

Church Alive!

Swanage Parish Magazine

May 2025



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Rev Jo Levasier writes;



As I write this we are just about to launch into Holy Week: a week full of church activities to help us focus on the last week of Jesus' life, his victory over sin and death through the cross and resurrection. A busy week in the church calendar and also a busy week for the town of Swanage, as visitors once again seek refreshment and holiday fun in the beautiful place in which we are blessed to live.

This year I have been particularly struck about how separate those two strands of “busy” are. Whilst Easter remains the central, defining celebration of the Christian faith – the moment on which the Good News we proclaim hangs – the wider world in the UK no longer has any real connection with the historical events of Jesus' death and resurrection. Easter for most is about chocolate eggs, bunnies and a couple of extra bank holidays. The necessity for us as God's people to make Jesus known is even more urgent than ever.

But for those of us who have been part of a church community for many years, we can often we struggle to know where to start, with finding the words, with knowing exactly how we can make Jesus known to a world that has largely rejected Christianity without really having a clue what it is actually about.

At the end of the Spring Term, a group of 12 of us from across All Saints, St Mary's, St Marks, Langton and Corfe Castle were able to go into Corfe Castle Primary School and run an Experience Easter Event. This is one of a number of events centred around Christian festivals designed by the Diocese of Gloucester for churches to run in schools. The material is interactive and aims to engage the children in the stories and reflect on the significance of them (without assuming Christian commitment).

The Easter one that we ran, took each group of children on a 6 stage journey from Palm Sunday to Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and finally Easter Sunday.

It was such a privilege to be welcomed into one of our local schools to run such an event and we were pleased to see how well it went down with both children and staff, and we really hope to be able to offer such an event more widely to other schools in a future year. But again, I was struck with how little knowledge most adults have of the Easter Story and how muddled understanding is about what is historical fact and what is “Christian faith”. In this vein, it was good to be able to welcome Sam Brooke from All Saints, to run some sessions in Lent on Evidence for Easter (you can read more details about later in this magazine).

The Apostle Peter encourages us to be ready with our answers: Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. *1 Peter 3v15*. And maybe that is a word for you. Do you need to think a little more about why you believe what you believe? Do you need to be a little more prepared to explain things clearly?

But for me the challenge is as always finding moments to have those meaningful conversations, finding those moments that prompt questions where we can talk about Jesus. (Once you get me started, I’m away!) My guess is that different people are better at this than others, and I am always encouraged by the Apostle Paul asking the Colossian church to pray that God might provide opportunities to speak the good news: *“And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains.” Colossians 4v3*

Perhaps this is the word for us across the team – that we each commit to praying for more opportunities to speak the name of Jesus, to explain the hope that we have within us, and to invite others to discover the peace and joy that the risen Jesus offers to all.

With every blessing in His Name
Rev Jo Levasier

St Mary's



Sunday Services:

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

Weekday Services

Daily	8am	Morning Prayer
Tue	2.30pm.	All Things Bright & Beautiful <i>(particularly suitable for those living with dementia or any kind of special need)</i>
Wed	10am- 12.30pm.	T-Pot in the Rectory Classroom
	11am	Holy Communion <i>Every 4th Weds with Healing</i>
Fri	5.30pm	Junior Choir Practice
	6.30pm	Adult Choir Practice
	6-8pm	Friday Fun Club in the Rectory

Sun 11th 6.30pm	Come & Sing Evensong with Ian Wick
Sat 17th 1-4pm	Set up and rehearsal for evening concert
7.00pm	Concert: Belvedere Singers

Every year we ask you to consider donating towards the cost of Church Alive!, and this year we hope you will feel able to use the enclosed envelope to make a suggested payment of £15.

Thank you so much,

Anthony Malpas Editor

Saint Mary's Church Library:

Thank you for the very positive feedback about the new arrangements. We continue to expand the range of books and if you would like to make a donation to the library, please either use one of the gift aid envelopes on Sunday and mark it 'Library Fund' or put a cheque into an envelope and drop it into the church office at any time.

We are also changing the forms in the borrowing file. In the past we simply asked you to sign books out and back in, but now we would like you to include a comment which might help people who follow you – let us know what you thought about the books you have read.

Feel free to contact me at any time if you have questions of comments about the library.

Paul (Pauldbaird@aol.com / 07802431012)

Christian Aid Week 2025 11th - 17th May

This year we particularly remember Warren Sellars who died last year. With his wife, Margaret, Warren delivered large numbers of Christian Aid week envelopes each year and we will miss him.

Warren always stressed that Christian Aid Week was not just about money, but raising awareness of the amazing work done by the charity, supporting, educating and training people in their own communities to be part of the solution to their problems

Can you help to deliver envelopes this year? If so, we would warmly welcome you to the team. If you would like to join or just want to know more, please contact me.

Joanna Baird [Joannabaird52@gmail.com]

All Saints



Regular Sunday Services

8am	Holy Communion
10.30am	Family Worship with children's groups
	1st Sunday Communion
	2nd Sunday All-Age Café Church

Weekly Church Calendar

Coffee Pot	Thursdays 10:30am
Art Workshop	Fridays 10am

Opportunities to pray together

Weekly	Thursdays 9:30 – 10am
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News from All Saints

Following the visit of Jamie Fleming to a camp in the USA and then onto Canada, we were treated to a presentation by Jamie to describe some of his adventures and to a delicious tea!

The first part of his adventure was working at a summer camp with children who have special needs. This was a big challenge for Jamie but as he had worked with autistic children at Purbeck View School he had some insight as to what was needed, unlike the other staff who were new to this experience. The camp was on a lake where he shared a 'bunk' or hut with some of the children. He encountered a few difficulties along the way including non appetising food, a false accusation made against

him and getting ill. Jamie confessed to being tempted to give up at times but despite all this he had a lot of fun, he stayed the course and he was pleased he did.

The second adventure was taking part in a five month discipleship training programme with “Catch the Fire Ministries” in Toronto. He had his head shaved as a result of a lost chess game and was disappointed that the Outreach part of his stay was a trip to Cardiff! He’d been hoping for somewhere more exotic!



On the more positive note, Jamie met others of mixed nationalities on the course and said he encountered God in a gentle way. It was obvious from his talk that he had been on quite a spiritual journey as well as the physical travels. He spent time telling us what he had learned as he was taught about ‘Hearing God’s Voice’. He shared that some of what he heard was exactly what he needed to hear and realised this was God at work in him.

The idea of a ‘Heartstone’ particularly resonated with him and he spoke of needing to ‘open the box’ to confront what’s holding us back. The concepts of repentance, renouncing, forgiveness of ourselves, rejoicing and trusting in God were all explored as were the many facets of God as our Father and our identity in Christ. Jamie reported that he was now excited to find a new identity in Jesus and had come to understand that we are all equally loved by Him.

If you would like to hear Jamie’s talk you can ask for a link to it.

“How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!” John 3.1

Evidence for Easter

We were privileged to have our very own Sam Brooke who has extensively studied Biblical history, deliver not one but two evening talks at All Saints recently.

His talks about the evidence for Easter focused on two main points: the historical evidence for Jesus' existence and the reliability of biblical manuscripts.

1. Evidence from Non-Christian Writers: Sam highlighted that various non-Christian writers from the first and second centuries, such as the Jewish historian Josephus and the Roman historian Tacitus, mentioned Jesus. These references serve as independent attestations to Jesus' existence and the events surrounding his life, providing external evidence beyond the Christian scriptures.

2. Reliability of Manuscripts: Sam also discussed the incredible reliability of the New Testament manuscripts. Despite thousands of copies being made over centuries, most of the variations between them are minor—such as spelling differences or slight wording changes. These variations don't affect the core message of the text. This large number of early copies allows scholars to reconstruct the original text with a high degree of certainty, affirming the historical reliability of the biblical account.

In essence, Sam's talk pointed to both external historical sources and the meticulous preservation of manuscripts as strong evidence supporting the reality of Easter and the figure of Jesus.

In Sam's second talk he proved that Jesus did indeed rise from the dead three days after the crucifixion. Again he used historical sources other than the Bible, evidence from the New Testament and modern medical sources. If you missed these talks and wish to listen to them they are on the All Saints website, or Sam can send you a link. His email address is **samuelbrooke@hotmail.com**

Heather Lightowler, Church Warden



ANY QUESTIONS?

On 11th March some seventy people gathered in the United Reformed Church Hall for the Any Questions group meeting, at which Dr James Paul, the Director of the English branch of the L'Abri fellowship and a former palliative care doctor, gave a well-received presentation under the intriguing title of "What on Earth is Heaven? James argues that heaven is not some spiritual place "somewhere out there." Instead, it is the dimension where God's will is done and humanity's role is to help bring the kingdom of God to fruition on earth, while hoping for a renewed heaven and earth in the fulness of God's time and plan – a refreshing re-interpretation of conventional ideas of heaven and earth.

Tuesday 13th May 2025 All Saints' Church

Doors open at 6.30 pm coffee/tea; presentation from 7.00 pm



The Rev'd Dr Paul Weston: "Sharing Faith in a Secular Culture"



Paul was latterly senior lecturer in mission studies at Ridley Hall Cambridge and lecturer in the University Divinity School. He remains a college fellow and is director of the Newbigin Centre for Gospel and Western Culture on which subjects he has written and published widely, particularly on the influence of Lesslie Newbigin, the 20th century internationally esteemed theologian and thinker about the nature of mission. Studying how faith can relate to and interact with the cultural assumptions of changing generations has been very much to the fore of Paul's research, both academically and in mission activity.

Do join us and hear Dr Weston's insights into the relationship between the gospel and western culture and how to understand and manage it effectively. It will be a fascinating evening.

Further information from David Williams

d.stephen.w1@gmail.com

Art Workshop Quiz Evening

Just over 40 people “competed” in the Art Workshop Quiz. They were a mixture of group members and friends from the church and wider community. It was a very convivial evening, with lots of conversation and laughter, good food and a raffle (of course!). It was all ably co-ordinated by our quiz master, Dionne, who is one of our volunteers, supported by John, Francine, Suzanne, David and Alan. Lots of banter all round! The winners were Greengage Horticultural Project. We shall repeat it next year! Oh, and we raised just over £400 for the Art Workshop funds. Many thanks to everyone who supported us.

Concert at St James, Kingston



All are very welcome to the Karen Grant Concert at St James' Church, Kingston, 2.30 on Sunday 4th May. Karen will sing some special tributes to help us commemorate the 80th Anniversary of VE Day. Refreshments will be served afterwards. Donations gratefully received for the Veterans Society and St James' Church.

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St Mark's Notes for May



Diary

Sunday 4th May 10am	Holy Communion
Monday 5th May 11am - 3pm	Herston Community Picnic <i>at Herston Village Hall and Community Field</i>
Tuesday 7th May 7pm	Bible Study Group
Sunday 11th May 10am	Holy Communion Rev. Ian Bird
Sunday 18th May 10am	Holy Communion Rev. John Cooper
Tuesday 21st May 7pm	Bible Study Group
Sunday 25th May 10am	Celebration! Service <i>With St Mark's Band</i>
Mondays 6:15 - 7pm.	Choir rehearsal
Wednesdays 10am - 10:45am.	Prayer and share

The St Mark's Goes Global evening, on 22nd March, was a lot of fun with an amazing array of photos from locations around the world. What a well-travelled crowd our Church members are! The event also raised £303 for Christian Aid, plus Gift Aid. Thanks to everyone who took part. We were very pleased that the excellent Lent lunch at St Mark's raised £331 - a total of over £600 in a single month. Thanks to everyone who made these events work.

St Mark's School held their Easter Services at the Church on 31st March and 1st April. It was great to see parents and grandparents come along. As usual, each class contributed

something to the service, and the Year 5 children wrote the prayers and read them during the KS2 service. Skye Crisp, a year 5 pupil, aged 9, wrote the amazing poem printed below, and read it at the service. What a talented young lady, and what a great school, nurturing this talent!

The Easter Story by Skye Crisp

Easter, a holiday of cheer,
Where children collect eggs that are near,
But, it's not all eggs and bunnies,
There is more to being silly and funny.

This story starts a long time ago,
When you couldn't walk with boots in the snow,
Where our hero came to a close,
But wait! Don't leave! Come stick in your nose.

Jesus had arrived in the town,
With people praising, the great leader gave a frown,
Soon, Judas was making a horrible trade,
The trade that would save when made.

Jesus knew of this cruel fate,
But, he had a stable heart rate,
That evening he told his disciples
That he would soon be in a terrible cycle.

"Death!?" said the disciples aloud,
As Jesus gave food to the crowd,
"Yes", said Jesus, "That is the cost",
He washed their feet, "Run, guide yourselves and don't get lost".

Then, it was the day,
The day that Judas would betray,
Jesus was praying then was arrested,
They knew to do this because Judas kissed him.

He was brought to trial,
His disciples in denial,
The crowd screams, "PUT HIM TO DEATH!",
Jesus knew at that moment they had lost all faith.

Then, the priests smirked evilly,
Their eyes angry and fiery,
As Jesus with a thorn crown,
Dragged the cross around town.

They nailed him on the cross,
Crowds gathering with fruits to toss,
"Forgive them, Father", Jesus gasped with his last breath,
As he was taken by death.

With this, the sky turned dark,
Lightning and thunder that went bark! bark! bark!
The temple curtain tore in two,
Crowds going "Whooo!"

They put Jesus in the tomb, they said
"For things to respect you",
A few days passed,
The Death of Jesus in the past.

When some ladies came to visit,
The stone had been shattered and hit,
An angel stood among the rocks,
Scaring them out of their socks!

“Don’t fret my dears”, the angel told them,
Mary and the others tried to trust him,
“The one you seek is not here”,
“When you find him, party! Drink beer!”

Being told this they quickly ran from the tomb,
The disciples resting until Mary burst into the room,
“Jesus is alive!” they cried,
Bursting with much pride.

When Jesus came back, he taught more people,
They sat down (some sitting in treacle!)
Then finally, the day came,
He went to heaven, his tale known as fame.

The End.

As I write, we are preparing for Holy Week and Easter and for our St Mark’s Day celebration on 27th April. In addition to the Celebration! Service on that morning at 10am, we are also holding a Teddy Bear’s Picnic for children aged 2-6 on Sunday afternoon at 3pm. Watch this space in June for a report, and a picture of Bella, the St Mark’s Teddy Bear.

Rev David Richards - Resident Priest

Can you help?

St Nicholas are seeking a PCC Secretary: To attend 6 PCC meetings each year, plus 1 annual meeting. These meetings can be recorded for ease of transcribing later.

The primary responsibility of the PCC Secretary is to support the PCC Chair in the preparation and organisation of the meetings and to handle all correspondence.

Please contact Barbara Matthews (Churchwarden) for more information or for an informal chat.

Tel: 01929 450218 Email: barmat18@btinternet.com

St Nicholas Studland



Parish News

I hope you had a really blessed Easter with family and friends. Across the Swanage and Studland Team Churches we journeyed through Holy Week, remembering the Last Supper, Jesus' betrayal, trial, crucifixion and death to Easter Sunday where we celebrated his resurrection and what that means for us. At St Nicholas on Good Friday we had a contemplative and poignant evening service and then on Easter Sunday joyfully celebrated the resurrection of our lord and saviour.

There were mixed emotions though as it was also Rev Tony Higgins' last service at St Nicholas before retirement. Tony has been an outstanding Resident Priest in Studland for over 15 years and has faithfully led worship at St Nicholas and well supported the congregation there. Tony and his wife Feli have also been active residents in Studland and his gentle and gracious ministry has touched many in the village and beyond. Also, he has been a great supporter of the wider Anglican team and a wise friend to me.

As you are probably aware by now, we are holding a retirement party for Tony and Feli at the Village Hall on Saturday 3rd May at 3pm and all are welcome as we gather to thank them for all they have done for our church and village communities over the years. Please continue to remember them in your prayers as they settle into post retirement life.

In retirement they will continue to live in Studland and Tony, after a few months rest, will be leading the occasional midweek and Sunday services at our Team churches in Swanage. He continues to be Swanage Lifeboat Chaplain in an important year as we celebrate later in the summer the 150th Anniversary of the founding of Swanage Lifeboat Station.

So, at St Nicholas, what will be happening next? You will be pleased to read that another Studland resident, the Rev Tony Edmonds, will be succeeding Tony at St Nicholas Church. Many of you will know him and his wife Diana already and he brings to this role a wealth of gifts and experience. He will start at the beginning of August. Please pray for him as he prepares for this new role.

Though we celebrated Easter Sunday last month, we continue throughout May in our services during this season of Easter to explore more fully all that Jesus' death and resurrection means for us as Christians. Again, I am struck by the boundless generosity of God in loving us so much that *'he gave his only son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but have eternal life.'* (John 3: 16). At the end of this month, we will celebrate Jesus' ascension into Heaven and at St Nicholas for the early risers there will be a service at 6.30am on Thursday 29th May followed by breakfast in the Church Hall – see you there!

From the registers:

Burial of Ashes – 4th April - Katie Rayment

Baptism – 6th April - Eloise Mae Lavender

Wedding – 12th April - Jemma Hodgson and Michael Hamilton-Fletcher

Every Blessing Ian, Team Rector, Swanage and Studland

CHURCHES TOGETHER AT EASTER

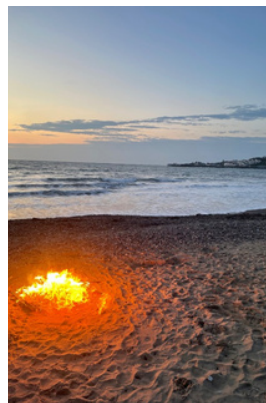
Good Friday, the weather set the tone, a cold wind and threatening sky, as three groups from several churches in Swanage converged on the Band Stand, each group quietly and thoughtfully following a leader carrying a wooden cross.



Rev Dave Richards led the short service of hymns, a bible reading, a short address and prayers, finishing with an act of dedication. It was an inspirational moment in time, summed up by the last verse of “When I survey the wondrous cross:”
*“Were the whole realm of nature mine,
that were an offering far to small. Love so
amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my
life my all.”*

Easter Day, 6 am, and the little fire on the beach at Swanage, was a poignant reminder of the risen Jesus, waiting for the disciples: *“When they landed, they saw a fire of burning coals there with fish on it, and some bread.”*

Rev Jo Levasier called out “**Christ is risen**” and the assembled group from churches in and around Swanage replied with gusto “**He is risen indeed!**”



As the service reached the final hymn, *“Thine be the glory, risen, conquering son, endless is the victory thou o’er death hast won,”* the rising sun came out from behind the clouds and reminded us of the glorious warmth and joy that Jesus brings to all who put their trust in Him.

The Besom in Purbeck

I was busy doing some Besom admin recently when I came across these pictures! They are from 2016 when we received a generous grant from the sale of the Christian Centre to enable us to purchase a van! In the first picture we see our wonderful Chaplain Rev John Staple conducting a service of Blessing.



The second is a picture of the Trustees who made sure that the proceeds from the sale of the Christian Centre was put to good use for the benefit of the community - the purchase of this van is a testament to this. John, in his inimitable way, listed the unusual things that he had blessed in his working life, but a van had never been included! But what to use for the blessing was the question? In the event 3 in 1 oil was chosen, for a truly Trinitarian blessing! But as John pointed out it was not him doing the blessing but God, who is able to

put the most mundane things to good purpose. This van changed our lives! When Besom in Purbeck began in Swanage over 20 years ago pioneered by Nick Viney and



Julie Bowerman, were limited and maintaining the service was a struggle, but through Nick's perseverance particularly it survived. those who don't know us what we do is very simple: We collect donations (household items and furniture) from those who have and give to those in need! We receive our referrals by way of the helping agencies such as Social Services,

Housing Associations, Health professionals, Citizens Advice and the like. All those who receive are on benefits or low income and many of them often in desperate need.



Due to the current financial climate the call on our services never ceases and has grown exponentially. Referrals and offers of donations are gathered in each week and Thursday is set aside for deliveries and collections. The generosity of people is remarkable and we are forever grateful for all we receive. However, we are always in need of help and would welcome and appreciate anyone who feels called to give time, include us in prayer, or called to donate financially to contact us – these will ensure that our service survives, with God's blessing.

If you need any further information please contact:

purbeckbesom@gmail.com

07519 977732

Davina Freedman (on behalf of the Besom Team).

Faith is acting in the face of contrary evidence. The senses declare, "It cannot be," but Faith shouts above the turmoil, "It is!"

E. W. Kenyon

SWANAGE TOWN BAND PLAYING IN THE BANDSTAND THIS SUMMER WEATHER PERMITTING

Wednesday 21st May	7.00pm *
Saturday 7th June	2.30pm
Wednesday 18th June	7.00pm *
Saturday 5th July	2.30pm
Wednesday 16th July	7.00pm *
Wednesday 30th July	7.00pm
Wednesday 20th August	7.00pm

**** In Methodist Church at 7.30pm if wet***

"Swanage Town Band will also be playing at Swanage railway station on 17th May at 1.15pm as part of the Swanage Railway 140th anniversary celebrations. We hope to see you there!"

The Rise of Herston by Audrey Pembroke

Audrey, the author of this delightful little book, lives in Herston, and says in her introduction that "History has always been my favorite subject, and research is a pleasure." Her love of history is demonstrated throughout the book, taking us back to April 25, 1872, St Marks Day when the church was dedicated, to the visits of Princess Victoria and later Prince Albert to Swanage, when Herston was completely separate to Swanage. She tells of a time when "there was a huge gap between rich and poor," but holidays were "celebrated with great joy" and they loved a brass band, which, as we see above, is a love that continues to this day.

Audrey writes about the quarries, a time when the stone wagons would be "rumbling down to the shore" with a "blast of the cow horn," of the sound of the stonemasons, the building of the school, the Ebenezer Chapel and the Herston Reading Room and much more.

I can guarantee that you will enjoy going back in time as you read this lovely little piece of our local history. Copies are available at Costcutters, Herston, and, thanks to Audrey, you will not be disappointed.

“Finding Peace In A Culture Of Anxiety”

“How do we deal with our need for PEACE in a world so full of ANXIETY?”

“Finding peace in a culture of anxiety”, is a Bible Society podcast that shows how, through the book of Proverbs, and other Scriptures, we can find real peace. When everything else is crumbling around us, we have a hope that will never fail in the love of Jesus.

The podcast points out that to be constantly fed by the Scriptures, in the midst of difficulty, is vitally important. The Bible is the greatest source of wisdom for us, and shows how in Biblical days people looked to God in desperate situations. We can learn from that now. It's about how we orientate our lives. We don't look at the chaos and the darkness and the evil. We look towards God through His Word. True wisdom recognises the reality of the limitations of human wisdom.

You can tune into the Rooted Podcast from Bible Society. Simply go to ‘YouTube/Rooted/Bible Society/Finding Peace,’ search for “Finding peace in a culture of anxiety-Proverbs E6” and discover more about where to find lasting peace.

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.”

Proverbs 3:5-6 ESV

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.”

Philippians 4:6 ESV

We believe the Bible is God's gift to the world. We want everyone to discover its message for themselves.

Bible Society, Swanage Action Group

biblesociety.org.uk



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AT THE SWANAGE BANDSTAND**

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Seasons Come and Go

It's spring again, with new growth in sight,
Instead of darkness, we see more light,
Our God is moving, His will to perform,
Bringing peace to our hearts, once caught in a storm.

The winter past, was an unpleasant time,
Those days were dark, and not in rhyme,
A barren time, for all created things,
The new season brings joy, my heart sings.

Each new beginning, that our God brings,
Is a real blessing, from the King of Kings,
When new seasons come in, the old ones must go,
It's through these times, that our faith will grow.

When our God's involved, there is more to then come,
Made available to us, through Jesus the Son,
So, whatever season we're in, let us look to Him,
Who paid the great price, and welcomed us in.

With thanks to Derek Harris

Quotation

“The Bible is the Word of God: supernatural in origin, eternal in duration, inexpressible in valor, infinite in scope, regenerative in power, infallible in authority, universal in interest, personal in application, inspired in totality. Read it through, write it down, pray it in, work it out, and then pass it on. Truly it is the Word of God. It brings into man the personality of God; it changes the man until he becomes the epistle of God. It transforms his mind, changes his character, takes him on from grace to grace, and gives him an inheritance in the Spirit. God comes in, dwells in, walks in, talks through, and sups with him.”

Smith Wigglesworth

Church Alive Cover Pages



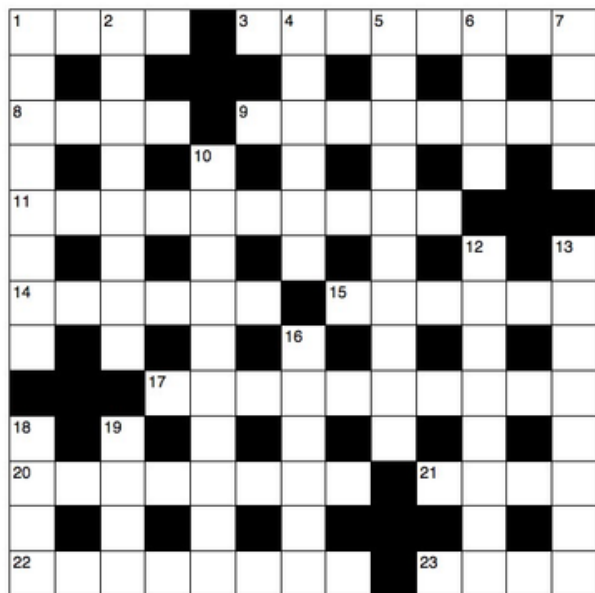
*“After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, “Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.” At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it.....In the center, around the throne, were four living creatures, and they were covered with eyes, in front and in back. **The first living creature was like a lion, the second was like an ox, the third had a face like a man, the fourth was like a flying eagle.**”*
Revelation 4; 2,6 and 7



The winner of the box of chocolates was Marian Booth, who spent some time reading Revelation. It could have been John Way who came close, but he does not like chocolates. We had some interesting suggestions which may be used on future cover pages.

Solution to April Crossword

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

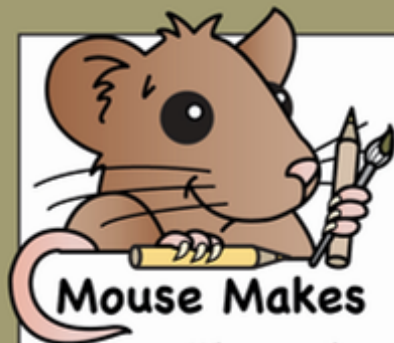


Across

- 1 Infant (Luke 2:12) (4)
 3 Luis must (anag.) (8)
 8 What Jesus called the devil (John 8:44) (4)
 9 'My God, my God, why have you – me?' (Matthew 27:46) (8)
 11 Anglican form of church government (10)
 14 'Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like – ' (Isaiah 40:31) (6)
 15 Ministers of religion (6)
 17 Make stronger (1 Thessalonians 3:13) (10)
 20 Devoutness (1 Timothy 2:2) (8)
 21 The father of Jesse (Ruth 4:22) (4)
 22 Pool where Jesus healed a man who had been an invalid for 38 years (John 5:2) (8)
 23 '[Jesus] said to them, " – here and keep watch"' (Mark 14:34) (4)

Down

- 1 Follower of Christ (Acts 16:1) (8)
 2 One of the punishments endured by Paul (2 Corinthians 6:5) (8)
 4 Soldiers (Exodus 14:9) (6)
 5 Scholarly study of melody, harmony and rhythm (10)
 6 'I am God, and there is none – me' (Isaiah 46:9) (4)
 7 'And how can they preach unless they are – ?' (Romans 10:15) (4)
 10 Favourable reception (1 Timothy 1:15) (10)
 12 Hip orbit (anag.) (8)
 13 End of life (Isaiah 22:14) (5,3)
 16 'About midnight the sailors – they were approaching land' (Acts 27:27) (6)
 18 He married Jezebel (1 Kings 16:30–31) (4)
 19 'According to your great compassion – out my transgressions' (Psalm 51:1) (4)



Mouse Makes

MIRACLES OF PETER

At which temple gate
did the crippled man lay?

Acts 3:1-10



Who were the man and wife
who lied to God?

and

Acts 5:1-11

People carried the sick into
the streets so that when Peter
came by at least his

might fall on them.

Acts 5:12-16

How long had Aeneas
been paralysed for?

years

Acts 9:32-35

Where had Tabitha's body been laid?
in the

Acts 9:36-42



"And the word
of God
continued to
increase,
and the number
of the disciples
multiplied
greatly."
Acts 6:7

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

After Jesus
ascended into
heaven, the
Holy Spirit
came upon
the Apostles
and Peter was
able to perform
many miracles
in Jesus' name.
*See the book
of ACTS*

PETER • SIGNS • WONDERS • MIRACLES • HEALED
CRIPPLE • LAME • WALK • LEAPING • PRAISING • LIED • DIED • SICK
AENEAS • PARALISED • TABITHA • ILL • PRAYED • ALIVE



Hebrew Word of the Month

Emunah: More Than Just Faith

Emunah (אֱמוּנָה) is a profound Hebrew word often translated as "faith" or "faithfulness." While many understand faith to purely be belief in God, emunah goes deeper—it speaks of a steadfast trust, loyalty, and complete dependence on God's character and promises. It's not just about believing in God; it's about fully relying on Him, trusting His faithfulness, and remaining committed to Him in every circumstance.

Biblical Context:

"Now faith is the confidence in what we hope for and the assurance about what we do not see." – Hebrews 11:1

Hebrew Meaning:

The root of emunah comes from the Hebrew verb "aman," which means to support, confirm, or be faithful. Emunah is a faith that is active and reliable. It's not passive belief; it's a firm and unshakable trust in God's promises, even when we cannot see the outcome. It's the kind of faith that moves us to trust God's plan, knowing that He is always faithful to fulfill His word.

Application:

Emunah is not about having all the answers or understanding every circumstance. It's about putting our full trust in God, believing that He is who He says He is, and that He will do what He has promised. In life's trials and triumphs, emunah calls us to stay grounded in God's love and faithfulness. It's a faith that stands firm, not because we are strong, but because we trust in God's unchanging strength.

A Prayer for You:

May your faith (emunah) in God grow stronger each day. May you trust Him fully with every area of your life, knowing that He is faithful to guide, protect, and provide. May His promises give you peace and hope, and may His faithfulness sustain you through every season.



Letter from the Bishop of Salisbury

Sudan and South Sudan Partnership – A time of crisis

We have been fortunate to celebrate a peaceful Easter in our land, we find Sudan and South Sudan in probably the most desperate state in more than 25 years of our half century of partnership. This Spring marks the second anniversary of the conflict in Sudan, and the BBC has reported that fighting between the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) has claimed more than 150,000 lives. The UN calls it the world's largest humanitarian crisis in which some 12 million people have been forced to flee their homes, creating new crises particularly in neighbouring Chad and South Sudan.

As the conflict intensified, Archbishop Ezekiel Kondo, his family and staff were forced to flee and with other supporters we helped him re-establish the Episcopal Church HQ in Port Sudan on the Red Sea coast. More recently the SAF has recaptured most of Khartoum including the symbolically important Presidential Palace. The RSF is now concentrated in El-Fasher in the Darfur region in the north and west of Sudan. It has been responsible for the most appalling atrocities yet denies it is ethnic cleansing but "tribal conflict". Efforts are being considered for the International Criminal Court (ICC) to investigate. The UK Government's recent decision to reduce the Overseas Development Aid budget is very disappointing. In South Sudan, violence has returned too. Many people worry that Juba may be consumed by violence again, most recently triggered by President Salvar Kiir arresting the First Vice-President Riek Machar. The South Sudan Council of Churches has been urging all parties to seek peace and not conflict. "Faith

before tribe” should be the guiding principle but that is easily said but much harder to practice. How do we do that ourselves?

Our partnership with the Sudans is founded on prayer and fellowship so please continue to hold the people of the Sudans in your prayers.

One way in which you can offer practical help is by supporting the Sudan Medical Link Fete, held in my garden on Sunday 15th June at 2pm. All are welcome as we raise much needed funds for medical aid for families in South Sudan.

+Stephen, Bishop of Salisbury

Letter from the Editor



If you look carefully at the beautiful East Window at St Mary's you will see at each corner of the figure of Jesus one of the four images that have graced the cover pages of Church Alive! for the past four months. The stained glass window depicts an angel, rather than the face of a man, because the man of Revelation 4 is often considered to be an angel. On page 29 you can read the passage from the book of Revelation, that describes the awesome vision that the Apostle John had when he was taken up in

the spirit and shown the throne of God. What John saw was not just a picture, it was the actual throne on which the Father is

seated, surrounded by the emerald rainbow, with the twenty-four, the four living creatures and the seven flaming spirits of God, and myriad upon myriads of angels. It reminds us of the reality of the spiritual Kingdom of God which we regularly refer to in the Lord's prayer, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

The first living creature was like a lion, showing us the majesty and power of Jesus. The second was like an ox, describing the strength of Jesus which He gives us to face the challenges and trials in our lives. David said "*You have given me the strength of a wild ox, and you have chosen me as your very own.*" The third, with a face like that of a man, reminds us of the humanity of Jesus, who often described Himself as "*The Son of Man.*" The fourth, like a flying eagle, tells of the divinity of Jesus, which He shares with all believers in Him, the Spirit of God, so that when we wait upon Him He will renew our strength so that we can soar above our troubles with wings like eagles.

If you have time it would be well worthwhile spending a few moments contemplating the North Window at St Mary's and maybe reading Revelation 4, taking in the glorious reality of the Throne of God. There is so much detail in the window, angels, the twenty-four elders, the four living creatures, Jerusalem and the Tree of Life. It even includes St George, although he is not included in the Revelation passage.

It may however be significant that the patron saint of England is shown in heaven with his sword in these troubled times. The Bible is called the Sword of the Spirit, *Ephesians 6.17*, and Satan is the dragon. There has never been a time when it has been more important for the Church, believers in Jesus Christ, to wield that sword, and to overcome the evil of these days in our country.

Anthony Malpas, Editor



Before the throne of God above
I have a strong and perfect plea
A great High Priest whose name is love
Who ever lives and pleads for me
My name is graven on His hands
My name is written on His heart
I know that while in heav'n He stands
No tongue can bid me thence depart



When Satan tempts me to despair
And tells me of the guilt within
Upward I look and see Him there
Who made an end to all my sin
Because the sinless Savior died
My sinful soul is counted free
For God the Just is satisfied
To look on Him and pardon me



Behold Him there, the risen Lamb
My perfect, spotless Righteousness
The great unchangeable I Am
The King of glory and of grace
One with Himself, I cannot die
My soul is purchased by His blood
My life is hid with Christ on high
With Christ my Savior and my God



One with Himself, I cannot die
My soul is purchased by His blood
My life is hid with Christ on high
With Christ my Savior and my God

Shane and Shane on YouTube