

THE MESSENGER

THE MAGAZINE OF PETERSFIELD AND LISS
UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

BIBLE SUNDAY



October 2020 No 692

The story behind ... ABIDE WITH ME

One of the most famous hymns in the world came out of Brixham, near Torbay, Devon, in 1847. In those days it was a poor, obscure fishing village, and the vicar was the Rev Henry Francis Lyte. It was a discouraging place to be a pastor, but Henry felt that God wanted him there, and so he stayed, though it was lonely work, and he suffered constant ill health.

By the time he was 54, Henry had contracted tuberculosis and asthma, and he and his family knew he was dying. It would have been so easy for him to look back on his life and feel a complete failure. What had he ever much accomplished? And yet – and yet – Henry knew that in life it is not worldly success that matters, but how much we respond to Jesus Christ, and how much we follow Him.

In September of 1847 Henry was preparing to travel to the south of France, as was the custom for people with tuberculosis at that time. One day before he left, he read the story in the gospel of Luke about the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. They were met by Jesus on the day of His resurrection, and they invited Him to stay with them because it was getting late. “Abide with us”, they said “for it is towards evening.”

“Abide with us – for it is toward evening.” These words struck a chord with Henry, who knew that it was getting ‘towards evening’ in his life. So, he sat down and wrote this hymn as a prayer to God – (*the following are just some of the verses*)

Abide with me

*Abide with me; fast falls the eventide;
The darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide!
When other helpers fail and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, O abide with me.*

*Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;
Earth's joys grow dim; its glories pass away;
Change and decay in all around I see;
O Thou who changest not, abide with me.*

*I fear no foe, with Thee at hand to bless;
Ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness.
Where is death's sting? Where, grave, thy victory?
I triumph still, if Thou abide with me.*

Shortly after Henry wrote that hymn, he preached his last sermon. He was so ill he practically crawled into the pulpit to do so. A few weeks later, in Nice, France, he died, and so of course he never knew that his hymn would go on to become greatly loved the world over.



Understanding the Bible

As we acknowledge Bible Sunday this month, it's a good opportunity to ask the question: ***why should I read the Bible?***

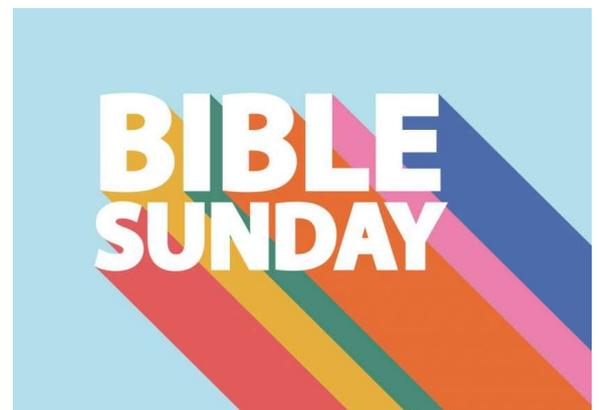
The Bible is the world's best-selling book of all time. However, it isn't one book, but a library of 66 books, composed by some 44 writers over a period of 1500 years in a range of literature including history, poetry, prophecy, letters and apocalyptic (end times). Despite having a number of different writers, the Bible claims one author: God himself!

This is the basis of the unity of its message and authoritative claim to be the primary way by which God speaks to us: *'All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work'* (2 Timothy 3:16). The Bible is inspired (*'the word of God in the words of men'*) and presents itself as a ***manual for life***, equipping us to live for God in every aspect of our lives. We also have the promise of the Holy Spirit to guide us in applying the words to our lives: *'the Spirit will guide you into all truth'* (John 16:13).

However, the Bible could also be described as a ***love letter*** from God, as He uses it to deepen our relationship with him. As Jesus said: *'You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me'* (John 5:39,40).

Christians follow a person not a book, and the Scriptures are intended to help us to know Jesus better.

At her coronation the Queen was given a Bible with the words ***'the most precious thing this world affords'***. Does this reflect our own attitude to the Bible?



Secretary's Snippets!

Hello everyone,

I actually have news for you all this month, which is a pleasant change! From the beginning of October we are starting services in the sanctuary at Petersfield. Josh will be leading these and they will be all age worship and as inclusive as possible. We do not feel this is the right time to start JFC again.

We are very grateful to Julie and Tom Pejnovic for carrying out a very detailed risk assessment, along with Josh. This is a “live” document and is liable to change. We will be following the strict guidelines laid out in the assessment when we start services again. These are all for the safety of each and every one of us. Don't worry – you will be given full instructions on which entrance and exit to use and where to sit! Details of how to book your place at the service will be up and running by the time you read this.

October is normally the month when I distribute the nomination papers for the election of elders. The election would then take place at the November church meeting. For obvious reasons this meeting will not be happening and so, after taking advice from Synod, we have asked the 2 elders due to step down this year, Carolyn and Mike, to stay on the eldership for an extra year. They have both agreed and I thank them for that.

In the words of my Mum- frequently!! “What a funny old world – It was never like this in the war!”

God bless you all,
Carol

Dates for your diaries

October 4th, Sunday and all Sundays through October – worship at 11 am at Petersfield. (and also on zoom)

Tearfund Quiz – details to follow. This will be held on zoom.



A Message from our Church and Community Worker...

It is so lovely to see things on the move again, our congregation together worshipping in the Church Garden and now in the Church as well, but with no JFC for the time being, however as you know we have been virtually meeting on Zoom and meet in the Church garden for a Bible story, craft and a picnic. But lots of things are still no hold, Little Fishes has not resumed but I have started doing craft on Church's Facebook page again. Our social gatherings on a Tuesday afternoon were a complete success over the summer and was rained off only once. Thank you Lord and for all of you who were able to join me, Josh and Ron for a good old catch and cuppa. I hope you are all happy for me to keep touching base with you all over October by phone, but if anyone needs a one to one with me I'm always so happy to visit, or do shopping for you, so do say.



Numbers 6:24-26

“The Lord bless you and keep you; the lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you: The Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace” Amen

Jo Hopkins



Operation Christmas Child Shoeboxes

As a church, unfortunately, we shall not be collecting shoeboxes this year due to the pandemic. However, if you would still like to provide a shoebox for a child in a needy country, you can send a shoebox online for £20, either a pre-packed one, or you can select the contents. See the link <https://shoebonline.samaritans-purse.org.uk/> **OR** you can pack your own shoeboxes and take them to an alternative collection point. At present, the nearest are



- St Wilfrids Church, Padnell Road, Cowplain, Waterlooville, Hampshire, PO8 8DZ
- The Entertainer (Haslemere)
- The Entertainer (Chichester)

For more information, see the Samaritan's Purse website. For those of you unable to access the website, contact details are Victoria House, Victoria Road, Buckhurst Hill, Essex IG9 5EX tel 0208 559 1180

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A message from Emsworth ...

Set me free from my prison, that I may praise Your Name. Then the righteous will gather about me because of Your goodness to me. Psalm 142 verse 7

Cora and I were just settling down to watch the VJ Celebrations on television when this very loud knocking noise came seemingly from the very walls of our bungalow. Penny was alert and showing concern as Cora told me that she had heard this noise the day before but did not want to worry me. Now I certainly do not believe in ghosts but what on earth was happening? I then realised that the noise was coming from the chimney breast and obviously some bird or animal had fallen down the chimney and was now behind the gas fire that we had had installed not long after moving to Emsworth. What to do? The fire looked complicated to move and being gas too was a problem. So I did nothing and tried to enjoy the wonderful Band from Horse Guards Parade. Liss Band has not played together as a Band now for months, so how had these musicians been able to practise and produce such a magnificent sound? When I practise my euphonium now, which I confess is not as often as I would like, the valves are very sluggish through lack of use and my lip very soon tires. Our enjoyment of the music was tempered by the awful banging sounds that occasionally were heard from behind the fire, which thankfully we did not need to put on.

The next day; Sunday was the same but the sounds were becoming weaker and more intermittent. The fire had been installed by "Fire and Stone" which was next to Emsworth Station. So first thing Monday morning I hastened to the showroom only to find that the Company had ceased trading! I then remembered the rival firm in Emsworth Town; Grayte Fires but found they too were no more. Now what to do? Then someone gave me some really excellent advice- "Why not look up a local Gas Safe Engineer on the Gas Safe Web site?" Would you believe there was an engineer living not 200 yards away from our front door! The engineer could not make that day but offered to come the next (My Birthday!).

Removing the fire was quite complicated so a good decision to get the engineer. We had opened the door onto the patio with little expectation that the bird, if indeed it was a bird was still alive and could fly to freedom. As the fire was inched away from the chimney we saw a very large pigeon trapped in such a small place. I suddenly realised that if this bird was alive it could fly out of the other door and into the rest of our home. As I turned to stop that from

happening the most wonderful Birthday present of all; the pigeon flew straight from the fireplace, out of the patio doors and onto the Greenhouse roof. There it stopped for a moment and looked at Cora and I as if to say “Thank you” before flying off. I thought how that bird must have suffered. Hardly any space to move and pitch black. No food or water for four whole days. The words of that wonderful Charles Wesley hymn came to mind:

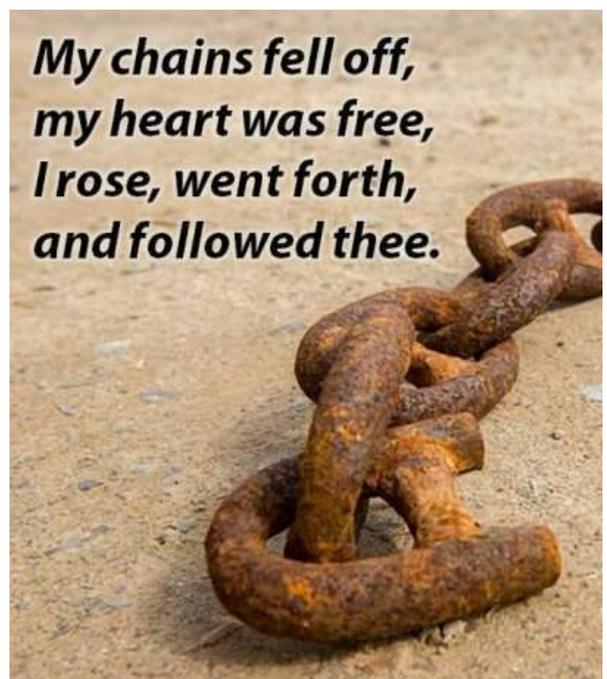
***Long my imprisoned spirit lay fast bound in sin and nature's night;
Thine eye diffused a quickening ray- I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;
my chains fell off, my heart was free, I rose, went forth, and followed Thee.***

Jesus began the fulfilment of His ministry on earth by quoting from the prophet Isaiah; “He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind.”

You certainly don't have to go to actual prison to be a prisoner. In fact I feel I can say with absolute confidence that every single one of us is either in a prison of sorts right now or has been at some time in their lives. When we do not recognise the sin in our lives. When fear overcomes us. When pride puts us at the centre and not God. When pain and sickness wears us out. When courage ebbs and self pity rules. When loneliness develops around us. All of these are prisons of one sort or another and we are prisoners if we are affected by these or all the others not mentioned, but you can fill in the blank “My prison is.....!” Unlike the poor pigeon trapped behind our Gas fire, no matter what prison we are in , we have the key that will open the door to release us. Jesus says “Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice **and opens the door**, I will come in and eat with him and he with me.” Strangely the key to our prison only opens it from the inside. We must first repent and be sorry for all that has kept us from experiencing the love of Jesus.

That unlocks the door and we see the light beginning to shine again. Acknowledging that Jesus is Lord over every part of our life fully opens that door and we are freed. There must be more to it than that but really there isn't. “My chains fell off, my heart was free, I rose went forth and followed Thee.”

Love, **Alan and Cora**



Available soon
2021 A3 Wall Calendar
“All things bright & beautiful”
Featuring paintings by Andy Tubbs



Price £10

All proceeds going as usual to support the Petersfield Youth Ukraine Mission
To order your copy please contact Carol by email at caroltubbs@ntlworld.com
Or call 01730 893489 (answerphone messages taken)



From the editors ...

Welcome to the October Messenger where we hope you will find the contents interesting and helpful. On 25 October, it is Bible Sunday and articles are included which focus on this. We can also read about the remarkable life of Nurse Edith Cavell, the anniversary of whose death falls this month. She has been an inspiration to many over the years. In addition, there are a variety of other articles.

With thanks, as ever, to our contributors.

Keep well and stay safe!

Keith and Mary

Godfrey's Almshouses, Petersfield, Hampshire

Registered Charity No: 254036

Notice is given by the Trustees that a vacancy exists for an almsperson of this Charity.

Needy persons of not less than 60 years of age who are resident in the county of Hampshire are eligible for appointment. Preference will be given to persons who are members of Petersfield & Liss United Reformed Church, or any church in the Wessex Synod of the United Reformed Church.

Application for appointment must be made in writing to Mrs Mary Evans, Clerk to the Trustees, at 12 Geddes Way, Petersfield, GU31 4DJ. Every applicant must state his or her name, address, age and occupation. The applicant must also be prepared to produce sufficient references and other evidence of his or her qualifications for appointment and to attend in person.

The Almshouses are not warden controlled. Applicants must be fully able to look after themselves and be in reasonable health. They will be required to contribute a monthly sum towards the cost of maintaining the Almshouses of the Charity.

Mary Evans, Clerk to the Trustees

Why are you facing such a temptation?

'Happy is the man who doesn't give in and do wrong when he is tempted, for afterwards he will get ...his reward.' James 1:12

Are you facing a temptation of some sort? It is easy to think of it as a bad thing. But it can become a stepping-stone rather than a stumbling block. Just think: it is as much an opportunity to do the right thing, as the wrong thing. Temptation just gives you the choice!

God develops the fruit of the Spirit in us by allowing circumstances into our lives in which we are tempted – in order that we might express the exact opposite quality! For instance: He teaches us to love by allowing unlovely people into our lives. It takes no character to love people who are lovely and loving you.



God teaches us joy in the midst of sorrow by urging us to turn to Him for comfort and strength when all other support is gone.

God grows peace in us by helping us learn to trust in Him in situations where we're tempted to worry or be afraid. Likewise, patience grows through having to wait...

You can't claim to be good if you've never been tempted to be bad; or to be faithful if you have never had the chance to be unfaithful. Integrity grows through defeating dishonesty; humility grows as you refuse to give place to pride. Endurance develops when you reject the temptation to give up.

The truth is: when temptation comes into your life, see it for what it is: a chance for you to grow closer to Jesus.



Psalm 90

'War simply aggravates the permanent human situation so that we can no longer ignore it. Human life has always been lived on the edge of a precipice.' (CS Lewis on World War II). Coronavirus powerfully illustrates this, and Psalm 90 demonstrates a right response to the crisis: *'Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.'* (12).

The Shortness of Life

We live as though life will go on forever, but in reality our time on earth is short: *'A thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by'* (4). By contrast God, who inhabits eternity, sees the whole of history in a single moment. How can we see our lives in the light of God, who is *'from everlasting to everlasting'* (2). True wisdom is making sure that we don't waste the time we are given in this life!

The Fragility of Life

Living to 80 years old is definitely an achievement! We know how we wear out in life until we are dust again: *'You turn people back to dust, saying, 'Return to dust, you mortals.'*(3). This is the result of turning from God to sin: *'You have set our iniquities before you'* (8). True wisdom warns us not to trust in our own abilities or seek satisfaction in the things of this world.

The Love of God

During the pandemic, many have lost loved ones, yet if we allow God's love to take hold of our lives, even death can bring us closer to God: *'Satisfy us in the morning with your unfailing love, that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days.'* (14). True wisdom is able to ask: *'May the favour of the Lord our God rest on us'* (17).

Nurse Edith Cavell

Edith Cavell is a good saint for NHS workers this year: she cared for the sick despite the danger to her own safety.

Edith was a vicar's daughter from Swardeston in Norfolk, where she was born in 1865. She became a governess, but her heart was for nursing, so she went on to train at the London Hospital, before nursing in various hospitals such as St Pancras and Manchester.

When Edith was 42, she decided to go abroad, and was appointed matron of a large training centre for

nurses in Brussels. She was still there seven years later, when the First World War broke out and German troops invaded Belgium on their way to Paris and the Channel Ports.

Edith's nursing school became a Red Cross hospital, and she turned down the opportunity to return to the safety of England. Instead, her nurses tended wounded soldiers from both German and Allied armies.

Sadly, in 1915, when the Germans began their occupation of Brussels, they took a dim view of Edith's work. But they would have been even more unhappy had they known she was helping to smuggle 200 British soldiers across the border into the Netherlands!

Finally, the Germans arrested Edith in August 1915, and put her into solitary confinement. They tricked her into confessing to a charge which carried the death penalty. But Edith refused to show either regret at what she had done, or any fear or bitterness towards her captors.

On 11th October 1915, the night before her execution, Edith was visited by the Anglican chaplain to Brussels, the Revd Stirling Gahan. Together they said the words of *Abide with Me*, and Edith received her last Holy Communion.

She told Gahan: "I am thankful to have had these ten weeks of quiet to get ready. Now I have had them and have been kindly treated here. I expected my sentence and I believe it was just. Standing, as I do, in view of God and eternity, I realise that patriotism is not enough. I must have no hatred or bitterness to anyone."

Edith was shot by a firing squad next day, on 12th October 1915.

After the war her body was exhumed and buried in Norwich Cathedral. Her memorial service in Westminster Abbey attracted thousands. A commemorative statue of her stands near Trafalgar Square.



The Longest Day

Joshua was an amazing person and he walked with God in everything he did. Joshua was hoping that the 5 kings would not go back to their cities as he had no siege weapons and scaling ladders and half the day was already gone. So Joshua called on God to do something special. He had more time to defeat the 5 kings. We read in Joshua 10 verse 12 Joshua said “O sun stand still over Gibeon, O moon,



over the Valley of Aijalon.” The sun stood still over Gibeon, and the Moon stayed in position until Israel had avenged itself on his enemies. Moses had command Joshua to kill all the population including the Kings, because they were evil and Satanic, and would affect Israel. Joshua was able to defeat the Kings and clear the Canaanites from the land.

The historian Hedodicus of ancient times, tells us that the priests of Egypt showed him in the records the existence of an unusually long day.

The Indian Hindu account says, “In the life of Chrishnu, the sun delayed setting to hear the pious ejaculations of Akroon;

Research shows that a whole day of 24 hours has been inserted into the world’s history.

So **Professor Totten** affirms that not before or since has there been a date which will harmonise with the required relative positions of the sun, moon and earth as conditioned in the Scriptures”.

A Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society, late of the Royal Observatory Greenwich, wrote about the subject, and traces not only the actual spot on which Joshua must have been standing at the time, but the date and time of the day when this remarkable phenomenon took place. Does the Bible give so much detail? Yes Joshua 10 verse 12 says, “Sun stand thou still at Gibeon, and thou moon, in the valley of Aijalon.” The Bible is very accurate, that it tells you the actual position of the sun and moon in the sky at the time.

The Astronomer Royal noted, from Joshua 10:12-13, that the sun was at midday and the moon at the horizon – the valley which is north west at Aijalon. With this astronomical information, he was able to project back and find that it happened on 21st July, 1400 BC..

The Scripture says that the sun stood still for about a whole day, so that could mean nearly 24 hours.

Then **computer programs** used by astronomers found out that about a day has been added to the astronomical calendar. The final 40 minutes or (10 degrees of the sun) could be what is added as a sign to Hezekiah in 2 Kings 20:10.

Robin Ive

Hampshire and Islands Historic Churches Trust - Ride and Stride Saturday 12th September 2020

Thank you for your generous support. May I assume that your donation may be Gift Aided for tax purposes, unless you tell me otherwise !.

Saturday 12th September was an excellent day for cycling and I am glad to say that I called at 18 churches, most of which had welcoming notices and some of which were prepared and able to offer most welcome refreshments. I covered 27 miles in all, including one hill with a 1 in 5 gradient whilst on the way to the tiny 17th C. church at Priors Dean.

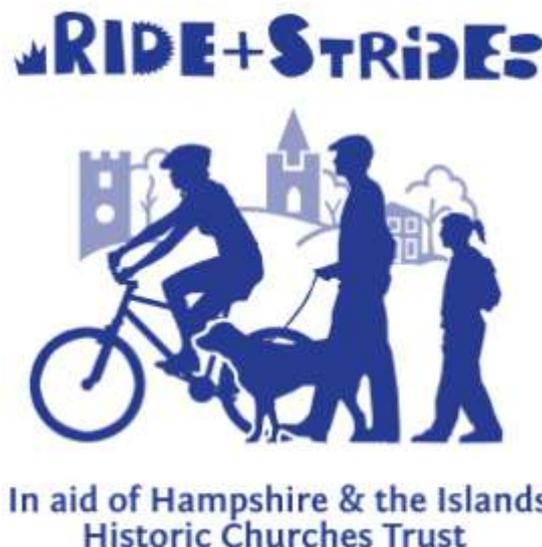
Starting at 10.00 am I met one other participant at Sheet [St Mary's] and we cycled on our way [via the A3 cycle path] to Liss and West Liss churches. At Greatham we met a large group of 11 cyclists including 7 children, all from Blackmoor St Matthew's Church, who were then on their way to visit more churches in Petersfield. The Blackmoor church had received recent Grants from the Trust to assist with vital repairs to the chancel floor.

There were more hills around High Cross church and Froxfield Green before descending to Langrish and via Stroud and Steep to call at all the Petersfield churches.

For me, as a 90 year old in possession of an electric assisted bicycle, it was a very pleasurable day's exercise, and in a cause I am pleased to support.

Eric Skipper

31,Marden Way,GU31 4PW



Our minister, an avid golfer, was once taking part in a local tournament. As he was preparing to tee off, the organiser of the tournament approached him and pointed to the dark, threatening storm clouds which were gathering. "Sir," the organiser said, "I trust you'll see to it that the weather won't turn bad on us." Our minister shook his head. "Sorry," he replied. "I'm in sales, not management!"

Petersfield Rotas October 2020

Sunday	October 4	October 11	October 18	October 25
Stewards	Doreen Lewis & Mary Fair	Janet Clemmy & David Darling	Mandy Martin & Kitty Rohrbach	Sylvia Bressey & Gwen Peake
Welcomer	Graham Fountain	Grace Fountain	Steve Glenn	Pat Berry
Elder	Val Torrance	John Lewis	Carol Tubbs	Julie Pejnovic
Communion Servers			Carol Tubbs & Mike Pennicotte-Henrie	
AV	David Darling	Keith Evans	John Lewis	Carolyn Barton

Petersfield Church Calendar – October 2020

Thursday	1	7.45 pm	Bible Study Group	CFC
Friday	2	2 pm	Bible Study Group	CFC
Sunday	4	11 am	The Minister	
Wednesday	7	7 pm	Bible Study Group	CFC
Friday	9	2 pm	Bible Study Group	CFC
Sunday	11	11 am	The Minister	
Wednesday	14	7 pm	Bible Study Group	CFC
Friday	16	2 pm	Bible Study Group	CFC
Sunday	18	11 am	The Minister (Holy Communion)	
Wednesday	21	7 pm	Bible Study Group	CFC
Thursday	22	7.45 pm	Bible Study Group	CFC
Friday	20	2 pm	Bible Study Group	CFC
Sunday	25	11 am	The Minister	
Wednesday	28	7 pm	Bible Study Group	CFC
Friday	30	2 pm	Bible Study Group	CFC

Please note that these rotas and Calendar were prepared from data available at the time of compilation and are therefore subject to error and change. We apologise for any inconvenience this may cause.

Mission News

For your information and prayers, there will be news from one or more Missions each month. If you support a mission that has any information and prayer updates, please send these to the editors so that they can be included



Shoebox Gifts Bridge the Divide

God used prayer and Operation Christmas Child shoebox gifts to help reconcile a believer to his estranged Muslim family. Today he is no longer the only Christian among them!

Ibrahim* grew up in a rural village in Burkina Faso. The local community highly respected his family because his father served as their imam, or Islamic leader. Ibrahim learned to recite the Koran as a child, and, every afternoon after school, he gathered firewood that provided light for the nightly reading of the Muslim scriptures.

He and the members of his family belong to the Fulani ethnic group—an unreached people in West Africa. Ibrahim first met Christians at his school, and they shared with him the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In time, he



decided to follow Jesus too. His family, however, was unaware of his decision. That same year, Ibrahim finished primary school and went to live with another family in the capital city in order to continue his studies. In this new location, he was able to attend church in secret. But when his host family realized he was following Christ, they banned Ibrahim from their home, and also informed his mother and father of his decision. Ibrahim fled for his life to the southern part of the country where he managed to continue his high school education and found work ironing clothes.

Through one of his customers, Ibrahim learned about a training centre where believers are discipled and trained in vocational skills. He enrolled and participated in the programme for two years, during which God led him in the important work of forgiving his family. In addition, he and a missionary named Adama*, who was also a Fulani, began the long process of seeking reconciliation with Ibrahim's family. After some degree of negotiation, the family said they were willing to see him.

The day Ibrahim and Pastor Adama set out to make the visit, their church prayed for them. Hoping for a good reception, the church also sent them off with three cartons full of Operation Christmas Child shoeboxes as a gift to the children in Ibrahim's extended family. Each carton held about 20 boxes.

As the two men approached Ibrahim's village, many things appeared different. Ibrahim discovered buildings that hadn't been there before, and what had been the old road was now just a field. After asking for directions, they eventually found their way to Ibrahim's home where he was warmly received by the younger members of the family. They were so excited; they hadn't heard about him in years!

"His mother was overcome with joy and had to hide in the hut as she was in tears," said Pastor Adama. Ibrahim's father, however, was nowhere to be found. Dozens of children continued to gather to celebrate Ibrahim's homecoming, so he and Pastor Adama asked permission to distribute shoebox gifts to them. The boys and girls as well as their parents were overjoyed by all the treasures they contained!

"The tension in the atmosphere dissipated," noted Pastor Adama.

"After an hour or so, Ibrahim's father came home on his bicycle. Ibrahim was still feeling nervous. His father greeted us, and then entered a hut where he was followed by a few elders. When he came out, he came to greet us again. He didn't speak much, but he did publicly welcome Ibrahim into the family again."

The father then noticed the joyful celebrations among the children in his courtyard, and thanked Ibrahim and Pastor Adama for bringing the shoebox gifts.

After a meal together with his family, the pair was planning to leave when 30 more children arrived. Sad to have missed out on the gifts, the youngest ones in the group were in tears.

Ibrahim quickly offered to return soon with more Operation Christmas Child shoeboxes for these who hadn't received one. He came back on his own two days later with more boxes and stayed in his village two weeks.

"We are grateful for the part the shoeboxes played in this reconciliation process," Pastor Adama said. "Now, Ibrahim is well accepted in his village."

Along with the shoebox gifts, Pastor Adama and Ibrahim gave his younger siblings, nieces, and nephews discipleship materials in French.

"These children have very little reading material of their own," said Pastor Adama, "so these materials became their main reading primer, the main resource to improve their literacy in the national language of French since their tribal language is only used locally."

Since then, several of Ibrahim's nieces and nephews as well as his adult cousin have also become followers of Jesus Christ. Pastor Adama is grateful to God for the role Operation Christmas Child is playing in evangelism and discipleship efforts among the Fulani. The kingdom of Christ is growing!

Read more about how Operation Christmas Child taking shoebox gifts and the Gospel of Jesus Christ [to the ends of the earth.](#)

***Name changed for security**

See article on page 5



is



Tearfund working to help Lebanon after blast

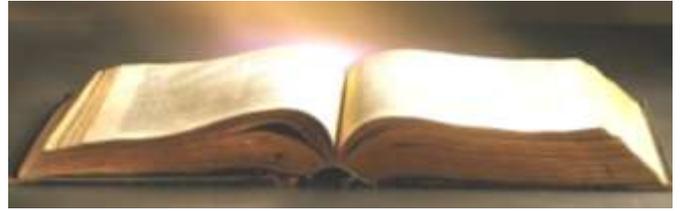
The charity Tearfund has moved fast to help people hit by the huge explosion in Lebanon on 4th August. The country was already suffering beneath the weight of an economic crisis, growing food insecurity, and widespread poverty.

Tearfund's local partners have been distributing thousands of hot meals, as well as vouchers to enable those most in need to buy food and hygiene items. Its partner churches and faith organisations are also giving emotional support to families, and also providing shelter for those who have lost their homes.

Tearfund has been working in Lebanon since 2013, responding to the crisis caused by the conflict in Syria. Around 1.5 million refugees call Lebanon their home – 25 per cent of the whole population – many of these living in makeshift accommodation in Beirut's slums.

If you can help, please go to: <https://www.tearfund.org>





Who authorised the Bible, anyway?

Question: If it was the Church that finally decided which books should be included in the Bible, then isn't the Church the top authority?

Answer: No; the Bible produced the Church, not the Church the Bible. This is the real issue: what caused a book to be accepted within the 'Canon' of Scripture? (Greek: *kanon*, 'standard' or 'rule').

As far as the Old Testament was concerned:

1. Books that were recognised by Jesus Christ as infallible 'Scripture' could not be broken (Matthew 5:18). In John 10:35 Jesus didn't have to explain what He meant by 'Scripture', though elsewhere He did refer to its different categories (law, prophets, psalms) as pointing to Himself (Luke 24:44; Matthew 24:37). All was to be believed and obeyed.
2. Books that were recognised by God's people because of their impact. God's people will always recognise His voice (John 10:27). Jesus clashed with the Pharisees for adding their traditions to the Scripture; yet all were agreed that the Old Testament Scriptures were God's word.
3. Books that were recognised by the New Testament. It is significant that the New Testament features hundreds of Old Testament allusions. Only two are from the body of books known as the Apocrypha (Jude 9, 14) – seemingly in similar style to Paul's quotation from a Greek poet (Acts 17:28). The Apocryphal books were perceived to be on a lower level.

Next, what determined inclusion in the New Testament Canon?

1. Books that are Christ-centred in their emphasis. It was inconceivable to the early Church that the Gospels, for example, which focused so much upon the life and death of Jesus, could have any lower place than that given to the Old Testament Scriptures.
2. Books that are apostolic in their teaching. It was to the apostles exclusively that Jesus promised guidance 'into all truth' through the Holy Spirit's inspiration (John 16:13). The result of this was the New Testament (1 Corinthians 2:12,13).

Significantly, Peter brackets Paul's writings with what he calls 'the other scriptures' (2 Peter 3:15,16).

3. Books that are faith-building in their effect, and thus, to be read in the congregations (John 20:30,31; 1 Thessalonians 5:27; Colossians 4:16; 1 Peter 2:2; Revelation 1:3). When the Christian scriptures take hold of the thinking of masses of people, they have the effect of 'stabilising society, without sterilising it' (historian T. R. Glover).

The books of the Old Testament were becoming largely accepted by AD 70; those of the New Testament by the end of the second century. The drawing of a line around them discouraged forgers and religious peddlers.

So no one really 'put' the books into the Bible; they put themselves in, because of their innate quality. No council by itself could have conferred authority upon the books; this, they possessed already. It is an authority that is inherent, not imposed. If art lovers say of a Renoir painting, 'This is a genuine Renoir', their acclaim in no way invests the painting with authority; it was already authentic. It is the same with the Scriptures; we can only recognise them as such.... and live by them.



Books of the Bible

This is a series outlining all the books of the Bible, the word of God, which is central to our Christian faith. This month we are focusing on ... **Acts**

- *What type of book is it?* Narrative
- *Who wrote it?* Luke
- *When was it written?* approx. 63-70 AD



The book of Acts (The Acts of the Apostles) was written by Luke, as a sequel to his gospel, and is an account of the early years of the Christian church immediately following Christ's Ascension and beginning with the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Key figures in the book are Peter and Paul. Peter and the remaining disciples' ministry was mainly to the early community of believers which grew rapidly and spread through neighbouring regions. Paul extended this ministry to many countries in the wider area. The book shows the power of the Holy Spirit working through the early Christians with many signs and miracles and is an exciting account of life in the early church.

For our younger readers ...

Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in
Matthew 24:44-51, Luke 12:40-46

Jesus warned his disciples to be always ready for his return at the end of time by telling the story of two servants

The good servant



While I am away, I am putting you in charge of the food

My master could be away a long time; I will work as if he was here.



When the servants came for their food, he had it ready



He made sure everyone got their full amount every day



Then his master came back



Well done!

I am putting you in charge of everything I have



The bad servant



While I am away, I am putting you in charge of the food

My master could be away a long time; I can do what I want!



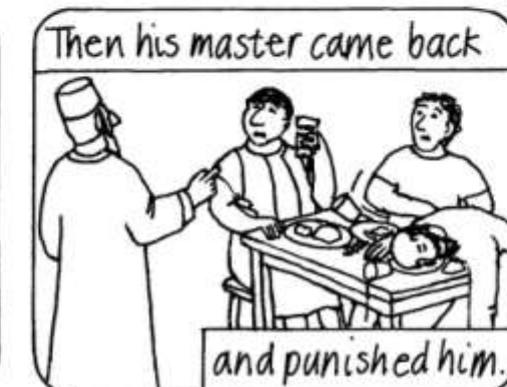
When the servants came for their food, he chased them away!



He had friends come round, and they ate and drank as much as they liked.

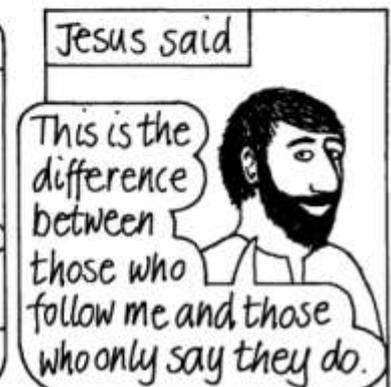


Then his master came back

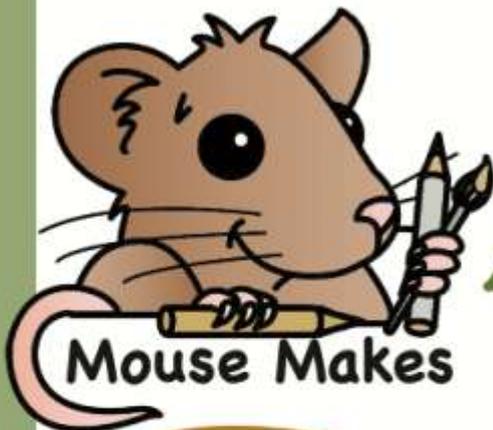


and punished him.

Jesus said



This is the difference between those who follow me and those who only say they do.



Mouse Makes

"GOD is the **one** who gives seed to those who **plant**, and He gives **bread for food**. And GOD will give you spiritual seed and make that seed grow. He will **produce** a great **harvest** from your goodness."

2 Corinthians 9:10

Jesus said:
 "The kingdom of heaven is like a _____ **seed** that a man took and sowed in his **field**. It is the _____ of all the seeds, but when it has grown it becomes a tree, so that the wild _____ come and nest in its branches."

Read Matthew 13:31-32

Jesus said:
 "You do not need more **faith**. There is no 'more' or 'less' in faith. If you have a bare kernel of faith, say the size of a poppy seed, you could say to this sycamore tree

"Go jump into the lake" and it would do it!"
Luke 17:6

So the one who plants is not important, and the one who **waters** is not important. Only **GOD** is important because He is the one who makes things grow."

1 Corinthians 3:7

Look out for seeds in the park and garden and in your kitchen store cupboard.

How many different seeds can you find?

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

Find the words in **bold** on this page in the word search



Crossword

Across

1 He must be 'the husband of but one wife and must manage his children and his household well' (1 Timothy 3:12) (6)

4 'For we must all — before the judgement seat of Christ' (2 Corinthians 5:10) (6)

7 'They reeled and staggered like drunken men; they were at their — end' (Psalm 107:27) (4)

8 See 19 Across

9 It concerned who among the disciples would be the greatest (Luke 9:46) (8)

13 Formed by the Jews in Thessalonica to root out Paul and Silas (Acts 17:5) (3)

16 'He has sent me to bind up the — ' (Isaiah 61:1) (6-7)

17 Moved rapidly on foot (Matthew 28:8) (3)

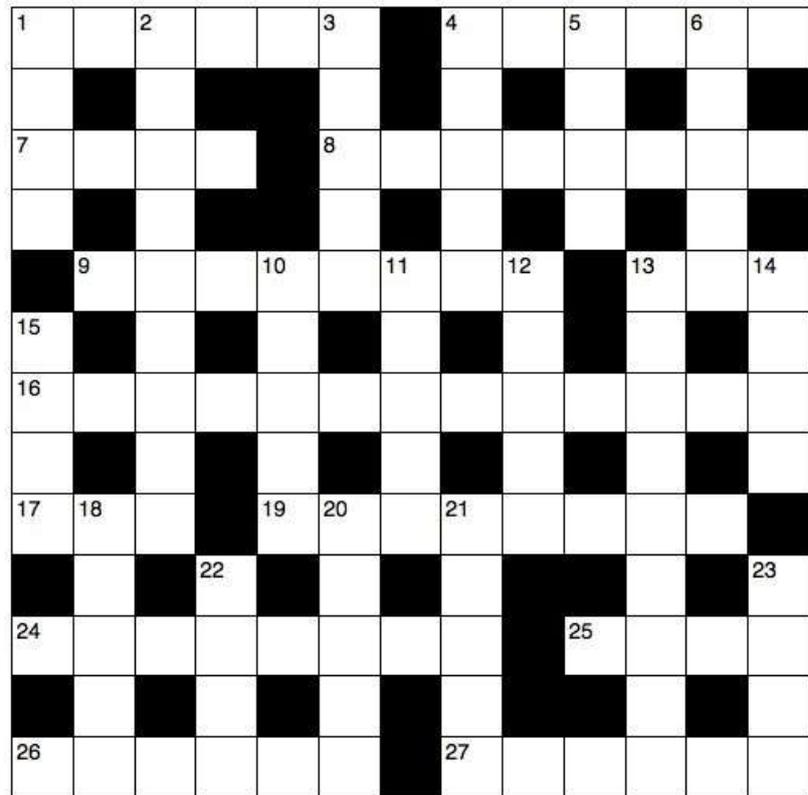
19 and 8 ' — a great company of the — host appeared with the angel' (Luke 2:13) (8,8)

24 Hindrance (Romans 14:13) (8)

25 Comes between Luke and Acts (4)

26 Empower (Acts 4:29) (6)

27 'Get these out of here! How dare you turn my Father's house into a — !' (John 2:16) (6)



Down

1 Sunrise (Psalm 119:147) (4)

2 The part of the day when Cornelius the Caesarean centurion had a vision of an angel of God (Acts 10:3) (9)

3 He was one of those who returned with Zerubbabel from exile in Babylon to Jerusalem (Nehemiah 7:7) (5)

4 'No one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born — '(John 3:3) (5)

5 Animal hunted or killed as food (Ezekiel 22:25) (4)

6 'He encouraged them — — remain true to the Lord' (Acts 11:23) (3,2)

- 10 Ruses (anag.) (5)
- 11 Jewish priestly vestment (Exodus 28:6) (5)
- 12 Visible sign of what had been there (Daniel 2:35) (5)
- 13 This was the trade of Alexander, who did Paul 'a great deal of harm' (2 Timothy 4:14) (9)
- 14 'This is my — , which is for you; do this in remembrance of me' (1 Corinthians 11:24) (4)
- 15 One of Noah's great-great-grandsons (Genesis 10:24) (4)
- 18 Traditionally the first British Christian martyr (5)
- 20 Relationship of Ner to Saul (1 Samuel 14:50) (5)
- 21 Jacob had one at a place he named Bethel while on his way to Haran, fleeing from Esau (Genesis 28:12) (5)
- 22 Bats (anag.) (4)
- 23 'You strain out a — but swallow a camel' (Matthew 23:24) (4)

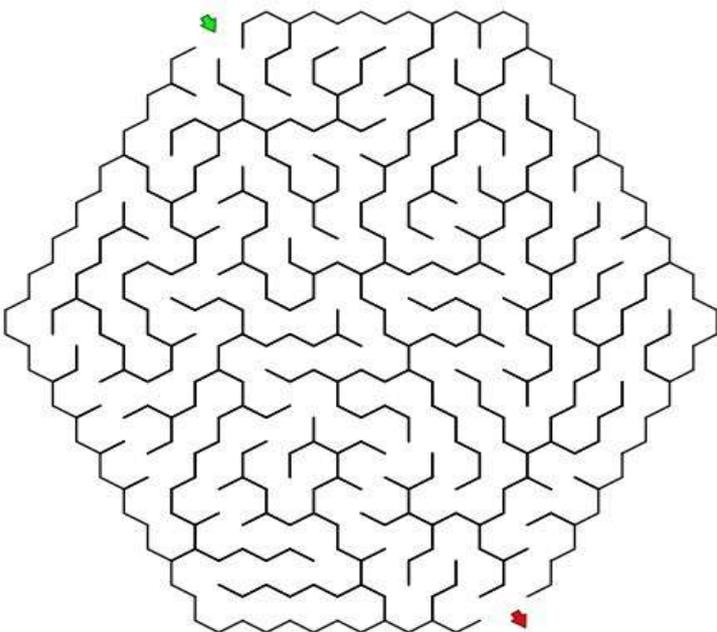
Answers on page 27

Sudoku

			5					
		8	7	4			5	
	4	9				6	1	
		1					8	
			4		5			
	7					3		
	1	3				8	6	
	6			7	8	4		
					6			

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Maze



News from the United Reformed Church items from the September edition of the Synod Newsletter



2021 URC Prayer Handbook, Conversations, and Diaries now available

The 2021 Prayer Handbook, *Conversations*, edited by Karen Campbell and the Revd Ian Fosten, is now available from the URC Bookshop. This year's handbook includes some new sets of prayers in addition to the usual prayers that follow the weekly lectionary readings. The new section includes prayers for everyday and extraordinary situations when we need to say 'Sorry!', 'Help!' or 'Thank You!'; prayers for deep reflection and in response to God's voice as heard through the scriptures and the world. The Prayer Handbook can be purchased from the URC Bookshop, www.urchop.co.uk. It comes in two sizes – the A5 standard edition, for £4.99+p&p (or £4.49 for 10 or more), and the A4 Lectern/Large print edition, for £9.99+p&p. The 2021 URC Diary is now also available in a pocket diary or as an A5 diary.

Your invitation to a new series of *Christians on Ageing*

Christians on Ageing is once again offering space and time for discussion on some important issues highlighted by the experience of the Churches over the last six months. These discussions are open to all and follow a successful series held in the summer months (see the reports after this invitation below).

22 September - Recruitment and support of volunteers in church activities (with older people).

20 October - Care Home Update

17 November - Supporting family carers and friends of people with dementia

Further details available here: [Christians on Ageing conference details](#)

A reminder to: Save the Date – Synod Big Day Out 2021

URC Wessex Synod - Big Day Out

Date: 24th April 2021

Time: 11am till 5pm

Venue: Hollycombe Steam Fair and Museum near Liss

(Wessex Synod will have sole use of the whole site)

Theme: Heroes and Villains

More details to follow.

Young Christian activists launch Climate Justice Campaign



On 18th August 2020, 25 young Christians from all over the UK will launch their campaign for climate justice. The young adults, who range from 18-30 years old started the campaign through Christian Aid's Prophetic Activists scheme. The campaign, which is called 'Stop Fuelling the Fire', focuses on encouraging the government to end the use of UK Export Finance in funding fossil fuel extraction overseas. UK Government funding for fossil fuel projects has increased in recent years - something the activists believe to be a hypocritical move for a government which prides itself on being a champion of sustainability. The campaigners plan to engage and raise awareness amongst the wider public and various political stakeholders. They will be doing this through various methods including launching a petition (see below for the link) and reaching out to MPs, with their key target being Boris Johnson. Activist Hannah Abban, a member of the campaign's Press and Parliamentary team, says, "Our motivation behind the campaign is the firm belief that our faith calls us to action. Truly loving one another as commanded by Christ means tackling the complicated effects of climate change and the inequalities it is creating head on. Several countries are contributing to global warming; however, we want to make sure the UK is setting an example by doing all within its power to decrease its carbon footprint." Christian Aid's Prophetic Activist scheme, which launched at the start of the year, allows young people to learn about activism and create a campaign to tackle societal injustice. This year's theme is climate justice, a phrase which describes the desire to redress the inequalities caused by global warming. Most noticeable were the school strikes which took place last year, with over 300,000 people and 1,000 companies in the UK participating. The campaign will be unfolding over the course of 2020, so if you would like to track its progress and offer support, do sign their petition which can be found from 18th August at: <https://you.38degrees.org.uk/p/SFTF>

Discipleship Development Fund

Grants of up to £200 per person are available! To encourage individuals to engage with a journey of deepening personal discipleship. Individuals can apply for help with the cost of attending approved discipleship courses, activities or retreats offered by others, or a congregation can apply for help with the cost of buying in a speaker or other resources. Please contact your DSO to discuss your discipleship development in advance of an application to this fund. Discipleship Development Fund flier.

Let's Celebrate: children and young people in the URC

If you missed Let's Celebrate: children and young people in the URC on Wednesday 15 July 2020, you can catch up with the highlights here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gAOwv-oOzZM>

This will give you a chance to hear from URC Youth, the CYDO+ team and most importantly our most recent young Lundie Awardees.

Please feel free to share the link as widely as possible! We would love everyone in the URC to hear about all that is going on among children and young people.

Mental Health First Aid training – further dates

Mental Health First Aid Awareness training. This is a four-hour course online via Zoom, 9am – 1pm. The next few dates are **Wednesday 7 October, Friday 6 November or Monday 7 December 2020**, (choose one date). You will need to contact me 10 days in advance of the training date to allow time to register and have the course booklet sent to you in the post.

Mental Health First Aider certificated course is now available online across four sessions with some self-study in between. The next course will be held on **Monday and Thursday mornings from 2nd – 12th November 2020**. Deadline for registering is 23rd October.

There will be another course on **Tuesday and Friday mornings from 8th – 18th December 2020**. The deadline for registering is 27th November.

Wessex Synod covers the cost for participants from URCs and LEPs in Wessex Synod.

Youth Weekend Saturday 14 November 2020. For ages 14 - 25 years. An exciting online event run by young people for young people. A chance to have your say, have fun and explore spirituality and prayer. Gift pack to take away.

This event will include the opportunity to join the Synod Youth Executive.

Watch out for further details on the Wessex Synod [facebook](#) page.

Bible Chatmats resource A brilliant FREE resource from the Diocese of Bath and Wells.

Bible Chatmats help families or small groups to engage with Bible passages using doodling and conversation. New ones are added weekly. Free to download, check them out here

<https://www.bathandwells.org.uk/supporting-children/youth-children/resources/bible-chat-mat/>



Lectionary Bible Readings for October

October 4	Exodus 20:1-4, 7-9, 12-20; Psalm 19; Isaiah 5:1-7; Psalm 80:7-15; Philippians 3:4b-14; Matthew 21:33-46
October 11	Exodus 32:1-14; Psalm 106:1-6, 19-23; Isaiah 25:1-9; Psalm 23; Philippians 4:1-9; Matthew 22:1-14
October 18	Exodus 33:12-23; Psalm 99; Isaiah 45:1-7; Psalm 96:1-9, (10-13); 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10; Matthew 22:15-22
October 25	Deuteronomy 34:1-12; Psalm 90:1-6, 13-17; Leviticus 19:1-2, 15-18; Psalm 1; 1 Thessalonians 2:1-8; Matthew 22:34-46

Important - Sensitive issues

As the Messenger is included in the Church Website, it is important that all the content is suitable for public exposure. When composing an article, if there is anything at all that you consider should be removed before publishing on the website, please inform the editors, Keith and Mary Evans.

The articles contained in this magazine do not necessarily represent the views of Petersfield and Liss URC leadership.

The deadline for the **November** Messenger is **Sunday 18 October 2020**. Please send articles to Messenger Editors, Keith & Mary Evans, tel 01730 235922 e-mail keithmary@talktalk.net

Answers to Crossword on page 22

ACROSS: 1, Deacon. 4, Appear. 7, Wits. 8, Heavenly. 9, Argument. 13, Mob. 16, Broken-hearted. 17, Ran. 19, Suddenly. 24, Obstacle. 25, John. 26, Enable. 27, Market.

DOWN: 1, Dawn. 2, Afternoon. 3, Nehum. 4, Again. 5, Prey. 6, All to. 10, Users. 11, Ephod. 12, Trace. 13, Metalwork. 14, Body. 15, Eber. 18, Alban. 20, Uncle. 21, Dream. 22, Stab. 23, Gnat.

Wessex Synod Prayer Calendar October

4	Anniversary of the Formation of the URC; Meeting of Synod; Elvetham Heath
11	St Martin's, West Moors; Bracknell
18	Fordingbridge; United Church of Egham
25	Bournemouth: East Cliff; Warsash

Church Contact Details

Church	Petersfield : College Street, Petersfield GU31 4AG 01730 266475	Liss : Hillbrow Road, Liss GU33 7PX
Minister	Rev Joshua Thomas Tel 07734 254983 minister@petersfieldurc.com	
Church Office	Administrator Mrs Esme Kelly Office Hours 9am-12noon Tuesdays to Fridays	
Church & Community Worker	Mrs Jo Hopkins 01730 266475 communityworker@petersfieldurc.com	
Telephone	Church Family Centre 01730 266475	
Website	www.petersfieldurc.com	
E-mail	admin@petersfieldurc.com	
Sunday Services	Mornings at 11 am with Junior Family Church	Mornings at 9.30am (usually 2nd Sunday in the month only, but see Liss calendar inside for full details)
	Evening Worship at 6.30pm (1st Sunday in the month only)	No evening Services
Secretary	Mrs Carol Tubbs 39 Rotherbank Farm Lane Liss Forest GU33 7BJ Tel 01730 893489 Mobile 07766 412160.	
Treasurer	Mr Jim Cleverly, 4 Crundles, Petersfield GU31 4PJ Tel 01730 300558	

Petersfield United Reformed Church Mission Statement

“As a congregation worshipping God: we seek to reach out with the love of Jesus; to worship God in our daily lives; to draw others into the knowledge and love of Christ; and to make disciples”