

JULY 2026

From the Editors

Welcome to this July edition

Well we are certainly in topsy turvy times. One minute we are sweltering in heat and the next we are sheltering from torrential downpours.

In football, one minute we are facing defeat and the next we have the euphoria of a win. Can our hearts stand it?

This month the schools break up for the Summer holidays. Some of our children will be going to a different school while others will be moving up a class. Change is all around them. Please pray for them all as they navigate these seas of doubt and uncertainty.

Here at St. Marys we too are experiencing changing times as we seek to appoint a new Vicar. But there is certainty behind it all—the certainty that God's plan will prevail.

Please pray for our church using the Parish Prayer on Page 2.

We wish you all a happy Summer whatever you do.

**"And pray, who are you?"
Said the Violet blue
To the Bee, with surprise,
At his wonderful size,
In her eyeglass of dew.
"I, madam," quoth he,
"Am a publican Bee,
Collecting the tax
Of honey and wax.
Have you nothing for me?"**

- John Bannister Tabb, *The Violet and the Bee*



Vacancy or Interregnum—What's Happening?

The PCC is actively pursuing all that needs to be done to have a new Vicar in post as quickly as we can, although we have been informed by the diocese that it is unlikely to occur before the New Year.

On the 15th July, the PCC will meet with the Area Dean to review our Mission Action Planning and also to develop a Parish Profile. This profile will contain information about the parish, its makeup, the type of worship we have been conducting as well as details of what we would wish to see in our new Vicar. The PCC obviously wants the best person, male or female, for this important vocation. Whoever the next incumbent is will have an extremely important role in the life of, not just our parishioners, but all of the people of Penwortham.

As a family of God with prayer central to our lives we are asked to pray our Prayer for Change as follows:

Prayer for this season of change

God our Father, who alone brings growth to your church, you have welcomed each one of us in Jesus and called us to be his body in this place. Send your Holy Spirit - at this time of uncertainty and change - to fill us with vision and energy and make us faithful in prayer and worship.

Guide with your heavenly wisdom, those appointed to discern the way ahead, that we may receive the person you have prepared for your church here - one who is ready to serve us with joy, to build us up in faith and to lead us by example in loving obedience to your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Amen

Pointers for prayer

Praise God.

Pray for those involved in the process of selecting a new vicar.

Pray for God to speak to the person he wants to come to St Mary's.

Pray for ourselves as a church and individually to be open to the Holy Spirit working amongst us.

Thank God for his greatness and

Times to pray

We encourage everyone to pray at the same time, for a few minutes, WHEREVER YOU ARE - lunch time every Monday.

Prayer groups in church

- 2nd Tuesday each month 2pm (1st Session 14th July)
- 4th Thursday each month 7pm (1st session 23rd July)
for 1/2 hour

Bookmarks with this prayer will be given out at church. Please feel free to take them home and use.

On the 22nd July the PCC will meet again to review the Parish Profile and formulate it in the required manner so the process for selecting a new vicar can proceed.

Below is the worship pattern for July:

Sunday 5th July 8.15 am Mattins, 10.15 am Holy Communion

Sunday 12th July 8.15 am Holy Communion, 10.15 am Mattins

Sunday 19th July 8.15 am Mattins, 10.15 am Holy Communion

Sunday 26th July 8.15 am Holy Communion, 10.15 am Mattins

If you have any queries or concerns please contact any of the churchwardens.

Other occasional services: baptisms, weddings and funerals.

These services will be conducted by visiting clergy. Please contact the churchwardens in the first instance.

177 Cop Lane

This property which was left to us some years ago is now on sale.

The PCC decided that it was in our best interest to divest ourselves of this property.

Vicarage

The vicarage on Cop Lane is now vacant. On the 21st July property surveyors will visit and report on its condition. The property will need to be made welcoming for our new Vicar. It may be that some costs (i.e. decorating) will devolve to us with other major work (if any) being paid for by the diocese.

Churchyard

Work on re-instating the stone memorials is due to start later in July.



PENWORTHAM FOODBANK

PENWORTHAM COMMUNITY CENTRE
KINGSFOLD DRIVE PR1 9EQ

EVERY FRIDAY**
BETWEEN 0930 AND NOON

**DONATIONS OF NON-PERISHABLE FOODS ARE
URGENTLY REQUIRED**

We thank all who have donated food in the past but we need further supplies: particularly pasta, pasta sauce, tins of soup, tins of baked beans and canned fruit

**BRING YOUR DONATIONS TO CHURCH, OR TO THE
FOODBANK ON A FRIDAY MORNING**

OR

ARRANGE A BANK TRANSFER/STANDING ORDER* TO:

Account name: Churches Together in Penwortham
Sort Code: 30-96-85 Account No: 00415955 (Lloyds Bank)

OR

MAKE A DONATION (cheque or cash)*

*We are registered for Gift Aid so if you are able to make a financial donation and are a UK taxpayer then please let us have your contact details so we can arrange for a Gift Aid form to be sent to you.

**opening times vary over the Christmas period

New group of County Priests and Deacons are now ordained

A weekend of ordinations has seen a group of 20 men and women begin a new phase of their ministry serving in Church of England parishes across Lancashire.

They became Deacons or Priests in Blackburn Diocese and will support the ongoing work of sharing the Good News of Jesus with everyone who lives in the County.

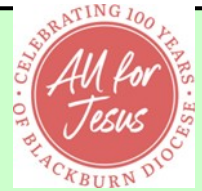
Two of the group of 20 were formally 'welcomed' into The Church of England having previously been ordained in other parts of the world.

Collectively they will serve in the following areas ... **Euxton, Broughton, Fleetwood, Preston (x5), Heapey, Withnell, Garstang, Leyland, Barrowford, Hoole, Blackburn, Feniscowles, Fenisccliffe, Wesham and Chorley.**

The youngest ordinand this year is 25 while the oldest is 63. Each of the 20 has their own personal faith story and journey to ordination to share.

In the week leading up to ordination weekend the Diocese released a series of videos on its social media channels ([Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#)) featuring six of the group telling their stories, alongside a video of the Bishop of Blackburn, Rt Rev. Philip North, in which he talks about the importance of this moment in the church calendar.

Bishop Philip ordained the Deacons while Rt Rev. Dr Jill Duff, Bishop of Lancaster, ordained the Priests at the Wesham service and Rt Rev. Dr Joe Kennedy, Bishop of Burnley, ordained the priests at the Fenisccliffe service.



Thousands gather to celebrate 'Joy of the Lord' at County castle`

More than 5,000 people gathered across the weekend in Clitheroe as Live at the Castle and Church at the Castle brought together music, creativity and faith in a major new expression of Christian community life.

Organised by local movement Love Clitheroe and led by St James' Church alongside churches from across the town and further afield, the ecumenical faith-based event on Saturday and Sunday created a festival atmosphere in the town centre.



Held in the grounds of the famous County landmark of Clitheroe Castle, the weekend featured live music, arts and activities alongside a strong programme of Christian worship and witness, with well-known Christian musicians taking to the stage.

Supported by The Grand in Clitheroe, the Lancaster Foundation and local civic partners, the event drew widespread backing from across the community.

While Sunday's Church at the Castle provided a focal point for worship, the Christian vision underpinning the weekend was evident throughout - from the welcome offered by volunteers to the message shared through music, conversation and community engagement.

The Bishop of Blackburn, Rt Rev. Philip North, attended for part of the event on the Saturday and commented: "This was a wonderful initiative and I was delighted to be able to take part. You could see the joy on people's faces, a real reflection of the theme and of the spirit in which it has been organised.

Archbishop of Canterbury calls to 'make strangers neighbours' amid rising hostility

Responding to the recent King's Speech, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Sarah Mullally, has spoken about the importance of hope at a time of rising hate crime, intimidation and hostility.

"The work of integration has never been more urgent. We have witnessed a deeply concerning deterioration in intercommunity relations. I therefore welcome the commitment in the Gracious Speech to do more to protect the Jewish communities following the recent appalling attacks and in doing so I wish to assure both Jewish and Muslim communities of my support as they face the unacceptable rise in hate crime, intimidation and hostility.

"The Church of England has long held that the right of all people to practise their faith without fear must be protected.

"We have also seen religious identity misused to intimidate and divide. Let us be clear: the commandment of Jesus Christ is to love your neighbour as yourself, to love without exception and to seek the flourishing of all.

"We must address the pressures facing people and communities today while ensuring that systems for new arrivals are fair. We must undertake the harder task of bringing communities together - of making strangers neighbours - and ensuring that all who reside here have both the opportunity and the responsibility to contribute to our shared life."

Protect us from the perils of division and hatred' – Bishops' prayer for nation

A group of Church of England bishops has issued an invitation to Christians to pray for wisdom and love in national life in the face of "division and hatred".

The newly established *Bishops' Working Group for Promoting Unity in our Nation* has shared a prayer - which can be used by churches or individuals - speaking of peace in our communities and how we can all be reconciled with God and our neighbour.

I want you to be concerned about your next door neighbour.

Do you know your next door neighbour?

Mother Teresa

Church News

The prayer, being shared on Church of England social media channels, highlights the four “nations of this United Kingdom” and gives thanks for all those who “build up our common life”.

It asks for God’s wisdom to “protect the most vulnerable among us” and His help to “love all who call these islands their home”. It then asks for God’s protection from “the perils of division and hatred”.

The group, chaired by the Bishop of Leicester, Martyn Snow, was set up to help the Church of England understand and respond to growing polarisation in the country at large.

Its recent work has included encouraging churches to celebrate St George’s Day and fly the flag as a symbol of unity, as well as joining with other Christian denominations to help local congregations play their part appropriately in the recent local elections.

Bishop Martyn said: “We know that these are anxious and fearful times for many in our country, which makes the Church’s calling for peace and reconciliation all the more pressing.”

People 'nourish' the communities they live in - Lord High Commissioner

In a time of "global division and conflict, it is our common ground that brings us together", King Charles' representative has said.

So said the Lord High Commissioner Lady Elish Angiolini, after visiting projects and organisations across Scotland.

She said they showed signs of the Kingdom of God, and she promised to share with His Majesty "the great unity and purpose" of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.

Lady Elish said communities across Scotland and elsewhere need the church now more than ever. She said that an important part of her role is to "affirm the connection" between the Church and the communities of Scotland.

"Over the course of the General Assembly, I have had the great privilege of meeting many people who are walking in God's ways," she said. "We saw how committed people nourish the communities they live in."

"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much." – Helen Keller

Church News

Military chaplains vital to “spiritual resilience” of service members

The key role played by Church of Scotland military chaplains at a time of rising international tensions has been recently highlighted at the General Assembly.

Group Captain (Ret'd) Andrew Tait, who is convener of the Committee on Chaplains to HM Forces, said that as people in the services "prepared like never before" for whatever demands the country asked of them, chaplains would stand alongside them "wherever they go and whatever they do".

Mr Tait went on to refer to the “dangerous state of the world today.” He said: "There is war in Europe, tension in the Persian Gulf and many other conflicts and hotspots around the world. Some informed commentators believe this country is closer to major conflict than it has been for many years.

"As a result, the men and women of his Majesty's Armed Forces are preparing like never before to meet whatever demands the Government and the country ask of them.

"Chaplains stand alongside the people of the Services wherever they go and whatever they do, to support them and care for them morally, pastorally and spiritually.

"Chaplains, of any faith, working with those of all faiths and no faith, are there to listen, to advise and to support.”

Stay overnight in a historic Mid Wales church this summer

Walkers and visitors can once again book overnight stays at St Gwrhai's Church in Penstrowed, Powys, as the 2026 champing season opens.

Champing, a blend of 'church' and 'camping', offers exclusive overnight access to historic churches no longer used for regular services. The church accommodates up to four guests and includes a fully equipped kitchen in the adjacent hall, an indoor toilet, and secure space for bikes. Dogs are welcome.

Located an hour from both Aberystwyth and Shrewsbury, the site is well placed for exploring the Cambrian Mountains, which lie 20 minutes away and include nine Dark Sky Discovery sites. The Severn Way — a 215-mile walking route to Bristol — begins nearby, and guided walking groups operate in the area.

For more information visit champing.co.uk.

Church News

Church attendance grows for fifth year in a row

Church of England congregations saw their fifth year of growth in a row in 2025 with steady increases in weekly and Sunday attendance and strong growth in Christmas and Easter services, an early snapshot of official figures shows.

Overall, there were an estimated 1.023 million regular worshippers across Church of England congregations last year, up 1.4 per cent on 2024, according to preliminary returns for the annual *Statistics for Mission* report. It is the fifth year in a row in which attendance both on Sundays and across the week have risen – the first time this has been seen since current records have been kept.

Just under two million people (1.96 million) joined services on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day last year - up 5.5 per cent - in addition to 4.8 million attendances over Advent, a 2.0 per cent rise.

Easter attendance was up 7.8 per cent to just over one million (1.03 million).

Over a typical week an estimated 707,000 people attended Church of England services, up 0.7 per cent on the previous year, and 15.5 per cent higher than 2021 when attendance rebounded after Covid.

Meanwhile average attendance at Sunday services stood at 590,000 – up 1.6 per cent on the 2024 figure. Despite this recent growth, attendance and participation remain below pre-pandemic levels.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Sarah Mullally, said: "It is so encouraging to see the ways that God is at work in our Church. I give thanks for the clergy, lay people and volunteers who each week make people feel welcome in every parish across our country."

Debbie Clinton, the Church of England's Director for Vision and Strategy, said: "From our rural villages to our post-industrial towns, in parishes across the country, churches are reaching out to their communities and sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ. Our 2025 statistics are a testament to their hospitality and faithfulness. We praise God for all that He is doing in His Church."

Editor: Canon Paul Hardingham considers football.

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!'*



Matters of Faith

Editor: By the Revd Roy Shaw, a retired but active priest in the diocese of York, where he is a spiritual director.

Keep on keeping on

In the church year, we've now come to that long season- it seems to go on forever- variously called 'Trinity' or 'Ordinary time'. Each of those labels tells us something about the approximately six months between Pentecost and Advent Sunday. 'Trinity' reminds us that with Pentecost, God has made Himself known to us in all His fullness (or at least as much as we can bear) as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. 'Ordinary time' tells us that this is the season where, now armed with the insights and power of the Holy Spirit, we can revisit the life of Jesus with new eyes, new heart, see new things in the faith, see new opportunities to serve God.

This is the time when those words of Jesus (John 15 v15) 'I have made known to you everything I have learned from the Father' come into play. It may seem a long season, it may feel like the drudgery of 'Keep on keeping on' without the excitement of Christmas, Easter and Pentecost to lift our spirits, but it is ordinary time charged with the knowledge that we have everything we need in the resources of God. The love of the Father, the words and works of the Son, the power of the Spirit will energise us as we 'keep on keeping on' through this long season.

This long season up to the end of November is a reminder that working out our love for God in our community is probably more about perspiration than inspiration. Few are called to be heroes of the faith, but all are called to faithfulness, and somehow or other, with the transforming power of the Spirit, we are all able to keep on keeping on, doing little things with great love.

Here's a lovely prayer I learned from our son's godmother which captures some of the mindset of the Trinity season/Ordinary time; it may help you 'keep on keeping on' through the months ahead;

Let not our soul be busy inns that have not room for thee and thine, but quiet homes of prayer and praise where thou mayest find fit company; where the needful cares of life are wisely ordered and put away, and wide sweet space is kept for thee.

Amen to that. Ordinary- but challenging!

If you can't fly then run, if you can't run then walk, if you can't walk then crawl, but whatever you do you have to keep moving forward. *Martin Luther King, Jr.*

Editor: The Revd Dr Jo White continues her series on aspects of Christianity.

Reflected Faith Series: Intercessions

Last month we reflected on the Creed within our service. This month, we consider what comes next.

In the Book of Common Prayer, the Creed and the sermon appear in a different order, but in both traditions intercessions follow. In Common Worship, they come straight after the Creed.

By this point, we may feel we have already prayed a great deal, so what makes intercessions different?

Intercessions focus entirely on the needs of others. They are public prayers, not centred on 'me' but on the wider world. They gather the concerns of the Church, the world, our community, those in need, and those who have died, along with those who mourn and as a whole congregation we bring them before God.

They are not, repeat not, a time to slip in a couple of adverts for next week's summer fair and a prayer for enough volunteers to come forward – please see Mrs Jones after the service - or to tell the congregation of someone's ill health or funeral arrangements!

These prayers usually follow that order, though sometimes in reverse. Either way, there is a clear pattern that helps the congregation engage. We may begin broadly with the world and move towards the local and personal, or start close to home and widen our view.

For example, with a theme such as farming, intercessions might include churches in rural communities worldwide, countries dependent on food production, government ministers responsible for agriculture and fisheries, local farmers and food workers, and those in need or recently bereaved within the community.

Style matters as much as content. These are the prayers of the people, so they should use language that feels natural and accessible. Often, simplicity works best.

This month

Listen carefully to the intercessions when you attend a service. Do they follow a clear, engaging pattern? Is the language accessible? Which prayers stay with you through the week? Who leads them, and from where?

The name of Jesus is not so much written as ploughed into the history of the world. - Ralph Waldo Emerson.

Editor: Canon Paul Hardingham continues his seven-part series **The Seven Deadly Sins: Sloth**

'Through laziness, the rafters sag; because of idle hands, the house leaks.' (Ecclesiastes 10:18).

This month we are looking at *Sloth*, the last of the Seven Deadly Sins. This is more than just laziness! The Latin root of the word is *'acedia'* (*'without care'*), meaning it represents spiritual apathy, distraction or indifference in our lives. Sloth can have a significant effect on our spiritual lives, as it enables other sins to gain a foothold eg lust, anger or envy. Another consequence is that we can fail to respond to God's calling in our lives and His gifts go unused. There is no satisfaction in sloth, as real joy comes when we are ready to step out of our comfort zones for God.

How do we overcome sloth in our lives? Paul writes, *'Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord'* (Colossians 3:23). We can ask ourselves some key questions:

Am I living with unconfessed sin? Can I identify sins or habits that are getting in the way of my spiritual intimacy with God?

Have I neglected the spiritual disciplines? In what ways have I neglected spending quality time with God in prayer, reading His Word or being still in His presence?

What fills my mind daily? What are the distractions that occupy my time and thinking eg social media, technology, people or habits? How can I let go of these things to give space for listening to God?

The Holy Spirit can convict us of those things that we need to confess and let go. Are we ready to switch off our screens, seek to help others in need and give time to God?

'Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervour, serving the Lord.' (Romans 12:11)

"Offer the lazy an egg, and they'll want you to peel it for them." – Lithuanian Proverb

You cannot escape the responsibility of tomorrow by evading it today." – Abraham Lincoln

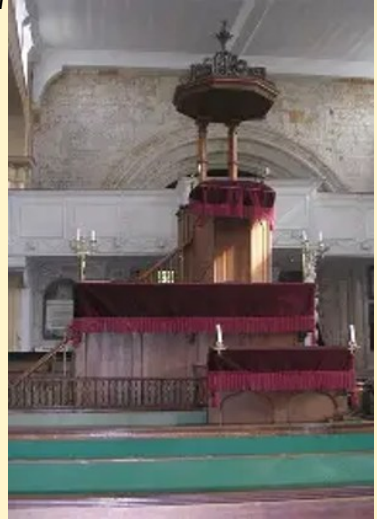
"Laziness erodes a person of his enthusiasm and energy. As a result the person loses all opportunities and finally becomes dejected and frustrated. The worst thing is that he stops believing in himself." – Sam Veda

God in the Arts

Editor: Have you ever thought how an actual church building might provide a series of visual aids to spiritual meditation? The Revd Michael Burgess continues his procession through a church building, this month pausing to consider the significance of the pulpit.

'He gave us eyes to see them' – Church Pulpits

It is a steep climb of 199 steps that leads the visitor to Whitby from the streets below to the church of St Mary's that stands near the ruined abbey. Having negotiated the climb, the visitor enters the church and is greeted by a glorious array of Georgian furnishings: box pews and a triple decker pulpit with candlesticks and cushions. The clerk would sit at the bottom level to give out the notices, the parson would lead the service in the middle, and then he would ascend to the third level to expound the Word of God.



George Herbert says that for the country parson the pulpit should be 'his joy and his throne.' Sydney Smith had a different slant when he wrote on going into the pulpit of All Saints Church in Foston in 1806: 'When I began to thump the pulpit cushion on my first coming to Foston, the accumulated dust of 150 years made such a cloud that for some minutes I lost sight of the congregation.' Not so at Whitby where the church is cared for and well loved.

Today preachers often remain at ground level, the better to interact with their congregations, but here at St Mary's Church the pulpit is a sign of the importance of teaching the Word: not because the preacher stands eight feet above contradiction, but to allow people to see and hear.

The word 'pulpit' means a platform or raised area to address the gathered family of God. As we look on in the pews, it stands often on our left. But God looks at us from the east end of the church and the pulpit stands at his right hand: a sign that the sermon can be the divinely inspired message of prophet and teacher, and so become living and active in the minds and hearts of its hearers.

God in the Sciences

This series is written by Dr Ruth M. Bancewicz, who is Church Engagement Director at The Faraday Institute for Science and Religion in Cambridge. Ruth writes on the positive relationship between Science and Christian faith.

A Scientist Reflects: Suffering and the Image of God

Since the cost-of-living crisis in 2021/22, Food Banks have become a necessity for many desperate families. When they are given food, people reveal a variety of emotions: from relief, happiness and hope, through to quiet sadness, resignation, and desperation. Most often they display a mixture of several of these feelings at the same time. I believe that our cries for answers at times like this, and our deep longing for things to be better, kinder, more just, less painful and chaotic, are a sign that we are made in the image of God. The Bible describes God creating men and women, instructing them to rule over the earth, and giving them the freedom to choose what they will do. The world God made was described as “very good”, but human wrongdoing caused a rift between people and God, and also between us and the rest of Creation. From a scientist’s perspective, it seems that the *potential* for accidents, disease and death – for both animals and humans – may have been part of God’s very good creation, and there was a real threat of famine, albeit far rarer than in our current mismanaged version of creation? How would we have managed life in what Genesis describes as an un-subdued world if our relationship with God hadn’t broken down, and evil hadn’t been unleashed? Maybe painful experiences would have been experienced as challenges that brought us closer to each other and to God, rather than bringing us the experience of suffering (which I would define more particularly as involving distress, isolation and fear)? Of course, these are theoretical questions that no one can answer, but perhaps they are worth exploring. God has already responded to suffering at a root level by taking it on Himself. Through His death and resurrection, Jesus broke the power of sin and death. We do not yet see the final results of those decisive actions – the end of suffering for all those who trust Him – but we can already feel their impact. For example, many people have experienced the wonderful effect, either in their own lives or by receiving kindness from others, which is described by these words: “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh” (Ezekiel 36:26).

Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in
1 Samuel 24

God chose Saul to be the King of Israel, but Saul chose to disobey Him. God said that the next king would not be Saul's son.

Saul didn't know that God had chosen David to be the next king.



David was very successful as a fighter and very popular.



David had to go on the run and hide.



One day, Saul and his army were in En-Gedi. Saul needed to pee, so he went into a sheep fold built next to a cave...

David and his men were hiding at the back of the cave!



David crept over and cut a piece off Saul's robe.



Then David felt bad.



David waited until Saul was far enough away then he shouted to him.



Your majesty, I could have killed you today, but I knew it was wrong. I want to prove to you I'm not trying to harm you.



David, you are better than me. I would have killed you but you were kind.



Now I know you will be the next king, but please look after my family.



David promised, and Saul and his army went home.



Miscellaneous

All in the month of July

It was:

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

250 years ago, from 12th July 1776 to 4th 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 5th 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 3rd 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.

Also 175 years ago, on 24th July 1851 that the Window Tax was abolished in England and Wales. The tax was introduced in 1696 and was based on the number of windows in a house. It led to many windows being bricked up. It was replaced by a tax on inhabited buildings.

125 years ago, on 9th 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.

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

75 years ago, on 13th July 1951 that Arnold Schoenberg, the Austrian-born American composer died. One of the most influential composers of the 20th century, though the Nazis considered his music degenerate, because he was Jewish.

60 years ago, on 30th 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 20th July 1976 that NASA's Viking 1 lander successfully landed on Mars, and sent back the first photographs from the surface of Mars.

40 years ago, on 23rd 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 1st July 1996 that candidates taking the British driving test also had to pass a written exam for the first time.

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

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

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

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

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

Editor: Tim Lenton considers the founding of America.

The US Declaration of Independence – 4th July 1776

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

The original signed parchment still exists, behind bullet-proof glass at the National Archives in Washington, but copies were quickly printed and distributed on the day – not all of them totally accurate. Its creation followed considerable conflict between the colonies and the British Parliament, reaching a head in late 1775 when Parliament prohibited trade with the colonies. This followed other measures, including what was regarded by some as unfair taxation without representation. An original draft of the Declaration was made by Thomas Jefferson, but it was amended by Benjamin Franklin and John Adams, who omitted passages likely to offend the more conservative colonists, such as the suggestion that King George III was to blame for transatlantic slave trade, or anything that accused the British people rather than their government. The most important effect of the Declaration from a diplomatic point of view was to make possible relationships between the colonists and friendly foreign governments. But it had a substantial effect elsewhere. Anglican clergy felt conflicted because they had sworn an oath to the King as Supreme Governor of the Church of England, and supporting independence would mean breaking that oath. Many colonies made public prayers for the King acts of treason, and this in part led Anglicans to recreate themselves as the Protestant Episcopal Church.

The Declaration itself could be described as a Christian document, reflecting Judeo-Christian values, as Abraham Lincoln made clear in his Gettysburg Address in 1863, quoting its second sentence: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

The Air Tattoo is cancelled because of Iran war

The Royal International Air Tattoo, one of the world's largest defence shows, has been cancelled due to military operations linked to the Iran war. RIAT 2026 had been scheduled for 17th–19th July at RAF Fairford, an active Royal Air Force base used by the U.S. Air Force, in southwest England. But at present the U.S. forces for the Iran war are using the base, and it is not clear when they will be leaving. In March, Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer said Britain would allow limited use of its bases, but that he would not join offensive strikes on Iran.

Have you noticed the seagulls lately?

Or rather – the lack of them?

A recent survey published by the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO), found that the total number of gulls wintering in the UK has fallen from 3.9 million to just under 2.5 million over the past two decades.

It is thought that the reason for the decline of gulls is due to improvements in waste management, both on our streets and in landfill. Avian flu, agricultural practices and climate. The survey targeted the black-headed gull, common gull, lesser black-headed gull, herring gull, and black-backed gulls. It found all species, apart from herring gulls, had declined.

The great black-backed gull, the UK's largest, saw a 66 per cent drop in numbers wintering in the UK. Black-headed gulls declined by almost half. Common gull numbers fell by 26 per cent, and those of lesser black-backed gulls dropped by 47 per cent.

Emma Caulfield, a BTO research ecologist and survey co-ordinator, said: "These figures are pretty alarming. Despite these smart and adaptable birds figuring out how to live alongside us, the ever-changing world appears to be moving too fast for them to keep up."

Holiday soothies

For dealing with motion sickness, ginger capsules are your new friend. Available from any health store, they do a wonderful job in calming upset tummies.

For fever or frayed tempers, take some camomile tea bags with you. Camomile tea doesn't just calm your nerves; cooled down, the tea also soothes sunburn.

For banning mosquitoes & insomnia, take some essential oil of lavender. Mosquitoes hate the smell, so if you put a few drops around your pillow at night, you can help keep them at bay – and help yourself drift off to sleep.

"Penalty kicks: the ultimate test of a player's nerves and a fan's ability to hold their breath!"

Why our 'crumbling infrastructure' is hurting older people

Poorly paved roads, unsafe crossings and poor public toilets are slowing people down. Especially older people. Rather than getting out and about in their communities, they tend to feel safer staying inside.

But the lack of regular, positive exercise is a danger for them. Such is the verdict of a recent report from MPs serving on the Health and Social Care Select Committee.

The MPs stress that what they call Britain's 'crumbling infrastructure' is leading to many preventable health conditions, ranging from obesity, type 2 diabetes, heart disease, cancer, the onset of frailty, dementia and disability.

Figures suggest that 44 per cent of people aged 75 or older are doing less than 30 minutes of moderate physical activity per week. In the UK, lack of activity is associated with a staggering one in six deaths and is estimated to cost £7.4bn a year.

So, the MPs are calling for local action to fix streets and crossings, and to put in more toilets and public seating, as well as better national transport.

Layla Moran, the chairman of the health select committee, said: "Staying physically active can help older people to live not just longer, but healthier, happier, more sociable lives."



Miscellaneous

Here are some tips for a cooler house

If the summer heat is getting to you, you might consider the following:

Close your curtains and blinds during the day. Block out the sunlight. That may be hard to do in a country where we don't see the sun as often as we'd like, but sadly that sunlight pouring through your windows will not only brighten but also heat up your house.

At night, aim to create a breeze that flows through your house. This is easy to do - simply open windows on opposite walls or at opposite sides of your home. Let the air circulate as much as possible.

Try to reduce heat from your appliances. Your stove, television, dishwasher, hairdryer, fridge and freezer all generate some heat. Can you do without any of these during the daytime?

Aim for cool flooring. Try and use wood flooring and ceramic or porcelain tiles in that is why we like them in the winter.

Consider using breathable fabrics over your sofa and chairs. Sitting on natural fabrics such as cotton or linen throws is cooler than sitting on man-made fabrics.

If all else fails, *try an electric fan*, placed on the floor in front of a bowl of ice water, and aimed at the opposite wall of your room. But they are expensive to run, and do not cool the air. They merely increase the velocity of it, so that it feels cooler.



Poems and Prayers



The boys on the substitutes' bench knew
their only chance of a sing was if one of
the first team was injured



For the last time! - Which member of the Junior Choir
put bubble mixture in the organ-blower?!

**"If we choose righteousness
— we choose liberty.**

**If we choose sin
— we choose bondage."**

Benny Hinn

Time Choices

(Lk 10:38-42)

Martha is distracted,
too busy
preparing for the needs of the day.
Not enough time... not enough time.

Mary is focused,
taking time to meet the needs of the heart.
Sitting still,
seeing through the paraphernalia of every
day
with a new clarity that changes her world.
Mary listens to Jesus.
She chooses life.

There is time...there is time.
We all have our life time.
What will we choose?

By Daphne Kitching

Come reign in me

Oh God, who made the world so fair,
And formed the earth, the sky, the sea;
Who gave us ears, and eyes, and minds,
To hear, to see, to know all love is thee.

Oh God, who in the Lord Jesus,
Gave us a light to light our way;
Let our life's lamp be lit by Him
Whose strength will see us safely through
each day.

Oh God, whose Spirit gave us birth,
And holds all life secure, e'en mine;
Take all I am, and all I have,
Bless and redeem them for they both are
Thine.

Oh God the Father, God the Son,
And God the Spirit, three in one;
Blessed be thy name, come reign in me,
And in me let thy will be done.

By Sam Doubtfire



Adopted

The teacher's young pupils were discussing a picture of a family. One little boy in the picture had a different hair colour than the other members. One of the children suggested that he was adopted. A little girl said, "I know all about adoption; I was adopted."

"What does it mean to be adopted?" asked another child.

"It means", said the girl, "that you grew in your mommy's heart instead of her tummy."

Who I am

An elderly woman walked into the local country church. The friendly usher greeted her at the door and helped her up the flight of steps. "Where would you like to sit?" he asked politely.

"The front row please." she answered.

"You really don't want to do that", the usher said. "The vicar is boring."

"Do you happen to know who I am?" the woman inquired. The man shook his head. "Well, I'm the vicar's mother," she said indignantly.

"Do you know who I am?" he asked. The woman shook her head. "Good," he grinned.

Never too old for cricket

"Well, well," said the old gentleman to some boys who were playing cricket. "I wish I could join your game, but I'm too old."

"You CAN join in," said one young player. "Our ball has just gone through that window. You can go and ask for it back."

Bucket list

I'm proud to announce that I have completed the first item on my bucket list. I have the bucket.

Church Bulletin Notices

Some church bulletin notices have a charm all their own, when you know that they MEANT to say....

At the evening service tonight, the sermon topic will be 'What Is Hell?' Come early and listen to our choir practise.

Eight new choir robes are currently needed, due to the addition of several new members and to the deterioration of some older ones.

Next Thursday there will be try-outs for the choir. They need all the help they can get.

Irving Benson and Jessie Carter were married last Saturday in the church. So ends a friendship that began in their school days.

Picture Parable

The tale of the Two Sons

