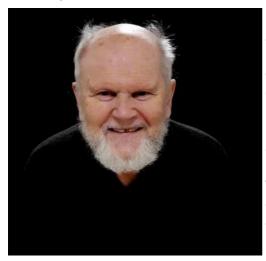




The children love to participate in Open the Book. As soon as we ask for volunteers from a particular year, virtually every hand in the class shoots up. The first assembly of 2024 was the visit of the magi. At the end, the teacher said he was amazed that we had involved 7 children with only 30 seconds preparation. That was how long it took to dress them as starwatchers, Herod's advisors, Mary, Joseph and a camel.



What the teacher had not spotted is that we had an 'invisible' storyteller (dressed all in black) who accompanied the children, whispering instructions as the story unfolded: 'point at the star', 'carry the basket and follow the star', 'make the toddler doll walk', 'take one of the gifts from the basket and put it on the table', 'pretend to sleep'.



In addition, the children watching are asked to repeat certain phrases actions. and For example - worried (stroke your chin), angry (shake your fists) upset (put your head in your hands and shake it) Pausing after each of these words, the narrator then read: Herod was worried. Well. worried and angry. Actually, quite worried and angry and upset. Parents have told us that their children

continue to use our words and actions when they return home, especially when the phrase has a rhythm, such as '**trav**elled a **very** long **way**'. The teacher complemented the children on their participation, saying it proved how engaged they were with the story.

The next story was 12 year old Jesus (played by a child) staying in the Temple. The family went to celebrate the Passover in Jerusalem. As Mary 'lit' a (battery operated) menorah the children gasped. At the end, the teacher thanked us for reinforcing what the Year 5s had recently been taught about the significance of the (knitted) roast lamb and bitter herbs.

The menorah remained lit until the last child left the hall, making a beautiful tableau which will hopefully remain in their hearts.





Why Do We Need To Know Who We Are In Christ? (Part 1)

Over the past year, we have looked at various devotionals concerning who we are in Christ ~ this begs the question.

Why is it so important for me to know who I am in Christ?

During March and April, we will be looking at Neil Anderson's answer, which in summary is that without this knowledge we are bound to struggle in our Christian walk! Why?

Because what you do is determined by who you are!

Father God, thank you that by your grace we are your children. Help us to daily seek you and see you in all things.

Robín

Hope For Today And Tomorrow

"What marvellous love the Father has extended to us! Just look at it - we're called children of God! That's who we really are... that's exactly who we are: children of God. And that's only the beginning. Who knows how we'll end up! What we know is that when Christ is openly revealed, we'll see him - and in seeing him, become like him. All of us who look forward to his Coming stay ready, with the glistening purity of Jesus'

life as a model for our own." (1 John 3:1-3, The Message)

As children of the sinful first Adam, we were obstinate and ornery, helpless and hopeless, with nothing in ourselves to commend us to God. But God's love overruled our unloveliness. Through Christ God provided a way for us into His family. As God's adopted child, you have been given a new identity and a new name. You're no longer a spiritual orphan; you're a son or daughter of God. Romans 8:16&17, tells us, "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ."

If you're beginning to think you are someone special as a Christian, you're thinking right - you are special! Your specialness is not the result of anything you have done, of course. It's all God's doing. All you did was respond to God's invitation to be His child. But as a child of God, in union with God by being in Christ, you have every right to enjoy your special relationship with your new Father.

How important is it to know who you are in Christ? There are countless numbers of Christians who struggle with day-to-day behaviour because they labour under a false perception of who they are. They see themselves as sinners who hope to make it into heaven by God's grace, but they can't seem to live above their sinful tendencies. Why can't they live the victorious Christian life? Because they have a misperception of who they are in Christ.

But look again at the hope-filled words above (1 John 3:1-3). What is the believer's hope? That he will someday be changed into Christ's image? That's part of it, but that's only a future hope. What is your hope for today and tomorrow? That you're a child of God now! You must see yourself as a child of God in order to live like a child of God. The blessed hope for the believer is

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

Thank You, Father, for the glorious hope of being Your child. I want to live in the security and blessing of that reality today.

Understanding Who You Are

"For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God." (Romans 8:14)

I enjoy asking people, "Who are you?" It sounds like a simple question requiring a simple answer, but it really isn't. For example, if someone asked me, "Who are you?" I might answer, "Neil Anderson".

"No, that's your name. Who are you?"

"I'm an American".

"No, that's where you live".

I could also say that I'm five feet nine inches tall (1.7 metres) and a little over 150 pounds (68 kg) - actually quite a little over 150 pounds (68 kg)! But my physical dimensions and appearance aren't me either. If you chopped off my arms and legs, would I still be me? If you transplanted my heart, kidneys or liver, would I still be me? Of course! Now if you keep chopping, you'll get to me eventually because I'm in here somewhere. But who I am is far more than what you see on the outside.

We may say with the apostle Paul that we "recognise no man according to the flesh". But we tend to identify each other and ourselves primarily by physical appearance (tall, short, stocky, slender) or by what we do (plumber, carpenter, nurse, engineer, clerk).

Furthermore, when asked to identify ourselves in relation to our faith, we usually talk about our doctrinal position (Protestant, evangelical, Calvinist, charismatic), our denominational preference (Baptist, Presbyterian, Methodist, Independent), or our role in the church (Sunday school teacher, choir member, deacon, usher, etc.).

But is who you are determined by what you do, or is what you do determined by who you are? That's an important question, especially as it relates to Christian maturity. I subscribe to the latter. I believe wholeheartedly that your hope for growth, meaning and fulfilment as

a Christian is based on understanding who you are - specifically your identity in Christ as a child of God. Your understanding of who you are in Christ will greatly determine how you live your life.

Lord Jesus, I know I am complete in You. Don't allow me to fall back into fleshly attributes today in an attempt to impress others or You.

Neil Anderson

Freedom in Christ Ministries Used by permission

Next month, having established the importance of knowing who we are, Neil goes on to look at our crucial need to seek, see and know our Father.

If we are certain of our heritage, our hope and our calling, we will naturally **seek our Father's face** and **see Him at work in our everyday lives** ~ for we know that **He is the Source of all Hope.**

Almighty God, You are the creator, provider and sustainer of all things. You are our just judge and our advocate, our Father and our Friend.

To you belongs all glory and honour. Thank you that You have made yourself known to us and that we have been saved by the blood of the Lamb, Your Son and our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Father forgive us our sins, please bring these to our minds so that we may repent fully and be true followers of Jesus all the days of our lives.

We ask that you give each of us the wisdom, discernment and courage to speak His Name to all those around us, in all situations.

Robín

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

The Cost of Discipleship

Our minister, Brian, has just begun a series on '**Discipleship**' and this promises to be really helpful as we hear what it means to truly follow Jesus.

We have been **so** blessed with freedom to worship in our country, but for many who embrace Christianity the cost can be very high.

Becoming. a Christian in Eritrea, (**number 4** in the **Open Doors 2024 World Watch List**), cost, *Abdullah everything: his job, his freedom, and eventually his life. This persecution might have ended if he renounced Jesus - but that was something he refused to do. **He knew Jesus is worth the cost**.

Here is more of his story and of the situation of believers in his country:

Eritrea is called the 'North Korea of Africa' because of its severe authoritarian government. While there are three officially recognised Christian denominations (Eritrean Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Lutheran), converting from Islam - like Abdullah did - or belonging to an Evangelical church is extremely dangerous. Churches are regularly raided, and more than 1,000 Eritrean Christians are currently imprisoned for their faith.

Abdullah grew up in a traditional Muslim family when he converted to Christianity, he didn't keep his new faith quiet. He had a passion to share the Gospel and told everyone at work about Jesus - he wanted them to know the good news too. This was particularly dangerous because Abdullah worked in a government office.

One of his coworkers, was angry about Abdullah's Christian activities. He asked Abdullah to meet him at the office, but it was a trap: the man secretly recorded Abdullah while baiting him into making political comments. The next day, Abdullah was arrested, charged and sent to prison.

In prison, he was only given food three times a week. His wife shares that she wasn't allowed to bring him anything, and he wasn't allowed to have visits from his family. Abdullah got very sick in prison - and tragically, he eventually died. If he'd agreed to reconvert to Islam, the charges would have been dropped. But no hunger, torture or illness could separate Abdullah from the love of God.

Pray with Eritrean Christians

Father God, thank you that no authoritarian regime can stand in the way of Your love. Please comfort Abdullah's widow and children and strengthen and encourage all Eritreans in prison for loving You. Equip the local Church as they support and strengthen persecuted Christians in Eritrea. Amen.

* Name changed for security reasons.

Some of you will remember the prayer initiative some years from **Release International** – '**Pray 173**', to galvanise prayer for the 173 prisoners of faith who were in prison with a sentence of ten years or more.

Sadly, the persecution still continues so please do uphold the believers in this and countless other nations where to be a disciple of Jesus is a dangerous path to take.

And do please take a copy of the new World Watch List from the back of the church – perhaps you might pray for a country a week, which will take a year – or even more frequently, there are inspirational stories and testimonies of our brothers and sisters and helpful information about their countries, as well as 'counting the cost' devotionals to help us reflect on our faith – again very timely to link in with our sermon series **discipleship** at present.

Do ask if you'd like to know more about this and other valuable resources – or to give to **Open Doors** and other ministries we receive literature from such as,

- Release International
- Elam
- Barnabas Aid

Blessings in Jesus' Name

Jane H

A Time of Reflection

Life continues to rush by, it seems, but during this time of **Lent**, if it is possible to set aside this time, we are blessed to have **Bible Bite** to help us on the journey towards Easter, when our minister, Brian will be bringing meditations from God's Word on Jesus' journey to the cross.

Bible Bite is such a helpful time – a mid-week opportunity each week to have fellowship (and a drink and a cake beforehand!). To 'sit at the feet of Jesus', with some worship, prayers and always a great message opening up God's Word.

Don't miss out – especially if you don't have fellowship and spiritual input during the week from a house-group, but even if you do, this is such a valuable time and not to be missed! The service itself commences at 14:00 for a approximately an hour – an hour very well spent and refreshments are available from 13:30.

It is also livestreamed on YouTube for those who can't make it, or for those who want to watch it again.

With very grateful thanks to all who facilitate this time – it's so **appreciated**.

Blessings

Jane H

PS Thank you too for the **News Sheet** that is produced each week – it is **so** helpful with:

- > prayer pointers,
- > what's happening with the life of the church and
- > Brian's message on the 'News Sheet +'.

Really helpful in looking back over the message! (Copies of these are on the table in the lobby).

The Tree

When I look upon a tree and gaze upon it's majesty

I wonder how it stands up straight, it's trunk is baring such a weight

It was a tiny seed in the earth, then it burst forth to give new birth

How many years it took to grow, to this height I do not know

Proudly it stands all dressed in green, waving it's hands in the breeze it wants to be seen

Soon the green leaves will turn to brown, to wear on it's head a golden crown

I'm thanking my Lord who created us all, and made all creatures great and small

I can write a poem or three, but only God can make a tree

Mary Fryatt.

Poem used by permission



What Happens After the Shoebox?

Next Comes The Greatest Journey

Around the world, more than 11 million shoebox gifts were delivered by Operation Christmas Child to children in need, but a shoebox is just the beginning!

It also presents an opportunity for local church partners to invite children into a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ through The Greatest Journey — 12 fun and interactive Bible lessons where they get the opportunity to discover who Jesus is and how to begin their own journey of faith.

Each lesson has a theme and includes a Bible story and fun activities for the children to do together as a class. It might include a game, a drama, a song, artwork, or some puzzles. Each week the children also learn a memory verse. At the end of the course they experience a special celebration event and receive a certificate and a Bible with the New Testament and selected Old Testament stories in their own language.

Thank you for helping with The Greatest Journey in 2023 and enabling children to discover the hope of Jesus Christ.

Every £5 you gave will provide a child across the globe with a colourful student book, a certificate, a New Testament in their own language, and a trained teacher who will share the Gospel and guide them through the 12 lessons. A child like Princess ...

A girl named Princess used to worry a lot. The 13-year-old lives in the Philippines with her grandmother, as her parents had to leave their remote village to find work. Money is tight, and sometimes the family have to go without meals. While joining in The Greatest Journey, Princess learned about God's power and love for her and prayed to receive Him as her Lord and Saviour. She no longer worries as much and says, "Now, I am more confident because He is with me."

If you would like to send another child on The Greatest Journey this year, there are still so many children you can bless who are waiting to hear the Good News!

Since 2009, over 40 million children have enrolled in The Greatest Journey in over 100 countries, with over 20 million children coming to faith in Christ. As the boys and girls share their faith with family and friends, communities are transformed, and the influence of a simple shoebox gift multiplies.

"By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." **John 13:35 (NIVUK)**

Bible verse quoted 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.

But... Where did my shoebox go?

I packed an 'online' shoebox last year and so consequently I received the following message from Samaritan's Purse by e-mail, which they have said I can share with you.

Thank you for packing shoebox gifts online in 2023! It's time to discover where your gifts were sent... **Romania**

Boxes from the IoW were sent to Armenia, Serbia and the rest of the Balkans

You are part of a global family that sent 11,330,126 shoebox gifts this season - including 237,735 from the UK!

Thank you for your amazing partnership. Each shoebox gift brings so much joy, shows a child they are loved, and gives them an opportunity to hear the Gospel.

Text & image used by permission of Samaritan's Purse





on our Christian Brothers and Sisters being persecuted for their faith

Pastor kidnapped and his children killed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo as attacks increase

A church leader and his wife have been abducted by members of the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) during a worship service; during the attack, their two children were killed. **Please pray** for our church family in DRC, and for the safe return of all who've been taken.

Christians in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) are calling for 'fervent prayer' after an attack on a church saw the pastor and his wife abducted and their children killed.

On 30 January, the lead pastor of the Eglise Message du Temps Church, his wife and an unconfirmed number of Christians were abducted in Bayeti, Ituri Province, in the north east of DRC. During the attack, which took place in the middle of a worship service, five others were killed – including the pastor's two children.

This latest tragedy is part of a growing trend in DRC which is seeing more frequent attacks on Christian communities by the Islamic extremist group ADF.

Christians are unsafe at work and church

Between 28th - 30th January, the ADF killed at least 12 Christians in a series of attacks on the Mangadola, Makodu, Mangazi and Matadi villages. The militants, armed with guns and machetes, killed Christians while they were working on their farms. For many, farming is their main source of income.

"Christians cannot go to their farms anymore. We are now landlocked in Oicha; the cost of living is very, very expensive, God

help us," lamented Pastor Paluku, a pastor and teacher at the Oicha Bible Institute.

"This umpteenth attack on the village of Bayeti has led to the closure of the church," says Jean-Paul, a Christian and member of the local civil society. "Most of the population had fled for Oicha, which was deemed safe. Now the situation has worsened. The young people from Oicha went to these villages on 31st January 2024 to collect the bodies and put them in the mortuary of the Oicha General Hospital.

ADF attacks have been recorded spanning from 8th January 2024 onwards, with 26 people known to have been killed and more than 30 people abducted. In some cases, the ADF even attacked communities in mourning. Some Christians, no longer feeling safe at home, are resorting to sleeping in open spaces with almost no protection.

"Scale of attacks is alarming"

"This latest incident is just another example of the ongoing violence against the church in north east DRC," says Jo Newhouse, an Open Doors spokesperson for the sub-Saharan region. "The DRC has nearly seven million people who are displaced, with around five million concentrated in the eastern part of the country, according to the UN. The continued weak rule of law has enabled violence, including abductions, detentions, and murders to continue with impunity. The scale of attacks is alarming: Christian villages have been burned down; pastors, priests, and lay Christians are abducted almost every week, and untold suffering has been inflicted on Christian communities by the ADF and other armed factions."

In ADF-controlled areas, expression of Christian faith is dangerous. Members of the group harass, abduct, and kill believers wearing Christian symbols or those meeting for fellowship. Children are abducted from school, forced to convert to Islam and married off to members of the ADF.

Christians ask for resilience

"We call on the worldwide body of Christ to commit the church in eastern DRC to fervent prayer," Jo continues. "Open Doors continues to provide practical and spiritual support to affected

Christians and churches and to advocate for them. We urge the government to fulfil its international obligation and its duty to protect civilians. We also urge the government, its international partners and the global community to acknowledge the scale of the problem and urgently work to address root causes."

"We ask brothers and sisters around the world to pray for the consolation of afflicted families and implore God's mercy for the return of peace to the territory of Beni," asks Pastor Paluku. "Pray for the survival of Christians trapped in the community of Oicha. Pray for the resilience of the Christians of Ngite, Mangodola, Makodo, Mangazi and Matadi."

Please Pray

- For God's comfort for bereaved families and communities, and for the safe return of the pastor, his wife, and other abducted Christians
- For displaced believers in north east DRC, that the Lord will provide for them in abundance and for the host community
- For the resilience of Christians across DRC, and that the Lord will restore peace in these areas so that the church will continue as a beacon of hope.

Source: <u>Open Doors</u> - used by permission

Exploring Church Membership

The session planned for February was postponed due to illness. This will now take place on **Saturday 16th March from 14:00 – 17:00** in the downstairs rooms.

Please speak to Brian if you'd like to come along. We do encourage those who have made this church fellowship their home for a year or more to consider becoming a church member.

If you are committed to following Jesus as your Lord and Saviour and feel this church family is your spiritual home, do consider taking this important step. We need to stand together as we serve the Lord, and our church can't function without committed members. Do come along and find out how you can get more involved.



Saturday 23rd March 15:30 – 17:30

Free fun for all the family

- no unaccompanied children please

Come and explore Easter through a Messy Church experience at Shanklin URC - 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 some delicious food.

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

For more information, please speak to Yvonne Sparks or Brian and Janet Harley – and please let Yvonne know if you can help in any way – even with clearing up!

Pick up an invite to encourage people you know.

Spring Cleaning

- Saturday 9th March 10:00 - 12:00

Please come along to help – there are all kinds of jobs to do to help supplement the regular cleaning.

In recent years we have had a great team working together for a morning sprucing up the whole place. We need to keep facilities looking good! Please prepare to come with steps, cloths and buckets at the ready; the more the merrier... and it can even be fun.



This will end with a soup lunch together... thanks to Julie C for being willing to sort this for us.

Dates For Your Diary



Day	Date	Time	Details
Sun	3 rd Mar		Morning Communion Service Shared Worship at Sandown Baptist Church
Fri	8 th Mar	19:00	Elders Meeting
Sat	9 th Mar	10:00	Spring Clean
Sun	10 th Mar		Ellen speaking – Brian at Ryde Shared Worship at URC
Fri	15 th Mar	19:30	Pray the Wight - Newport Methodist Church
Sat	16 th Mar	14:00	Exploring Church Membership
Sun	17 th Mar	18:30	Shared Worship at Christ Church Sandown
Thu	21 st Mar	19:30	Annual Church Meeting
Fri	22 nd Mar	14:00	Property Team Meeting
Sat	23 rd Mar	15:00	Messy Church
Sun	24 th Mar	10:30	Encounter Café – Palm Sunday
Thu	28 th Mar	19:00	Maundy Supper & Communion at Ryde
Fri	29 th Mar		Good Friday Service Procession of Witness
Sun	31 st Mar	10:30	Sunrise Service and Breakfast (note the clocks change!) Easter All-age communion Informal evening café event
Fri - Sat	19 - 20 Apr		Prayer Sabbath <i>More details to follow</i>

Pic 'n' Play

With Shanklin Town Brass Band

Ever wanted to play a brass instrument or just have a go? Then come along to Rylstone Chalet on

Saturday 16th March 2024

10:00 to 12:00

Well, now is your chance, regardless of age or ability, to pick an instrument and take it home. Receive 4 weeks free tuition with no obligation to join.

Open to people of all ages; parents and grandparents are welcome to learn along side your children.



Rylstone Chalet, Rylstone Gardens, Popham Road, Shanklin PO37 6RG

Connection Quiz Answers

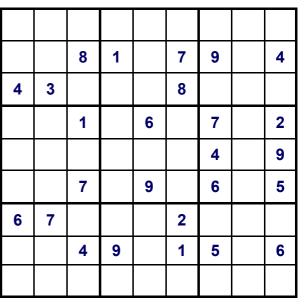
- 1. King's Cross.
- 2. Waterloo.
- 3. Paddington Bear.
- 4. Queen Victoria.
- 5. Connection: they are all **London mainline** railway stations.
- This issue's cover photo is of: Shanklin (taken from Chine Avenue) © C Sparks.

The Puzzle Pages

Sudoku

A numerical placement puzzle!

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



Enjoy!

1	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	
<u> </u>		1	1	1	1	1	4					

Last month's Sudoku - how did you do?

-													
1	7	8	4	9	2	5	6	3	26 1992 BBC programme set in Spain (8)				
4	6	3	8	5	7	9	1	2	29 e.g. Tibia, Fibula, Ulna (4)				
5	9	2	6	1	3	7	8	4	31 Back of a ship or aircraft (3)				
2	1	6	5	4	9	3	7	8	33 Sea, en français (3)				
7	5	9	2	3	8	6	4	1	34 Went to the woods to have a				
8	3	4	1	7	6	2	5	9	picnic (5 4)				
9	2	1	7	6	4	8	3	5	35 There are 5 rivers with this name in the British Isles (3)				
6	8	5	3	2	1	4	9	7	Down				
3	4	7	9	8	5	1	2	6	1 Normandy peninsula (8)				
									2 Male friend, en français (3)				
_		-	nce	by C)ff_r	hac	•h		3 Feline (3)				
				Do					4 Informal word for grandma (3)				
5 Sı	urrey	/ tov	wn n	ear	Rei	gate	(7)		5 Capital of Normandie (5)				
8 CI	harit	y we	e su	рроі	rted	at			6 Fleece with a hood (6)				
				initi		• •			7 First UK safari park (8)				
				Not	•	• •			13 Stringed instrument (6)				
	0			ic cr		```	,		14 ' <i>Moulin -</i> ' Paris (5)				
	11 Workers' organisation (5)								15 A in VAT (5)				
				plac	•				16 Kent channel port (5)				
17 V orig			s ma	agaz	ine,	⊦re	nch	IN	23 Longest European river (5)				
	•	·	ninic	n <i>in</i>	itials	s (3)			24 Anno Domini <i>initials</i> (2)				
	-	-		nan		,(0)		25 Long, thin, flat piece of wood					
					• •	nitial	s (2	(5)					
	20 8 May 1945, - Day <i>initials</i> (2) 21 Ship's official record (3)								27 An arm or a leg, eg (4)				
	•					(-)		28 Point at a target (3)					
22 Adam's partner (3) 24 Help someone to commit a									29 Flying mammal (3)				
crim	•							30 Not the beginning (3)					

Can You Guess The Year?

- Children's ITV is launched.
- The Austin Metro was Britain's best selling car.
- The James Bond film 'Octopussy' is released in the UK
- And UK No. 1s included: Billy Joel with 'Uptown Girl' David Bowie with 'Let's Dance' Spandau Ballet with 'True' Flying Pickets with 'Only You'

Answer next issue

This Issue's 'Pot Luck' Quiz Questions

- 1. Who was the first Briton to win the F1 Driver's Championship?
- 2. When was the National Trust founded?
- 3. What's the capital of the Isle of Man?
- 4. Who was King George VI's wife?
- 5. What was the French currency before the Euro?
- 6. Who founded the 'Abbaye aux Dames' in Caen?
- 7. Who wrote 'A Tale of Two Cities'?
- 8. What is Postman Pat's surname?
- 9. On the periodic table, which element is Rf?
- 10.Who designed the Viaduc de Millau (it's in Creissels, France)?

Answers next issue

Please note that the <u>deadline</u> for contributions for the next magazine is:

Sunday 24th March

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

surc.thelink@btinternet.com

Last Issue's Solutions

- Guess the year: it was 1968
- Last issue's crossword ullet

F	Ε	В	R	U	Α	R	Y			S		Q	
R		Α			R			С	Α	С	T	U	S
Α	R	G	Ε	N	T	Т	N	Α		0		Т	Т
Ν		G			Α			E	A	R	N	Ε	R
С		Y	U	R	T		S	N		P		T	Α
Ε	G		Р		Т		Т			Т	S		S
	A			W	Α	T	Ε	R	L	0	0		В
Α	В	В	Α		С		R			N	Α	T	0
	R		В	A	K	Ε	R				R		U
Р	Т		В			۷	A	L	۷	Ε	S		R
	E		E			E		A		Α			G
Р	L	A	Y	Р	Ε	N		Р	A	R	Т	S	

Last Issue's 'Pot Luck' Quiz Answers

- 1. Damon Hill
- 2. European Currency Unit
- 3. 4 March 1824
- 4. Douglas
- 5. Mary of Teck
- 6. William I

- 7. H G Wells
- 8. René Goscinny (writer) & Albert Uderzo (illustrator)
- 9. Iron
- 10. Roy Chadwick

		Sunday Service							
<u>Morning</u>	10:30	Morning Worship in church Broadcast live on YouTube							
	→ Hol	y Communion on 1 st Sunday of each month							
	→ All	Age 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 Broadcast live on YouTube							
	19:30	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·							
Wednesday	11:00	Living Well Together (aka 'The Well')							
Friday	10:00	CatURpillars							
Saturday	10:30	Coffee Morning on Zoom – a chance to catch up and have a chat							
Details of an	y other	services/activities that we hold will be posted:							
	→ insi	de the church							
	→ on (our Facebook page							
	→ and	I on our website							
<u>Minister</u> : ⊠ ≌ Day off:	 10 Dracaena Gardens, Shanklin PO37 7JQ 01983 862485 								
<u>Secretary</u>		Wightman ightman@aol.com							
Shanklir	Shanklin URC is a member of the Evangelical Alliance								
	D	www.shanklinurc.co.uk egistered Charity No. 1130459							