

MAY 2026

## *From the Editors*

*Welcome to this May edition.*

*This month we will be saying a sad farewell to Chris and Jacqui. Chris is retiring from the ministry and his last service will be on Pentecost Sunday 24th May. Please come along to his last two services and wish him well. He has been with us and looked after us for over 25 years and we are very grateful for his ministry among us. His unfailing humour and care for the people of Penwortham has uplifted and re-assured us. Please pray for them and their family as they take the huge step into retirement. We are celebrating his time as our Vicar with a light buffet at 2pm on the 24th and all are welcome. If you do intend to come will you please let one of the churchwardens know so we have an idea of how many to cater for. This will be a lovely opportunity to say our goodbyes to Chris and Jacqui and give them our heartfelt thanks.*

*This month brings us Penwortham Live on the 8th and 9th of May with our regular Vicar's Tea Party on the afternoon of Saturday 9th.*

"'Tis like the birthday of the world,  
When earth was born in bloom;  
The light is made of many dyes,  
The air is all perfume:  
There's crimson buds, and white and blue,  
The very rainbow showers  
Have turned to blossoms where they fell,  
And sown the earth with flowers."  
- Thomas Hood



# St Mary's News

## Dates for your diary

Penwortham Live 8th and 9th May

Vicar's Tea Party Saturday 9th May at 2pm

Our Vicar's last service Sunday 24th May (Whit Sunday/Pentecost)

Penwortham Gala 13th and 14th June

## Christian Aid Week 10<sup>th</sup>- 16<sup>th</sup> May 2026

Christian Aid Week this year is 10<sup>th</sup> -16<sup>th</sup> May, when we are all



encouraged to take 7 days to make a difference. I will be taking a bit longer than that as I will be taking part in 70K in May, both walking and swimming to cover at least 70k, that's 70 kilometres or 46 miles. You can sponsor me either by going online to do so, [Rachel's 70k in May - Christian Aid Week](#) or if you prefer I have a paper form too. Keep an eye on my tracker to see how far I have got.

As a church our main effort this year will be on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> May when volunteers will be at Tesco with buckets to encourage shoppers to do their bit to help. There is also an electronic envelope you can use to make a donation

[St Mary's Penwortham's Envelope - Christian Aid Week](#)



and there are envelopes at church you can take home and bring back to church. Most importantly, who are we helping?

Well it's families like Fridah's and Belinda's. They both live in an informal settlement on the edge of Nairobi, where life is precarious. Work can be intermittent and selling at market can bring in a variable income. This makes any planning for the future and being able to pay for their children's education difficult. With help from a project run by Christian Aid's partner Beacon of Hope, both have been shown how to use cone planters to grow crops in small spaces in the settlement. These crops both give the families nutritious food for themselves but also provide an income from selling the excess. The confidence this has given Fridah and Belinda the ability to help other families to be able to do similarly, helping the whole community become more resilient. Anything you can give will make a difference, £15.00 will buy basic tools and seeds to help someone start their urban garden.

### South Ribble Live in Penwortham

Wristbands are now on sale at church priced £6. They give access to all the events in Penwortham and are great value. Please buy them from church as we receive all of the proceeds which go to help church funds. See one of the churchwardens if you would like to purchase one.



# St Mary's News

## Vicar's Tea Party.

On Saturday 9th May we will be hosting the annual Vicar's Tea Party. Come along and enjoy delicious cakes and refreshments. This is a lovely time for friends and families to meet up and enjoy good company.

**SOUTH RIBBLE LIVE**  
CRAFTS

christian aid  
**RAFFLE**  
Fair Trade Prizes

PARACHUTING TEDDIES  
(or other soft toys)

St Mary's Parish Church  
**Vicar's Tea Party**  
**Saturday 9th May 2026**  
**2-4:30 p.m.**

Climb to the  
top of the  
tower

## Please help us

St Mary's Church has recently been given permission to renovate and extend the existing extension at the church

We have money to help pay for this work but that will not cover the whole cost of building and fitting the replacement extension

As part of the application process, we need to show that the whole community have an interest in us doing this work to help us to make the church a sustainable building, that will preserve and publicise important heritage in Penwortham and provide a resource for the community

As a result, we are making an application to try to get funds from the National Lottery Heritage Fund to cover the difference.





**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

### **The year 2026 is our centenary year as a Diocese.**

It will be a chance to give thanks for all that God has done through his people in the Diocese of Blackburn since William Temple founded it in 1926, and an opportunity to commit ourselves anew to mission and ministry in the service of Jesus Christ across Lancashire.



### **Why “All for Jesus”?**

All for Jesus explains in three simple words why there is a Diocese of Blackburn and what our purpose is. The Centenary will be an opportunity for everyone to come together to celebrate and also give us opportunities for mission across the County.

### **What can I expect during the Centenary?**

Resources will be shared for use throughout the year. As well as local events across our parishes and schools several key collective events are planned and these are outlined below.

### **Big Day Out in Blackpool – Saturday 16 May, 2026**

A celebration needs a party, So, on Saturday 16 May 2026 we are going to invite the Diocese to have a ‘Big Day Out’ together in the centre of Blackpool; a place that has played such an important role in the history of the Diocese. Let’s make it the heart of our celebrations and also enjoy a great day together. We’ll be hosting activities for children of all ages with games, crafts and stories. We’ll run sessions for teenagers and grown-ups from sport workshops to live music and more. In the afternoon, we’ll have a giant picnic before all coming together for a celebration service on St John’s Square outside the Winter Gardens. There will be BSL Interpreter provision on the day.



### **'Thy Kingdom Come' – global prayer movement marks ten years**

This year the global prayer movement *Thy Kingdom Come* (TKC) will take place from Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> May.

Spanning the 11 days between Ascension and Pentecost, the initiative encourages Christians to pray for five people whom they know (friends, families, neighbours) to come to faith.

This year is a special one for *Thy Kingdom Come*. It was ten years ago, in 2016, that it began as a call to prayer from the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Archbishop of York.

TKC has since grown into a global wave of prayer, involving tens of millions of Christians, in dozens of denominations, in almost 90% countries worldwide.

To mark these first ten years, the new archbishop, Sarah Mullally, has written a Novena for the initiative.

This year's theme is 'God With Us'. With the help of leaders from across the church traditions, TKC will explore a different Bible story each day, one which demonstrates God's transformative presence, power and love at work in the lives of people and communities.

### **World Council of Churches condemns Russia's mass abduction of Ukrainian children**

The World Council of Churches (WCC) has responded with grave concern to a recent United Nations commission that has confirmed Russia's mass abduction of Ukrainian children.

"These actions are a shocking violation of the God-given dignity of every child and the sanctity of family bonds", said the WCC's general secretary, the Revd Professor Jerry Pillay.

"The deliberate removal and relocation of children for political or ideological purposes is fundamentally incompatible with international law, morality and Christian values."

Professor Pillay was responding to a report by a UN-appointed Independent International Commission of Inquiry, which said that Russia had committed crimes against humanity by forcibly deporting Ukrainian children during and after its February 2022 invasion.

**"Almost everyone has at least one person on their phone who will never pick up the phone again."**

**– Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky.**

### **Vatican says people with Down syndrome are of 'equal dignity'**

The Vatican has affirmed that a person with Down syndrome has the same dignity and sacred value as any other.

It firmly rejects prenatal screening and the selective termination of pregnancies, where the condition has been diagnosed in the unborn child.

The Holy See's Apostolic Nuncio in Geneva, Archbishop Balestrero, said that "persons with Down syndrome are more than a diagnosis, more than a condition, and certainly more than the limits others may imagine.

"All of them, like all of us, possess the same inherent dignity and sacred value, intentionally and lovingly imprinted by the Creator from the very first moment of conception."

The Vatican recently released the statement on World Down Syndrome Day (21<sup>st</sup> March).

### **Church bells rang for the first time in Betws-y-Coed**

Those of us who enjoy visiting Betws-y-Coed will be glad to know that the bells at St Mary's Church in Betws-y-Coed were rung for the first time at a church service this Easter, following the completion of a major restoration project.

Although the church was built with plans for a full ring of bells, that work was never completed. More than 150 years later, the tower now has a full set of bells in place.

Eight of the bells were brought from St John's Church in Porthmadog, after its closure in 2024. They had been cast by John Warner & Sons, with six dating from 1900 and two added in 1902. The remaining bell, cast in 1873 for Betws-y-Coed by John Warner of London, has been restored and rehung as the clock and chiming bell.

Work on the installation included cleaning and tuning the bells, removing original fittings and installing new headstocks. A new base frame was designed using sections from the Porthmadog installation, supported by the original beams in the tower. The church clock mechanism has also been replaced so it can now chime the hour.

The project has cost around £100,000, funded mainly through grants, including support from the Keltek Trust, Hobart Trust and Bernard Piggott Trust.

**"Be like a flower and turn your face to the sun."  
- Kahlil Gibran**

### **Abortion law changes: Bishops take part in House of Lords debate**

Eleven bishops joined a recent late night sitting in the House of Lords to debate proposed changes to the law on abortion.

A clause in the Crime and Policing Bill, inserted in the House of Commons last year, will disapply the existing criminal law for women who access an abortion outside the legal limits.

This means that a woman seeking an abortion outside the terms of 1967 Act – which regulates the term limit - could not be prosecuted for doing so. However, providers could still be investigated or prosecuted.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Sarah Mullally, took part in the debate, alongside the Bishops of Chelmsford, Coventry, Chester, Leicester, Southwell & Nottingham, Portsmouth, Sheffield, Chichester, Hereford and Oxford.

Archbishop Sarah spoke in support of an amendment brought by Lady Monckton, to reject the clause altogether.

“Decriminalisation of abortion is a question of such legal, moral and practical complexity that I do believe it cannot be properly addressed in an amendment hastily added to another bill,” she told Peers.

“Consideration of any alteration to our abortion laws needs public consultation and robust Parliamentary processes to ensure that every aspect of this debate is carefully considered and scrutinised.”

She also spoke in support of amendments from Lady Stroud and the Bishop of Leicester which would reinstate in-person consultations before drugs for the termination of a pregnancy could be prescribed, which were provided before the Covid-19 pandemic. The Bishop of Leicester, Martyn Snow's amendment related to those under 18.

“Women confronted with the very complex and difficult decision to terminate a pregnancy deserve our utmost understanding, care and practical support as they face what is often a heart wrenching decision,” she said.

“However, I cannot support Clause 208 as it stands. Though its intention may not change the 24-week abortion limit, it undoubtedly risks eroding the safeguards and enforcement of those legal limits and inadvertently undermining the value of human life.”

Lady Monckton's amendment was lost by 185 votes to 148. Bishop Martyn's amendment fell by 163 votes to 68.

## Church News

CARE's Director of Advocacy and Policy, Caroline Ansell, said, "We are deeply troubled and grieved by the outcome in the House of Lords on the amendments relating to abortion.

"By rejecting the opportunity to remove the highly controversial clause allowing women to abort their own babies up to birth without legal consequences, Peers have instead endorsed a dangerous principle which may prove truly terrible in practice with more, not fewer, women taking desperate and risky steps to end late term pregnancy.

"Tiny lives will be lost before they have begun. If the mark of a just society is how we treat the most vulnerable, what does this say about us?"

Peers also rejected a bid to make it mandatory for a pregnant woman to have an in-person consultation before lawfully being prescribed medicine for the termination of a pregnancy at home.

### **Bible Society says its *Quiet Revival* report was based on a 'faulty' survey**

The Bible Society has said that the survey sample on which its report the *Quiet Revival* was based was "faulty, and it can no longer be regarded as a reliable source of information about the spiritual landscape in Britain".

In a recent statement, the Bible Society's CEO, Paul Williams, said: "We are . . . deeply disappointed that YouGov not only made an error but also that it only discovered this so recently."

YouGov's CEO, Stephan Shakespeare, apologised, saying: "YouGov take full responsibility for the outputs of the original 2024 research, and we apologise for what has happened. We would like to stress that Bible Society has at all times accurately and responsibly reported the data we supplied to them."

When it was published last April, the report suggested that churchgoing among young people, particularly men, in England and Wales was growing, but not in the Church of England.

The report suggested that this showed "dramatic growth" in church attendance, owed largely to younger generations.

The report was subject to criticism, most recently by the Pew Research Center, which said that such reports "may be misleading" because they "canvass members of *opt-in* panels who have signed up to participate, often in response to website ads or email campaigns", as opposed to surveys using random samples, which, Pew said, "do not show clear evidence of a Christian resurgence".

## Church News

Thursday's statement by Mr Williams said that the Bible Society "recognise that this news may feel discouraging and we share that sense of disappointment.

"Over a 15-month period, Bible Society repeatedly sought and received assurances from YouGov, regarding both the robustness of the methodology and the reliability of the report's conclusions. It was only at the beginning of March that YouGov confirmed that it failed to activate key quality control technologies that protect the sample from a wide range of errors and this undermines the reliability of the results."

None the less, Mr Williams's statement said, there was "plenty of other evidence that indicates that more people are finding faith today than for many years.

"We think Christianity in Britain is increasingly moving from being a declining nominal faith to being a committed and active faith; there is greater spiritual openness than in the past and a greater warmth towards faith and religion."

### **Russian clerics want more Ukrainian land, and praise the Ayatollah**

A senior cleric in the Russian Orthodox Church, Metropolitan Kirill (Pokrovsky) of Stavropol, has recently called for Russia to move in and occupy even more Ukrainian territory.

His call came as the war entered its fifth year. Metropolitan Kirill is the Church's director for relations with the armed forces.

He said: "If the Western satanists fail to withdraw, and the current junta still controls territory, the Orthodox Church's persecution will continue, and Russia will need to go further, occupying Odessa and Kiev as well."

He urged Russian forces to continue "giving themselves for the safety and prosperity of the people," and said that President Zelensky could be "eliminated by a missile."

"You may say I'm a dreamer, but I'm not the only one. I hope someday you'll join us. And the world will live as one."

— John Lennon

### **24<sup>th</sup> May - Fire of Pentecost, Whit Sunday**

"You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you and you will be witnesses to me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth" Acts 1:8

We all get tired, and battle weary sometimes. The disciples of Jesus had just been through a three-year long roller coaster adventure with Jesus that had culminated in His death, resurrection and ascension into heaven.

The range of emotions would have been hugely taxing in the days leading up to Pentecost, as they remembered Jesus weeping in the garden of Gethsemane, betrayed by Judas, brutally beaten and crucified, and then dead and buried. Then there had been the shock and awe of finding out that He was alive again! But then He had left them again, to return to His Father. By the time the day of Pentecost arrived, the disciples would indeed have welcomed some fresh spiritual fire!

Today, many of us have been emotionally drained by the uncertainties of Covid 19, the worry of prices rising at an alarming rate, and now the uncertainty of what will happen in Russia's war in Ukraine.

So, what better day to pray for fresh spiritual fire for each of us? As we celebrate the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and birth of the Church, let us thank God that He will never leave us or forsake us.

*Editor: Canon Paul Hardingham continues his series on the books of the Bible.*

### **What's the Big Idea? - an Introduction to the Books of the Old Testament: Ezekiel**

Ezekiel was a prophet who proclaimed judgment to God's people in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC. He was among the group of Jews exiled in Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar. Ezekiel received his call when he was 30 years old through a vision of the glory of God. His ministry finished 22 years later with a vision of the restored Temple in Jerusalem.

Ezekiel spoke to a community forced from its home, who had broken faith with God. He presents a God who rules over all people and history. He is a God who desires to be known and acknowledged (*'then they will know that I am the Lord'*). As a priest, Ezekiel was deeply concerned with the holiness of God. This call to holy living includes an emphasis on individual responsibility (chapter 18), which is a significant milestone in biblical thought.

**A happy marriage is a union of two good forgivers.**  
**- Robert Quillen**

Ezekiel offers a vision of true hope for those who have undergone judgment. He promises a restored Temple as a sign of God's presence among his people. He also promises a future 'prince' who will rule with justice and restore God's relationship with his people (34:23-4).

In restoring them morally and spiritually, God promises to use them to bring light to the Gentiles. They will demonstrate the holiness of God's name, because they will know him from the heart. This is the promise that is fulfilled in Jesus and made possible for us:

*'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. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.'* (36: 26-27).

*Editor: Canon Paul Hardingham continues his seven-part series.*

### **The Seven Deadly Sins: Lust**

*'Lust is the craving for salt by a man who is dying of thirst'* (Frederick Beucher).

This month's Deadly Sin is *lust*. It is usually understood as an intense desire for sexual pleasure, but can include other things eg food, success or fame.

Objectifying a person for our own selfish pleasure can leave us feeling guilty, ashamed or disappointed. Our relationship with God is spoilt, as we create an area of life which is not under God's authority. As Jesus says: *'You have heard that it was said, "You shall not commit adultery."*

*But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.'* (Matthew 5:27,28).

How can we deal with lust in our lives?

*Confess it to God: 'If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.'* (1 John 1:9). Lust feeds on secrecy, yet God already knows our thoughts and desires. Focus on Jesus, who loves and accepts us for who we are. Confess our desires to Him, knowing that He wants to cleanse us of our sin.

*Renew your Mind: 'Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is - His good, pleasing and perfect will.'* (Romans 12:2). Overcoming lust requires an understanding of our thinking. We need to acknowledge when lust affects us, understand the triggers for our thoughts (circumstances, time) and address them by asking for God's strength to overcome them.

*'Lust is a poor, weak, whispering thing compared with that richness and energy of desire which will arise when lust has been killed.'* (CS Lewis).

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

### **Reflected Faith Series: The Creed (Part I)**

There are various sections that make up a Communion service. While different denominations, and different styles of churches even within the same denomination, may do things differently, generally speaking they all include the same foundational elements.

So, after the Bible readings, and then sermon, what follows next?

In Common Worship (CW) we ‘immediately’ jump to our feet and proclaim our faith!

If you follow the Book of Common Prayer (BCP), the Creed comes between the Gospel reading and the sermon – which is my excuse for forgetting to say it more than once when I’ve conducted the latter service first (if you get what I mean) on a Sunday morning.

The question is, ‘Why is it placed here?’ Wouldn’t it make more sense to have it at or close to the beginning of a service; so that we can be sure everyone in the congregation is on the same page, so to speak.

Or why not at the end, just before we go out into the world taking our faith with us?

Why here?

When (BCP) it follows directly after the Gospel reading, it’s as though having heard the words of Jesus we rush to say ‘I believe that. I believe in who said it. And I believe in ... etc etc.’ Rather like after your favourite team has scored a goal!

Where we’ve had the sermon first (CW), it’s as though the ‘explanation and contextualisation’ by the preacher makes it so plain that we can do nothing less than join together and reaffirm our baptismal faith.

*This month*

Pause for a moment before you say the Creed next time and consider where in your service it is placed. What has encouraged you to be able to say it from your heart? Was there a word, phrase or sentence that particularly gripped you and prompted you to your feet? Or was it just words written on the service sheet with a direction to stand?

## Matters of Faith

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Editor: David Pickup, a solicitor, considers credit and debit cards...

### **No quibble guarantee**

*Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of ...both of having abundance and suffering need. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me. Philippians 4:11-13*

*For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.*

*1 Timothy 6:10*

Recently a man received two letters from his bank. One was telling him his debt was going to be passed to the enforcement department, and the other was offering him a new loan! Sensibly, he got some advice about what to do. If you are thinking of getting a loan or a credit card, do check the small print. Does the offer seem too good to be true? What are the charges if you miss a payment? Make sure you know before you sign!

Many experts wonder if cash will become a thing of the past, because we use credit and debit cards so often, even for small payments. Credit cards and bank cards have their advantages. They are simple and easy to use. If you buy something on a credit card that costs more than £100 you get extra legal rights. So, if it does not arrive or does not work you can claim against the credit card company. But don't forget that debit cards are not credit cards and you do not get the same rights.

Up until a few years back we had offers of credit cards, loans, and buy-now-pay-later deals, all the time. Now things are tighter, and debt is a big worry for many. The Bible warns us of the dangers of borrowing but offers us the assurance that God cares for us. No questions asked!

**If only God would give me some clear sign!  
Like making a large deposit in my name at a  
Swiss bank.**

**Woody Allen**

### God in the Arts

*Editor: Have you ever thought how an actual church building might provide a series of visual aids to spiritual meditation? We continue our procession through a church building, this month pausing to consider the significance of the railings and kneelers. By the Revd Michael Burgess*

#### **'He gave us eyes to see them' – Stained Glass windows**

You may know the story of the little girl with her family during a guided tour around a cathedral. As the bright sun streamed through one of the windows, she asked the guide who were the people depicted there. "Those are the saints," he replied. Later that evening the girl told her mummy, "I know who the saints are." "Do you, dear? Who are they?" the mother asked. The little girl replied: "They are the people who let the light shine through."

When the summer sun rises, its light catches the east window of a church I look after. It shines through the figures and colours of the Annunciation scene to bathe the chancel in a warm glow. Later as the sun sets, it shines once again through the west window showing Christ surrounded by angels, with the same wonderful effect. They are two stained glass windows by the Victorian designer, Kempe. But in St Mary's Church, Fairford in Gloucestershire, there are an incredible 28 windows of medieval glass that have survived the centuries and continue to astonish the visitor.



As the sun catches this array of windows, the colours take on a new, vibrant life. We see scenes in the life of our Lord and our Lady, Old Testament prophets, New Testament apostles and the communion of saints. The eye moves round and we reach the west window portraying Christ in majesty and the day of judgement. This great work has been attributed to the royal glazier, Barnard Flower, who was influenced by the late medieval illuminated prayer books. The windows are a living witness to his skill and faith.

George Herbert has a poem that calls us to shine out like the church windows. It is easy, he says, to be "brittle crazy glass", but in God's good grace we can become like a window where colours and light, belief and life can combine and mingle to radiate out into the world.

### 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.

#### Humility

A few years ago, I visited the Smithsonian Museum's Hall of Human Origins. Our guide, the curator of anthropology, was keen to help Christians understand his research. Whatever you make of the evidence for human evolution, the fact remains that other species a bit like us were around before we came on the scene – or in the case of Neanderthals, at the same time.

Part of the exhibit included lifelike reconstructions of the face and hair of several different hominins, displayed on pillars at the right height for each species. So, I could crouch down to 'meet' *Homo floresiensis* or stand tall to look into the eyes of *Homo heidelbergensis*. Most of these – beings? creatures? – were on other branches of the evolutionary tree to us, and we share a common ancestor much further back. I did, however, feel as if I was meeting my forebears. As I walked between the statues I asked myself, "Why us?" There's evidence that Neanderthals used symbolism as we do, and also buried their dead. Did they have the potential to evolve to a point where they could do similar things to us? The curator explained how, as the ice ages came and went, human beings moved around but other species appear to have stayed put and suffered the consequences – they just weren't ready yet for that big change. As I took in the displays about how we began to gather socially around a fire, make music or write, I felt humbled. We managed to adapt, but we could so easily have disappeared with the rest.

In his book *The Message of Creation*, theologian David Wilkinson shares his view that being made in the image of God has nothing to do with our own cleverness or abilities, but instead it is a gift. God created us on purpose (I believe through the long slow process of evolution) and chose to enter into a relationship with us, making us His representatives on earth.

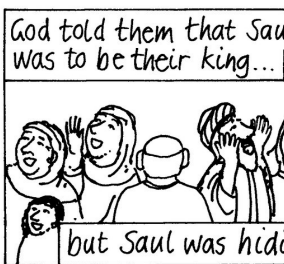
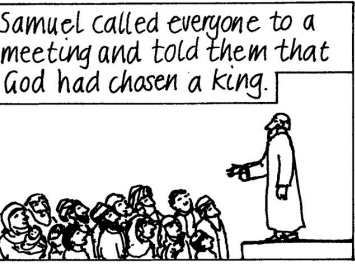
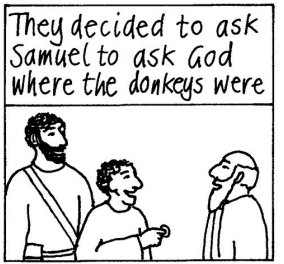
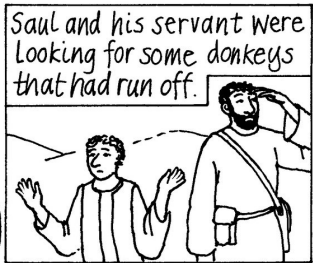
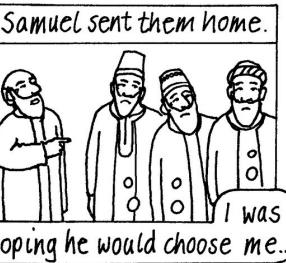
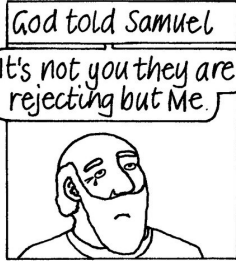
Thankfully I don't have to figure out how to interact with other human-like hominins today. I do, however, have an equal share in humankind's God-given commission to tend and keep creation. Am I ready to go further than ensuring my own species' survival - not necessarily because we have evolved further than our ice-age ancestors, but because I have one of the 'new hearts' promised in Ezekiel 11:19? Can I work together, in a true spirit of humility, with people from all over the world to ensure the full diversity of life can flourish?

# Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in  
Samuel 8:1 - 10:1, 17-24

Samuel had been a good leader of Israel but he was now old. The leaders of the twelve tribes came to talk to him...



## Miscellaneous

### All in the month of May

It was:

**400 years** ago, on 4<sup>th</sup> May 1626 that the Dutch explorer Peter Minuit arrived on the east coast of what is now the USA. He negotiated the purchase of Manhattan Island from the Lenape Native Americans for \$24 worth of cloth and buttons. (Equal to about \$1,150 today.)

**300 years** ago, on 25<sup>th</sup> May 1726 that the world's first Circulating Library (lending library) was launched by Scottish poet and bookseller Allan Ramsay at his bookshop in Edinburgh.

**250 years** ago, on 4<sup>th</sup> May 1776 that Rhode Island became the first of the Thirteen Colonies to renounce allegiance to the British Crown and instead, to declare independence.

**175 years** ago, from 1<sup>st</sup> May to 15<sup>th</sup> October 1851 that the Great Exhibition was held in The Crystal Palace, Hyde Park. More than 10,000 exhibitors attended what is regarded as the first World's Fair.

**100 years** ago, on 4<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> May 1926 that the UK's General Strike was held. The Trade Union Congress (TUC) called a General Strike in support of 1.2 million coal miners. The strike lasted nine days, and had little effect.

**90 years** ago, on 7<sup>th</sup> May 1936 that British aviator Amy Johnson made the fastest-ever (at that time) solo flight from England to Cape Town.

**80 years** ago, on 11<sup>th</sup> May 1946 that the first CARE packages for Europe arrived in Le Havre, to help people who were starving after WWII.

**75 years** ago, on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1951 that the Festival of Britain and the Royal Festival Hall in London were opened.

**Also 75 years** ago, on 9<sup>th</sup> May 1951 that the Lake District National Park was established as Britain's second national park.

**70 years** ago, on 24<sup>th</sup> May 1956 that the first Eurovision Song Contest was held in Lugano, Switzerland. It was won by Switzerland.

**65 years** ago, on 31<sup>st</sup> May 1961 that Michael Ramsay became Archbishop of Canterbury (until 1974).

**60 years** ago, on 30<sup>th</sup> May 1966 that British racing driver Graham Hill won the 1966 Indianapolis 500. He was the only driver in history to win the 'triple crown of motor racing': the Formula One World Championship, the 24 Hours of Le Mans, and the Indianapolis 500.

**40 years** ago, on 9<sup>th</sup> May 1986 that Tenzing Norgay (Sherpa Tenzing), died. This Tibetan/Nepalese mountaineer had been with Sir Edmund Hillary of New Zealand when in 1953 they became the first people to reach the summit of Mount Everest.

## Miscellaneous

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### **National Biscuit Day – 29<sup>th</sup> May**

Did you know that Britain is the country with the highest biscuit consumption in the world?

According to industry research, we each eat about 500 biscuits a year. And the great biscuit dunking debate - over which biscuit holds up best when dipped in tea – can spark surprisingly passionate discussion.

Biscuits have been part of our daily lives for centuries. Their dose of sweet, tasty comfort is loved by 2-year-olds and 90-year-olds, and every age in between.

And so National Biscuit Day is held each year to honour this beloved snack. Our national favourite seems to be the chocolate digestive, followed by shortbread and chocolate fingers. But don't underestimate the appeal of custard creams, hobnobs, chocolate chip and oatmeal cookies!

The McVitie's Digestive, first produced in 1892, is one of the most iconic biscuits in British history. Today, it remains a bestseller alongside other classics like the Rich Tea, the Bourbon, and the Jammie Dodger.

The word 'biscuit' comes from the Latin *panis biscotus*, meaning 'twice-cooked bread'. In Roman times, flour-based provisions were baked twice, to remove moisture, making them durable enough for long journeys. Ancient Egyptian sailors and Roman soldiers relied on these early biscuits as a portable, long-lasting food source.

The transformation from practical sustenance to sweet treat began around the seventh century, when Persian bakers added eggs, butter, cream, and eventually sugar and honey to their recipes, creating some of the earliest cookies in history. By the Middle Ages, biscuits had spread across Europe, with each region developing its own favourite.

The Industrial Revolution brought mass production to the biscuit world. British firms like McVitie's, Huntley and Palmers, and Carr's produced biscuits on an unprecedented scale. In 1831, Huntley and Palmers even invented the decorative biscuit tin, which not only kept biscuits fresh but also made them an attractive gift item.

### **Small plates are better**

How large are your dinner plates? If you replace 12" plates with 10" plates you could end up eating between 16 and 22 per cent less food. That could mean a loss of two stone over a year. The study at Cambridge University concluded: "Helping people to avoid 'over-serving' themselves or others with larger portions of food or drink is likely to ...help reduce their risk of overeating."

### **Beware bread for ducks**

The Canal & River Trust, which looks after Britain's waterways, has warned that bread is 'junk food' for ducks. It can lead to excessive droppings, which spread disease. If bread is left to rot, it can trigger noxious odours which can kill fish and encourage algae, as well as rats and mice. So – what DO ducks eat? Try corn, peas, lettuce and seeds.

### **National Smile Month - 11<sup>th</sup> May – 11<sup>th</sup> June**

National Smile Month is 50 years old this year. It is the UK's largest and longest-running campaign to promote good oral health, aiming to encourage people to brush twice a day with fluoride toothpaste, to cut down on sugar, and to visit the dentist regularly. Organised by the British Dental Health Foundation, the website offers the following snippets:

*Some fun facts about your teeth:*

- It takes 43 muscles to frown, but only 17 to smile.
- Some people pick their teeth with keys, earrings, bank notes and even screwdrivers!
- The going rate given by the tooth fairy these days is £2 to £5
- 61% of us have been attracted to someone by their smile alone
- 24% of us would share our toothbrush with our partner, but only 6% of us would share our toothbrush with a celebrity (!)
- Two thirds of us have less respect for a boss with bad breath.

### **Looking for old metal - and at least getting exercise**

Here is a hobby that will give you great outdoor exercise – and might, just might, make you rich! Metal detecting is simple to start, and the actual machine is very affordable and easy to master. You can do it anywhere, from your own back garden to local pathways, to fields and even the beach. People who do metal detecting are called 'detectorists'. They hold on to the stem of a metal detecting machine which is in turn attached to the search head on the ground. This is swept from side to side in an arc as the detectorist walks along. When it passes over a buried metal object, a signal – a bleep – is relayed, usually via headphones, to the enthusiast. A hole is then dug to retrieve the treasure.

If you like the idea, but don't want to try it alone, you might consider joining one of a number of clubs. Visit <http://www.ukdetectornet.co.uk/clubs.html> for a full list. Apparently Norfolk, Suffolk, Wiltshire and North Yorkshire are the best places to find treasure.

### **You and a goldfish's attention span**

How long can you concentrate on any one thing? According to the now infamous study by Microsoft (back in 2015), our digital lifestyles have had such a detrimental impact on our concentration levels that our average attention span has fallen to below that of a goldfish.

Humans now stay focused for just eight seconds, before being distracted by news alerts, social media and so on – while even a goldfish can concentrate for nine seconds.

And it is not just the endless stream of information that hits us, but the type of information that is so distracting. Violence and endless conflict can leave you distressed and unsettled. Medical experts recommend regular non-digital breaks such as a walk, a chat, or even just staring out the window. Meanwhile, try these tips to calm your mind:

1. In the evening, reverse the settings on your device, so that you have white writing on a black background. This reduces the blue light that affects your brain's cyclic rhythm, disrupting your sleep/wake cycle.
2. Get moving. Exercise takes time, but it also sharpens your mind and increases your concentration. So, in the end you will get more done in less time.
3. Eat well. Avoid sugar and too much caffeine which make your mind busier.
4. Seek company. Anxiety levels rise after six hours, due to the changes in your brain hormones caused by social isolation. So, if you work from home, take your laptop to a coffee shop for an hour, or see a friend for coffee.
5. Fill the final half hour of your day with one simple task, rather than flitting from task to task.

So I went in to a pet shop. I said, "Can I buy a goldfish?" The guy said, "Do you want an aquarium?" I said, "I don't care what star sign it is."

*Tim Vine*

## Miscellaneous

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*Editor: by Tim Lenton*

### **The Great Exhibition that started the V & A**

Some 175 years ago, from 1<sup>st</sup> May to 15<sup>th</sup> October 1851, the Great Exhibition was held in The Crystal Palace, Hyde Park. More than 10,000 exhibitors attended what is regarded as the first World's Fair.

Prince Albert was an enthusiastic promoter of the exhibition, which was described by some as a reaction to the successful French Industrial Exposition of 1844: he described it as a display of divine providence, though some religious writers took the opposite view, describing it as worldly and even ungodly with its emphasis on human achievement. Others welcomed it as an opportunity to evangelise.

Queen Victoria was an Exhibition enthusiast, visiting three times with her family and 34 times on her own. In fact, six million people – equivalent to a third of the population of Britain at the time – paid it a visit. The average daily attendance was 42,831, with a peak of 109,915 on 7<sup>th</sup> October. The Baptist preacher Thomas Cook, in a landmark achievement for his embryonic company, arranged travel there for more than 150,000.

The event made a surplus of £186,000 – worth about £30 million today. This was used to found the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Science Museum and the Natural History Museum.

The original Crystal Palace, constructed of cast iron and plate glass, was built specifically to house the Exhibition – consisting mainly of examples of technology developed in the Industrial Revolution. Designed by Joseph Paxton, it was three times the size of St Paul's Cathedral and boasted the greatest area of glass ever seen in a building.

After the Exhibition, the Palace was rebuilt near the affluent South London suburb of Sydenham Hill and stood there until it was burnt down in November 1936. The nearby residential area was renamed Crystal Palace.

**I love flying. I've been to almost as many places  
as my luggage.**

*Bob Hope*



"Whilst I appreciate the thought, would whoever it is please stop tweeting, 'So far, so good...!'"

### Red Squirrels on the Isle of Wight

A sunbeam, in the woods of Wight  
 Illumines a magenta coat  
 And, sat within that beam of light.  
 A squirrel – red! And how we gloat!  
 Though squirrels are a common sight  
 We see them nearly ev'ry day  
 Aloft within the treetops height  
 But these are never red – just grey.  
 But there, upon the Isle of Wight  
 No greys have ever set a paw  
 So go! You never know, you might  
 See squirrels you've not seen before.  
 A lovely island's best delight –  
 Red squirrels on the Isle of Wight.

By Nigel Beeton

### Christ is All-in-All

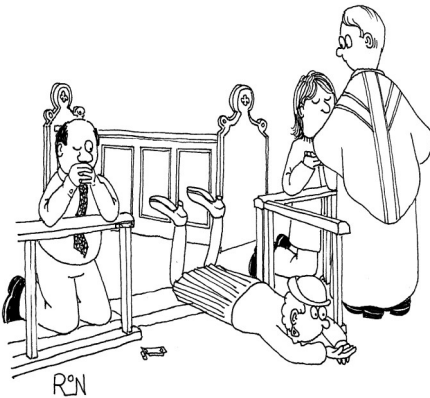
We hold you and your treatment  
 at the heart of every prayer,  
 And we ask our God who loves you  
 Just to hold you in His care.

May He make His presence known  
 To you in every way He can  
 While the healing balm of Christ is  
 placed  
 In the hands of mortal man.

So may the good Lord bless you  
 As He holds you in His grace;  
 And may He ever let His peace  
 Be known in every place

Where your journeying will lead you;  
 In whatever may befall:  
 That you will know in everything  
 How Christ is all-in-all.

By Sam Doubtfire



Terry made a note to fix the bolt

To be yourself in a world that is constantly trying to make you something else is the greatest accomplishment.

Ralph Waldo Emerson



## Notices found in church newsletters - that didn't quite come out right!

Barbara remains in the hospital and needs blood donors for more transfusions. She is also having trouble sleeping and requests tapes of the vicar's sermons.

The Rector will preach his farewell message, after which the choir will sing: 'Break Forth Into Joy.'

Irving Benson and Jessie Carter were married last weekend in the church. So ends a friendship that began in their schooldays.

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

Scouts are saving aluminum cans, bottles and other items to be recycled. Proceeds will be used to cripple children.

Ladies are requested not to have children in the church kitchen.

For those who have children and don't know it, we have a crèche and nursery in the crypt.

Don't let worry kill you. Let the church help!

The organist invites any members of the congregation who enjoy sinning to volunteer for the choir.

At the church meeting last week, the rector spoke briefly and delighted the audience.

Remember in prayer the many who are sick both of our church and the community.

Smile at someone who you find hard to love. Say 'hell ' to someone who doesn't much care about you.

## I know

I'm not bossy. I just know what you should be doing.

## Windy

Three elderly ministers, all hard of hearing, were playing golf one sunny spring morning.

The Methodist minister observed, "Windy, isn't it?" "No", the Baptist pastor said, "It's Thursday." The Anglican vicar agreed: "So am I! Let's go and get a pint."

## Who's been good?

A father of five young children won a toy at a raffle. Back home, he called his children together to let them determine which one should have the present. "Who is the most obedient?" he asked. "Who never talks back to Mother? Who does everything she says?" Five small voices answered in unison: "You, Daddy!"

# Picture Parable

## The tale of the Mustard Seed & the tale of the Yeast

