

Church Alive!

Swanage Parish Magazine

July 2026



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Rev Ian Bird writes:

What has ‘the Diocese’ ever done for us?!



Sometimes I have conversations with people about ‘the Diocese’ and, as we chat, it becomes apparent that by the term ‘the Diocese’ they mean our diocesan office. They see it as some sort of overstaffed money pit and often question what benefit we receive from our diocesan office. So I thought I would take this opportunity to dispel some myths in this area and give our readers an indication of what great support we and other parishes in our diocese receive from our diocesan central staff.

Before outlining what support our central staff give us, I want to dispel the myth that there is some entity out there that is ‘the Diocese.’ No. **We are the Diocese**, along with all the other parishes and benefices within the Diocese of Salisbury. We have a diocesan office at Emmaus House in Wilton, near Salisbury (pictured above) and a much better way of thinking about our diocesan office is as a support office for the all the parishes across the Diocese of Salisbury.

What goes on in that building? Based there is a range of departments that enable our diocese to function effectively at a parish level. Without them my life as Rector would be miserable.

We have a range of experts there who are just a telephone call or e-mail away who can offer advice and help in all sorts of ways. Here are some examples of how the staff at Emmaus House support us: running ordination selection and training and supervising curate training, including the Rev'd Natalie's training; offering expert Safeguarding advice and training; advising on issues we might have with the special Church planning system (the faculty system); overseeing clergy property repairs; supporting parish fundraising; supporting ministry and mission.

Importantly, the Parish Support department help us with advice and schedules that enable all incumbents and PCCs around the diocese to operate legally. There is also a small finance team. I could go on, but I hope this gives you a flavour of the way that we and other parishes in the diocese are supported ably by staff at Emmaus House. And to dispel another myth – the departments listed above are not bloated with staff. To carry out the support briefly listed above (and more), there are less than 38 full time equivalent staff. So let us thank God for all those in Emmaus House who support us in this parish in so many different ways along with the 423 other parishes across the Diocese of Salisbury!

Last month, across all of our four churches in the Swanage and Studland Team we followed a series entitled Generous God, Generous People. We have been exploring God's generosity to us and our call to be a generous people in the way we use our time, talents and treasure to the glory of God. I hope you have found the series both encouraging and challenging. It was an opportunity to review prayerfully our volunteering, how we can use our gifts and talents effectively in our churches and to review our giving too.

Those on the Swanage electoral roll also received a letter outlining our difficult financial position and how we can respond to ensure that we continue our worship and mission.

We were reminded again in this series that all we have comes from our generous God. King David succinctly sums this up, in those familiar words from the First Book of Chronicles as he declares: ‘Yours, Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendour, for everything in heaven and on earth is yours.’ (1 Chronicles 29: 11.). As the body of Christ, we all have a role to play in our churches and supporting mission and activities that share the love of Jesus Christ with others in our community and beyond. So let us continue to work together and be communities of light and hope that we are called to be.

Every Blessing
Ian
Rector

We now have a convenient QR code available for anyone who would like to make a donation to any of our three parishes. Simply scan the code shown here to give securely and support our parish.



Goodbye to Revd Natalie

Revd Natalie's last Sunday before she leaves for her new role as Succentor, St George's Chapel Windsor Castle and Chaplain, St George's School, will be 9th August. Hers and Joseph's final service with us will be Choral Evensong at St Mary's at 6.30pm followed by refreshments. She will also be presiding at 8am and 10.30am at St Mary's. Natalie will be working around the other churches in our team to take final services as follows- St Mark's at 10am on 12th July, All Saints at 8am & 10.30am on 19th July, and St Nicholas' Studland at 10am on 2nd August.

Natalie's installation in St George's Chapel will take place at Evensong at 5.15pm on 1st September. All are welcome. Parking is available in the town centre car parks. Please arrive to King Henry VIII gate by 5pm, the police officers on duty will let you know when the Chapel doors have opened (seating in the Quire is limited so early arrival is recommended to give the best chance of a view- the screen between Quire and Nave is annoyingly solid!).



St Mary's



July Services

Sunday Services

8.00am	Holy Communion
10.30am	Choral Eucharist
6.30pm	Choral Evensong

Weekly Services/Events:

Tues	2.30pm	All Things Bright & Beautiful <i>(particularly suitable for those living with dementia or any kind of additional need)</i>
Weds	10am-12.30pm	T-Pot in the Rectory Classroom
	11.00am	Holy Communion <i>(every 4th Weds with Healing)</i>
Fri	5.45pm	Junior Choir practice
	6.30pm	Adult choir practice
	6-30pm	Friday Fun Club in the Rectory Classroom (term time only)

St Mary's Notes

I'm writing this soon after hearing the last of the sermon series Generous God, Generous People, designed to encourage us all to reflect God's generosity to us, in the way we give to the work of the church and the upkeep of our buildings, whether financially or through giving of our time and skills. I'm hoping that there will be enough in our regular donations to "pay our way" rather than use reserves which, essentially, are for major projects.

I hope nobody still thinks the “Parish Share” somehow keeps the cathedral going – it doesn’t, it pays for our clergy and their housing, training, and pensions among other things. Neither does it pay for the “Spire Fund”, set up to go a little way towards counties where enslaved people from Africa were shipped in chains to work on plantations, particularly in the Caribbean. Much wealth in Britain was founded on the profits of slavery and institutions like the C of E invested various companies that trading and transported slaves from Africa to the Americas.

Awareness of this has grown in recent years and the Church Commissioners formed a group to analyse the extent to which Queen Anne’s Bounty, part of the historical endowment the Church Commissioners manage had been invested in the slave trade. As a result, £100m has been committed to investing in projects in communities damaged by slavery. Beyond the church, communities in the Caribbean have been campaigning for reparation from wealthy families, including that of Prime Minister Gladstone, who benefited hugely when slaves in the British Empire were freed in 1833. (The payments to the former owners amounted to 40% of the British annual expenditure and the former enslaved people got nothing.)

There is some opposition to the Church Commissioners’ decision by those who feel the “reparations” are unjustified; the opposite view is that it is ultimately a moral and ethical issue.

Back to parish finances! One reduction in the parish budget means we no longer have a Verger. As a result, the verger’s duties have been (or not been) covered by a small group of volunteers who give a lot of time and effort to keep the St Mary’s ship afloat. More volunteers are much needed.

Perhaps some of those who are unable to take on practical tasks might be able to sponsor an hour's gardening, or an hour's cleaning for the Rectory Classroom? But what is most important is to pray for our church to thrive and attract people to join us and find Christ.

Avril Harris

Churchwarden at St Mary's

CHRISTIAN Aid Week 2026

Very many thanks to all in our Swanage churches who attended events, provided cakes and preserves, donated in church and did a sponsored walk. Your support is much appreciated, especially by women in Dagoretti, Kenya, who are receiving training to grow food for their families, even in urban areas. So far, a total of £2,694.92 has been raised with an additional £225 Gift Aid to be added. Others will have donated directly to Christian Aid online.

Christian Aid Committee

"Don't undervalue yourself. God loves you. Your worth is what you are worth to God. Jesus died for you. You are of infinite value."

— Nicky Gumbel



Regular Sunday Services July

8am Holy Communion

10.30am Family Worship with children's groups, except on 2nd Sunday All-Age Café Church. 1st Sundays communion.

Weekly Church Calendar at All Saints

TERMTIME All Saints Toddlers Mondays 9:15am

Coffee Pot Thursdays 10:30am

TERMTIME Art workshop Fridays 10am

Opportunities to Pray together at All Saints

Weekly Thursdays 9:30 – 10am

(with a focus on our mission partners on the final one of the month)

Other dates for your diary

Sat 4th July: 8.15am Swanage Christian Men's Group

Breakfast @MacAllisters

Sun 5th July Host-a-Roast: an opportunity to meet friends new and old as guests or hosts, having lunch in various church members homes. Sign up to take part. (more info from Jo, jo@swanageteam.com)

Sat 11 July South West Awake 10:30am-11am.

Gather in various locations on the South West Coast path to pray for the SW of England. A church group meets on the grass through the Ballard Estate by Sheps Hollow.

Thu 16 July 7pm Midweek worship: an opportunity to enjoy an extended time of informal band-led worship at All Saints (more info Stuart Spreadborough stuart@metalclay.co.uk)

**Carnival Training Events to staff Churches Together Tent during
carnival week**

Mon 6 July 7:30pm St Marks Thu 9 July 11am St Marys

Wed 15 Jul All Saints 4pm

26 July 10:30am Carnival Service Joint Churches Together in the main Carnival Marquee

News from All Saints

One of the great joys on Pentecost Sunday was Gareth's baptism in the sea. The service started at All Saints with Gareth speaking about his journey of faith. The congregation joined in with the responses as he made a public commitment to Jesus. Following the conclusion of the morning service in the building it then continued down at the beach where he was baptised. It was, and is, such a great joy to hear how Jesus has been working in his life.



Gareth's testimony can be heard on the Parish website using the following link:

<https://www.swanageteam.com/news-article/sunday-sermon-24th-may-2026> or by going to the All Saints page – sermons-24th May. Please continue to hold Gareth in your prayers.

We have continued our series of 'Fabulous Free Family Fun Days'. This time we held it on a Friday evening owing to the various weekend festivals and other events that take place in our town. Once again the vertical slide was set in church and underwent the obligatory safety check from Megan!

It was good to see families from Swanage come and have a good time in church. I still can't quite get my head around a free raffle – but it was brilliant! As part of the event this time live music was provided in the first two hours by Martha, who accompanied her own wonderful singing by playing guitar. The entertainment for the final two hours was provided by Martha and Tim, on keyboard.

It was good to welcome the Friday Fun Club to the event. An opportunity to use the slide, take part in the games and crafts, and enjoy a hot dog or two! An especial thanks to all who provided cakes and other food for the event.



Following on from last time Jackie and Jo entertained the assembled families to another story of Jesus using puppets. Once again, it was well received.

On the 10th & 11th June it was great to see Allsort'd use the church for four concerts. They were raising money to go towards installing a lift to increase disabled access in the Mowlem Theatre. I had the privilege of seeing them on the Wednesday evening. It was an evening full of humour, enthusiasm and talented youngsters giving their all for the audience.

By the time you read this we will have finished our series on "Generous God, Generous People". This has been a parish wide initiative to explore how we can respond to the generosity of God. Not just in terms of money, but also using our time and skills in His service.

John Payne
Churchwarden

Cover Story

*'As the deer pants for streams of water,
so my soul pants for you, my God.
My soul thirsts for God, for the living God'*

Psalms 42.1-2.

DIARY DATES JULY 2026



Sunday 5th July - 10am Holy Communion

Monday 6th July - 7:30pm Briefing for Carnival Tent volunteers

Tuesday 7th July - 7pm Bible Study

- 7pm Open Deanery Synod Meeting at Bere Regis

Thursday 9th July - 7pm PCC meeting at All Saints

**Sunday 12th July - 10am Holy Communion with Rev. Natalie
Davies**

**Sunday 19th July - 10am Holy Communion
- 3:30pm Pimms and Hymns**

Tuesday 21st July - 7pm Bible Study

**Sunday 26th July - 10:30am Carnival Praise – Sandpit Field
No service at St Mark's**

**Sunday 2nd August - Holy Communion at 11am followed by a
BBQ**

Choir Rehearsal - Mondays 6:15 - 7pm

**Junior Singing Club - Tuesdays 3:30pm – 4:25pm (during term-
time)**

Prayer and Share - Wednesdays 10am - 10:45am

St Marks News

There's always lots of events and happenings in St Marks and in beautiful Swanage.

John and I attended the Archdeacons Visitation, on 2nd June, when we, along with the many other Churchwardens from churches around Dorset, were sworn in, once again, to serve St Marks for another year. Thank you for all your support, prayers, and encouragement, in the coming year.

Our afternoon concert, on Sunday 14th June, was another great success. A big Thank you to all who took part and supported this event. With a special Thank You, to Colin Burgess, our Music Director, who organised and coordinated the event. The concert was very well supported, raising over £450, in donations, and has been doubled by a generous anonymous donor, which will be divided between St Marks funds and Allsort'd, supporting their Café in the Focus Centre.

Our traditional Pimms and Hymns will take place, on Sunday 19th July at 3:30pm, in our beautiful church garden. A perfect chance to admire and sit on our newly repaired church bench. Many thanks to Mike Keats and his son, Stephen, and to David Hudson for organising and making the repairs. The garden has burst in to colour with all the wonderful roses and variety of flowers in bloom. Our many thanks go to David Hudson, our church gardener, who has grown many of the flowers from seed, and planted them in the garden for us all to enjoy. Further details of this event will be in the pew sheet shortly.

I hope you have enjoyed and had a chance to reflect on the sermons, reflections, and readings, from our Generous God, Generous People series looking at our service to our Generous God, through our giving, gifts, and service within our churches. Booklets are still available in church if you would like one. There will be more updates and reflections on this during the coming months.

This month we will be looking forward to and, for some members, participating in the Swanage Carnival week of events starting on 25th July. There will be some wonderful fireworks to enjoy on the Saturday evening, to ensure the week gets off to a great start with a big Bang! There will be the traditional Carnival Praise Service, on Sunday 26th in the Carnival Tent, on Sandpit Field.

An opportunity to come together for united worship and fellowship. In the afternoon there's the wonderful Carnival Procession when Churches Together in Swanage, with representatives from each church, will join in the procession.

We look forward to seeing everyone again this year and being a part of the great atmosphere around the procession route and in the town. Several members will also be helping in the Churches Together Carnival Tent. Hope we will see you there!

We look forward to welcoming visitors to Swanage, during carnival week and throughout the summer holidays, to our churches, and especially to St Marks, where, I am sure, they will receive a very warm welcome to the Party Church!

Just as you take a breath and recover from the fun packed events of Carnival Week.....

Our BBQ will be on Sunday 2nd August!, (now an annual event) following our morning worship service @ 11am. Further details will be in the pew sheet, nearer the time.

A reflection:

Pray regularly

Read and reflect on the scriptures

Participate in the life of the local church

Enjoy God's gifts with gratitude

Give generously to others

Serve and use your gifts

Share the good news of Jesus

Challenge injustice and care for God's creation

May God Bless and Keep You.

Anne Roper
Church Warden



St Nicholas Studland News



Dear Friends,

Soon the holidays will be upon us. Schools break up, the university year finishes and businesses, offices and all places of work take a couple of weeks break. In Studland, life becomes very busy with visitors, day trippers and holiday makers. It is such fun to see the families heading down to the beach or along the heath footpaths all seeking out those times of fun, rest and recuperation. Of course, sometimes, it can be less than ideal. The weather may turn, someone gets stung by a bee, a favourite toy gets left behind or the car refuses to move. Finding peace can be quite hard work!

What strikes me though about the holiday season is that it's often seen as a means to an end. We take our holidays so that we can return to work and become engaged and effective once more, to recharge our batteries and so on. Alternatively, we can fill our holidays with busy experiences. We journey on to new places to learn new things, discover different places and customs and food. I suppose it's sort of alright, but I wonder if deep down we're a bit wary of doing nothing. It's almost as if we're embarrassed to take time for leisure just for leisure's sake: no programme, no agenda, no plans, just time.

It's often said that the pinnacle of creation according to the Genesis story is the moment on the sixth day when God created man, but I think that misreads the original text. If you follow the story on from the end of chapter one to the beginning of chapter two you'll find that the summit of all that effort was the seventh day, the Sabbath, the day when God did nothing. Doing nothing was a feature too of Jesus' ministry. Clearly, he was very active with preaching, healing and travelling, but he did take time out too. He certainly prayed a great deal and he took his disciples away from the crowds and the bustle to places of calm and quiet. There doesn't seem to have been any particular plan or object to these times. They were simply opportunities to just be.

D H Lawrence in his poem 'Pax' captures that sense of just being really well and shows us that it can be a path to encounter God.

All that matters is to be at one with the living God
to be a creature in the house of the God of Life.
Like a cat asleep on a chair
at peace, in peace
and at one with the master of the house, with the mistress,
at home, at home in the house of the living,
sleeping on the hearth, and yawning before the fire.
Sleeping on the hearth of the living world
yawning at home before the fire of life
feeling the presence of the living God
like a great reassurance
a deep calm in the heart
a presence
as of the master sitting at the board
in his own and greater being,
in the house of life.

I wonder whether we might try to do that 'cat thing' of just 'being', just enjoying what it means to be alive in this moment in this place. Taking leisure for no other reason than that it is leisure and discovering in it a connection to the most deep and beautiful and significant things of life and God. As the summer draws on, I hope all of us will have an opportunity to just rest.

Revd. Tony Edmonds

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Carnival Praise
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Seafront in Swanage

A special United Service in the Marquee on the Carnival Field
(Sandpit Field).



Letter from the Dean of Salisbury

800 years ago, on 14 June 1226, an extraordinary event took place at the heart of the post-Conquest still-new Diocese of Salisbury. The bodies of three of its early bishops (Osmund, Roger, and Jocelin) were removed from their tombs in the cathedral of Old Sarum. They were brought down the hill, and reinterred in the cathedral of New Sarum, then in its seventh year of construction.

It was a sign that the cathedral community's centre of gravity had shifted decisively. Its principal place of worship and prayer was no longer the windswept hilltop, under the watchful eye of the royal garrison. The community had moved, and it was important that the remains of its former leaders should move too. In life and in death, God's people belonged together.

It was not a custom peculiar to mediaeval England. Scripture records moments when the bones of the elders are moved as the community moves. On his deathbed, the patriarch Joseph prophesies that God will deliver his people from Egypt. He asks that when that day comes his bones should be reburied in the Promised Land.

We could debate the theology of such removals at length. Presumably the unity in Christ of the living and the dead is not contingent on the place where the remains of the dead are located (or, indeed, on the place where the living are resident!)

But the care with which such remains were treated, and the importance attached to their being close at hand tells us something. It suggests that our forebears were prepared to view those who had led them with respect and generosity.

Roger, Jocelin, and Osmund were all Norman aristocrats heavily embroiled in the politics of the new regime. Despite Osmund's later canonization all must have made enemies (indeed, Jocelin was twice excommunicated by Archbishop Thomas Becket, martyred in 1170, while Roger's predilection for castle-building earned him the perpetual enmity of King Stephen). Yet the community honoured them; honoured the office they had held as Bishops of the Church; honoured (perhaps) whatever good they had seen in them as they exercised that office; and continued to pray for them as brothers in the Lord's family as they were laid to rest in the new cathedral.

Many commentators have observed that these are difficult times for leaders: I write this wondering who will be our Prime Minister by the time you read it. The scrutiny leaders are under is intense and the expectations of them are high - understandably, and necessarily so.

Perhaps the strange rite of 800 years ago – that solemn procession from Old Sarum to New – has something to teach us. Something about our common origin in God's loving purposes, which puts our differences into perspective; something about the roles leaders hold which transcends the qualities or defects that they bring to them; and something about our vocation to pray constantly – and to learn to pray for those we find hard to love.

Nick, Dean of Salisbury

Mothers' Union 150th anniversary

In June, there was a wonderful celebration in Salisbury Cathedral to mark the 150th anniversary of the founding of The Mothers' Union, a joyous and very significant service (and picnic!).

We remembered how, from a small idea in the vicarage at Old Alresford (Hampshire), a global movement with some 4 million current members was born. So why am I writing this to you?

We used to have a lively branch which met regularly and contributed widely to the life of the church, here in Swanage and around the world. The meetings stopped during Covid restrictions and never started again. We would now like to invite you to be part of the fellowship's rebirth in Purbeck.

The name 'Mothers' Union' doesn't really help you to understand what the organisation actually is, or what it achieves.



It is not just for mothers – it is no longer even just for women – men are encouraged to engage, and I would be very grateful for your support!

Mothers' Union is very active in the UK, fighting domestic abuse, supporting prisoners and their families, taking action against modern slavery, and giving positive support to families and carers facing a wider variety of problems in life.

Global programmes are rooted in communities and work to end injustice, violence, illiteracy, and poverty through carefully considered action, structured to match the particular needs of local people.

I would like to invite you to come along to a meeting in the Rectory Classroom at 10:30 am on Thursday, 23rd July. We will have coffee and cake and share information about the Mothers' Union, and about the programme of Swanage events we are proposing for the rest of the year. I look forward to seeing you then. If you would like to know more before the meeting, do contact me.

Paul Baird (Pauldbaird@aol.com / 07802431012)

Quote

"What we need as Christians is to be able to feed ourselves. How many there are who sit helpless and listless, with open mouths, hungry for spiritual things, and the minister has to try to feed them, while the Bible is a feast prepared, into which they never venture."

Dwight L Moody



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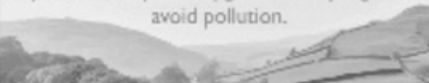
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Family News

Funerals

Mrs Patricia Lilian 'Pat' Norman, 89, Casterbridge Lodge,
Dorchester 15th May at St Mary's

Mr Brian Rennison Stockley, 91, Steer Road, Swanage 17th June
at St Mark's

Mr Gerald Perkins, 88, Bonfields Avenue, Swanage 3rd July at All
Saints

Baptism at St Mary's

Madison June Chloe Wells 17th May

Weddings at Studland

Giles Richardson and Anna Hutchings 16th May

Jack Wood and Shannon Donnelly 6th June

Jocelynnne

If anyone has got spare knitting wool, I knit scarves for homeless people. Not furry wool, just double knitting wool, bright colours please. lynnechurchserver@hotmail.co.uk. Please leave on the back pew at St Marks church, with my name on it and your email address. Thank You!



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Hebrew Word of the Month

Have you ever found yourself asking God for direction while quietly hoping He would confirm a plan you had already made?

Most of us have. We seek His guidance for our families, our work, our ministries, and our future. We ask Him to show us the next step and open the right doors. Yet sometimes, before God reveals where He wants us to go, He first asks a different question: Are we willing to follow Him wherever He leads?

This is where the Hebrew word Hineni (הִנֵּנִי, pronunciation hee-NAY-nee) becomes so powerful. Usually translated “Here I am,” Hineni carries a deeper meaning than simply announcing one’s presence. Throughout Scripture, it expresses attentiveness, availability, and a readiness to respond to God. It is the language of a heart that is fully present before the Lord and willing to obey.

We see this response throughout the Bible. When God called Abraham, he answered, “Hineni” (Genesis 22:1). When Moses encountered the Lord at the burning bush, he answered, “Hineni” (Exodus 3:4). When the young Samuel heard God’s voice in the night, he responded in the same way (1 Samuel 3:4).

Although their circumstances were very different, each of them demonstrated a willingness to place themselves in God’s hands before they knew exactly what He would ask of them.

That willingness is what makes Hineni so challenging and so beautiful. We often want clarity before commitment. We would prefer to know the destination before beginning the journey. Yet the men and women whom God used most powerfully were often those who chose obedience before they had all the answers.

Abraham did not know where God's plan would ultimately lead. Moses felt deeply inadequate for the task before him. Samuel was still learning to recognize God's voice. None of them were perfect, and none of them felt fully prepared. Yet God was not looking for perfect people. He was looking for hearts that were willing to trust Him.

The same remains true today. Many believers wonder whether God can use them because they feel unqualified, inexperienced, or uncertain about the future. Yet throughout Scripture, God consistently works through ordinary people who are willing to make themselves available to Him. More often than not, His call is not about ability but availability.

This truth finds its fullest expression in Yeshua, Jesus. Throughout His earthly ministry, He walked in complete obedience to His Father. He declared, "I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me" (John 6:38). In every circumstance, Yeshua demonstrated what a life of perfect surrender looks like. His heart was continually turned toward the Father, ready to fulfill His purposes.

As followers of Yeshua, we are invited to cultivate that same posture. God may not call all of us to leave our homeland like Abraham or stand before rulers like Moses, but He does call each of us to live with open hearts and willing hands. He may be prompting you to encourage someone who is struggling, share your faith with a friend, step into a new area of service, or trust Him in a situation where the outcome is still unclear.

Often the greatest acts of faith begin with a simple response: “Lord, here I am.”

As you reflect on Hineni this week, consider making it part of your daily prayer. Before the busyness of the day begins, take a moment to come before the Lord and say, “Hineni. Here I am. Teach me, lead me, and use me for Your purposes.” You may be surprised at how God works through a heart that is willing to be available to Him.

God is still looking for men and women who will respond to His voice with trust and obedience. May our response be the same as Abraham, Moses, Samuel, and ultimately Yeshua Himself: Hineni. Here I am.

Prayer

Father, thank You for Your faithfulness and for inviting me to participate in Your purposes. Help me to be attentive to Your voice and willing to follow wherever You lead. Give me the courage to trust You when the path ahead is uncertain and the humility to place my plans in Your hands. May my heart be quick to respond, “Hineni—Here I am.” Use my life for Your glory and help me walk faithfully with You each day. In Jesus name, Amen.

Blessings,

Pastor Israel Pochtar

Letter from the Editor

Last Sunday I just made it to St Marks in time to hear the choir begin the morning service with a rendering of the beautiful anthem that is on the back page of this month's Church Alive!

‘Lead me Lord, lead me in your righteousness, make Your way
plain before my face.

For it is You Lord, You Lord only, who makes me dwell in safety.’

I love this prayer and pray it every day. I especially prayed it whilst, with a wonderful group of helpers, we were preparing for the ‘One New Man’ conference, which the leaders of Emmanuel Baptist Church kindly let us hold there.

What made the conference special was that Pastor Israel Pochtar, a Jewish pastor, who writes the Hebrew Word of the Month on page 32, came to Swanage with Pastor Saleem Shalash, an Arab pastor who leads a church in Nazareth.

The reason we were so dependant on the Lord to lead us is that the very word ‘Israel’ is one of the most controversial words on the planet today. ‘Sadly it is more associated with anger, hatred, bloodshed and fighting than with the land where Jesus was born, lived, died and rose again to save us from our sins.

That is why this was important, because we were able to demonstrate, that through faith in Jesus, even the most bitter of enemies are not just reconciled, but become united in love and purpose, working together to spread the good news of His love and His faithfulness.

**Lead me, Lord, lead me
in your righteousness,
Make your way plain
before my face.
For it is you, Lord, you,
Lord, only
That makes me dwell in
safety.**

Psalm 5.8

[Listen to this beautiful anthem on YouTube](#)