

# CORNERSTONE

The Magazine of  
**WITNEY CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH**



Christ Jesus is the chief cornerstone.  
In Him the whole fabric is bound together, as it grows into a temple,  
dedicated to the Lord (Ephesians 2:21)



**2026**

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be typed up

The next 3-monthly **Autumn** edition,  
covering September, October & November is  
due on **Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> September**

Your Editor

Doesn't time fly! Nearly half-way through the year already, and now into the 3-monthly Summer edition, and I hope you still enjoy reading the magazine, or enjoy it if you are new to it

Over the past couple of months, the days have been getting longer, and for me personally, for the better. However, this generally means that because of the increase daylight period we try to fit ever more into what is already a hectic schedule. However, and probably due to climate change, the weather generally has been more sunny, and certainly at record-breaking temperatures for this country, for the last couple of weeks, which has probably meant you were restricted for a period, and probably unable to do some of the things you had planned!!

As you read this the schools have just finished half-term which means that holiday time is nearly with us again, and, even though some cannot bear the heat, the increasing good weather has to be encouraging for most of us. Whatever your circumstances, hopefully it will be a chance for most people to take a break of some kind.

Let us now look to those who have contributed to this edition; alongside the standard page; Tony Houghton has written about his Bible Study & Prayer Group; Lesley Barter has written about moral questions, and some articles have been extracted from Parish Pump, to name but a few

Many thanks for those who have contributed for this edition, but would encourage anyone to consider submitting article(s) for the next edition by either:



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# Summer 2026

Services: 10.30am weekly & 6.00pm on first Sunday of the month

## June

7 <sup>th</sup>	am	Rev Elaine Kinchin		Summer Harvest
	pm	Nanna Blackman		Communion
14 <sup>th</sup>	am	Rev Judi Holloway		
21 <sup>st</sup>	am	Rev Elaine Kinchin		Communion
28 <sup>th</sup>	am	David Kinchin		Songs of Praise

## July

5 <sup>th</sup>	am	Tony Houghton		
	pm	Rev Elaine Kinchin	Café Church Hi 5's Cream Tea	Communion
12 <sup>th</sup>	am	Rev Judi Holloway		
19 <sup>th</sup>	am	Nanna Blackman		Communion
26 <sup>th</sup>	am	Rev Judi Holloway		

## Aug

2 <sup>nd</sup>	am	Rev Elaine Kinchin		
	pm	tbc		Communion
9 <sup>th</sup>	am	Nanna Blackman		
16 <sup>th</sup>	am	Tony Houghton		Communion
23 <sup>rd</sup>	am	tbc		
30 <sup>th</sup>	am	Rev Judi Holloway		
	3.00pm		Madley Park Residential Home	

## Sept

5 <sup>th</sup>	11.00am	Saturday Praise		
6 <sup>th</sup>	am	tbc		
	pm	tbc	Communion	

The following events are given for your particular attention:

## June

9 <sup>th</sup>	Chair-based Exercise Group & repeated on 16 <sup>th</sup> , 23 <sup>rd</sup> & 30 <sup>th</sup>	10.45 – 11.45
	Explore the Bible & Prayer Time & repeated on 16 <sup>th</sup> & 23 <sup>rd</sup>	12.30 – 1.30
27 <sup>th</sup>	Witney Book Circle	10.30 – 11.15

## July

7 <sup>th</sup>	Chair-based Exercise Group	10.45 – 11.45
	Explore the Bible & Prayer Time	12.30 – 1.30
25 <sup>th</sup>	Witney Book Circle	10.30 – 11.15

## Aug

5 <sup>th</sup>	Hi 5's Treasure Trail	6.00 – 8.00pm
29 <sup>th</sup>	Witney Book Circle	10.30 – 11.15

## Sept

5 <sup>th</sup>	Hi 5's Back to school	6.00 – 8.00pm
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## Rotas

### WELCOMING TEAM

June	07	Lesley Barter
	14	Jacqui Powlesland
	21	Janet Hayes
	28	Jean Hodgson



<b>July</b>	05	Pat Smith
	12	Lesley Barter
	19	Jacqui Powlesland
	26	Jean Hodgson
<b>Aug</b>	02	Janet Hayes
	09	Pat Smith
	16	Lesley Barter
	23	Jacqui Powlesland
	30	Jean Hodgson
<b>Sept</b>	06	Janet Hayes



**FLOWERS**

<b>June</b>	07	Rita Hayes
	14	Janet Hayes
	21	Jacqui Powlesland
	28	Judi Holloway
<b>July</b>	05	Rita Hayes
	12	Janet Hayes
	19	Jacqui Powlesland
	26	Judi Holloway
<b>Aug</b>	02	Rita Hayes
	09	Janet Hayes
	16	Jacqui Powlesland
	23	Judi Holloway
	30	Rita Hayes
<b>Sept</b>	06	Janet Hayes



**SUNDAY COFFEE**

<b>June</b>	07	Jacqui & Terry Powlesland
	14	Pat Smith & Janet Hayes
	21	Jean Hodgson & Ann Clack
	28	Claire Woodward & Jacqui Powlesland
<b>July</b>	05	Elaine Kinchin
	12	Jacqui & Terry Powlesland
	19	Jean Hodgson & Ann Clack
	26	Pat Smith & Janet Hayes
<b>Aug</b>	02	Claire Woodward & Jacqui Powlesland
	09	Elaine Kinchin
	16	Jacqui & Terry Powlesland
	23	Jean Hodgson & Ann Clack
<b>Sept</b>	30	Pat Smith & Janet Hayes
	06	Elaine Kinchin



**THURSDAY COFFEE (10 – 12)**

<b>June</b>	11	Pat Smith
	18	David Kinchin
	25	Ann Clack
<b>July</b>	02	Elaine Kinchin
	09	Judi Holloway
	16	Pat Smith
	23	David Kinchin
	30	Ann Clack



<b>Aug</b>	06	Elaine Kinchin
	13	Judi Holloway
	20	Pat Smith
	27	Ann Clack
<b>Sept</b>	03	David Kinchin
	10	Elaine Kinchin



**SOUND SYSTEM**

<b>June</b>	07	Terry Powlesland
	14	Nanna Blackman
	21	Tony Houghton
	28	Terry Powlesland
<b>July</b>	05	Terry Powlesland
	12	Tony Houghton
	19	Terry Powlesland
	26	Nanna Blackman
<b>Aug</b>	02	Terry Powlesland
	09	Tony Houghton
	16	Nanna Blackman
	23	Terry Powlesland
<b>Sept</b>	30	Tony Houghton
	06	Terry Powlesland
	13	Nanna Blackman



**For ALL the Rotas, every effort has been made to meet individual circumstances.**  
 However, if the dates are not convenient for you, please change with someone else

**June**

14	Norlene La Fortune
16	Sandi Franklin
	Martina Janotova
24	Janet Park-Pratley
26	Barbara MacLarty
30	Jacqui Powlesland

**July**

05	Bob Blackman
19	Ethan Adewole
22	Rosemary Lee
25	Oscar Stanley
26	Jenny Garrett
28	Michael Pratley
30	Irene St Clair



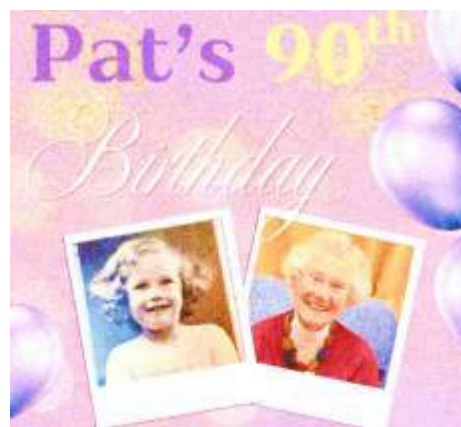
**Aug**

02	Janet Hayes
08	Matt Reifsnider
20	Vera Adewole

**Sept**

01	Theo Howells
02	Gail King
	Claire Woodward
03	Bryan Doyle

**May special Birthday celebrations:**





## PRAYER LETTER No 223

In the last issue, I wrote about death. Let's turn now to LIFE.

The word LIFE occurs about 550 times in the whole Bible – depending on which translation you are reading. Although I am dedicated, I am not willing to read all of those on your behalf! So instead I searched for how many phrases have “blank OF LIFE” and what we can see instead of *blank*.

The first occurrence is in Genesis: *Breath of Life*. As we learned at our Pentecost service in May, the breath of God is linked with the Holy Spirit, and in Genesis, it is the breath of God which gives life. Curiously the same phrase, *breath of life*, also occurs in Revelation. The next phrase found in Genesis is the *Tree of Life*. The phrase appears twice in Genesis, thrice in Proverbs and thrice in Revelation. The whole Bible is bracketed with phrases about LIFE.

Christian Aid's official strapline and rallying cry is “*We believe in life before death*”. This is based on John 10:10 with its promise of “abundant life” or “life to the full”. All Christians should believe in that slogan; none of us want to see or hear about stillborn or miscarried babies. Neither do we want to learn about children whose short lives are blighted by poverty, neglect or illness. It can be very tough to realise that there is very little we can do to give these tiny people a full life.

What we CAN do is to focus on giving our lives, our will, our time, our talents and resources over to God to work and pray that God's Kingdom can become more evident in our lives and communities.

I used to love the children's hymn: Jesus bids us shine, with a pure clear light... you in your small corner and I in mine. This simple hymn explains that we each have a responsibility to act and the maturity to accept that none of us can do it all: we just do what we are enabled to.

I seem to have wandered from LIFE to LIGHT. Let me finish with both:

Psalm 56:12-13 My vows to you I must perform, O God; I will render thank-offerings to you. For you have delivered my soul from death, and my feet from falling, so that I may walk before God in the light of life.

John 8:12 Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, ‘I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.’

Prayer is our way of continuing to link with God in a productive way. If our prayers are not being answered there are two options: God is teaching us to be patient or our prayer is not aligned with God's will. Being patient is hard but accepting that what we pray for is not God's will is very tough. We pray for peace in the Middle East: do we just be patient or do we believe that God wants that war to continue? It seems as if that war may be over before the Ukraine war. Why are the millions of Christians around the world not having that prayer answered? Sorry if you expect me to know the answer. I don't. But God does.

Sorry also if this article for Cornerstone is not very well constructed. While composing this, I have had one grandchild staying with me; one grandchild visiting me; one grandchild unable to get suitable work and one grandchild struggling with exams. I love them all but they have sapped my concentration. Why do I tell you this? Because this is my life at the moment. And

my life is precious; having a terminal diagnosis hanging over me makes me really enjoy the good times in my life but it also makes me look for the tiny bits of happiness when I am surrounded by chaos.

These are the first three verses in our Bibles: When God began creating the heavens and the earth, the earth was a shapeless, chaotic mass, with the Spirit of God brooding over the dark vapours. Then God said, "Let there be light." And light appeared. (The Living Bible)

When life is chaotic, we can hang on to the fact that the Spirit is ready to act and God will bring light.

Every Blessing, Elaine

*Please note that for up-to-date prayer requests contact Elaine 07534 879449)*

The following article has been written & submitted by Tony Houghton, and is entitled:

## **Explore the Bible and prayer**

We have recently completed two series, the first in the psalms and the second overcoming obstacles. These are the summaries of one application lesson from each study.

### **Psalm 1**

Be intentional about what shapes your mind. Choose to spend regular time in God's Word instead of being influenced by ungodly advice, media, or peer pressure. Let Scripture guide your decisions daily.

### **Psalm 27**

When you feel anxious or afraid, deliberately turn your focus to God in prayer and worship. Trust Him for courage instead of letting fear control your actions.

### **Psalm 50**

Don't reduce your faith to outward rituals. Prioritise a genuine relationship with God—express gratitude, keep your commitments to Him, and live obediently from the heart.

### **Psalm 74**

In seasons when life feels chaotic or God seems distant, keep praying and remembering His past faithfulness. Trust that He is still at work even when you don't see it.

### **Psalm 94**

When you see injustice or wrongdoing, resist bitterness and revenge. Trust God as the ultimate judge, and continue to live righteously and faithfully.

### **Psalm 103**

Make it a habit to remember and thank God for His benefits—His forgiveness, mercy, and love. Let gratitude shape your attitude and how you treat others.



### **Psalm 127**

Depend on God in your work, family, and plans. Don't rely solely on your own effort—commit your daily tasks and long-term goals to Him.

### **Psalm 145**

Speak openly about God's goodness. Make praising Him part of your daily life and conversations, encouraging others by sharing what He has done.

### **Overcoming Obstacles**

1. Jesus in Samaria Luke 9: 51-62  
Stay focused on God's purpose even when facing rejection. Jesus was rejected by the Samaritans, yet He continued toward Jerusalem without revenge or discouragement. Christians learn to keep moving forward in faith when others oppose or misunderstand them.
2. David Psalm 31  
Trust God during fear and suffering. David faced danger, betrayal, and distress, but he prayed and placed his confidence in God. Christians learn that prayer and trust in God bring strength during difficult times.
3. Jeremiah 26:1-19  
Courageously speak the truth even when it is unpopular. Jeremiah obeyed God's message despite threats against his life. Christians learn to remain faithful to God's calling, even when facing criticism or pressure from others.
4. Paul in Corinth? Acts 18:1-18  
Persevere in serving God despite opposition. Paul experienced hardship and resistance in Corinth, but he continued preaching because God encouraged him. Christians learn not to give up when ministry or life becomes challenging.
5. James 1:2-18  
View trials as opportunities for spiritual growth. James teaches that difficulties develop perseverance and maturity in faith. Christians learn that God can use struggles to strengthen character and deepen dependence on Him.



### **Hymns for professionals**

Dentist:	Crown Him with many crowns.
Contractor:	The church's one foundation
Obstetrician:	Come, labour on.
Golfer:	There is a green hill far away.
Politician:	Standing on the promises.
Librarian:	Let all mortal flesh keep silence.
Barrister:	In the hour of trial.
Dry Cleaner:	O for a faith that will not shrink.
Census taker:	All people that on earth do dwell.
Tax officer:	We give thee but thine own.
Traffic patrol:	Where cross the crowded ways of life.

The following article has been extracted from Parish Pump, and is entitled:

## **All in the month of June**

250 years ago, on 11 June 1776 that the Second Continental Congress appointed John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Robert R Livingston and Roger Sherman to create the first draft of the Declaration of Independence.

90 years ago, on 14<sup>th</sup> June 1936 that G K Chesterton died. Novelist, short story writer, journalist, essayist, poet, social/literary critic and theologian, and remembered for his stories about the priest-detective Father Brown.

80 years ago, on 8<sup>th</sup> June 1946 that the London Victory Celebrations following WW2 took place. Allied forces paraded through London, cheered by crowds that stretched from Buckingham Palace to Regent's Park. Countrywide, an estimated 12 million people joined in various celebrations.

65 years ago, from 4<sup>th</sup> June to 9<sup>th</sup> November, that the Berlin Crisis of 1961 took place. It led to Berlin being partitioned into East Berlin and West Berlin, and the erection of the Berlin Wall on 13<sup>th</sup> August.

50 years ago, from 23<sup>rd</sup> June to 27<sup>th</sup> August, the 1976 British Isles Heat Wave took place. One of the hottest and driest summers on record, it dried up rivers and evaporated reservoirs. Domestic water supplies were rationed, and public standpipes were installed in some areas. September and October both saw very heavy rainfall.

40 years ago, on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1986 that the 'Hand of God' goal took place during the quarter-final of the 1986 FIFA World Cup in Mexico City. Argentine football player Diego Maradona scored a goal against England using his hand, which the referee mistakenly thought was his head, and allowed the goal.

30 years ago, on 4<sup>th</sup> June 1996 that the Second Severn Crossing was officially opened. The bridge spans the River Severn and links England and Wales via the M4 motorway.

30 years ago, on 15<sup>th</sup> June 1996 that the centre of Manchester was devastated by an IRA bomb. 200 people were injured and the city centre had to be redeveloped because of the immense amount of damage.

30 years ago, on 18<sup>th</sup> June 1996 that Benjamin Netanyahu became Prime Minister of Israel for the first time. He served from 1996 to 1999, then from 2009 to 2021, and then from 2022 to the present time. He is Israel's longest-serving Prime Minister.

20 years ago, on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2006 that American bishop Katherine Jefferts Schori became the first woman to be elected as a primate in the Anglican Communion. She became the Presiding Bishop and Primate of the Episcopal Church from November 2006 until 2015.

10 years ago, on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2016 that Muhammad Ali, American world heavyweight boxer, died. He was regarded as the greatest heavyweight boxer of all time.

10 years ago, on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2016 that Jo Cox, Labour MP for Batley and Spen, was murdered by a far-right extremist. She was 41.

10 years ago, on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2016 that the UK European Union (EU) membership referendum was held. 52 per cent of voters voted to leave the EU, and 48 per cent voted to remain. The UK left the EU on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2020.

The following article has been written & submitted by Lesley Barter, and is entitled:

## **The Moral Maze**

Recently we seem to have been confronted with more moral questions than ever before. This may just be because we now know so much about what goes on in other parts of the world as well as on our own doorstep. Whatever the reason, as Christians we cannot just dodge these issues and pretend that they have nothing to do with us.

The ever-present issue of war is at the back of all our minds. How can we justify the appalling loss of life even in the face of clear injustice? Is there any such thing as a just war? Should we allow countries to use might to overcome right in the interests of saving those lives? Are the long-term implications our business – or are they God's? Would Jesus have approved of a war to reclaim land that was originally the gift of God to Israel? And what of the displacement of the people of all religions who have made their homes there? These are questions to which we find no answers in the Old Testament. Indeed, it is full of tales of war and displacement, the outcomes of which are determined by God's favour. King David was a ruthless and sometimes merciless warrior, whose chief adviser was God. And yet in the New Testament we find that Jesus is not the Messiah to lead Israel to victory over the Romans. Indeed, he sidesteps all encouragement to oppose the occupying regime. He is concerned with the Kingdom of Heaven. Yet he tells us that we need to stand up for what is right – we should not stand idly by.

Two very different moral questions have been in the news this week: firstly, that of

the re-habilitation of young offenders who have committed dreadful crimes. Do we condemn them to what will likely turn into ever-increasing violent crime, or do we prioritise the reprogramming of their lives in a law-abiding direction? How then do we support the victims? Jesus would have said 'Go, and sin no more' but is that attitude applicable in a Godless age?

Our second moral dilemma is unconscious prejudice. The tragic death of a young white man in police custody has pinpointed our underlying worries about racism. We see a number of examples of inclusive behaviour in the New Testament, so it is clear that we, as Christians, are called to believe in a level playing field for everyone of whatever race, creed or gender. This is not the end of the story, though - our desire to put it into practice can lead to over compensation, controversial woke behaviour and unforeseen consequences.

So, it is clear that we need God's help as never before. Like King David, we need to pray for guidance at every crossroads. All the more because the crossroads these days are ever more complex.



**Moral Maze**

The following article has been extracted from Parish Pump, and is the reflection of a small church in a rural area looking for a new minister, and is entitled:

## **Report on the search for a new minister**

We do not have a happy report to give. We are still struggling to find a suitable candidate for this church. The following are our present candidates:

**Adam:** Good man, but problems with his wife. Also, one reference told of how he and his wife enjoy walking nude in the woods.

**Noah:** Former pastorate of 120 years with no converts. Prone to unrealistic building projects.

**Abraham:** Thinks that God is telling him to go somewhere, but he can't say exactly where. Also, he has offered to share his own wife with another man.

**Joseph:** A big thinker, but a braggart, believes in dream-interpreting, and has a prison record.

**Moses:** A modest and meek man, but poor communicator, even stuttering at times. Sometimes blows his stack and acts rashly. Some say he left an earlier church over a murder charge.

**David:** The most promising leader of all, until we discovered the affair he'd had with his neighbour's wife, and there are rumours he even killed her husband.

**Solomon:** Great preacher, very smart, but our parsonage would never hold all those wives.

**Elijah:** Prone to depression - collapses under pressure.

**Elisha:** Reported to have lived with a single widow while at his former church.

**Hosea:** A tender and loving pastor, but our people could never handle his wife's occupation.

**Deborah:** Female.

**Jeremiah:** Emotionally unstable, alarmist, negative, always lamenting things, and reported to have taken a long trip to bury his underwear on the bank of foreign river.

**Isaiah:** On the fringe? Claims to have seen angels in church. Has trouble with his language.

**Jonah:** Refused God's call into ministry until he was forced to obey by getting swallowed up by a great fish. He told us the fish later spit him out on the shore near here. We hung up.

**Amos:** Too backward and unpolished. With some seminary training he might have promise but has a hang-up against wealthy people. Might fit in better in a poor congregation.

**John:** Says he is a Baptist, but he doesn't dress like one. Has slept outdoors for months on end, has a weird diet, and provokes denominational leaders.

**Peter:** Too blue collar. Has a bad temper—even has been known to curse. Had a big run-in with Paul in Antioch. Aggressive, and a loose cannon.

**Paul:** Powerful CEO type leader and fascinating preacher. However, short on tact, harsh and has been known to preach all night. We don't want that.

**Timothy:** Too young.

**Jesus:** Has had popular times, but once when his church grew to 5000, he managed to offend them all and this church dwindled down to twelve people. Seldom stays in one place very long. And, of course, he's single.

**Judas:** His references are solid. A steady plodder. Conservative. Good connections. Knows how to handle money. We're inviting him to preach this Sunday. Possibilities here.

The following article has been extracted from Parish Pump, and is entitled:

## Well-dressing in Derbyshire – May to September

Derbyshire is known for its wells and well-dressing. The annual tradition followed in many villages of decorating the village wells, or 'well dressing', attracts sightseers from miles away.

By ancient, centuries-old tradition, five wells are decorated. Boards are set up around each one which is then covered in clay. The clay is then impressed with thousands of colourful flower petals to create pictures and tableaux. Often the stories illustrated are from the Bible.

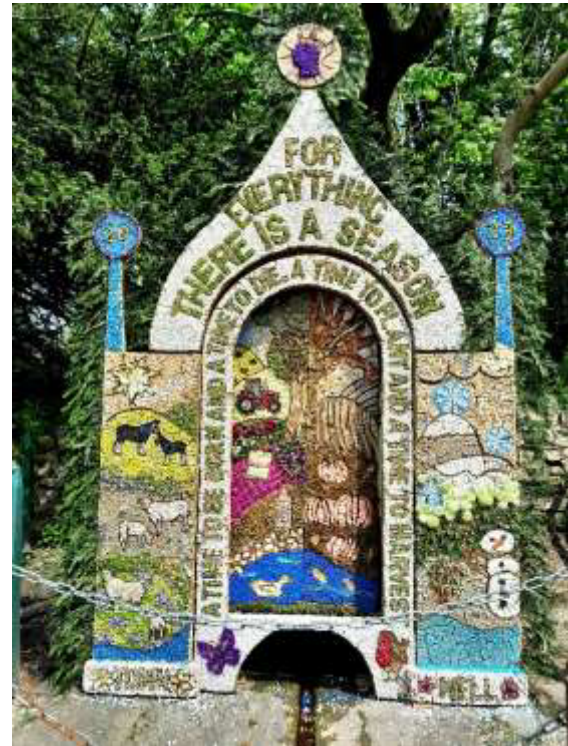
It is thought the practice may date back to the 14th century, and it may have started as an act of thanksgiving when the community escaped the Black Death. Over the years, and before piped water became available, it also became an act of thanksgiving for the village's supply of clean, clear water.

Today more than 80 Derbyshire villages still follow the tradition, and the season extends through the summer. Many well dressings have a biblical theme, or are inspired by royal occasions or sporting events.

Generally, the Derbyshire wells are *not* considered holy or named after saints. Most were just the original village water tap. However, Buxton does have a celebrated holy well, where people regularly line up to collect its special waters.

Buxton mineral water is bottled and available in supermarkets, but in the town itself, at St Anne's well, it is free. Through medieval times there was a chapel on the spot, and pilgrims came seeking cures and to leave offerings.

Later the town became a spa and patients came to bathe and drink, much as the ancient Romans had done in pre-Christian times. Today the free Buxton water emerges from a pipe set in a modern plinth containing a statuette of St Anne, the mother of Mary and Jesus's grandmother.



This article has been extracted from Parish Pump, and is entitled:

## **21st June - Father' Day, a time to celebrate male role models**

In the UK, USA and Canada, the third Sunday in June is Father's Day. How will you celebrate it this year?

How do these special days ever get started, anyway? Well, Father's Day began because way back in 1909 there was a woman in Spokane, Washington, named Sonora Louise Smart Dodd. That year she heard a church sermon about the merits of setting aside a day to honour one's mother. Mother's Day was just beginning to gather widespread attention in the United States at this time. But Sonora Louise Smart Dodd knew that it was her father who had selflessly raised herself and her five siblings by himself after their mother had died in childbirth. So the sermon on mothers gave Sonora Louise the idea to petition for a day to honour fathers, and in particular, her own father, William Jackson Smart.

Sonora Louise soon set about planning the first Father's Day celebration in Spokane in 1910. With support from the Spokane Ministerial Association and the YMCA, her efforts paid off, and a 'Father's Day' was appointed. Sonora Louise had wanted Father's Day to be on the first Sunday in June (since that was her father's birthday), but the city council didn't have time to approve it until later in the month. And so on 19th June, 1910, the first Father's Day was celebrated in Spokane.

Gradually, other people in other cities caught on and started celebrating their fathers, too. The rose was selected as the official Father's Day flower. Some people began to wear a white rose to honour a father who was dead, and a red one to honour a father who was living. Finally, in 1972, President Richard Nixon signed a

presidential proclamation declaring the third Sunday of June as Father's Day - a permanent, national holiday.

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## **Celebrating Fathers**

This month we celebrate the importance of fathers on Father's Day. Unlike Mothering Sunday, this doesn't have a distinctly Christian origin. However, it does provide an opportunity to celebrate God's Fatherhood and what it means for us.

At His baptism, when Jesus came out of the water: 'heaven was opened, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on Him. And a voice from heaven said, 'This is my Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased.' (Matthew 3:16,17). What do we learn about Jesus' relationship with His Father, our relationship with God and the role of fathers?

### **The Father's presence**

When Jesus was baptised, the Father was present in the Holy Spirit. It's the Spirit who enables us to address God as daddy ('abba', Galatians 4:6) in an intimate way. God is present with us and understands our joys and sorrows, fears and trials. Dads should relate to their children like this.

### **The Father's love**

The Father described His Son as 'beloved'; like us, Jesus was the subject of God's unconditional love. Dads should assure their children of their constant, undeserved love.

### **The Father's pleasure**

The Father tells Jesus that He is 'well pleased' with Him, as He embarked on His public ministry. We need to hear this as well, especially when we feel that we are

disappointing God or letting Him down. We should also be aware of the effect of our words spoken to our children. Dads should be using every opportunity to demonstrate their pleasure in their children, especially when things go wrong.

\*\*\*\*\*

The following article, written by the Revd Roy Shaw, a retired but active priest in the diocese of York, where he is a spiritual director, is entitled:

### **Giving thanks for fathers**

There is no finer sound in the world than your child calling you 'daddy', or 'dad'. I love it!

And as I look around our neighbourhood, dads today are far more involved in their children's lives than when I was a child. Pushing prams, holding hands while out on a walk, bathing, playing games. Dads are in all these activities and more. I see the dads on either side of our house, and they obviously love their kids with all their hearts.

Unfortunately, too many kids grow up without a stable and involved male figure in their lives over the whole of their childhood and beyond. And no prizes for guessing the outcome; when they reach fatherhood, their kids often grow up without a stable and involved male figure in their lives.

The month of June brings Fathers' Day - this year on the 21<sup>st</sup> June. May all dads reading this be pampered like never before! If it's a fine day, it may be a case of 'Stand back everyone- dad's going to bar-b-q'. But before we get carried away, let's spare a thought for those who for one reason or another couldn't be dads, or whose dads fell far short of the high

expectations we invest in them, or who lost a dad at a crucial time in life and feel a permanent ache where 'Dad' should be.

Our Christian faith teaches us to look at God as 'Father'- we address Him as such in the opening words of the Lord's Prayer, and it was Jesus' custom to talk to God as 'Father'. Maybe, taking into account those who have had a very mixed experience, or a bad experience of fathers, we should qualify what we say of God and call Him 'the Good Father', or 'our Good Father'.

Because that is what the experience of countless Christians would testify to; that God is a good father. I think of the picture Jesus paints in the parable of the Prodigal Son; the father on the look-out for his wayward son day after day, and when he sees him in the distance runs all the way to him to embrace him. Now in Jesus' time, in that culture, fathers did NOT run, least of all to welcome returning no-goods who had wasted half the father's fortune. Fathers were people of dignity. Run? Never!

Jesus has turned that on its head. We can be sure that a welcome awaits us; we turn to God, or return to God, and find that He's already half-way towards us, coming at speed to embrace us.



The following article, written by Canon Paul Hardingham, has been extracted from Parish Pump and considers football, and is entitled:

## FIFA World Cup

Many across the world are united in watching the World Cup in the United States, Mexico and Canada. However, football is more than just a game; it can illustrate some key points about the Christian life. As Paul writes: *'But one thing I do: forgetting what is behind and straining towards what is ahead, I press on towards the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenwards in Christ Jesus.'* (Philippians 3:13b,14).

**A prize to be won:** The dream of every player in the competition is to be able to hold up the World Cup themselves. Christians grasp to the prize of eternal life, God's gift to us of relationship with Jesus for now and eternity. However, there's an important difference between football and the Christian faith. To win the World Cup you have to be good enough, while Christ's love for us is underserved and not dependent on how well we've done.

**Training to be undertaken:** If a team is going to win the World Cup, training is vital! Our training, as Christians, starts the moment we accept the gift of God's life. On a daily basis, we train ourselves to say *no* to the wrong things in our lives. As we build up our *godly muscles* we are better able to choose to do what is right in God's eyes. To enable us to do all this we need to engage in the spiritual disciplines of prayer, studying the Bible and being part of a church and small group. How is your training going?

The former Liverpool Manager Bill Shankly famously said, *'Some people believe football is a matter of life and death, I am very disappointed with that attitude. I can assure you it is much, much more important than that!'*

## When England won the FIFA World Cup

Sixty years ago, on 30<sup>th</sup> July 1966, the 1966 FIFA World Cup final took place. England beat Germany 4 – 2. English player Geoff Hurst became the first (and only) player to score a hat-trick in a World Cup final.

Hurst is also the only surviving member of the England team that started the 1966 final, held at Wembley, where England played all their matches. Others were spread around the country.

The 1966 World Cup was unique in that it was the only one in history that had no matches played on a Sunday, because of the Sunday observance laws in force at the time. Professional football was in fact not played on a Sunday in England until 1973-74, and then to a much lesser extent than it is now.

The 1966 tournament was also significant in other ways – not least for the famous commentary snippet from Ken Wolstenholme, still quoted today. This occurred when it seemed the crowd might be invading the pitch as Hurst advanced on the German goal. "They think it's all over!" said KW. Pause, then as Hurst's shot hit the back of the net, "It is now!"

Many matches in the tournament were marred by violent play and contentious sendings-off. Vicious tackles on Pelé, the world's leading player, put him out of the tournament, and one angry player in another match had to be escorted off the field by police. As a result, the yellow and red cards familiar to us today were introduced, as was the use of substitutes. Inconsistent refereeing was also tackled through training and clearer interpretation of the laws of the game.

Before the tournament started, the Jules Rimet trophy was stolen from an exhibition. A dog named Pickles discovered it wrapped in newspaper under a bush in a South London garden.

The following article has been extracted from Parish Pump, and is entitled:

## **All in the month of July**

250 years ago, on 4<sup>th</sup> July 1776 that the US Declaration of Independence was adopted by the Second Continental Congress.

250 years ago, from 12<sup>th</sup> July 1776 to 4<sup>th</sup> October 1780, that the British explorer Captain James Cook made his third and final voyage. He travelled to New Zealand and Hawaii, where he was killed in a violent exchange with the local people.

200 years ago, on 5<sup>th</sup> July 1826 that Sir Stamford Raffles, Lieutenant-Governor of the Dutch East Indies and later of Bencoolen (now in Sumatra) died. He was the founder of modern Singapore.

175 years ago, on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1851 that Charles Bannerman, British-born Australian cricketer, was born. He scored the first-ever run in Test cricket, and also scored the first century in Test cricket.

125 years ago, on 9<sup>th</sup> July 1901 that Dame Barbara Cartland, romantic novelist, was born. She wrote 723 novels, including 23 in a single year, and sold more than one billion copies of her books.

100 years ago, on 15<sup>th</sup> July 1926 that Leopoldo Galtieri was born. As president/military ruler of Argentina, he ordered Argentina's invasion of the Falkland Islands.

90 years ago, on 24<sup>th</sup> July 1936 that the speaking clock telephone service was launched in the UK.

60 years ago, on 30<sup>th</sup> July 1966 that the 1966 FIFA World Cup final took place. England beat Germany 4 – 2. English player Geoff Hurst became the first (and only) player to score a hat-trick in a World Cup final.

50 years ago, on 4<sup>th</sup> July 1976 that Operation Entebbe took place. Israeli commandos staged a counter-terrorist hostage-rescue mission at Entebbe Airport in Uganda, following the hijacking of an Air France plane on 27<sup>th</sup> June.

50 years ago, on 29<sup>th</sup> July 1976 that the pier-head of Southend Pier in Essex was destroyed by fire. It is the world's longest pier. It re-opened in 1986, but then a tanker crashed into it, creating a 70-foot gap. It reopened again in 1989, but two further fires, in 1999 and 2005, caused significant damaged. It reopened in July 2012.

40 years ago, on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1986 that the marriage of Prince Andrew and Sarah Ferguson in Westminster Abbey took place. They became the Duke and Duchess of York and divorced in 1996.

30 years ago, on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1996 that candidates taking the British driving test also had to pass a written exam for the first time.

30 years ago, on 5<sup>th</sup> July 1996 that Dolly the sheep was born. She was the first cloned mammal at the Roslin Institute in Edinburgh. Died in 2003.

25 years ago, on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2001 that Barry George was convicted of killing British TV presenter Jill Dando in April 1999. He was sentenced to life imprisonment, but later acquitted and the case remains unsolved.

20 years ago, on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2006 that Fred Trueman, cricket player and broadcaster died. Seen as one of the greatest bowlers in cricketing history.

20 years ago, on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2006 that Twitter, the online micro-blogging service, was launched.

20 years ago, on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2006 that Tesla Motors unveiled its first model, the Tesla Roadster. It went on sale in February 2008.

15 years ago, on 9<sup>th</sup> July 2011 that South Sudan gained its independence from Sudan. It is the world's newest country.

10 years ago, on 13<sup>th</sup> July 2016 that Theresa May became Prime Minister (until 2019) after David Cameron resigned following the UK's referendum on leaving the European Union.

10 years ago, on 26<sup>th</sup> July that Hillary Clinton became the first woman to be nominated for President of the USA by a major political party (Democrats). She lost to Donald Trump in the election that November.

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The following article, written by Dr Ruth M Bancewicz, who is Church Engagement Director at The Faraday Institute for Science and Religion in Cambridge, has been extracted from Parish Pump, and Ruth writes on the positive relationship between Science and Christian faith, and is entitled:

### **God in the Sciences: Re-joining the Choir: Why people are the helpers, not priests, of Creation**

Urbanisation has taken us away from the rest of Creation, often reducing it in our eyes to a resource that we draw on when we feel like it, or need it. But Jesus said the stones would start praising Him if people didn't (Luke 19:40), and in the Psalms and Job, all of Creation is praising God. There is no hint here that people are needed to enable Creation's praise to happen. The singing is metaphorical, but it draws attention to fact that all creatures praise God by being themselves. They don't only praise with their 'voices', but with everything else they do as well: eating, running, hopping, grooming, reproducing, and so on (which is a reminder to us that our whole lives can be an act of praise to God).

Our isolation from Creation's praise can add to our sense that the whole world revolves around us and our needs. In reality,

Creation is God-centred and 'His name alone is exalted' (Psalm 148:13). The value of Creation for God is not necessarily linked to its value for us – it is of value to God because He made it, He cares for it, and it praises Him.

Genesis 1:28 says that we must "rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground". To rule wisely we need to get hold of the fact that, although we have a special responsibility, we are creatures alongside all the other creatures. One way to ground ourselves in this idea is to re-join the choir and worship God together with every other living and non-living thing on earth.

Rather than being needed to help Creation praise God, we can actually rely on it to help *us* in our worship. Sharing God's delight in Creation, we can learn to delight in God. In return, the best thing we can do is to let living things recover their full fruitfulness as much as possible so they can praise God fully. We are called to a life of humble service, taking care of each other and everything else on this planet. In this way, we can choose to see other creatures as they are, pointing our attention away from themselves towards God – until we are caught up in their praise of Him