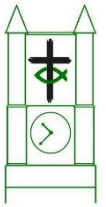


The Link



Shanklin United Reformed Church



View From Number 10



Part of a glorious global family

I'm penning a few thoughts as I come to the end of the 3-day Board meeting of PRMI in North Carolina. As we give oversight to a ministry which spans several continents (and islands!), I'm again revelling in the reality that we are part of a worldwide body of believers who are knit together as one family through our faith in Jesus Christ. It has been exciting to meet a few wonderful new people who have joined the team and to see how this particular stream is contributing to the great river of God bringing the gospel to the nations in the power of the Holy Spirit.

There are new initiatives in places as diverse as Uganda and Bethlehem as we find ourselves connecting with like-minded believers hungry to grow in spiritual giftings and confidence to share the good news of Jesus in their unique context.

As we launch into a new term of activity in Shanklin, we need to be reminded that we are just one small outcrop of God's great church. Yet who we are, and what we do, are important to the Lord and to the advancement of his Kingdom. Our local mission field has its own peculiarities and challenges, and we must not simply try to replicate what works for others in very different places, even on the Island. Yes, Alpha is a global tool that we are about to use once again, but we must ensure that we use it in a way that best fits our setting. Please be praying that our invitations reach those that are ripe and ready to explore the Christian faith and that we get the plans right.

Let's be prayerful about all that we seek to do in the Lord's name. We must take time to listen carefully for his direction and be obedient to his call. Let's pray for a strong sense of unity as we move forward together, and for protection from the enemy who will do all he can to thwart God's purposes for his people here in Shanklin.

I'm so very grateful for the wonderful community of believers that the Lord is bringing together in our church family. May we continue to be

The Link – September 2026

an open and welcoming group that fosters radical discipleship and kingdom living and encourages others around to find new life in Jesus. Let's always remember that we are just one part of a very big picture that embraces a diverse multinational family of believers.

Grace and peace,

Brian

The PRMI Board in full flow in the Prayer House at The Community of the Cross in Black Mountain, North Carolina. Three days of meetings to oversee the work of ministry.

Brian has one more year to serve on the team.



Praying for the leadership team...



Prayer



Prayer - always at the heart of our life

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 - Continues each week via Zoom using the same account as for other activities and groups:

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/3242665584?pwd=ZTlXZzBLWnkrWTNB.Y2JBK1o0K2ZXdz09> 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 over 30 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 – these monthly meetings are on hold at the moment.

Next Prayer Sabbath – coming up on 23-24 October

The provisional plan is to have another praise evening on the Friday and then two prayer slots on the Saturday.

Please save the dates and look out for details...

SURC September Prayer Diary

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

Tue 1	Teachers & children returning to school	Wed 16	Church tech team - and for the tech used
Wed 2	The Well - volunteers, regulars and visitors	Thu 17	The Island's emergency services
Thu 3	The prayer life of the church	Fri 18	Churches on the IoW spreading God's Word
Fri 4	Those affected by violence and conflicts around the world	Sat 19	The Persecuted Church and the organisations supporting it
Sat 5	Those who aren't well enough to get to church	Sun 20	The Alpha Course starting today
Sun 6	The Alpha Course taster session being run today	Mon 21	People suffering from dementia & their families
Mon 7	Rise & Shine initiative	Tue 22	Churches on the IoW
Tue 8	Those affected by natural disasters	Wed 23	Vulnerable children & adults and their carers
Wed 9	Shanklin Town Council and Isle of Wight Council	Thu 24	Text prayer network, & Lou who organises it
Thu 10	UK Government	Fri 25	Safety of children
Fri 11	European Union	Sat 26	Care homes on the IoW
Sat 12	United Nations	Sun 27	Our minister, Brian
Sun 13	World peace	Mon 28	IoW Youth for Christ
Mon 14	Home groups	Tue 29	Church Property Team
Tue 15	Those leading worship and prayers	Wed 30	The NHS; staff, patients and services

Make sense of life

Explore some of the big questions

The Alpha Course



Sundays at 17:00

**Taster session on 6th September
starting with afternoon tea**

Please bring guests

**Weekly course begins on Sunday
20th September, also at 17:00**

**These are interactive informal sessions to
discuss the Christian faith and ask questions**

Please be praying for a really fruitful time

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 Harvest Sunday,
27th September – do please invite friends to join
you for this more informal service**

– café serving from 10.15

Website of the month:

[Bible a Month Club](#)

*Join the 20,000 Bible a Month members praying and giving
monthly to make the Bible's message known around the world.*

Shanklin United Reformed Church Harvest Charity 2026

At our church meeting on 23rd July, we decided that our Harvest Charity Appeal should focus on local “food-based” needs. We will focus our giving during our Harvest Encounter service on Sunday 27th September, when we will be encouraged to bring non-perishable items for the Isle of Wight Foodbank, along with financial contributions to the 2026 appeal.



We have recently donated towards feeding children during school holiday periods at the Bay Schools, and this is likely to be an ongoing need. In the current climate, we anticipate multiple different “needs” in several “places” within the Bay communities. Church Meeting felt that this would be a way to meet both immediate needs and those in the longer term.

These gifts will be made towards a new “fund” entitled **Feed The Bay**. This will be administered by our treasurer and Elders, and regular reports will be provided to church meetings.

There will be envelopes available from Sunday, 13th September, which will identify the appeal. Please do prayerfully consider how you may be able to help. The envelopes can be placed in the usual Green Bucket.

Thanks

Robin



Harvest Chip Supper



Friday, 2nd October 2026 @ 18:30

(doors open @ 18:00)

We will be holding our fellowship Harvest Supper at the beginning of October this year. Arrangements have been made for Paramount Café to supply our food once again (choices will be as usual).

This is always a popular and fun time to meet together over food and conversation, and we would like as many of us as possible to come along... and please do remember to invite a guest if you can!

I will be producing a sign-up list and invitation cards in early September. Do look out for these and get your name down early!

As usual, we will be asking folk to bring along cakes, etc. for us all to enjoy after the main event; please sign on the list if you can help with this.

Please do speak to Brian or me if cost is an issue, and we will make the necessary arrangements; we do not want anyone to miss out!

If you can help lay out the church or serve and clear, please do let me know. Sue will be our “treasurer” for the evening as usual; please do make payment to her during the evening.

Thanks

Robin

At Viv's Cooking, Sandown High Street...

➤ Ladies' Breakfast - **Saturday 12th September 10:00**

➤ Men's Breakfast - **Saturday 19th September 09:00**



Look out for invitation cards and sign-up sheets.

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



Big thank you

First of all, a big apology to my mother for forgetting to put her note into The Link following her birthday in May, entirely my fault, here follows her note of thanks:

I was humbled by the love and generosity shown to me for my 90th birthday. Thank you. I would like to add that I'm very happy to be worshipping our dear Lord with you. You have accepted me with true Christian love. It has helped me so much over the past difficult months. I really feel so glad have your support and prayers. May the dear Lord bless you all. Thank you, June

Connection Quiz

1. Ciel is the French for what word?
2. What is placed on a monarch's head at their coronation?
3. What wedding anniversary is the 40th?
4. What is the name of the principle navigable waterway between London and the Midlands?
5. What is the green nickname for Ireland?
6. So, what is the **connection** between the answers to questions 1 - 5?
7. The cover photo was taken in a major city in the Netherlands, but do you know which one?

Answers are on page 51



Update to Church Members Directory 2026

Dear Member,

It has been over 3 years since the current **Directory of Church Members** was published, and the Elders now feel that it is time to update it. This is a vital aid to communication within the fellowship. After all, **We Are Family!**

I would be grateful if you could fill in the form I sent you by email/post, (blank copies are available in the church).

Just to emphasise:

- Directories will be issued in **PRINTED FORM – not electronic** – to church members **ONLY** and will include an instruction to only pass on information to others with the **PERMISSION** of the member involved.
- To compile the directory, permission for your details to be included is required by law. If no reply is received or you do not want your details included, your **NAME** will be included, but your details will **NOT**.

Please fill in your details and return it to me as soon as possible, and by 18th September at the latest!

Each member must give their consent by completing and signing the form for themselves.

I know that form-filling does seem a chore ~ but you will be helping me out enormously!!!

Thanks,

Robin





So you are no longer a slave, but God's child; and since you are his child, God has made you also an heir." (Galatians 4:7)

FREEDOM IN CHRIST

"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)

Forgiveness 1

Brian (and visiting speakers) often speak of our need to release ourselves from the grip of unforgiveness; to be merciful and to forgive others as we ourselves have been forgiven.

- In Ezekiel 36:26, God says, ***"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh"***.
- In Matthew 6:14, Jesus says, ***"For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you"***.
- In Romans 12:18, Paul says, ***"If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone"***

Neil Anderson's Freedom in Christ course (and, for many of us, our own personal experiences) makes it clear that one of the biggest barriers to fully receiving God's gift of freedom is unforgiveness in our hearts. Neil's divides his thoughts on this topic (and how we might deal with it) into three parts; this month we'll look at the first of these...

The Choice of Forgiveness

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you (Ephesians 4:32)

Most of the ground that Satan gains in the lives of Christians is due to unforgiveness. We are warned to forgive others so that Satan cannot take advantage of us (2 Corinthians 2:10,11). God requires us to

forgive others from our hearts, or He will turn us over to the tormentors (Matthew 18:34,35).

Why is forgiveness so critical to our freedom? Because of the cross!

God didn't give us what we deserve; He gave us what we needed according to His mercy. We are to be merciful just as our heavenly Father is merciful (Luke 6:36). We are to forgive as we have been forgiven (Ephesians 4:31,32). Forgiveness is not forgetting. People who try to forget find that they cannot. God says He will "remember no more" our sins (Hebrews 10:17), but God, being omniscient, cannot forget. "Remember no more" means that God will never use the past against us (Psalm 103:12). Forgetting may be a result of forgiveness, but it is never the means of forgiveness. When we bring up the past and use it against others, we haven't forgiven them. Forgiveness is a choice, a crisis of the will. We choose to face and acknowledge the hurt and the hate in order to forgive from the heart.

Since God requires us to forgive, it is something we can do (He would never require us to do something we cannot do). But forgiveness is difficult for us because it pulls against our concept of justice. We want revenge for offences suffered. But we are told never to take our own revenge (Romans 12:19). "Why should I let them off the hook?" we protest. You let them off your hook, but they are never off God's hook. He will deal with them fairly - something we cannot do. If you don't let offenders off your hook, you are hooked to them and the past, and that just means continued pain for you.

Stop the pain; let it go. You don't forgive someone merely for his or her sake; you do it for your sake so you can be free. Your need to forgive isn't an issue between you and the offender; it's between you and God.

Lord, teach me how to love unconditionally and quickly forgive those who hate me, curse me or mistreat me. I desire to be free from the hurt and the hate of offences in my past. Today I move beyond desiring to forgive and ask Your help to forgive.

Neil Anderson

Freedom in Christ Ministries

Used by permission

Lord, we stand amazed at the example of Your forgiveness. We desire to grow in our willingness to forgive those who have hurt us. We want to commit ourselves afresh to you today. We ask you to bring to mind any sinfulness we have not dealt with. We are sorry for this and ask for your forgiveness.

Show us any unforgiveness which remains in our hearts. Help us to forgive and cleanse us by the power of your Spirit. We ask this in the name of your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Next month we'll look at The Cost and The Process of Forgiveness.

Robin

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Isle of Wight CAP Debt Centre

Celebration Service

Sunday 13th September at 17:30

at Gunville Methodist Church

Gunville Rd, Newport, PO30 5LS

We are one of five congregations that support the Island CAP project. The leadership group have arranged to gather us together again to celebrate how things have been progressing and to commission the two new team members – Val Taylor and Rhoda MacLeod.

Do please come and share in this special service as we celebrate lives transformed through freedom from debt, worship together and pray for the ministry's future.

Light refreshments will follow.

Please offer lifts if you are able...



FAIRTRADE FORTNIGHT

21st September – 4th October 2026

Fairtrade Fortnight unites consumers and brands from the third Monday of September through the following Sunday for two weeks of advocacy. This special festival recognises and celebrates farmers and workers in developing countries, highlighting issues of underpayment and exploitation. **Join the global movement by choosing Fairtrade-certified products, supporting ethical brands, and spreading awareness.**

Fairtrade Fortnight focuses on ethical purchasing and advocacy. Consumers are encouraged to seek out and purchase products bearing the Fairtrade Mark, directly supporting fair wages and sustainable practices for farmers and workers in developing countries.

Many brands consistently use Fairtrade ingredients and often highlight their commitments during this period. Look for special campaigns from retailers that promote Fairtrade items. The Fairtrade Foundation run donation-matching programs and awareness campaigns. For more information, see www.fairtrade.net/uk-en.html.

Shanklin United Reformed Church is registered with the Fairtrade Foundation, and we support their initiatives in what we purchase ourselves. **During this ‘special’ fortnight we encourage all in the fellowship to seek out Fairtrade alternatives in their purchasing.** There will be more information (and possibly an inflated banana!) on display during the period.

A message from 250 Kenyan tea farmers

Earlier this year, over 250 Kenyan tea farmers shared a powerful message with UK tea drinkers: **The global tea trade is letting them down.**

Low wages, climate shocks, and an unfair system are making life in the sector increasingly difficult. Their open letter calls for change - and solidarity.

Dear tea drinkers, tea businesses and the government in the UK. As the people behind the tea you drink, we write to you today to urge you to use your power for good. We know that tea is drunk by millions in the UK, that it can bring people together and provide comfort or a moment to rest and revive.

Tea also has the power to change lives in our communities. As growers and pickers, we work hard to nurture and care for the tea we grow, so we can earn a decent living for our families. When we earn enough money, we can educate our children, keep them safe

with school transport, adapt our farming methods to protect the environment around us, and look after the health of our communities with access to clean water and medicine. We want to see the people in our local communities thrive.

But today, we come together to tell you the scales of the global tea trade are not tipped in favour of those of us growing and picking the leaves behind your cup of tea.



The price we earn today for the hard work behind your favourite drink is just too low. As this continues to drop, our outgoings are rising, and this simply cannot continue. Many of the people picking tea on estates around the world earn significantly below what is considered a 'living wage' and are struggling to support their families.

This unbalanced global tea trade drives other challenges for those working in tea around the world, including poor living conditions, a lack of health and safety protections, and unequal power for women. On top of this, the rapidly changing climate is making it harder and harder to grow our delicate tea leaves, with risks of flooding, drought and increasing plant diseases all increasing costs and pressure for us. By 2050, climate change is expected to reduce the conditions for growing our tea here in Kenya by a quarter. Established farmers and young people hoping to see a future in tea are increasingly worried about the future for themselves and their families.

As tea drinkers, businesses and the government in the UK, you have the power to change lives alongside the people behind your favourite brew. **Will you use your power for good?**

The reality is that what is happening here impacts us all. We all rely on the same global food system. When tea growers struggle, tea drinkers will feel the impact too.

We know that people in the UK care about protecting each other, upholding human rights and tackling climate change. We have written this letter, as a united group of farmers and growers within the Fairtrade network, to urgently call on the UK to support us in changing our collective future.

We are asking business and policymakers in the UK to use your power to protect human rights, support us in responding to the impacts of climate change and work with us for a better future for tea growers and workers everywhere.

When we work together, we are stronger.

Signed,

Kenyan tea farmers and workers (from Nduti Tea Factory Company Ltd, Gacharage Tea Factory Company Ltd, Momul Tea Factory Company Ltd, Browns Tea Estates).



A Fairtrade Prayer



Dear Lord, who prayed "give us today our daily bread", we give thanks for those who work to produce our food and pray they may be given fair reward for their labours.

We pray for those who grow the things we love that can't be grown in the UK, including our favourite cup of tea, coffee and bananas.

We pray for communities where a fair price sends children to school and supports basic health care.

We pray that you will guide the Fairtrade movement in its efforts to secure a fair deal for those whose bargaining power is weakest.

We pray for supermarkets, brands and other retailers that they will recognise that everyone involved in the produce they buy and sell is important, and that sustainable communities and a sustainable planet depend on fairness for everyone in our food supply chains.

We pray for shoppers here in the UK facing cost-of-living challenges that they will recognise that fairness is for everyone.

When we come together socially and share a cuppa, in church, at parties or organised events, help us to remember to **Brew It Fair**.

Amen

Freedom after four months captivity in Nigeria

13th August 2026

On Easter Sunday, Victoria and her three children were kidnapped by extremist militants, along with many others. After four months in captivity, she and her family were recently able to escape. Here is her story – the story of hundreds of believers in Nigeria.

Victoria sits in a hospital bed, her body thinned and emaciated by four unforgiving months of captivity in an extremist militant camp. On Easter Sunday of this year, at least seven believers were killed and 33 kidnapped in a violent attack on Ariko Village – amongst them, Victoria and her three children, Sonai (12), Patience (6) and Christy (4).

As is tragically often the case for Christians across the world, Easter Sunday became a day of targeted violence by Islamist extremists for believers across Nigeria. The First Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA) church and St Augustine Catholic Church in Ariko village were only two churches amongst many who were made victims of such attacks on that day.

Men, women and children were all taken to an unknown location far from towns and villages in Kaduna State. Victoria was pregnant at the time and was forced to give birth in the camp without any medical assistance. “My baby died three weeks later,” she shares.

The long journey to freedom

After months in captivity, the crucial moment came on Saturday 1 August when an opportunity to flee their captors appeared. “I was able to escape with my children. But Christy was already critically ill while we were still in the camp. Her eyes and legs were badly swollen, and she could no longer walk,” Victoria recalls. “I carried Christy on my back. Whenever I became too weak to continue, I would give her to my 12-year-old son to take over carrying his younger sister despite his own exhaustion. All four of us walked barefoot through the bush for two days without food or water.”

The family pushed on through the bush, walking until nightfall. Once morning came, they resumed their journey with no knowledge of when

refuge might come. While they were still trying to find their way home, Christy tragically died from her illness.

Laden with grief and exhaustion, Victoria and her children continued, carrying Christy's body. At last, they reached a village in Kachia Local Government Area on the afternoon of Sunday 2 August.

The residents immediately came to Victoria and her children's aid, and the family were later moved to another community where they are now receiving essential medical care.

Sadly, they aren't the only family with such a story of suffering. Many are still being held in militant camps – severely emaciated, critically ill and in need of urgent rescue.

Chained

After speaking to Victoria in a hospital where she is recovering, Open Doors local partners were also able to meet Bennie*, another Christian from Ariko village whose father died in the same camp that Victoria and her children were held in.

"My father was among the people who died in captivity because of the hardship they faced. According to those that escaped, he died on 5 July 2026, after exactly three months in captivity," Bennie shares.

Two groups of people were also able to escape the confines of the camp and shared their experiences with Bennie. "The experience for them was a terrible one," he relates. "They told us how they stayed for two weeks without food. They only had boiled water to drink. That's how they struggled before the bandits gave them corn flour, and they started making swallow [a kind of porridge]. The men are restrained, chained in groups. They are not free to move around, they said."

"Join us in praying"

Prayer is urgently needed for those who are still in captivity and enduring horrific conditions. "In this persecution we are facing, we are calling on all our brothers in Christ to join us in praying so that we will see an end to this, not only in Ariko and Kuturmi, but also in other communities that are facing this persecution," Bennie pleads. "Presently in our village of Ariko, we don't go to the farm. Pray that God will bring an end to this so that we can start going to the farm.

There are persecution and hunger – since we don't go to the farm, where we will get food? We are pleading with brothers to join us in prayer so that these attacks will stop.

“Please pray for those who were able to escape and are in the hospital, so that God will heal them,” he continues, “And also, for those who are still in the bush and are facing severe persecution and suffering, so that God in His might will bring them out alive. Others who have fled the community are not finding life easy where they are; they are displaced. Pray that God will bring an end to this situation so that people can go back home and continue farming and get food and other needs met.

“Pray for our government, that God will touch their hearts so that they will put in more effort to bring an end to these attacks, and that God will give them wisdom to fight this insecurity and bring it to an end.”

Stand with the church in sub-Saharan Africa

Our brothers and sisters in Nigeria and across sub-Saharan Africa are suffering indescribably at the hands of perpetrators of extremist violence and injustice. As well as praying, would you consider signing and encouraging others to sign the Arise Africa petition? In November, the petition will be presented to the UK government to advocate on behalf of our church family in Africa, so please take this opportunity to add your voice. The deadline is 2nd November. It is so important and deeply appreciated when you join the church's cry for justice and restoration for believers in sub-Saharan Africa. Thank you.

**Name changed for security reasons*

Nigeria is number 7 on the Open Doors World Watch List, there are 107.3 million Christians (45.7%) in the country. Main threats are from Ethno-religious hostility and Islamic oppression. Nigeria continues to be the most violent place to live in for believers and much of this comes from Islamist militant groups, such as Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP). They target Christians and church buildings through intense attacks, and converts from Islam are especially mistreated.

Source: [Open Doors](#)

Praying Our Church Into Growth

As most of you know at the end of September 2025 we had an awayday at Ryde URC, this was to discuss how we could grow our church in Shanklin. It was an interesting day, lots of things to think and pray about. It was suggested that we have a prayer group, meeting once a week to pray for our church, wait on God and listen to what He wants. So about 8 – 10 of us meet at 13:00 every Monday for an hour to wait and pray.

It has been great to be part of this group. Although we started with a focus of praying our church into growth, we quickly encompassed day to day needs of the fellowship and members. We have truly seen many answers to our prayers; the Lord has been amazingly faithful to His people in Shanklin, and we thank Him for this.

The church has grown both spiritually and numerically in the past year and many personal needs have been met. We have prayed for those suffering both physical and emotional issues; the Lord has clearly inspired us in the right direction ~ the recent series digging deep into the Holy Spirit was one such direction that came during a Monday session

We felt God was saying to open the church for a soup and sandwich lunch to which we would invite our local community in. So, on Saturday 6th December we opened our doors, hoping a few would come along. The results were amazing, so many came, it was astounding. People really enjoyed themselves and had a good time.

To those of us that had been praying in the group it had a wonderful effect, we had been praying faithfully, and God had answered our prayers in an astounding way. This gave us so much confidence, we felt if we prayed God would listen and answer. Most of us had been Christians for many years but it was so **good** to see our prayers answered, often in ways we could not have imagined.

This was the encouragement we needed so we started 2026 feeling confident and expectant. God didn't let us down, we had a brilliant pancake tea, inviting CatURpillars families and mums and babies from the local mother and baby home. The wonderful catering team was back and forwards to the Co-Op for more supplies!! And a good

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time was had by all. At the same time the Holy Spirit was present in such a powerful way in the church, particularly at Sunday Services but also in other groups meeting during the week.

We have been asking God to clear the way for several folk, none more so than Steve & Sheilagh as they planned a life together. Many hurdles, which seemed unsurmountable to us, were overcome by the Lord's intervention.

In June we had a cream tea, inviting people in from the local community, again it was packed. Talking to some of the people there they have been into church for various things, CatURpillars, brass band concerts and clearly felt it was their local church.

Personally, it has been a revelation for me, I have truly felt God's presence, prompting and voice in a much more profound way than ever before.

Everyone in the group has grown closer to God, here are some of the things we have experienced,

It is a **joy** listening to God's plans and 'praying into them', seeing old activities revived and new one's spring up, God has clearly been involved as His provision has really been in the details of answered prayer.

So, we are now approaching our 2nd year, please drop by one Monday to join us, it doesn't have to be every week, or for a whole hour, you **will** be richly blessed. Please speak to one of us if you want to know more

Thank you for taking the time to read this

Many Blessings, Sue W, Robin, Graham, Sue B, Baz, Steve, Pat, Alan, Shami, Mike and Jane, and Lou.

Did you know...

'To love another person is to see the face of God...'
is a quote from a song in the musical Les Misérables?

Release International has changed its name to Voice of Persecuted Christians!

The phrase has featured in the ministry's logo for many years and reflects an important element of the UK-facing work.

Internationally, Voice of Persecuted Christians is active in around 30 countries, supporting Christian partners on the ground, as they seek to meet both the practical and spiritual needs of those who suffer for Christ and the gospel. That hasn't changed.

But in the UK, as well as encouraging Christians and congregations to pray and to give, the ministry believes Christians have much to learn from those who continue to serve Christ amid opposition.

Paul Robinson, the CEO of Voice of Persecuted Christians, said: 'We believe the new name better reflects what our ministry is about: enabling the first-person voice of persecuted Christians to speak into the life of the church here in the UK.'

'As we truly hear the voice of persecuted Christians, their witness calls us to a deeper discipleship—to live Christ-centred lives, with a willingness to count the cost of serving Him and proclaiming the gospel, wherever we are.'

The ministry's general enquiries number remains the same (01689 823491), the general email address is now info@voiceopc.org and the website address is now voiceofpersecutedchristians.org/.

If you have been supporting the ministry by Direct Debit or Standing Order, please note you do not need to do anything as a result of the name change.

Source: VoiceOPC

voice
OF PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS

Shoebox Appeal – ‘Every Box Counts’

Further to last month’s article in ‘The Link’, we now have available the leaflets for the shoeboxes, and these are to be found on the table in the lobby.

This is an excellent time to be collecting items, as many shops will have sales on. Do have a look at the list of things that are not acceptable by customs – sadly soap, sweets and toothpaste are no longer so, as are other items. However, there are still plenty of other things to bless the children who will receive them.

Thank you so much to everyone who has helped in previous years – you are such a blessing.

Maybe compiling a shoebox is something you are unable to do, but individual gifts – either items or monetary gifts towards transport – would be very appreciated. Alternatively, you could always go online and complete a shoebox that way. Simply go to www.samaritans-purse.org.uk/what-we-do/operation-christmas-child/shoebox-online and follow the simple instructions on screen. For a £25 donation, you can build a shoebox by selecting whether you’d like to build for a boy or girl, and choose their age bracket, then pick from a range of items to build your shoebox. Or, you can donate £25 and they will pack a shoebox for you, filled with fun toys, school supplies and personal care items. Your gift will then be sent to a child in need on your behalf. The editor of The Link always completes a shoebox online every year – it is so easy.

Flatpacks will be available nearer the time (the National Collection Week this year is 9th – 16th November) for assembly if required. Details of collection points will be revealed in September and can be found at www.samaritans-purse.org.uk/what-we-do/operation-christmas-child/find-drop-off-locations.

Do ask if you’d like to know more and again thank you for any way in which you can help.

Blessings in Jesus’ Name

Jane H

CAP Update

Dear Friends

We wanted to take an opportunity to say a massive thank you for your support of the Christians Against Poverty Debt Centre on the Isle of Wight. It makes such a difference, and this project wouldn't exist without you! Over the past 18 months we've seen 4 clients become debt free! We've also had the opportunity to pray with a number of clients which is such a privilege. So, thank you for enabling this to happen.

Celebrate a New Season

We are also entering an exciting new season as a debt centre. We have recently taken on 2 additional volunteers to work alongside Lin who has been our sole Debt Coach for 18 months: another Debt Coach, Val, and a Service Team Leader – Rhoda – who will be overseeing the project. This is a really significant moment, and we want to celebrate both the work that has already been done, and this next step in our journey.

To do that we are hosting a 'IOW CAP Celebration Service' at Gunville Methodist Church on Sunday 13th September, 17:30 followed by a light buffet. As one of our valued supporters we would love to invite you to join us for this celebration. We will be joined by members of the five Partner Churches (Shanklin URC, Castlehold Baptist Church, Apex, Christ Church – Sandown and Kerith Community Church) as well as other volunteers and friends of CAP. We will be hearing a message from Tim Barry, the Christians Against Poverty Area Partnership Manager, and worship will be led by musicians from across the 5 churches. It's going to be a great celebration!

A Newsletter

We are also hoping to launch a regular e-newsletter, to keep our supporters updated on all that God is doing through the project, including prayer requests. If you would like to receive the newsletter, please just send an email with your name to Rhoda - rhodamacleod@capuk.org.

Donations

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Should you wish to make a regular contribution to the Isle of Wight CAP Debt Centre, the details to be used for future standing orders to the Debt Centre are as follows:

Kerith Community Church
A/c no, 70001449
Sort Code 40-22-65
Reference IoW CAP

The reference is essential in all payments.

Thank you once again for your continued support for this vital project.

Blessings,

Dan Wells
Chair of IoW CAP Debt Centre Steering Team

Prayer Ministry

As you probably know Prayer Ministry is available for anyone one who needs it at the end of each service. Most weeks people do come forward, and it is a joy to pray for them. Some folk would like prayer but prefer to ask someone they know to pray with or for them which is fine.

But sometimes it can be difficult to come forward or ask someone else for prayer so folk can go away feeling they should have asked for prayer but not felt confident enough to do so. It seems like a good time to remind you all that there is a prayer card system where something can be written down, in confidence, and put in a prayer box in the lobby. Each Sunday, during Prayer Ministry, the team will pray for them. Please remember this and don't go away not having received prayer.

Thanks for reading this,

Please remember, **Prayer Works**

Blessings
Prayer Ministry Team

Open The Book to Joseph's story, part 2	
One morning, Pharaoh woke having had a really bad night. He summoned his magicians, and asked them to tell him the meaning of his dreams. Seven healthy fat cows came out of the River Nile.	Poor Joseph, it was 2 years since the cupbearer had been released. Then seven thin, skinny cows came out of the river. They ate the fat cows, but didn't get any fatter. This was followed by a second 
	dream in which seven healthy ears of corn were swallowed by seven withered ears of corn.
 	The court magicians had no idea what either dream meant. 
Suddenly, the cup bearer remembered. He told Pharaoh about Joseph, the man who had interpreted his dream. 	Joseph had been in prison for many years. Before he could be brought before Pharaoh, he needed a bath and shave! 



Dressed in clean clothes, Joseph was presented to Pharaoh, who asked: "Can you tell me the meaning of my dreams?"
"I can't," replied Joseph. "but God can."

"The two dreams are the same. There will be 7 years of plenty followed by 7 years of drought. The famine will be so bad, it will be as if the 7 years of plenty never happened. So, chose someone to store food from the good years so that there will be enough to eat during the bad ones."
"You're the wisest person I know," said Pharaoh.

"You're in charge!" Joseph was dressed in fine linen with a gold chain round his neck.



During the seven years of good harvests, Joseph stored up the excess in barns.



He also married and had two sons.



The Famine did not only affect Egypt

When they ran out of food, Jacob sent his 10 older sons to buy grain in Egypt. Jacob said: "Joseph's brother, Benjamin stays behind. He's the only child I have left from my beloved Rachel."



When the brothers came before Joseph, he pretended not to know them, and accused them of being spies. They protested and said:



“We are all the sons of one man. There were 12 of us but the youngest stayed at home and the other - er - is no more.”

Joseph said: “Prove it, bring the youngest one here.” Reuben whispered: “I told you not to hurt Joseph. Now we are being punished for it.” Joseph turned away and wept.



Then, keeping Simeon as a prisoner, he ordered the others not to return without Benjamin.



He sold them sacks of grain to feed their family.

When they got home, they found their money in their sacks.



Jacob did not want Benjamin to go, but, when all the food ran out again, he had no choice.

They offered to give the money back, but Joseph’s servant said that it must have come from their God. Then Joseph invited them all, including Simeon, to a feast.



He served them in age order. The brothers were amazed.

How could the governor of Egypt know? He had a special cup which people thought was magic. Benjamin, the youngest, was given five times as much as anyone else. Joseph needed to be certain his brothers could be trusted not to hurt him.



Joseph sold them more grain, but he ordered his servant to put his special silver cup in Benjamin's sack. After they left, Joseph sent soldiers to stop them. All the sacks were searched.



When the cup was found, the soldier siezed Benjamin. He said that the others could go home, but they all insisted on returning to Egypt to plead for Benjamin.



It was more than 20 years since they had seen Joseph so they hadn't recognised him, especially as he talked to them through an interpreter. They bowed down to him, just as Joseph had seen in his dream.



When Judah offered to stay in place of Benjamin, Joseph knew his older brothers had changed. Joseph



revealed his identity. The brothers were terrified. They thought he would punish them.

"Don't worry," said Joseph. "I know you meant to harm me, but

God used it for good. There are still five more years of famine. Go and bring our father and the whole family. Pharaoh has given the area of Goshen for us to live."



So the family of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob was saved from the famine and the brothers were reconciled. God uses even our mistakes to His glory.

Our Next Church Meeting

24th September 2026 @ 19:30

Refreshments from 19:00

All members and regular worshippers are encouraged to come along as we seek to plan ahead.

Copies of the agenda and minutes of the last meeting will be available ahead of the meeting so we can all come prepared.

As usual, a Zoom link will be provided for those who cannot make it in person via the regular meeting space.

Don't just go to church – be the church!



A Smile

When you see a stranger as you walk along the street. Remember that a stranger is just a friend you've yet to meet.

So, give a great big smile as you pass that person by. Very soon they will catch it and here is the reason why.

For a smile is contagious and they will pass it on you see. Not just one or two but now it's even three.

So as that smile keep passing on, you catch it like the flu, after a little while it will come right back to you.

So now you've caught that smile, smile for all your worth. Let's start an epidemic and spread it round the earth.



Mary F

Used by permission

God With Us: Thy Kingdom Come 2026 Reprise

Last time we looked at **The Spirit of Grace** from both the TKC Novena (by Archbishop Sarah Mullally) and the Prayer Journal (by Rev Canon Chris Russell). Now we turn to ...

The Spirit of Listening

1 Samuel 3: 1-10 The Lord calls Samuel

¹The boy Samuel ministered before the Lord under Eli. In those days the word of the Lord was rare; there were not many visions.

²One night Eli, whose eyes were becoming so weak that he could barely see, was lying down in his usual place. ³The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the house of the Lord, where the ark of God was. ⁴Then the Lord called Samuel.

Samuel answered, ‘Here I am.’ ⁵And he ran to Eli and said, ‘Here I am; you called me.’ But Eli said, ‘I did not call; go back and lie down.’ So he went and lay down.

⁶Again the Lord called, ‘Samuel!’ And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, ‘Here I am; you called me.’ ‘My son,’ Eli said, ‘I did not call; go back and lie down.’

⁷Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord: the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him.

⁸A third time the Lord called, ‘Samuel!’ And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, ‘Here I am; you called me.’ Then Eli realised that the Lord was calling the boy. ⁹So Eli told Samuel, ‘Go and lie down, and if he calls you, say, “Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.”’ So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

¹⁰The Lord came and stood there, calling as at the other times, ‘Samuel! Samuel!’

Then Samuel said, ‘Speak, for your servant is listening.’

When Samuel heard the voice of the Spirit, he didn’t understand what was happening, or why he was responding in the wrong way – as though he was using a walkie-talkie that received & transmitted on

different frequencies! He perhaps felt like the victim of a practical joke. But he received some important advice.

Eli doesn't come out particularly well in this book of the Bible, but in this story he plays an invaluable role. He taught Samuel how to listen to the Spirit: to lie back down, in his original place – tuning in to the right radio frequency – and to respond in the right way. In effect, he helped him realise how to pray.

If those we encounter in our daily life were to hear a voice as Samuel did, would they know who or what it was, or how to respond to it? We must be ready to play the role of Eli because, like Samuel, listening to it will change their lives!

Hearing God personally and distinctly changes Samuel's life (and that of his mum Hannah, see Chapters 1 & 2). Through their hearing and obeying, the world around them is changed.

For those we want to come to know the Lord, let the difference that would be brought if they were to hear God through His Spirit call their name, spur us to pray that they will indeed hear.

***'Oh Lord our God give us by Your Holy Spirit a willing heart and a ready hand to use all Your gifts to your praise and glory through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.'* [Thomas Cranmer]**

Father, prompt us to be aware of those around us who need a touch of Your Spirit. To be ever watchful of the needs of others and always be ready to respond in love.

Robin

Rylstone Gardens Concerts - September 2026

Date	Time	Who's Playing
Tue 1 st	19:45	Bob Howarth Big Band
Wed 2 nd	20:00	Sandown & Shanklin Military Band
Sun 6 th	15:00	Cowes Concert Band
Sun 13 th	15:00	Shanklin Town Brass Band

Used Stamps



Ever wondered what to do with those used stamps you get?

Do you want to put them to good use?

Then wonder no more!!

Ability Dogs 4 Young People will take them!

To quote their website...

Used Stamps

We accept all stamps. We sell any we can and recycle the rest.

There will be a box at the back of church for you to put your old stamps into – and thank you.



**Ability Dogs
4 Young People**

Can you help?

Would you have an hour a week to spare to visit a person in a care home?

Research shows that care home residents are twice as likely to feel severely lonely as older people living at home.

Embracing Age is a Christian charity working towards a world where older people are valued, connected and full of hope, by combatting loneliness, mobilising volunteers, equipping churches and speaking out.

Inspired by our Christian ethos, we serve older people regardless of background, ethnicity or beliefs, upholding dignity, compassion and respect for all.

We are looking for more volunteers both male and female (over the age of 16) to befriend residents, we ask for an hour a week.

Any volunteer would need to complete an application form, we take up 2 references, complete a DBS, which is renewed every 3 years. Training is given for each person to include dementia, communication, safeguarding and confidentiality.

You would also get support from the Isle of Wight coordinator. We have regular meet ups and discuss any problems and tips with each other.

Residents have said what a difference this makes to them to have a person sit with them and talk, play games, knit, read to them. The care home staff say what a difference they see in a person, it lifts their mood and increases communication.

You can be an individual befriender or work in pairs and have a small group to talk to. Full support is given, you will have a named person within the care home who will support visits, we try to keep all volunteers close to where they live unless you are happy to travel. I have care home residents waiting for a befriender.

If you would like to know more or would like to donate to the work of Embracing Age, then please speak to me, Yvonne Sparks (email yvonne@embracingage.org.uk)

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 'Harvest of Joy - Founder of award-winning farm tells how Jesus changed his life.'

Other contributions include:

- **Food and Faith** - Why we celebrate God's generosity at Harvest-time
- **Bonnie Tyler** - Welsh star's love for Jesus not eclipsed by fame
- **Grammy Winner** - Singer Kehlani says she's 'living in answered prayer'
- **World Cup Worship** - Looking back at the many World Cup teams who prayed on the pitch
- **Wood From Solomon's Temple?** - Ancient beams found in Jerusalem dated to Solomon's era
- **Enemy No More** - The criminal who hated the police until God spoke to him
- **Keeping Faith** - Why a scientist holds onto God despite serious health issues

Good News... for a change

Bible a Month – Here and Now

Bible Society's Bible a Month ministry reaches far and wide across the globe. However, their focus for **September 2026** is much closer to home.

We know of the work of Open the Book through our own church members, Bill & Julie, and their ministry in Island schools.

This is just one area of our nation's life that Bible Society is ministering into. Three thousand plus churches are involved in Open the Book reaching over two thousand schools with more than ninety dramatised Bible stories.

The monthly giving of Bible a Month supporters helps drive this mission forward.

Let's see what Bible Society's Prayer Pointers say about other areas of ministry that Bible a Month helps:

England and Wales

Many more people here are becoming spiritually open and thanks to you we are expanding Bible mission to point these people towards Jesus through the Scriptures.

Bible sales are growing and thanks to your support, the 'Everyday Faith Bible' has been published. With over 1,000 prompts to help you understand, reflect and respond to Scripture, this Bible equips you to live out your faith with confidence, wherever you are.

Thanks to you, 'The Bible Course' and 'The Romans Course' have been produced, a parliamentary prayer breakfast engages with politicians, think tank Theos promotes the Bible through public life and thousands of Bibles are provided in prisons. Find out more at biblesociety.org.uk.

September Prayers

- *Pray that children will never forget the Bible stories that they hear through Open the Book. Also, ask God to bless the new Explore the Book holiday club that takes Bible stories into public spaces.*
- *Ask God to prompt tens of thousands more spiritually open here to take that step into a church or open the Bible.*

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- *Pray that those new to the faith in England and Wales will remain strong and stay focused on Jesus.*

Whilst remembering our own nation and its need for spiritual renewal, do remember the countless people throughout the world who have not yet had the Scriptures that we have been so blessed to have all our lives.

If you are able to support the work of Bible Society in any way – by joining Bible a Month Club or by other ways of giving, maybe now or as a legacy, you would be bringing the joy of God's Word to many who so need it.

On such community is in Syria where more than 1.2 million Syrian Christians have fled this Biblical land because of civil war persecution and endless cycles of violence. The 600,000 believers who remain need our prayers, not only so that the church may survive but also that it may prosper. This year the giving of Bible a Month members is enabling the training of many more Sunday School teachers, a cornerstone for future generations of Christians. Would you join in prayer for our brothers and sisters at this very difficult and dangerous time:

Pray that God will comfort His people, strengthen the churches and open new doors for his work across Syria.

Ask God to bless the Sunday School teachers who are sowing and nurturing the seeds of truth in the hearts of children and young people. Pray that the Bible stories heard will leave a powerful, lasting impression on the younger generations.

Please pray for the protection of all Christians in Syria, and the work of Bible Society there.

There are a few leaflets about the work of Bible Society's Bible a Month Club on the table in the lobby or go to www.biblesociety.org.uk/get-involved/bible-a-month for more details. Otherwise, I would be very glad to share more about this amazing ministry and how we can support it.

With blessings and thanks for your prayers,

Jane H

Source: [Bible Society](http://www.biblesociety.org.uk)

A Reflection On Cold Showers and Hot Tempers

There's a very real problem of global warming and other related issues globally. This has a very real effect on those that suffer the most from it. A tutor at college (an Alaskan) spoke of the indigenous people living in Alaska and places like that who are faced with the very real and awful realisation that the world they know is slowly falling into the sea, gradually melting and that there's nothing they can do about it. Thanks to us. (My comment, not his). He went on to speak about the extreme poverty in places like the reservations in America, where he had lived for a period of time and the daily struggle and grind for those that were forced to live there, as well as the effect this has on them.

I was reminded of my own home country in South Africa not to mention the rest of Africa where there are also people living in extreme poverty and the awful circumstances where they can't even imagine fresh water, fresh food, a warm home and a roof over their heads but scrape a daily living from whatever they're able to, living in such demeaning circumstances with no hope of clawing their way out. Nobody wants to help them, except by paying lip service or making a celebrity showing of it. Trite; a thin veneer of concern and underneath it all, such underprivileged people are used to further their own agendas and line their own pockets.

Of course, I know all about this, having seen it and lived close to it for most of my life but like most people in the privileged western world, I remain far from this, observing from a distance and removing myself from the reality of it, giving only a grudging nod to those less fortunate—a painful and shocking thing to realise in myself and very humbling. I'm not as okay and as cool and as 'informed' as I thought I was. I believe it is an intellectual exercise for the majority of us because we cannot even begin to know the heart, the reality and the practicality of it and the pain and sorrow of it. This is a shameful thing to recognise in myself.

I had a very practical lesson of this when I arrived at our new home a couple of weeks ago, after a couple of extremely difficult (and a little scary) irritating, frustrating couple of months. All I wanted to do when

I finally arrived at the house, was to have a nice hot shower and fall into bed.

Annoyingly, I couldn't get it to work. As hard as I tried all I could get out of the shower was very cold water, no matter how much I twiddled and fiddled. In mounting fury, I decided that there was no way I was prepared to submit myself to the indignity of a cold shower - such pride. In the end I gave up in an ungrateful huff and simply went to bed.

The following morning, I thought I would try again - being in a better frame of mind. I thought I'd have a look at the boiler. It registered 'below normal pressure' or something like that. I duly dug out the reams and reams of instructions on how to reset it and get it working. Well, after pressing all the buttons, switched this on, twisted that around, I gave up. It simply didn't work. I needed a doctorate in engineering to make sense of what I was being told to do.

So, for four very long days, there was no hot water and no hot shower! Instead, it was boiling the kettle every night, just to try and freshen up. I didn't want to 'call an expert' as was suggested in the manual because of the expense and eventually, I asked a friend of mine with experience, to come and have a look. I was somewhat gratified when not even he could make sense of exactly what the instruction manual was on about, not to mention all the twiddling and fiddling he had tried either. But... he did switch on the 'emergency' button, which I had not wanted to touch in case I added to the problem. A plumber I am not! Then, I put the call in to the developer to request an engineer. Because it wasn't 'urgent' it has taken two weeks to get the appointment, which will finally happen this week.

But.... In thinking about all this, I have come to realise my utter ungratefulness of the many daily luxuries I live with and I'm ashamed to say, take for granted. It brought home to me practically, what our tutor had been teaching about. How many people have no choice *but* to wash in freezing cold water?

I admit that this stopped me in my tracks. This simple example caused me to truly recognise and appreciate the difficulties that so many people encounter; those who are less privileged than I am; those who live in such straitened circumstances with no hope of getting out.

And as the world slides towards destruction, how are we to rescue them? How are we to help them escape this, if at all? How are we to make life better for them?

I don't have an answer. All I can do I think, is to find small ways not only of appreciating what I already have but also in some way to give away what I already have-to make someone else's life more bearable, whether it's tangible or spiritually or both, if that's even possible, in the hope that they'll be lifted out of their daily grind if even only for a moment. I suppose though that, in reality, this is like sticking a plaster on a wound that will never heal but we all have to start somewhere, and it might as well be in our own backyards.

Sheilagh Medland

Rev Joshua Norris

One of our former youth workers Josh went on to train for URC ministry and has been serving at Halstead in Essex since 2014. He grew up in Haven Street and attended Ryde URC until his dad trained for ministry and they settled in Petersfield. After ordination, which Brian attended, he joined the GEAR committee and has continued to serve on that team.



He has now returned to Wessex Synod just across the water at Hythe, with a second congregation at Immanuel, Southbourne on the edge of Bournemouth. These are two strong evangelical churches which will suit him well. He is now married to Sarah and they have a little boy who was 2 in August - Elijah. Our prayers are with him and the family as they settle into their new context.

Brian has had regular links with Cornerstone URC, Hythe over the years and has provided a number of video sermons to help them during a long vacancy. Some will recall that Chris Copley (formerly Vivian) was based there for several years before she sadly died.

Where are Christians facing the impossible?

Millions of Christians around the world live in countries where following Jesus seems impossible.

Despite this, with your prayers and support they are still courageously speaking out and shining a light for Jesus.

The different ways in which following Jesus affects our brothers and sisters range from discrimination, oppression, violence, imprisonment, having to flee their homeland, and ultimately martyrdom.

You might remember one such dear person who we have prayed for before and who we need to keep praying for:

‘Remember Leah’

Leah was abducted as a schoolgirl in an attack by terrorists in Northern Nigeria, 14-year-old Leah, now aged 23 refused to deny her Christian faith.

She is still being held and as she entered her ninth year in captivity in February, it is understood that she has endured multiple forced marriages to militant fighters and several childbirths.

Please pray for Leah and her family. May our Lord Jesus comfort them and enable Leah to continue to stand strong and may we believe the impossible for her, that she would be released and that her witness would have spoken to her captors.

Dear Lord,

Help us to be part of Your impossible plan in interceding for Leah and all others who suffer for loving and following You.

Amen.

Do read more of Leah's story, along with those of others who are suffering for their faith (pages 4 & 5 of Release's Voice magazine for July – September, which can be read online at

voice
OF PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS

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voiceofpersecutedchristians.org/the-voice-magazine/) – in June of this year Release International changed their name to ‘Voice of Persecuted Christians’.

Do Look into the Prayer Room at church where you will see maps from VoiceOPC and Open Doors on the wall – very informative and useful in seeing the countries where believers are most persecuted, also Open Doors ‘World Watch List 2026’ booklets with 50 countries with a prayer for each day for our brothers and sisters.

We now also have the Open Doors magazine and Prayer Diary for September/October 2026 available.



It would be great if we regularly ran out of these publications, rather than being left – if you’ve not encountered them before, do please take a copy/copies – they are inspiring and faith building.

Thanks to our editor of ‘The Link’ for his consistent support of our persecuted brothers and sisters by keeping us informed every month of ongoing situations for them – so helpful.

Also just to say if you’d like to speak about the above, I would be so pleased to share with you – in the meantime may our dear Lord enable us to always be a light for Him.

For information, websites for the two organisations mentioned above are:

- **Open Doors** - www.opendoorsuk.org/
- **Voice of Persecuted Christians** (formerly Release) – if you key in voiceopc.org in your browser, you will automatically be redirected to the website voiceofpersecutedchristians.org/ - I know, I’ve tried it.

Love in Him

Jane H

Sources: VoiceOPC/[Open Doors](http://OpenDoors)

Shanklin Town Community & Youth Brass Bands



ISLE of WIGHT
Est. 1993

Charity Concert for Embracing Age



EMBRACING AGE
Later life in all its fullness

30th October 2026 at 19:30

Shanklin United Reformed Church
High Street, Shanklin PO37 6LA

Free Admission

Retiring Collection in aid of Embracing Age

***Come and learn about us and what we do, and
help support our Christmas Gift Box Appeal***

www.embracingage.org

Registered charity number 1160400

FOCUS

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

***Christian in China arrested for
listening to Bible in car***

11 August 2026

A believer in China has been detained for listening to the Bible through a USB stick connected to his car. Please pray for him and his family, and others in China who are under pressure and need your support to stand firm.

When was the last time you listened to the Bible or a Christian podcast whilst travelling? A believer in China was doing just that recently – and it's landed him in prison.

Brother AK* comes from a Muslim background and lives in the north west of the country. During a long drive with his family to visit other believers, they listened to the Bible using a USB device connected to the car. However, at a checkpoint, the device was spotted by police officers.

"Because I believe in Jesus, I was listening to the Bible through the USB," Brother AK courageously told the officers.

Because the family has several children, including a baby under a year old, the police instructed AK's wife to take the children away while he was detained for questioning. His family were temporarily hosted by a Christian family in the small town while waiting his release. However, several days passed without any news of AK's whereabouts.

Meanwhile, the family who hosted AK's wife and children also received a call from the authorities, who questioned them about their relationship with AK's family.

Incidents like these are becoming more common in China, as the authorities tighten their grip on any religious activity deemed a threat to the regime's ideological control. That even extends to the Christian media that believers consume in private, which many rely on for discipleship and fellowship.

Town under close surveillance

Brother AK's family is one of the families served by Open Doors local partners in a Muslim-majority region of the country. Through their support, discipleship and companionship over the past two years, both the parents and children have grown significantly in their faith and their willingness to participate in ministry.

"The town is under close surveillance," shares Jason*, an Open Doors local partner who's been discipling the family. "In the past, there have been similar incidents. One believer in the area was discovered listening to the Bible through earphones in a public place. He was taken into custody and interrogated, and local authorities learned that he had attended Christian gatherings. He was detained for 15 days. Other believers from the same church were also questioned and held for one or two days.

"At present, AK's situation remains unclear, and we do not yet know what consequences he may face. We were recently informed that AK will be detained for 15 days. However, no specific charge or official basis for his detention has been disclosed by the authorities. We urgently need to pray."

Under pressure and underground

There are so many Christians throughout China, like AK and his family, who are under intense pressure because of the increasing surveillance of the authorities alongside ever-tightening religious laws. It's forcing believers further underground and deeper into the shadows. Despite this, they are looking to stand firm, but to do so, your prayers and support are critical. Please come alongside them today. Thank you.

**Names changed for security reasons*

Please pray

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- For protection and strength for AK, and for his imminent release
- For comfort, peace and wisdom for his family and the host family
- That local partners will be empowered in their work discipling believers in the region.

China (*Number 17 in the World Watch List*)

- **Leader:** President Xi Jinping
- **How many Christians:** 96.7 million (6.7%)
- **Main threats:** Communist and post-Communist oppression, and Dictatorial paranoia

How are Christians persecuted in China?

- Christianity is seen as a threat by the Chinese authorities, so Christians here face close monitoring and tight controls.
- There are registered churches in China, falling under either the Three-Self Patriotic Movement (TSPA) or the Catholic Patriotic Association (CPA), but these are closely overseen by the State who monitor what is preached and who is there.
- Many churches decide not to register and instead meet underground as house churches; these churches face raids, fines, arrests, imprisonments and the confiscation of materials. Lan* and her husband Qian* lead a house church that has been repeatedly raided by the authorities. She says, “My husband is under government surveillance. I do feel afraid at times. But if the day comes when he’s taken away... I ask God for the courage to stand firm.”
- Under-18s are not permitted to attend church.
- In areas that are traditionally Muslim or Buddhist, new Christians can face threats and even physical harm from their family and community, on top of persecution from the state.
- Despite the challenges, many of China’s Christians are boldly continuing to share their faith. Brother Kai* says, “Sharing the gospel is our calling. Some of us have written farewell letters, prepared for prison.”

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

For up-to-date news on how our fellow Christians are being persecuted, head to www.opendoorsuk.org/news/latest-news/

Charity Barbecue

After the fantastic support for our BBQ for Help 4 Heroes and the Ability Dogs (Isle of Wight) on Saturday 22nd August, we would like to update you of the funds raised.



On the day about £1,000.00 was donated and our wonderful church family further supported us with around £200.00 on Sunday morning with more promised!

Thank you all for your support and amazing generosity, God bless you all. Malc, Miriam and the family.



Discover the truth of the Island's motto: 'All this beauty is of God'. Go to the Isle of Wight Walking Festival website isleofwightwalkingfestival.co.uk/ for a list of all the walks.

The gentlest, suitable for those with limited mobility, is run by Julie. The Lost Crypt Walk is a history stroll around Ryde, costing £5 per person, with every penny going to Aspire Ryde. Tuesday October 6th at 15:00, Wednesday 7th at 17:30, Friday 9th at 15:00 and Saturday 10th at 10:00. Prebooking essential.



Dates For Your Diary

Day	Date	Time	Details
Sun	6 th Sep	10:30 17:00	Communion Service Alpha taster session (see page 6)
Sun	12 th Sep	10:00	Ladies' breakfast at Viv's Cooking (see page 7)
Sun	13 th Sep	10:30 15:00 17:30	Daniel Tan speaking Last open-air concert of 2026 in Rylstone CAP Service at Gunville Methodist
Sat	19 th Sep	09:00	Men's breakfast at Viv's Cooking (see page 7)
Sun	20 th Sep	17:00	Alpha Course starts
Sun	20 th Sep		<u>Deadline</u> for items to be included in October's 'The Link'
Thu	24 th Sep	19:30	Church Meeting <i>Refreshments from 19:00</i>
Sun	27 th Sep	10:30	Harvest Encounter Service
Fri	2 nd Oct	18:30	Harvest Chip Supper
Sat	17 th Oct	15:30	Messy Church – Harvest
Fri-Sat	23 rd - 24 th Oct		Sabbath of Prayer <i>Watch out for more details</i>
Fri	30 th Oct	19:30	Shanklin Community/Youth Brass Bands Charity Concert for Embracing Age



Messy Harvest

Saturday
17th October
15:30 – 17:30

Free fun for all the family

- no unaccompanied children please

Come & enjoy a Harvest Messy Church experience at Shanklin URC - a fun way of learning for all ages.

There will be several craft activities to choose from related to the Harvest theme, 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 Janet Harley, and please let Yvonne know if you can help in any way – even with the clearing up afterwards!

Connection Quiz Answers

1. **Sky**
2. **Crown**
3. **Ruby**
4. **Grand Union Canal**
5. **Emerald Isle**
6. **Connection: Princess cruise ships – Sky Princess, Crown Princess, Ruby Princess, Grand Princess and Emerald Princess.**
7. **This issue's cover photo is from the Dutch city of Rotterdam (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.

An easy one this
month.

Enjoy!

	8			1			3	
	4		3		6		7	
4			9		2			1
9	6		5		3		2	7
		4				2		
	5	2				7	8	
7		9		4		6		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									29				

Last month's Sudoku - how did you do?

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

Across

- 1 Country where the cheese Edam is made, backwards (11)
 7 Channel Islands *initials* (2)
 8 Very basic, simple (11)
 9 In, en français – clue, it's in the question (2)
 11 Opposite of yes (2)
 12 Kanga's son in Winnie the Pooh (3)
 13 Period before Easter (4)
 15 O Come All - Faithful (2)
 17 Identification *abbr* (2)
 19 Life or existence *noun* (5)
 20 French port, near Calais (8)
 22 Editor *abbr* (2)
 24 Eminem song (4)
 26 Battle part of 100 years war, on 25 October 1415 (9)

- 28 This should be earned on bank a/c savings (8)
 29 Surrey town, often paired with Epsom (5)

Down

- 1 Country, capital Oslo (6)
 2 Not yesterday or tomorrow (5)
 3 Surrey borough containing Esher and Walton on Thames (9)
 4 UK capital city (6)
 5 Tidily (6)
 6 Speak (3)
 7 French city where William I is buried (4)
 10 You smell with one (4)
 14 A strong, sharp taste, flavour (4)
 16 Merseyside football team, not Liverpool (7)
 17 Not out (2)
 18 A phrase that has been used so much (6)
 21 To praise or glorify someone or something very much (5)
 23 A specific calendar day or a romantic social meeting (4)
 25 French word to indicate a married woman's maiden name (3)
 27 To employ something for a purpose (3)

Can You Guess The Year?

- Queen Elizabeth II opened the replacement London Bridge.
- VAT came into effect in the UK on 1st April.
- Sunderland won the FA Cup, beating Leeds Utd 1-0.
- The UK joined the European Economic Community.
- And UK No. 1s include:
 - Donny Osmond with '*Twelfth of Never*'
 - Sweet with '*Blockbuster*'
 - Dawn with '*Tie a Yellow Ribbon*'
 - Wizzard with '*See My Baby Jive*'
 - Simon Park Orchestra with '*Eye Level*'

Answer next issue

This Issue's General Knowledge Questions

1. Which team won the women's FA Cup in 2018?
2. Who was the English monarch after William II was killed?
3. What was The Shadow's Eurovision song (in 1975)?
4. What is the capital of Latvia?
5. What is the currency in Norway?
6. Who was elected UK Prime Minister in 1997?
7. In computer terms, what does RAM stand for?
8. Who composed '*Ode to Joy*'?
9. When was the Peterloo Massacre in Manchester?
10. Where is the French Tennis Open held?

Answers next issue

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

Sunday 20th September

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 1960
- Last issue's crossword ↓

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

Last Issue's General Knowledge Quiz Answers

- | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Chelsea | 7. Solid State Drive |
| 2. He was shot with an arrow | 8. Douglas |
| 3. Long Live Love | 9. 25 th October 1415 |
| 4. Lima | 10. Wimbledon, French, Australian, US |
| 5. Krone | |
| 6. Clement Atlee | |

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>	17:00 Alpha Course in church <i>on 6th, 20th & 27th September</i>

Weekday Activities

Monday	09:00 Rise and Shine 13:00 Prayer Meeting in church (see page 4)
Tuesday	09:00 Rise and Shine 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
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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