

The Link



June 2026



Shanklin United Reformed Church www.shanklinurc.co.uk

View From Number 10



The Spirit gives life

We are in that season of the Christian year when we tend to focus on the person and work of the Holy Spirit, coming on the back of our Pentecost celebrations.

It is good to give attention to this third person of the Holy Trinity who sadly gets overlooked by large parts of the church. Jesus spoke to his disciples about another counsellor or advocate who would come to be with them in future, implying someone who would come alongside them, just as he had been. In fact, it's even better - he speaks of the Spirit of truth being in them (John 14:17).



The picture in Acts 2 is of the Spirit coming upon them in power. This helps bring to light a mysterious truth that there is both an outward work of the Spirit, equipping us for ministry with gifts and confidence, and an inward one where he is at work shaping our character and guiding us along like an onboard Satnav.

Everyone who believes in Jesus has the Spirit in them – our new life in him results from being born of the Spirit – see John 3. But we can either welcome this wonderful counsellor into every area of our lives and learn to depend on him day by day, or we can almost ignore his presence and just press on with life in our own way.

Paul urges us to “*eagerly desire the gifts of the Spirit, especially prophecy*” while importantly following the way of love (1 Corinthians 14:1). It is good for us to be seeking a greater experience of his presence and power and to be expectant that he will answer our prayers.

The church today needs to be walking in the way and in the power of the Spirit if we are to reach our generation with the Good News of Jesus. We can't achieve it without his help. Power was given at Pentecost in order that those first disciples might be witnesses to Jesus (Acts 1:8). They were anointed for action!

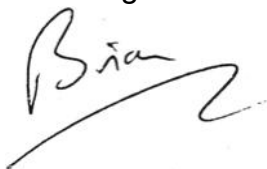
The Spirit is a bit of a slippery fish (not a Biblical image!) - we can

never quite pin him down with neat definitions. Various pictures are used in scripture to try and describe him and the way we encounter him – wind, fire, oil, dove, water. Jesus stressed that we can see the effects of the Spirit's work but never quite grasp where he's come from and where he's going - like with the wind (John 3:8).

Let's not try to control the Spirit but joyfully receive him and lay down our lives, allowing him to take hold of us and use us in the work of the kingdom. May we as a church be infused with his dynamic life and allow him to transform our worshipping community into a true temple of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 3:16). May he shape our life together and create something beautiful among us where the love of Jesus radiates out to the lost and broken world around.

Do join me on the adventure of a lifetime...

With all good wishes ,



Come and worship...

We had a wonderful hour of praise and prayer as part of our Sabbath of Prayer in April and will have another at the end of May. This month, we'll gather again on the weekend when we have Encounter Café when there is less sung worship on the Sunday.

Please join us for a free and open time of praise and worship on:

Friday 26th June at 19:00

Let's all go deeper with God and get closer to Jesus.



Prayer



Prayer Walking – our annual summer prayers around the town will be on Saturday 20th June...

Meet at 10:00 for coffee/tea and preparation, and we'll head out around 10:30 to pray around the community. Some may choose to stay at the church and pray from there.

Please pick up a leaflet about praying for Shanklin with ideas for topics when you are out and about at other times.

Monday Prayer at 13:00 – a weekly meeting in church. This is especially to pray about our priorities for us as God's people going forward and seeking kingdom growth.

Tuesday Prayer at 19:30 - a weekly meeting via Zoom using the same account as for other activities and groups:

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

[pwd=ZTIXZzBLWnkrWTNBY2JBK1o0K2ZXdz09](https://us04web.zoom.us/j/3242665584?pwd=ZTIXZzBLWnkrWTNBY2JBK1o0K2ZXdz09) or use the Zoom app and click on 'Join a meeting'. The Meeting ID you will need is 324 266 5584, and the Password is: 936536.

Text Prayer Network - If you have an urgent and important issue that needs immediate cover, please text Lou on **07514 766798** (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.

Pray for The Bay Grace Mckenzie from Christ Church hosts this gathering, normally on the first Thursday of each month, at her home in Lake at 14:00. Ask Brian or Lou for details if you are interested in going along.

Next meeting: 4th June

SURC June Prayer Diary

We have again included this month a prayer diary for you to use daily throughout the month, covering a wide range of topics to be prayed for as the Spirit leads you.

Happy praying

Mon 1	Our Prayer meetings in church and on Zoom	Wed 17	CARE
Tue 2	Bible Bite	Thu 18	Church tech team - and for the tech used
Wed 3	The Well - volunteers, regulars and visitors	Fri 19	Churches on the IoW spreading God's Word
Thu 4	Those who aren't well enough to get to church	Sat 20	The Persecuted Church
Fri 5	Those affected by violence and conflicts around the world	Sun 21	Organisations supporting the Persecuted Church
Sat 6	Anniversary of D-Day - give thanks for freedom	Mon 22	Christian youth work in The Bay
Sun 7	Today's Communion service	Tue 23	Local schools and for outreach to them
Mon 8	The Monday prayer meetings in church	Wed 24	IoW Youth for Christ
Tue 9	Shanklin Town Council and Isle of Wight Council	Thu 25	The text prayer network, & for Lou who organises it
Wed 10	UK Government	Fri 26	The Church Property Team and their important work
Thu 11	European Union	Sat 27	Our minister, Brian
Fri 12	United Nations	Sun 28	The NHS; staff, patients and services
Sat 13	World peace	Mon 29	The care homes on the Island; for the staff and residents/patients
Sun 14	Churches in The Bay	Tue 30	Our Church Elders
Mon 15	The Evangelical Alliance		
Tue 16	The Christian Institute		

God With Us: Thy Kingdom Come 2026 Reprise

What a wonderful time many of us have had “up close and personal” with Our Lord during these 11 days, from Ascension Day to Pentecost Sunday. We must keep on praying for our “five” to come to know the saving grace of the Lord Jesus Christ... and so...

Over the coming months, I will summarise some of the content from both the Novena (by Archbishop Sarah Mullally) and the Prayer Journal (by Rev Canon Chris Russell).

I hope that this encourages us all to “keep on keeping on”.

Ascension Day ~ The Spirit of Promise

Acts 1:6-9

⁶ Then they gathered around Him and asked Him, ‘Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?’

⁷ He said to them: ‘It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority.

⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.’

⁹ After He said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid Him from their sight.

Our forebears were granted the power of the Holy Spirit to be Christ’s witnesses to the world. And – therefore – so have we, and if we have been given the power to reach the ends of the earth, we have certainly been given the power to reach Shanklin.

To be a follower of Jesus is to be a witness. We don’t get to choose if we want to be. We all are. The Spirit is given. Not just to give us a bit more pep in being witnesses, but to actually make us witnesses.

Father, help us to recognise the power of the Holy Spirit within us, and to use that power to share the good news. Come, Holy Spirit, and make us effective as witnesses to the people of Shanklin and all those we meet.

Robin

Thank you

Mum would like to thank you for the beautiful flowers from the church and the card - she was really touched and pleased.

She says:

"It was such a joy to see so many names on my card wishing me a Happy 80th Birthday. The flowers lift my spirits they are my favourite colours. It is a milestone and although I am not able to come to the services I enjoy seeing them online when I can, most Sundays and worshipping from my chair. Thank you all "

We appreciate you sharing this.

Much love.

Jenny and Maria

Connection Quiz

1. Which English king signed the Magna Carta at Runnymede in 1215?
2. What London station is the southern terminus of the West Coast Main Line ?
3. Cumberland and Lincolnshire are types of what food item?
4. What novel by James Joyce was published in December 1920?
5. Which English airport has the IATO code of STN?
6. So, what is the **connection** between the answers to questions 1 - 5?
7. And bonus question... the cover photo was taken in Normandie, but do you know where it is? It was just before a D-Day commemoration service was about to take place.



Answers are on [page 39](#)

The Well

a place for

Living Well

Together

Drop in at any point

Wednesdays 11:00 – 12:30

A safe place for friendship, a chat,
support and refreshments



And sausage rolls!



ENCOUNTER

On the last Sunday of each month at 10:30

**A café style meeting place to drop in and enjoy
time together with God**



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

EVERYONE is welcome – why not bring a friend?

**The next café service will be on 28th June – do
please invite friends to join you for this more
informal service**

– café serving from 10.15

Website of the month:

[Open the Book](#)

***An exciting storytelling project where Bible stories are shared
with children in a way that is fun, interactive and memorable***



FUNDRAISING IN SUPPORT OF HELP *for* BBQ HEROES

We are holding another BBQ on the date below. Please come and support our armed forces and a local charity, thank you.

This year, we will again be additionally supporting a local Isle of Wight Charity - Ability Dogs 4 Young People IoW

When: 22nd August 2026

Time 15:30 - 19:00 (Food from 16:00)

Venue: 93 Lushington Hill, Wootton Bridge, PO33 4NR
(next to Wootton Bridge Car Boot Field)

Huge variety of homemade cakes for sale, crafts for sale, children's lucky dip, sweets stall, guess the weight of the cake, tombola

RSVP (for catering): Miriam or Malc: 07891 935221 or 883811

A suggested price list will be available for food.

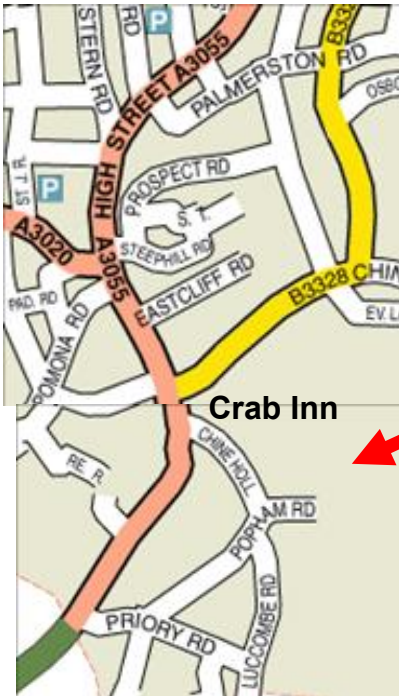
All proceeds go directly to the above charities



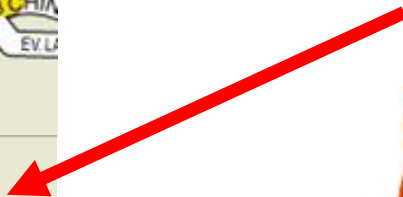
CHRISTIANS WORKING TOGETHER IN THE BAY

warmly invite you to join us for

Worship in the Open Air



**Each Sunday 19:00
at Rylstone Gardens**
(turn left just past the Old Village)



**An informal service for everyone led
from the bandstand by local Churches**

From 31st May until 30th August

More fruit from our Sabbath of Prayer in April...

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that works within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations for ever and ever! Amen. Ephesians 3:20



Leading your Church
into Growth

This was the verse that jumped out at me as I was reading my Bible one morning. The church had been praying for growth, and ideas had been discussed as to how we could make this happen so this verse was very relevant. Being one who likes to dabble with a paint brush, I began to see a picture forming in my mind of the generations who have gone before and those of the present and the future who will form the church of tomorrow.



I am very blessed to have had a Christian upbringing with grandparents and a godly mother who faithfully prayed for us children and who were thrilled when at eight years old I came home from Sunday School and told them that I had “given my heart to Jesus.” He has remained faithful all these years and I am so thankful for all those prayers. I believe it is so important to pray for our children, grandchildren and families. Sometimes we have to be patient and wait for God’s timing (I am still waiting for some) but I am sure that he will answer those prayers, because he has promised that he will.

This is a new type of art for me; I usually do landscapes or portraits of my grandchildren so I wasn’t sure how it was going to take shape but I found as I went on God was in control of every little detail. Everything I needed was there including the wood for the cross. I found in my art box lots of small pieces of wood which came along with my canvases, all cut to size and shape, and they fitted together perfectly! I had plenty of fabric scraps to clothe some of the people, buttons and beads etc. When I had finished, I thought I could do with a frame. Frames that fit are hard to come by, but guess what? In my shed I knew I had some old frames that someone had given me but didn’t hold out much hope. Oh, ye of little faith! It was a perfect fit! I

couldn't help thanking God because I knew then that he really did want me to bring a message through this picture for the church.

That wasn't all, the next Sunday when our dear friends, Mike and Jane led the service, Mike ended with a blessing and quoted this same text. How amazing was that; I could have jumped for joy! Another confirmation that this, very small thing, was his will.

I hope and pray that it will be as much of a blessing to someone as it has been for me doing it.

With love to you all,

Sheila Rayner



News Update

The Island CAP project, which we are partnering in with four other churches, is going well and the team is now expanding. Two new volunteers are embarking on training this month.

Val Taylor from Ryde Elim joins us as a Debt Coach to work alongside Linda, and Rhoda MacLeod from Kerith Church will become the Service Team Leader, helping coordinate the whole thing. This is a wonderful answer to prayer after a period of waiting and searching for the right people to emerge!

Laptops and mobiles have been purchased for each of them but the account remains in a reasonably healthy position. We plan to let things settle down before we return to consider how best to proceed with charitable status and perhaps adding a sixth partner church.

Food and Fellowship coming up:

Some great opportunities to build up our common life and to invite friends to get to know us as a faith community:

Men's Breakfast

at Viv's Cooking in Sandown High Street:

Saturday 6th June at 09:00

See invitation cards and sign-up sheet.

Jesus once said to his friends – *“Come and have breakfast”*



“It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery”
(Galatians 5:1)

Choices (Part 4 of 4)

In this final part of our series on “Choices”, Neil addressed the crucial fact that we are free to choose. As I mentioned last time, this means that we have the spiritual liberty, enabled by grace, to choose righteousness over sin and follow God, rather than being enslaved to selfish desires.

Free To Choose

The Spirit-filled walk is neither characterised by license nor legalism, but liberty.

Paul stated that we are:

“He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant – not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life” and ***“Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.”*** (2 Corinthians 3:6,17)

I believe that our freedom in Christ is one of the most precious commodities we have received from our spiritual union with God. Because the Spirit of the Lord is in you, you are free to choose to live a responsible and moral life. You are no longer compelled to walk according to the flesh as you were before conversion. And now you are not even compelled to walk according to the Spirit. You are free to choose to walk according to the Spirit or to walk according to the flesh.

Walking according to the Spirit implies two things:

First, it's not passive. We're talking about walking in the Spirit, not sitting in the Spirit. One of the most dangerous and harmful detriments to your spiritual growth is passivity - putting your mind in neutral and coasting. The Christian classic “War on the Saints”, by

Jessie Penn-Lewis, was written to combat such passive thinking. Sitting back and waiting for God to do everything is not God's way to spiritual maturity.

Second, we're talking about walking in the Spirit, not running in the Spirit. The Spirit-filled life is not achieved through endless, exhausting activity. We mistakenly think that the harder we work for God, the more spiritual we will become. That's a subtle lie from the enemy. Satan knows that he may not be able to stop you from serving God by making you immoral, but he can probably impede your service by simply making you busy. Our service for God can become the greatest detriment to our devotion to God.

Lord, I desire to walk according to the Spirit today at Your pace, not sitting passively through inactivity or running myself ragged by becoming too busy.

Neil Anderson

Freedom in Christ Ministries

Used by permission

Neil's words put in mind of some famous words of Jesus, recorded in John 8:31-36:

“To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, ‘If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.’

They answered him, ‘We are Abraham’s descendants and have never been slaves of anyone. How can you say that we shall be set free?’ Jesus replied, ‘Very truly I tell you, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it for ever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.’ ”

Thank You Jesus, that You have set us free by Your self-sacrifice on the cross of Calvary. By Your Spirit, descend on us afresh today and help us to remain free and active in Your service.

Robin

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Refining faith amid conflict in Iraq

Lilyan is a Christian mother living in Iraq whose life has been shaped by the past and present conflicts many across the region have endured. Despite the fear of what else may come, she holds on to her hope in Jesus.

Conflict has left a long shadow over the life of Lilyan, a Christian mother living in Iraq. Unrest and persecution are obstacles she faces every day. And the shadow was first cast when her husband was killed in a terrorist attack.

It was 2 May 2010, and Lilyan's husband was on his way to work. It was like any other day – until he found a bomb on a bus, planted to take the lives of Christian students travelling to university in Mosul. Lilyan's husband immediately warned the buses and saved numerous lives – giving his own in the process.

At the time, Lilyan was pregnant. Only after the attack did she give birth to a baby girl whom she named Rafif. The little girl would grow up never knowing her father.

Sixteen years later, Lilyan remembers the day with painful freshness. But she hasn't given up her faith – rather, her faith is what keeps her going.

Starting from scratch

That fateful day in 2010 was only the beginning of the effects of terrorist unrest in Lilyan's life. She and her daughter lived in Qaraqosh until so-called Islamic State invaded the Nineveh Plain in 2014, forcing her family and many others to flee for safety.

“Out of the blue we were forced to leave our home, our possessions and our old lives behind,” Lilyan remembers. “It was a very difficult time. We had to start our lives over from scratch.”

They fled to Erbil in the Kurdistan region of Iraq, which posed more challenges. Where they had once lived, they spoke Arabic – in Erbil, people largely speak Kurdish. “The country was the same, but the lifestyle and the language were different from what we were used to,” Lilyan says.

Pressed down

Lilyan didn't just struggle to fit in, though. She shares how she also

faces discrimination for her faith – a problem faced by many Christians in Iraq. “It happens everywhere and every day, in schools, at work. In my line of work as a teacher, they deal with Christians differently – the majority-religion students are preferred,” she explains. “It is all about connections and because non-Christians have many connections, they are preferred for jobs and promotions, even inside schools. We are ignored.

“Even when you go to do your paperwork with the authorities, they try to delay it. It could sometimes be routine paperwork, but sometimes you notice that others’ paperwork is more quickly completed than ours as Christians.”

Unfortunately, the persecution is extended to students, too. “They always try to bring my 16-year-old daughter down so she is not on top, although her grades are excellent,” explains Lilyan.

There is another complication for Christian students. “In the Arabic language, most questions and almost all the material contain Quran verses, especially grammar. Even when writing a composition, if you put Quran verses in it, it will make your grade higher.”

Such challenges shape everyday life for some believers in Iraq, and that was before war returned to the region.

“Will history repeat itself?”

In recent months, Erbil has suffered over 800 attacks, being caught in the crossfire between the US, Israel and Iran. Lilyan remembers each one with clarity.

“It was chaos. Everyone was worried, saying ‘Will history repeat itself? Will we relive what we lived during the ‘80s or after 2014 and the displacement?’ It was like another slap in our faces,” she says. “Everyone started thinking about what to save, what to buy, what the future will look like, what will become of our kids, our family.

“Especially with those attacks, we were really scared because the American embassy is near to us, so we were always worried and wondering if the next hit will be on our house,” Lilyan recalls. “The house was shaking every time, and it was very scary.”

Though Rafif had almost no memory of previous upheaval as Lilyan did, she was still impacted by it. “She kept asking, ‘Will I finish my class this year? Will we continue studying?’” says Lilyan. “Most of

her generation did not go through these wars and attacks, so this was all new and strange for her.”

In such times of uncertainty, Lilyan knew they had to hold on to hope in the gospel. “I tried my best to encourage Rafif through prayer and worship. With faith we can get through anything – without our faith we would not have been where we are now,” she declares. “God saved us from all the challenges we went through. Prayer is our strongest weapon, and I could help her conquer her fear through prayer.”

Looking to the future

Lilyan’s concerns are not primarily for her own future but for Rafif’s. “My hope for her is like any Iraqi mother: to have peace in the country, and of course I want her to have a bright and great future in a place she deserves, because she puts a lot of effort into studying.”

But with her hope comes persistent worries. Rafif will go to university in Mosul in two years’ time, which will involve travel each day – the same journey upon which her father was killed. “I am very worried about this,” Lilyan says. “I don’t know how I will be able to let her go there alone every day. If I get the chance, I will leave the country because I don’t want Rafif to go through what I went through.”

These concerns aren’t unique to this family, given the instability the region faces. But what sets them apart from those around them is their enduring faith. “Faith and prayer will help you get through everything. When you have faith in God, He will put His peace in you.”

Please continue to stand with our brothers and sisters in Iraq and across the Middle East holding on to faith, despite the fears they face. Thank you.

Please Pray

Lilyan asks, “Pray that this hardship passes and pray for our country to be safe and have peace.”

That greater security and calm will settle in Iraq and across the Middle East

For the strengthening and protection of God’s people in Iraq, that they would know that ‘the joy of the Lord is [their] strength’. (Nehemiah 8:10)

Source: [Open Doors](#)

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.

A great resource for people to read - and then share with others!!



This month's edition (available to read online at www.goodnews-paper.org.uk/viewlatesteditionpage.htm) has several great articles, including the headline article 'Judge and Criminal - Ex-criminal now works with judge who jailed him - after God changed him'.

Other contributions include:

- **Raye of Hope** - The hope of Jesus shines through the dark of Raye's latest album
- **Russians and Ukrainians Unite** - Christ brings enemies together to help victims of war
- **Pull-Out World Cup Wallchart** - Full match schedule to fill in the scores as you watch
- **England Wingers** - The testimonies of Bukayo Saka and Eberechi Eze
- **Scotland Star** - The faith of Scotland's Ben Gannon-Doak
- **Ashley Banjo** - Diversity dance troupe leader is a true pilgrim
- **Moon Mission Man** - Pilot of rocket to the moon took off with prayer.

Good News... for a change

Shanklin Town Brass Band and Mother & Baby Unit Concert

Well, let us say what a gloriously amazing, fun and entertaining evening that the Shanklin Town Brass Band orchestrated and produced for the third year running, at Shanklin URC to raise much needed funds for the YMCA Young Mother & Baby Unit in Shanklin.

Once again we had a full house! It was such an inspirational evening of well known melodies from a selection of different movies from the past and a bit of rock and lots of light-hearted fun and jokes. A very big Thank You to Yvonne for putting all the catering together for us all to enjoy during the interval.

Once again the generous giving and amount of funds raised (£571.25) from the church members, the public and all who attended was phenomenal and greatly appreciated by the unit. Thank you so very much to you all – to each and everyone of you, for attending and supporting this worthy cause.

Special thanks to Brian, our minister, for the use of the church and it's facilities and for supporting and hosting the event, and for being the MC for the evening.

Thank you to Jo McGrath for standing up and giving us a brief overview on what the Mother & Baby Unit is all about. Most of all, a very big thank you to Ashley Wicks, the Producer and Conductor of the Shanklin Town Brass Band, and a very special Thank You to each and every individual musician in the STBB for their contribution to the event.

At this point, we reach out to everybody because we are always looking for all the day to day Mother & Baby consumables which are always needed on a daily basis for the parent and child. These items can be handed in at the Church on a Sunday morning or on a Wednesday at The Well between 11:00 and 12:30, or contact Ann on 07481 596958 to arrange collection.

If we may ask, we are looking for two very important items for the education and cultural side of the Unit as we desperately need a keyboard and an electric guitar with cables and small portable amps please. If anyone has any of these they can donate or perhaps know where they can be collected please contact Ann on 07481 596958 or Rod on 07394 044614

In closing, we would like to bring your attention to some important information regarding the STBB - the brass band itself is a self funded, registered charitable organisation, so whenever and wherever you can, when they are playing, please come along and support them on Sunday afternoons in the summer at Rylstone Gardens and also at any other IoW events. Each instrument is bought by the band from the funds they raise and obviously these are very expensive. Something else that may interest you - they have a very successful and special training programme for people of all ages, young and old. The band supplies the instruments, the music, the uniforms and the training lessons free of charge. Once a member, the annual subscription is £150 per year, or £75 for concessions, but can be paid annually monthly or even weekly. Anybody who is interested in joining this unique and special band on the Isle of Wight, or for further information, please contact Yvonne on 07725 845956 or Christopher on 07725 845955.

Should you wish to make a donation to the band, whatever the amount, please see Christopher (Link editor and STBB player) or put a suitably marked envelope in the green bucket in church - Gift Aid forms are available, see Christopher.

Once again in closing, a very big thank you to all those who supported the event and to Jo and Tess and all the ladies at the Mother and Baby Unit.

Blessings to All

Rod and Ann.



Open The Book to Genesis

Although Esau and Jacob were twins, they didn't look anything alike. Esau was hairy whilst Jacob was smooth. Esau was born first and would inherit everything.



Esau came back from hunting absolutely starving. When he demanded food, Jacob only gave it on condition that Esau gave him the rights of the firstborn.



Mother overheard Isaac sending Esau to hunt. She put Esau's smelly clothes on Jacob plus goatskins on his arms and neck.



Blind Isaac recognised Jacob's voice but the smell and feel convinced him it was Esau. Isaac gave his son his blessing.



Both Isaac and Esau had been tricked.



Esau swore he would kill Jacob, who fled for his life. As Jacob ran, he dreamed of a ladder of angels with God at the top. God promised to keep Jacob safe and take him home one day.





Jacob set up an altar, anointed it and promised to serve God. When he arrived at his Uncle Laban's, Jacob removed the stone from

the top of the well, to help beautiful Rachel water the sheep. She took Jacob to her father's house.



Laban was happy for Jacob to marry Rachel, as long as Jacob worked for seven years.



Seven years flew past because Jacob loved Rachel. The wedding was beautiful. But



when the veil was removed, it was Leah – Rachel's elder sister. Jacob confronted his father-in-law. Laban said: "It's the custom to marry the elder before the younger. You can marry Rachel as well..."



as long as you work for me for another 7 years!" The trickster had been tricked! There was no way out. Jacob carried on working for no wages.





At last, Jacob said he wanted to go home. Laban offered him anything as long as Jacob stayed.



Jacob asked for all the lambs born with spots or stripes. Laban agreed, but, before the sheep mated, he took all except the plain sheep and moved them three days' journey away from the rest of the flock. But, God was with Jacob.



All the newborn lambs had spots or stripes. Jacob set off home with his possessions, wives & children

Then he heard that Esau was coming to meet him. Jacob was worried. He loaded presents on his camels and sent servants with gifts for Esau. Jacob begged God to forgive him.



All alone in the dark of the night, Jacob wrestled with an unknown figure.



When morning came, the stranger touched Jacob's hip, putting it out of joint. Before he disappeared, the stranger said that, from then on, Jacob would be called Israel, which means:

'You have wrestled with God'.



Jacob/Israel apologised to Esau, who forgave his brother. At last, the former trickster was reconciled with God and man.



Another open house event...

Come and join us

for a

Free Cream Tea

Saturday 27th June

15:30 – 17:00



*It's open house at
Shanklin United Reformed Church*

Bless the Island

Several groups gathered around the Shanklin area to share in the third Island-wide united prayer event on the afternoon of Pentecost Sunday.

It was so encouraging to speak blessings over various areas of Isle of Wight life and to know that this was being done in unison with other groups of believers all over the Island. We look forward to seeing the fruit of our prayers as the year unfolds; may we see many finding fresh hope and purpose and coming to faith in Jesus.

Thanks to everyone who made time to take part in this important united act of ministry – what a glorious afternoon it was!





Isle of Wight Street Pastors

IoW Festival 2026

With only a few weeks to go until the IoW Festival 2026, we are still collecting donations for the work we will be doing over the four days. The festival is already sold out this year so it will be busy.

We now have confirmed over 60 volunteers from the Island and the mainland which is amazing and an answer to prayer.

This is the list of items that we are looking to be donated:

- Individually wrapped sweets and lollipops
- Small bottles of water
- Wipes, tissues, small bottles of hand sanitiser, ice packs, and paper cups
- We are also asking for donations of money towards other kit that the volunteers use.

The opportunity to show the love of Jesus at the festival, where 90,000 people attend each day, is amazing.

We are the only Christian organisation that are allowed to patrol on foot on the whole site, onsite and offsite, as well as having a Safe Space onsite and our Safe Space at Newport Bus Station that will be open (see [page 36](#)).

Our first shifts start at 13:00 and we will go right through to 02:00 (03:00 on Sunday) each day.

We also have a WhatsApp prayer group that will be live throughout the whole weekend, where we post prayer requests for people we meet, incidents we come across or are dealing with, etc. If you would like to join this, please let me know.

I personally would really value your prayers as this is a huge task to organise, whilst continuing to oversee our regular patrols we do and

organising all the other extra summer events we either patrol at or attend, as well as attending various meetings, and I'm currently overseeing the School Pastor initiative as well.

If I'm not at church, then donations can be given to my parents (Miriam and Malc) or just ask Robin and he will let me or my parents know.

Thank You.

Suzanne McCaffery (IoW Street Pastor Co-ordinator)

suzanne@iowstreetpastors.org.uk

07511 163632

Visit of Logos Hope

Operation Mobilisation's larger ship, Logos Hope will be in London from 19th June - 5th July and open to the public.

An onboard visit costs just £1.00 and if

you want a tour of the ship, that will cost just an extra £5.00, which is bookable in advance online. There is a large bookshop onboard and refreshments are available in the cafe where you can meet and chat with some of the international crew. It will be berthed at the Excel Centre Docklands.

I will be going on Saturday 4th July for the day. If anyone would like to join me, let me know. Also, if you want more details, please ask me or go online at Logos Hope UK Tour, www.uk.om.org/logos-hope-uk-tour-2026.

The ship will be visiting Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Cardiff, Belfast and Liverpool after London.

Janice Morgan



To Africa, with hope

19th May 2026

At the end of a visit to the UK in May, the Rev Lydia Neshangwe, President of the All Africa Conference of Churches, said she would return home with, “a sense of hope,” because of the work being done by the United Reformed Church (URC) in Britain, nationally and locally.

Lydia Neshangwe met representatives of URC synods at the Offices of General Assembly in London, to hear about the development of partnerships with synods and local communities in Africa.

She said she had seen many British flags in London and the south of England and been made aware of their links with nationalist campaigns and protests. But she said: “I want to applaud you for the work you’re doing for justice, with ‘foreigners’, and on migration issues, disregarding hatred and putting out love where there is hatred. When I leave London tomorrow, I’ll leave with a sense of hope, not with disappointment, because of the work you’re doing to build the Kingdom of God.”

At the gathering, hosted by Karen Campbell, the URC’s Head of Global and Intercultural Church, URC representatives shared their experiences of setting up and working to maintain partnerships with synods across Africa.

The Rev Lythan Nevard, Moderator of the URC’s Eastern Synod, said her Synod saw the twinning of individual churches as “a key plank” of their approach, and said, “You get to understand what expressing faith looks like in a different context.” She said the Synod is trying to improve its use of online communications and wanted to encourage an exchange of videos between partners that explore responses to Bible readings out of their different contexts. This idea was well received, though there was also a strong understanding that relationships are best built in person where possible.

Some participants said that getting the balance of a partnership right can be difficult. Because representatives of partner Churches in Africa may encounter difficulties getting visas to enter Britain, exchange visits can be one-sided. Concern was also expressed about the carbon footprint associated with long-distance travel

between continents.

Speaking to these ecological concerns, Lydia agreed that visits should be well-planned and meaningful, limiting use of fuel as much as possible. However, she also reflected on the saying, “Give a man a fish and he’ll eat for a day; but teach a man to fish and he’ll eat for a lifetime”, adding that it is important for people in the West to “come and encounter, so you understand how we fish, and why we fish the way we do”.

She said that only by being present in Africa can British partners really understand why African churches do what they do. Worship with 1,000 people needs to be experienced in person, for example. You also come to understand that services are long not least because many people have walked two hours to get there. They don’t want to worship for only an hour and then go home again; they need time to rest and to share a meal.

Lydia said that, in the past, international church partnerships have often been about giving money, but now “they must be about relationships”. She said Africans may not have much money but they have a sense of community and relationships. Partnerships “can share spiritually”, she said, and shared prayer is powerful regardless of distance.

Lydia Neshangwe is the immediate past Moderator of both the Council for World Mission and the United Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa, and is a serving minister in Mutare, Zimbabwe, with her husband Paul.

Taken from urc.org.uk/to-africa-with-hope/, used with permission.

For more news stories from around the URC, go to urc.org.uk/our-news-stories/latest-news/, where you can also sign up for a monthly e-newsletter. You just simply enter your e-mail address and hit the subscribe button. It’s as easy as that.



FOCUS

on our Christian Brothers and Sisters being persecuted for their faith

A letter to you from North Korea

15 May 2026

A letter from a North Korean Christian has recently been smuggled out of the country – thanking people like you for your prayers and support.

A letter from a North Korean Christian seems like miracle. It is the most dangerous place in the world to be a Christian, where the discovery of your faith will mean either execution or a lifetime in a most unimaginably cruel and brutal prison. Your whole family might be rounded up and given the same punishment, even if they don't know you're a Christian.

And yet, despite the extreme danger, there are tens of thousands of our brothers and sisters who follow Jesus in North Korea. "North Korean Christians are among the most devoted believers you can ever meet," says an Open Doors fieldworker, who works with the North Korean underground church. "They live in circumstances so difficult that we would go mad.

"Yet these Christians, because they have so little, are so eternally grateful to [Open Doors] supporters around the world. They are devoted because you are devoted."

And one of those believers recently wanted to share his or her gratitude. It would be too dangerous to share how the letter was smuggled out of North Korea, and some details have been edited to avoid anything that could identify this Christian. As you read it, may it help you remember that we are part of a worldwide body of Christ – and that the parts of the body that are suffering the most are our dear family members.

The letter from a North Korean Christian

Dear brothers and sisters,

Have you been at peace in the Lord?

We have been using your support for our ministry. Many believers are in great need, and we help those who are in the most need.

We, the North Korean Christians, are united in the same faith as you and devoted to a life centred on the Lord. We strive to prepare and equip the next generation to follow the Word's guidance and fulfil the Great Commission of our Lord. Under your guidance and support, we grow to be faithful servants of God. We regard this calling as the compass of our lives, and with an unwavering conscience of faith, we are running faithfully with deep devotion to the noble honour and weighty responsibility entrusted to us.

We could not function as the body of Christ without your unwavering support. I'm so proud of the believers I know. They are steadfast and carry out the tasks they are entrusted with. They stand solidly upon the Rock, which is Jesus Christ.

Today, I will end my letter here. Thank you and all the people who work for us.

How you are helping North Korean Christians

Your support makes it possible for us, through our secret networks outside the country, to equip North Korean believers with Christian materials, provide food aid and medicines, operate safe houses for refugees, and create and broadcast Christian radio programmes that are transmitted into North Korea.

The Open Doors fieldworker adds his thanks: "None of this would have been possible without the steadfast prayers and generous support of believers worldwide. They know the verse 'If one part suffers, every part suffers with it' (1 Corinthians 12:26). Not only do they know it, but they also act upon it. So, thank you, on behalf of our entire team, for everything you do."

Please take a moment to pray for your brothers and sisters risking everything to follow Jesus in North Korea, and remember their courage and steadfastness

Please Pray

- For North Korean Christians who live under constant pressure, to know the unconquerable love of the Lord

The Link - June 2026

- Praise the Lord for the impact of your support. Pray that God would continue to use Open Doors fieldworkers to equip and strengthen North Korean Christians
- For the hearts of North Korean leaders, that they will turn to Jesus and stop the persecution of His people

Country Profile

Leader: Kim Jong-un

How many Christians? 400,000 (about 1.5%)

Main threats: Dictatorial paranoia, and Communist and post-Communist oppression

How are Christians persecuted in North Korea?

North Korean Christians must keep their faith an absolute secret – Christians often won't even tell their partners or children about their faith for fear of discovery. One secret believer shared, "I decided to gather all my courage and tell [my wife] my deepest secret. She started to cry, because she had been a secret believer all her life."

Meeting with other Christians is almost impossible, as there is always someone watching. North Korea has a network of secret police, but even your neighbours could report you for suspicious behaviour.

Owning a Bible is also considered a serious crime, and those who have one keep it hidden. A secret believer, explains, "Because of the many sudden and random house searches, we had to hide the Bibles in our home. Each Bible had a paper cover, with images of Kim Il-Sung and Kim Jong-Il, to keep them from raising suspicion."

If a North Korean Christian is discovered, they could be killed instantly. If they are not killed, a Christian will be arrested and imprisoned. Thousands of Christians are being held in North Korea's horrific labour camps where they are forced to carry out hard labour. Many die in these camps.

A Christian's entire family are likely to be arrested along with them, even if they are not Christians.

Many North Koreans make the dangerous and illegal journey over the border into China in search of food, medicines and other supplies to take back to their families. If they are caught on their

return, they may be asked if they have had any contact with Christians. If they have, they will face particularly severe punishment.

If a North Korean has a family background that shows any connection to Christianity, they will be denied membership of the ruling party and given the worst jobs.

Although their faith comes with terrible risks, there are hundreds of thousands of secret believers in North Korea. One North Korean secret believer shares, “Despite these dangers, the underground church in North Korea is alive. It worships not with sound, but with whispered prayers and memorised Scripture. Believers continue to follow Christ with quiet courage, deep faith and a willingness to give everything for the sake of the gospel.”

Why are Christians persecuted in North Korea?

North Korea is ruled by the Kim family who expect to be worshipped and obeyed like gods. A North Korean choosing to believe in any other god is seen as a threat to them.

While there are a few church buildings in the capital Pyongyang that hold services, these are primarily used as propaganda, to try to demonstrate freedom of religion in North Korea to other nations.

In December 2020, ‘anti-reactionary thought laws’ were introduced which made it clear that being a Christian or owning a Bible are seen as criminal acts and will have severe consequences.

How can I help Christians in North Korea?

Please keep praying for your brothers and sisters from North Korea. Your prayers make an enormous difference to those following Jesus no matter the cost. A North Korean escapee, says: “God uses your prayers. There still is a large underground church. Because you pray, many people are miraculously healed, and they experience God’s power.”

Names removed for security reasons.

Copies of the World Watch List are in the lobby, or available online at www.opendoorsuk.org/persecution/

Please pray for all our persecuted brothers and sisters, they do so need your prayers.

Source: [Open Doors](http://www.opendoorsuk.org/) - used by permission



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED



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

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



Registered charity no. 1160400

For Christian carers...

Are you an unpaid carer for a loved one at home or in care? Come and join us to connect with others, share experiences, encourage one another, and pray together.



- **Online Zoom groups:**
Wed 19:15 and Thurs 15:00
- **Weekly Message:**
for encouragement and news sent to your inbox
- **Facebook group**
(private)

CARERS CONNECTED



To find out more:
carers@embracingage.org.uk
07964 895477

www.embracingage.org.uk/for-carers



NEWPORT
BUS
STATION

SAFE
SPACE



A safe place to...



WAIT
FOR FRIENDS



RECEIVE
FIRST AID



GET ADVICE
& SUPPORT



HELP GETTING
HOME



REPORT ASB
OR ANY CONCERNS

Pop in & talk to us!

In partnership with



Rylstone Gardens Concerts - June 2026

Date	Time	Who's Playing
Wed 3 rd	20:00	Sandown & Shanklin Military Band
Thu 4 th	20:00	Vectis Brass Band
Sun 7 th	15:00	Shanklin Town Community & Youth Brass Bands
Mon 8 th	19:45	Cowes Concert Band
Tue 9 th	19:45	Bob Howarth Big Band
Wed 10 th	20:00	Sandown & Shanklin Military Band
Thu 11 th	20:00	Vectis Brass Band
Sun 14 th	15:00	Abbey Brass
Mon 15 th	19:45	Cowes Concert Band
Tue 16 th	20:00	The TuesdayZ
Wed 17 th	20:00	Sandown & Shanklin Military Band
Thu 18 th	20:00	Vectis Brass Band
Sun 21 st	15:00	Martin Hoy
Tue 23 rd	19:45	Bob Howarth Big Band
Wed 24 th	20:00	Sandown & Shanklin Military Band
Thu 25 th	20:00	Vectis Brass Band
Sun 28 th	15:00	Shanklin Town Brass Band
Mon 29 th	19:45	Cowes Concert Band
Tue 30 th	20:00	Solent Swing



Dates For Your Diary

Day	Date	Time	Details
Sun	31 st May	19:00	Open Air Worship at Rylstone Gardens begins for the summer season
Thu	4 th Jun	14:00	Pray for the Bay (see page 4)
Sat	6 th Jun	09:00	Men's Breakfast at Viv's Cooking, Sandown
Sun	7 th Jun	15:00	Shanklin Community & Youth Bands in concert at Rylstone Gardens
Fri	12 th Jun	18:00	Elders' Meeting
Sun	14 th Jun	10:30	Sheilagh speaking – her last assessed service
Sat	20 th Jun	10:00	Prayer Walking in the town (see page 4)
Fri	26 th Jun	19:00	Praise Evening (see page 3)
Sat	27 th Jun	15:30	Cream Tea summer open house event (see page 25)
Sun	28 th Jun	10:30	Encounter Café service
Sat	18 th Jul	15:30	Messy Church
Thu	23rd July	19:30	Church Meeting
Sun	27 th Jul	10:30	Encounter Café service
Sat	22 nd Aug	15:30	Help 4 Heroes BBQ (see page 10)



Summer
Special

Saturday
18th July

15:30 – 17:30

Great family fun and vital story

- no unaccompanied children please

Come and explore 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.

Please let Yvonne know if you can help in any way – even with clearing up!

Connection Quiz Answers

1. John
2. Euston
3. Sausage
4. Ulysses
5. Stansted
6. Connection: If you take the first letter of each word it spells out... **JESUS**.
7. This issue's cover photo is of a memorial to the 3rd British Infantry Division, in Caen, Normandie - next to the castle/ chateau (photo © C P 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.

A fiendish one this month (not impossible).

Enjoy!

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

1		2		3		4		5		6		7	8
			9	10				11			12		
13													
								14					15
			16										
17	18		19							20			
				21				22					
23			24										
					25								
		26											
27							28						

Last month's Sudoku - how did you do?

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

Across

- 1 Parisian iron landmark, 330 metres tall (6 5)
 7 First part of the Bible *initials* (2)
 9 - Cassidy, US singer who is no longer with us (3)
 11 Winnie the Pooh's donkey friend (6)
 13 Kent town on the Medway (9)
 14 Largest internal organ *pl* (6)
 16 He went for a walk in 1912, and was gone some time (5)
 17 @ (2)
 19 Not off (2)
 20 - *soit qui mal y pense*, from British coat of arms (4)
 21 Can this builder fix it? (3)
 23 Normandy city where Joan of Arc died (5)
 25 Musical term, meaning

'slowly' (6)

27 Cake named after a Scottish city (6)

28 Normandy birthplace of William I (7)

Down

1 African country, No. 5 on Open Doors' World Watch List (7)

2 Country where 1 across and 28 across are (6)

3 Premier league club 'The Toffees' (7)

4 Something typical, customary, or old-fashioned (11)

5 Used to help things move (6)

6 Narrow beam of light (3)

8 Worn with a shirt; collar & - (3)

10 6 in Roman numerals (2)

12 King of the fairies (6)

15 A Triumph car, or a WW2 RAF aeroplane, or a beer (8)

18 One plus one (3)

19 Natural mineral deposit, e.g. iron (3)

22 One visited Mary, mother of Jesus (5)

23 Tall, stiff, hollow-stemmed grass found in wet areas (4)

24 Biscuit that shares its name with a southern French city (4)

26 Not out (2)

Can You Guess The Year?

- Musical film Summer Holiday premieres in London
- Labour Party elects Harold Wilson as its new leader
- Everton win the Football League First Division
- Vauxhall launches the Viva, a family saloon car.
- And UK No. 1s include:
 - The Shadows with 'Dance On'
 - Frank Ifield with 'Wayward Wind'
 - The Beatles with 'From Me to You'
 - Elvis Presley with 'Devil in Disguise'
 - Gerry and the Pacemakers with 'You'll Never Walk Alone'

Answer next issue

This Issue's General Knowledge Questions

1. When, in WW2, was D-Day?
2. What was the code name for Allied invasion of Normandy?
3. What was ABBA's first Eurovision song?
4. What is the capital of Estonia?
5. When did the UK currency go decimal?
6. In which TV programme would you find Orinoco and Tomsk?
7. In computer terms, what does ROM stand for?
8. What is the official National Anthem of Wales?
9. What is the largest town in Orkney?
10. In what year was the RNLI founded?

Answers next issue

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

Sunday 21st June

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 **1998**

- Last issue's crossword ↓

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

Last Issue's General Knowledge Quiz Answers

- | | |
|--|-------------------------|
| 1. 30 th June 1894 | 6. True |
| 2. Bolton Wanderers (beating West Ham 1-0) | 7. Random Access Memory |
| 3. 1991 | 8. There isn't one |
| 4. Zagreb | 9. The castle |
| 5. Northern Ireland | 10. Chad |

Sunday Service

<u>Morning</u>	10:30 Morning Worship in church <i>Broadcast live on YouTube</i>
	➔ Holy Communion on 1 st Sunday of each month
	➔ All Age service on last Sunday of each month
<u>Evening</u>	19:00 Open Air Worship in Rylstone Gardens <i>Shared with other churches in The Bay</i>

Weekday Activities

Monday	13:00	Prayer Meeting in church (see page 4)
Tuesday	14:00	Bible Bite ministry in church (Refreshments from 13:30) <i>Broadcast live on YouTube</i>
	19:30	Prayer Meeting on Zoom (see page 4)
Wednesday	11:00	The Well <i>safe space</i>
Friday	10:00	CatURpillars Toddler Group (<i>term time</i>)

Details of any other services/activities that we hold will be posted:

- ➔ [inside the church](#)
- ➔ [on our Facebook page](#)
- ➔ [and on our website](#)

Minister: Rev Brian Harley



10 Dracaena Gardens, Shanklin PO37 7JQ



01983 862485



brianharley58@gmail.com

Day off: Monday

Secretary: Robin Wightman



robinwightman@aol.com

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

www.shanklinurc.co.uk

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