

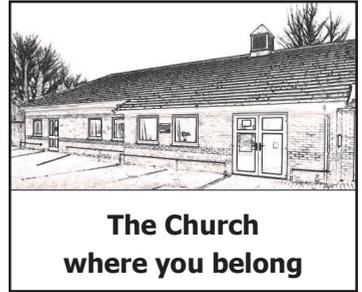


# *The Westgate Chronicle*

**The Magazine of Westgate New Church**

**Issue 470: September 2017**

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*United Reformed/Methodist*  
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## Our Mission Statement

We at Westgate New Church are called by God to highlight Jesus Christ's love for the people of Peterborough. We pass on this good news by worship, fellowship, mission, education, personal life and social service.

Our minister, Lesley, was on holiday when this article should have been written, but approved this choice as a substitute for her letter prior to leaving.

It was written by Revd Dr. Matthew Prevett, who members will remember leading services at Westgate when he was a student minister.

*Editor*

### **Acts 10: 44-48**

While Peter was still speaking, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who heard the word. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astounded that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles, for they heard them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter said, "Can anyone withhold the water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" So he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they invited him to stay for several days.

### **Reflection:**

This passage continues to astound me.

It doesn't astound me that God's Spirit falls upon all who heard the word preached by Peter. Pentecost teaches us that God's Holy Spirit falls upon an array of people of many tongues and backgrounds. It teaches us that the Holy Spirit fills the people with abilities to speak to one another about God's grace and love. It teaches us that the Spirit's gifts can be shared equally among all those who hear.

It's not astounding that God's Holy Spirit would rest upon those who have heard the Word preached.



But rather, what is astounding is the response of the 'circumcised' – the people of faith who were with Peter. They 'were astounded that the gift of the Holy Spirit has been poured out even on the Gentiles.' They were a people who could not understand that the Spirit might actually be about more than just those who filled the pews and already called the local Synagogue their own. They were unable to see how it might be possible for God's Spirit to touch those who weren't already in the family. They were astounded that God's action might not actually be restricted to their own blinkered expression of faith.

It's not astounding that the Holy Spirit can be received by all who hear the Word. It's not astounding that the message of the gospel is one of love and compassion and community and welcome.

But what astounds me – and I continue to see it in the Church – is the idea that what we expect, as people of faith, is that God's grace, mercy, peace, and love to be confined to our ways of doing things and our type of people. I'm not astounded that God might speak to people through pop music or sports or visiting an art gallery; but I am astounded that we don't do more to help people who have the encounter with God's Holy Spirit to know that they too might be part of God's communion.

We may not be withholding the welcome of the Church in the way Peter's

'circumcised believers' might have wished, but are we really doing enough to look beyond our own ways of doing things and our type of people to see and respond to how God Spirit is speaking to the world?

**Prayer:**

Astounding God,  
who speaks beyond our imaginings,  
help us to open our eyes  
to the remarkable ways you speak to all  
who hear your word  
and open our hearts to the astonishing  
acts of witness that come from your Spirit.  
Astound us so that we might see in others  
the gifts that come from you  
and welcome into your family those who  
have received of your Holy Spirit. Amen

**Writer:**

The Rev'd Dr Matthew Prevett is the minister of St Andrew's URC, Monkseaton and Northern Synod Minister

**Bible Version:**

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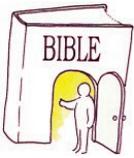
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Now I've been free, I know what a dreadful condition slavery is. I have seen hundreds of escaped slaves, but I never saw one who was willing to go back and be a slave. *Harriet Tubman*

*(American abolitionist, humanitarian, scout and spy for US Army in American Civil War. Born into slavery, escaped.)*

We have come a long way from the days of slavery, but . . . discrimination and inequality still saturate our society in modern ways. Though racism may be less blatant now in many cases, its existence is undeniable. *Al Sharpton*

*(US civil rights activist, Baptist minister, talk show host, ex White House adviser )*



## STORIES WITHIN THE STORY: LEARNING FROM OUR MISTAKES

Don't you just love it when the important people, leaders and exemplars in the church, are shown up for getting things wrong? I do; somehow it brightens up my day.

When Peter, who was then the leader of the church, came down to us at Antioch he at first joined in all we did – Jews and foreigners worshipping and having fellowship, even eating, together – we thought this was how God's people were meant to be. Then some more people came down from Jerusalem, Christians but also strict Jews, and they persuaded Peter that as a good Jew, following the customs of maintaining national purity, he should no longer eat and drink alongside those of us who were not Jewish, It began to look like it would be one church for Christian Jews and one for all the other Christians.

Until Paul, then an active evangelist in the Antioch church, stood up amongst the whole congregation and confronted Peter. We are all what we are, he said, because of God's bounteous grace in Jesus our Saviour, expressed through our common faith in Jesus. Those who come from a Jewish background treasure the heritage of their ancestors' trust in the law of Moses, but are no longer bound by it. For all of us Jesus Christ is the Way we follow – and the Truth and Life – so we are all one in Him. Anything that makes a division in the church community, based on race or anything else, is contrary to our faith. Peter, and others should confess and repent the sin of promoting division in our community.

oops!

Peter, to his credit, graciously accepted this criticism from one who, at that time, was still a fairly new and less experienced minister to the church. He reminded us, and indeed himself, that he had been one of the first to take

the gospel to non-Jews – Centurion Cornelius and his household, at Ceasarea. He acknowledged that he had forgotten some of what God had taught him through that incident – that just as all creatures are "clean" before God, so all people are equal in God's sight and should be in ours.

The great Peter, the Lord's right hand man, caught with egg on his face! I thought it was funny, until someone reminded me of another incident involving a far greater person than Peter – our Lord Jesus himself.

Jesus had been travelling through a region that had a mixed population of Jews and foreigners, and it was a foreign woman who called out to him for help, "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon." Jesus ignored her, and even when she knelt in front of him he told her "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs." However, she was a quick-witted woman and answered, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." Jesus was impressed, and recognised a real claim on his ministry. He commended her faith, and the daughter was healed at once.

So even our Lord could make the

mistake of disregarding people who were not Jews – just once, though. Jesus definitely learned by this incident, or I, a non-Jew, would not be speaking to you today. And the wonderful church community at Antioch, with its mix of people from different backgrounds, could never have come to be. Praise God!

### *Patricius,*

(an early Christian from Antioch)

AUTHOR'S NOTE: We all make mistakes, and need to recognise and confess the wrong-doing of the past. This year, the Methodist Conference passed a resolution that confessed the sin of racism which had been present in the church for many decades. Confession is not enough, however, and Conference recognised the considerable amount of work still required by the Connexion to achieve greater

equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI). All bodies in the church were urged to take steps to become a 'more inclusive and multicultural community of faith', and an EDI Toolkit has been prepared to help this process this can be seen on the Methodist Church website at:

<http://www.methodist.org.uk/ministers-and-office-holders/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/edi-toolkit>.

It appears Antioch may have lessons for today's church! – especially in central Peterborough, where our congregation has much the same racial diversity they had in Antioch.

By the way, the incidents described by Patricius can be found in the Bible at Galatians 2, 11-16 and Matthew 15 21-28. [Some translations refer in Galatians to Peter by the alternative form of Cephas.]

*Ian*

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## SPRING HARVEST LOCAL EVENT

**At Emmanuel Church  
Twelvetree Avenue  
Werrington  
Peterborough PE4 5DT  
Thursday 5 October 2017  
7.30 pm  
ONLY THE BRAVE**

**Exploring  
the theme of determined  
discipleship  
Tickets £7 adults  
£5 for concessions  
To book visit  
[springharvest.org/local](http://springharvest.org/local)**



## GOOD NEWS FROM SIGHTSAVERS

### **Unblocking sinks (and minds)**

"By a disabled person proving they can do the work, that's how we can change the opinion in our community."

Monica, a 24-year-old woman living in Uganda, is smashing stereotypes. In her community people with disabilities are often thought to be cursed and

incapable. But she has defied these negative attitudes by becoming financially independent – and she's doing it by working as a plumber, a job traditionally seen as a man's work. She's now helping to support her family, contributing to the local economy and paving the way for other women to follow in her footsteps.

# THOMAS OLIVERS 1725– 1799



We now come to one of the contributions of hymn writing by a famous Welsh Methodist preacher and hymn writer who wrote few hymns, but one of his hymns became very popular in his time and is now sung today from many Christian hymn books such as ours, 'Singing The Faith,' under 'Praise and Thanksgiving,' ie Hymn no 91 – 'The God of Abraham Praise'.

This hymn was written by Thomas Olivers, a Welsh Methodist preacher who was born in Tregynon, Montgomeryshire, Wales in 1725. He had a very sad and disturbing upbringing, due to the death of his parents when he was only four years old. He was passed on to the care of relatives and did not have a proper education. He was apprenticed to a local shoemaker and he was a mischievous character in his youth. At the age of 18 he was compelled to leave town and moved south to Shrewsbury, then Wrexham and

Bristol. At Bristol he felt that his ungodly behaviour should come to an end and he made every effort to see a famous preacher, G. Whitfield, preach on the text, "Is not this a brand plucked from the fire". That sermon turned his life and he became a dedicated Christian.

He wanted to become a local preacher and joined the Methodist Society at Bradford-on-Avon, where he met John Wesley, who recognised him to have enthusiasm and zeal and made him one of his preachers and in October 1753 he was made an evangelist to Cornwall. He was in this position for about 25 years, riding on his only horse for all his travels around Cornwall. He then moved to London continuing his preaching and became a co-editor of John Wesley's 'Arminian Magazine,' but was later sacked for printing errors due to his lack of a proper education. However he continued with his preaching work until his death in March 1799. He was buried beside John Wesley's tomb in London.

Although he lacked a proper education he still managed to write many hymns from inspiration of the Old Testament. Apart from his famous hymn 'The God of Abraham Praise' he also wrote another famous hymn 'Come Immortal King Of Glory' and also wrote an elegy on the death of John Wesley.

*Manny*

Sources:

- 1) Elsie Houghton: Christian Hymn Writers,
- 2) Hymnary.org,
- 3) Wikipedia

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There is a big difference between a human being and being human. Only a few really understand it.

You are loved when you are born. You will be loved when you die. In between, You have to manage!

*Found by Trevor*

# PRAYER BREAKFAST, CENTRAL PARK

## SATURDAY 5TH AUGUST 2017



This year, the short service was prepared by All Souls Roman Catholic Church and led by Pat and John Bedford. We were reminded that the tradition of holding the Prayer Breakfast in August in Central Park goes back over fifteen years and Pat and John welcomed members from St Mark's, St Mary's, Park Road Baptist, All Souls, Westgate New Church and for the first time St Oswald's RC Church.

The time of prayer was devoted to thinking of God's gifts in creation and pledging to do what we each are able to do in order to pass this beautiful work on to future generations. There are many references to creation and the sowing of seeds in the Old and New Testaments. The reading was from Matthew 13: 24-3, the story of weeds being sown after the farmer had sown good seed. This tells that however careful we are there will be those who would try to deflect our efforts. When we look at climate changes and their effects on our world, we already know that powerful people would rather speak up for carrying on as before and

A minister said the church needed extra money and asked the congregation to prayerfully consider giving extra in the offering. Whoever gave most would be able to pick three hymns. He later noticed a \$1,000 bill in the offering. He'd like to thank the person who gave it.

taking no notice of our duty to protect God's created universe. It is a long uphill road to travel if we are to produce a harvest that we can hand on to future generations.

Our prayers were for parts of our world that suffer most from the ignorance of climate change and the overuse of resources and those whose work for conservation and moderation is made harder by denial and greed, and continued to include prayers for our city and its people and the work of Fairtrade and the environment. News from the churches keeps the Churches Together in Central Peterborough in touch with each other and gives an opportunity of praying for each other.

Prayer time began by singing the hymn 'I watch the sunrise lighting the sky', a new one for most people, but very appropriate, and ended with 'Now thank we all our God'.

A sharp shower sent us all into the Buttercross for breakfast, which was very welcome, and fellowship with friends.

*Monica*



Rosie shyly raised her hand. The pastor asked her to come to the front. He asked her to pick three hymns. Her eyes brightened as she looked over the congregation, pointed to the three most handsome men in the building and said, "I'll take him and him and him!"

# A TRIP TO CROMER



time to get a bite to eat and have a leg stretch both in the town and along the promenade before the show which started at 2.30pm. During the short walk along the pier to the theatre we met up with several from the coach who we knew. The theatre was nearly full so we settled down to enjoy the performance. There were nine performers in the show, who started with an overture of songs and music from the last 40 years. Other items in the first half included a selection from Broadway, with 'Getting to Know You' and 'Chitty Chitty Bang Bang' to finish the first half.

The second half opened with the musical director playing various well known tunes, so well known that I can't remember the names, the lead female vocalist (a wonderful voice) had a spot singing a couple of songs from the operas. This half ended with a selection of Hollywood favourites. In between we were treated to comedy, juggling and dancing.

A very good show, well performed and full of energy, which when you consider that they were doing two shows each day shows that they were all very fit.

Returning to the bus up the road from the prom was a bit taxing, some of the audience being provided with a taxi to get them back to the bus. After a slight hold up, all were assembled so we set off stopping at a hotel between Cromer and Sheringham where the organiser had booked a two course meal, which was well received as it meant that we did not have to sort out a meal when we got home at about 10pm.

*June*

Pictures from top down:  
Cromer Parish Church, Beach and Pier,  
Leaving the Theatre

On Thursday July 27th Trevor and I were picked up at the Boat House, together with about 50 others, for a day trip to Cromer to see the pier show which is celebrating its 40th year and is the only one left in the UK which has such a show.

The trip to Cromer was uneventful, arriving at about 11.45am in plenty of

# WORK AT WESTGATE NEW CHURCH

Work has recently been undertaken to separate our water supply from that of UCKG and to remove the trees from our front car park and resurface it. Many thanks to all permit holders who have refrained from parking on our car parks during this work.



Pictures: top left, work on water main; bottom left, uprooting tree stumps; top right, work on front car park; bottom left, finished car park.

# WONDERS OF CREATION

This gorgeous dragonfly on a hanging basket by our front door sat still long enough to be photographed, even with four people close to it. The transparent wings can be seen as a very faint outline.

It was so still, that some of us thought that it must be dead, but I thought it was hanging on very tight for something that was dead. We soon settled the matter: a very carefully approaching finger had it moving very fast indeed. The latest theory is that it was newly hatched and drying out it's wings.

*Linda*

*Photograph by Ian.*





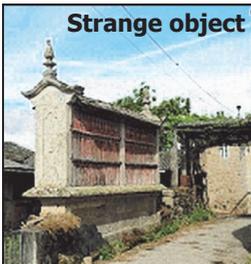
# PILGRIMS' PROGRESS (7)



July 07, 2017: Today's walk billed descent; climbs to 1270 then 1330metres, higher than yesterday's difficult climb. Through Linares, Hospital da Condessa, Alto do Poio, Fonfria, Biduedo and Fillobal, nearly 11 miles. Albergue with good write up. Washing and rest. Think of ice rinks with machine, sweeps ice between sessions. Does machine sweep Camino? Few footprints seen. Roger, amused by this, tripped, nearly fell. People walked path for centuries, leave no mark. Leave mark on people met through greetings, kindness, generosity.

July 08, 2017: Less than 75 miles to go. Left above mist and clouds, descended to Triacastella. Breakfast, bank. Alto do Riocabo, 910m. Up was nothing like challenge of down. Slipped. Roger stopped headlong descent. Both uninjured but I was bit shaken. Concentration on hills for rest of day. Fierce dog at farmyard gate. Albergues full, walked on and on. Sleep well tonight. 22km today, only 72miles to go.

July 09, 2017: Only 12km today, now 2km from 100km marker. Roger says I've got shin splints, right shin swollen, tender. Have to be sensible again – not preferred option. Happier active, even if painful, than sitting foot up. Stop next place two beds, so in converted water mill in depths of Galician countryside. Tough but someone has to! Always eaten well in Spain. Most places offer pilgrim menu. Good trout in mountains and lentil soup rivals Scottish. Frogs, birds, including nesting buzzards. Dragonfly – beautiful.



Strange object

Privilege to spend day in tranquil setting. Pretty spider's webs by road.

July 10, 2017: Hobbled 12km. This evening at physiotherapy clinic. Physio brilliant. Health care in Spain superb.

July 11, 2017: Stopped Vendas de Naron, 13km. Bandage obvious, yet people barged past, forced to change direction or leave path. Irritated. Pretty certain now less than 50 miles from destination. Stunning scenery. Pain distracts from everything except present. Diminishing rapidly but focus of thoughts while

walking. Black plastic failed to keep bandage dry in shower. 200ml water in bag at end. Sitting in sun getting dry.

July 12, 2017: Chuffed with distance today, 15.6km. Quiet evening 4km beyond Palas de Rei. Leg rapidly improving. At end of Camino show credencial to prove walked distance, at least 100km for a compostela. Now people walking to get one. Detracting from experience. Two days ago was pilgrim, walking, meditating, praying, reflecting on privilege of time and space for journey. Today looking forward to Santiago and journey home. Valued peace and quiet, regret new phase. Perhaps all that practice at being grumpy old woman paying off and I'm introverted miserable old baggage. Should arrive Santiago Sunday, home in early next week. Looking forward to own bed, haircut, manicure. Your endless mercy follows me, your goodness will lead me home!



By the Way

July 13, 2017: Rotten night, took time to realize cold. Shame as food and company good. Not walked well, stopped short of target. Hope our quiet corner remains quiet at bedtime. Defaced waymarker made me think about being made for greatness. Believe each and every human being born with potential to become great how choose. Today



# PILGRIMS' PROGRESS (8)



greatness is confused with celebrity; more burden than gift. Should recognise and value gifting, develop skills and talents to best ability. To be truly great is to reach potential.



July 14, 2017: Walked well today, Way less *Two scary bridges* crowded. 14.3km. Leg so much better. Good walk tomorrow. Wondering where are all chickens in Spain? Seen cabbage, corn, beans, tomato, shops selling meat and fish but few chickens to lay all eggs in Spanish diet.

July 15, 2017: Long hard slog. 11.6 miles. Leg sore. Had to keep walking to find accommodation, nice country inn. Heard roosters four times; if farmers don't keep roosters without hens, a few chickens laying all those eggs.

July 16, 2017: Slept long. Interesting dilemma up hill from breakfast, left or right fork? No waymarker. Chose wider left path, relieved after few hundred metres to find one. Lunch shared sandwich at San Paio. Soon discussing state of legs and feet, good. Unscheduled stop at Lavacolla, brass band Sunday afternoon concert. Enjoyed, then very hot. Not Santiago today. Comfortable beds, clothes washed. Tomorrow last 10km.

July 17, 2017: View of destination disappointment, mist. Soon feeling rotten, think caffeine. Into square in front of cathedral about 1130. Cathedral shrouded in scaffolding etc. (L) Got compostelas. Proved impracticable to return to missed stage. Tickets home difficult, eventually booked ferry from Santander, Wed. eve.



July 18, 2017: Real rest: joy! Last night interesting. Santiago gearing up for St James day, 25th July. Drumming began 22:00. Rose after 8.00, leisurely breakfast. Booked bus to ferry at Pilgrim's price. Cathedral. Queued to 'embrace apostle' (R).



Copied others, gave apostle hug. Given prayer card. In crypt, reliquary said to contain remains of apostle. Met volunteers from English albergue, lovely chat. Market. Gifts and postcards. Written and posted cards, almost certainly arrive after our return. Leg almost normal.

July 20, 2017: MV Pont-Aven left late. Journey still holds logistical challenges but other challenges perhaps more interesting. Speeding up after pilgrimage quite disconcerting. Exhaustion. Looking forward to seeing family and friends, hair cut etc. Mixed feelings. Singing 'He who would valiant be' – interesting thoughts on pilgrimage.

July 21, 2017: Arrived back 3.16 am. Reflected on privilege of sabbatical, amazing. Valued good wishes and prayers from churches and friends. Feet still sore, almost detached toe nail, swollen shin, all settling down.

# SHERINGHAM FLOWER FESTIVAL

The theme for this year's Festival at St Andrew's Methodist Church, Sheringham in early July was 'Music in Bloom'.



*"Sing for joy to the Lord, all the earth;  
Praise him with songs and shouts of joy!  
Sing praises to the Lord!  
Play music on the harps!  
Blow trumpets and horns,  
And shout for joy to the Lord, our king."  
Psalm 98: 5-6*

Thirty arrangements were put together by organisations from Sheringham and surrounding areas and represented a wide range of different musical genres.

Here is a selection of my favourites:

**'Think of a world without any flowers'** (top left): This arrangement struck me as it compared two worlds, one with and one without flowers. It showed how dreary and desolate life would be without the flowers. The programme said: "This hymn encourages us to look around imagining what the world would be like without so much we take for granted and reminds us that we should give thanks to God for the wonders of the world in which we live."



**'Swan Lake'** (centre left): I liked the way this arrangement was made to look like a pirouetting ballerina – complete with ballet shoes! The arranger drew attention to the fact that the ballet has a mixture of emotions and reminds us of Psalm 30: 11-12.

*"You have changed my sadness  
into joyful dance;*

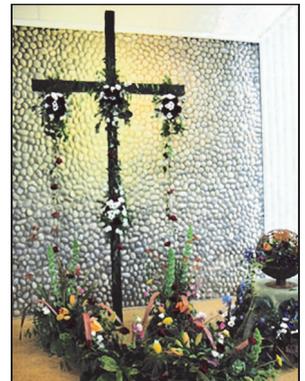
*You have taken away my sorrow and  
surrounded me with joy.*

*So I will not be silent; I will sing praise to you.  
Lord, you are my God; I will give you thanks forever."*

**'Somewhere over the rainbow'** (centre right): Such a simple yet effective display. The song reminds us that though we face uncertain events, we still have hope, and our hope is in God.

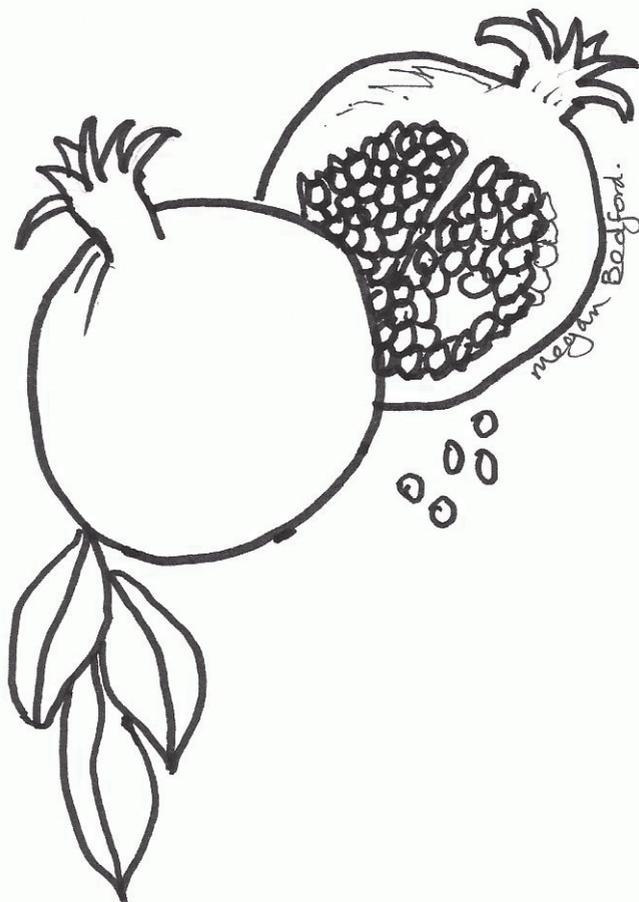


**'When I survey the wondrous cross'** (bottom right): At the centre of Christian faith is the Cross; the Church Cross was the centrepiece of the display. I was impressed by the ingenuity putting roses that hung down in small test tubes to keep them fresh.



*Sue*

# Inspirational Colouring



The Pomegranate is a symbol of fertility and abundance. It is also the fruit that the scouts brought back to Moses to demonstrate the fertility of the promised land. The broken pomegranate burst open is a symbol of the fullness of Jesus' suffering and resurrection.

The next time you drink its fruit or eat the jewel like seeds I invite you to think of these things. Megan

# URC MINISTERS: THE FUTURE?

Dear friends,

In her history the church has faced very many challenges and even dangers. Yet God is faithful and has always been faithful to the church and therefore we do not give in to fear. We can think of the churches of North Africa, once the power house of Christianity, now a minority faith there. The church of Augustine and Tertullian is a shadow of its former self but it is not gone. For fifteen hundred years small but faithful Christian communities have continued to bear witness to the Gospel of our Lord.

Today, like all traditional Christian denominations the URC faces numerical decline and the challenges that come from that. One such challenge is the falling numbers of people available to the church as stipendiary ministers and as you are aware, that fall is forecast to be precipitous from 2020. This leaves each Synod with huge challenges. There will need to be a culture change in our churches and with our stipendiary ministers. The role that ministers play from now on needs to change if we are going to move into the future with energy. With a forecast of eighteen ministers for the whole of East Midlands Synod by 2025 (I think that number will arrive before 2025 based on the low number of successful vocations) we are going to have to think big.

I've been very encouraged so far by the response from churches where the minister has moved on. There is a real sense of wanting to "grasp the nettle" and doing so with great faith in God. But the response, such as it is, since we've only just begun the conversation, from one or two places has been parochial and even



hurtful. To face the challenge we need to think big and creatively.

To that end a paper I wrote and endorsed by Synod Pastoral Group and Synod Enabling Group will come to the October Synod for information. We will discuss it too in the County Gatherings. A resolution based on the paper will then come to the March Synod for a decision. May God the Holy Spirit inspire and hold us all as with God we move into a very different future.

With love in Christ, *Peter*  
(Rev'd Peter Meek, Moderator,  
East Midlands Synod)

In mid-July, the Moderators, Clerks and Treasurers of East Midlands, West Midlands, Wales and South Western Synods met together for their annual day conference in Birmingham. This year they were also joined by the General Secretary, John Proctor. It is not a formal meeting but an opportunity to share visions and priorities and identify areas with the potential for co-operation. Inevitably deployment was at the forefront of everyone's mind. As numbers of ordained ministers decline steeply over the next few years, how are we planning to provide ministry for our churches in future? The problem is the same for all Synods, but the solutions vary. Resource churches, flexible pastorates, group pastorates with team ministry, local lay leaders, 'bidding' for part of a minister's time for a particular piece of work and transitional ministry are all in the frame. Alongside this all four Synods are reviewing their committee and staffing structures, or have recently restructured, to improve the support they offer to local churches.

We continue to identify areas where we can cooperate. Although the three-Synod youth camp this summer had to be cancelled due to lack of numbers, some alternative joint events are in preparation. We raised the possibility of East Midlands offering some of its listed buildings expertise to West Midlands. Wales offers training in conducting funerals using the package 'Good Grief'.

After two Synods reported that they will be closing several churches this year, John Proctor asked a challenging question: are any of you opening any new

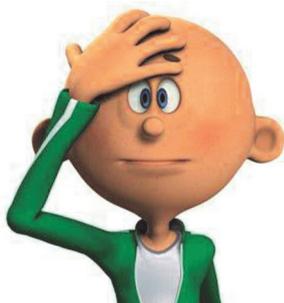
churches? We shared news of mission projects: the 'church without walls' in Milton Keynes, a worshipping community on the outskirts of St Neots, ministry to a town rather than a church in Devon and the ecumenical project in the new housing development at Lubbethorpe, near Leicester. John's challenge is one for us all to reflect on. Can we move from focussing on decline to creating opportunities for growth?

*Helen Lidgett (Synod Clerk)*

*Both letters from editions of the Synod e-newsletter*

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## LANGUAGE FORGOTTEN



Further to your pieces about learning languages – have you also given any thought to possibilities of forgetting language? I hadn't – at least not for one's own!

I was somewhat surprised some time after we had married and were making changes to our house, that Carmen said that she didn't know the Spanish for some items in the house and garden. OK, I could understand that a town girl may not have bothered to learn the name for birds and flowers and some architectural features, but I was a little surprised that she didn't remember the

words describing parts of a room, but then I should have remembered that I was dealing with technical terms as an everyday activity. However, nowadays I am somewhat embarrassed when I go to the market and I have difficulty in remembering the English words for things that I want to buy, that we normally refer to in Spanish at home.

On the other hand at the other extreme we have a Spanish friend who has lived and worked in London for some 50 years and is married to an Englishman. She is now developing dementia and very suddenly finds that she is not able to communicate in English. When David (who has only learned a smattering of Spanish) tells her to speak in English, she protests that she is! So he phones up

Carmen to ask her to relay to his wife what the doctor has said etc.

*Ewan*

If it's any consolation, Ewan, I find I remember things best in the language I first learn them. There are some slightly technical terms I use happily in French, but would struggle to find an English word for and some subjects I have never learnt French words for. I had to have recourse to a dictionary when a French-speaking child needed help with maths. It's all a matter of the circumstances in which you needed to know. I also have to admit that nowadays the most basic words can sometimes disappear and I can't find them in either language!

*Linda*

# WESTGATE PUZZLE PAGES

In September the Old Testament readings move out of Genesis and into Exodus where we will be reminded of the miracles God performed for Moses.

## Puzzle 1: Exodus 14: 19–31

This reading shows a spectacular miracle. The Israelites had been freed by the Pharaoh (king) and God led the people out of Egypt towards the Red Sea. Meanwhile, back in Egypt, when the Pharaoh realized that the Israelites were gone, he changed his mind and decided he wanted them back again, so Pharaoh took his best men and chariots and started chasing the Israelites. When the children of Israel saw the Egyptian army and chariots coming they were afraid, but Moses told them that the Lord would save them. When Moses raised his hand over the sea, the Lord opened up a path through the water with a strong east wind, which people of Israel followed. When the Israelites reached the other side Moses raised his hand over the sea again and the waters returned and all of the chariots and horses who chased the Israelites into the sea were drowned. This showed how the Israelites put their faith in the Lord and so should we.

Each number represents a letter of the alphabet. Substitute the correct letter for the numbers to reveal the coded words.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
C	B	F	G	T	Z	J	K	U	O	D	X	E
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
P	L	W	Q	A	Y	H	S	I	R	M	V	N

1) \_\_\_\_\_  
20 18 26 11

6) \_\_\_\_\_  
15 18 26 11

2) \_\_\_\_\_  
21 13 18

7) \_\_\_\_\_  
1 20 18 23 22 10 5 21

3) \_\_\_\_\_  
11 22 25 22 11 13 11

8) \_\_\_\_\_  
18 23 24 19

4) \_\_\_\_\_  
11 23 19

9) \_\_\_\_\_  
21 18 25 13 11

5) \_\_\_\_\_  
20 10 23 21 13 21

10) \_\_\_\_\_  
5 23 9 21 5

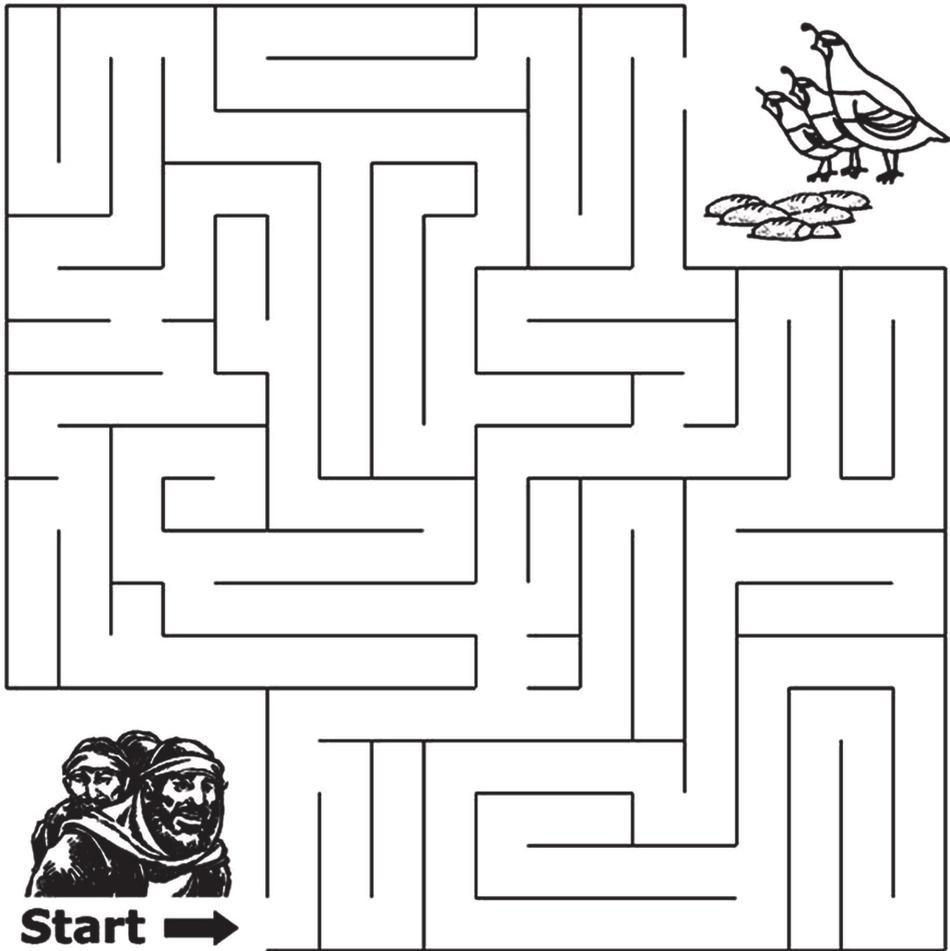


**Puzzle 2:** Exodus 16: 2 –15

This is another miracle by God that was witnessed by the Israelites. The Israelites had been looking for the land that God had promised them and had been wandering around in the desert for a couple of months. They started to grumble and complain that there was little to eat. God heard the people complaining and told Moses that in the evening he would send quail to cover the camp so that the people would have meat to eat. Not only that, but in the morning, after the dew was gone, there would be bread on the ground for everyone to eat. All they had to do was go out, pick it up, and eat it. God did it so that they would know that he loved them and that he would take care of them.

The message is that we should not forget that God loves us and that he provides us with everything that we need.

Help the Israelites find the bread and quails.



# INTERNATIONAL BLASPHEMY DAY

## 30TH SEPTEMBER

### ***Do you occasionally break the Third Commandment?***

*"You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the Lord your God (or his son or his son's mother<sup>(1)</sup>), for the Lord will not acquit anyone who misuses his name".* But we get reports in the Bible that despite God's exhortation, people did still blaspheme – in Leviticus we find "One who blasphemeth the name of the Lord shall be put to death"; and it was a criminal offence in many Western states. Although many of those laws may still exist on the statute books as technicalities, they are not now enforced, at least not with any real punishment, in most western countries. In the UK the blasphemy law was repealed in 2008.

The word *blasphemy* derives from a Greek term meaning "speaking evil," but in the Christian religious tradition the word refers to verbal offences against sacred values or beliefs. A seventeenth-century Scottish jurist called it "treason against God." The concept of blasphemy has never remained fixed. It has ranged from the ancient Hebrew crime of cursing the ineffable name of God to irreverent statements that outrage the religious sensibilities of others.

Many expressions in common parlance are oaths in disguise – "**minced oaths**", euphemistic expressions formed by misspelling, mispronouncing, or replacing part of a profane, blasphemous, or taboo term to reduce the term's objectionable characteristics. Some examples include *gosh* (for *God*), *darn* and *dang* or *drat* (for *damn*), *heck* (for *hell*), and many other



common expressions in place of other words considered to be rude or coarse.

Common methods of forming a minced oath are rhyme and alliteration. Thus the word *bloody*<sup>(2)</sup> (itself maybe either an *elision* of "By Our Lady" — referring to *the Virgin Mary*, or of "God's blood") can become *blooming*, or *ruddy*. Alliterative minced oaths such as *darn* for *damn* allow a speaker to begin to say the prohibited word and then change to a more acceptable expression; we get *jeez* instead of "*Jesus*" and instead of "*Christ*" we get *cripes*, *crumbs* and even *Christopher Columbus*. Alliteration can be combined with metrical equivalence, as in the pseudo-blasphemous *Judas Priest*, substituted for the blasphemous use of "*Jesus Christ*".

Minced oaths can also be formed by shortening: e.g., *b* for *bloody*. Sometimes words borrowed from other languages become minced oaths; for example, *poppycock* comes from the Dutch *pappe kak*, meaning "soft dung". The minced oath *blank* is an ironic reference to the dashes that are sometimes used to replace profanities in print. It goes back at least to 1854, when Cuthbert Bede wrote "I wouldn't give a blank for such a blank blank". By the 1880s, it had given rise to the derived forms *blanked* and *blankety*, which combined together gave the name of the long running and popular British TV show *Blankety Blank*. In the same way, *bleep* arose from the use of a tone to mask profanities on radio.

The use of minced oaths in English dates back at least to the 14th century,

when *gog* and *kokk*, both euphemisms for "God", were in use. Other early minced oaths include *Gis* or *Jis* for Jesus (1528). Late Elizabethan drama contains a profusion of minced oaths, probably due to Puritan opposition to swearing. Seven new minced oaths are first recorded between 1598 and 1602, including '*sblood*' or "By God's blood" from Shakespeare, '*slight*' for "God's light" from Ben Jonson, and '*snails*' for "God's nails" from the historian John Hayward. Swearing on stage was officially banned by the Act to Restraine Abuses of Players in 1606, and a general ban on swearing followed in 1623.

In some cases the original meanings of these minced oaths were forgotten; the oath '*struth*' (*By God's truth*) came to be spelled *strewth*. The oath *Zounds* changed pronunciation – changing the vowel to be as in the word *found*, so that it no longer sounded like its original meaning of "By God's wounds". Other examples from the 1650s included '*slid*' for "By God's eyelid" (1598), '*sfoot*' for "By God's foot" (1602), and *Gadzooks* for "By God's hooks" (referring to the nails on Christ's cross). In the late 17th century, *egad* meant *oh God*, and *ods bodikins* for "By God's bodkins" [i.e. nails] in 1709.

Although minced oaths are not as strong as the expressions from which they derive, some hearers may still find them

offensive. One writer in 1550 considered "idle oaths" like *by cocke* (by God), *by the cross of the mouse foot*, and *by Saint Chicken* to be "most abominable blasphemy". The minced oaths '*sblood*' and *zounds* were omitted from the Folio edition of Shakespeare's play *Othello*, probably as a result of Puritan-influenced censorship. In 1941 a U.S. federal judge threatened a lawyer with contempt of court for using the word *darn*.

The term *bowdlerisation* is a pejorative term for the expurgation of lewd material from books. The term derives from Thomas Bowdler's 1818 edition of Shakespeare's plays, which he reworked in order to make them more suitable, in his opinion, for women and children. He similarly edited Edward Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*.

30th September is **International Blasphemy Day** – started 2009 in the USA – (where else?)

*Ewan*

(1) My addition. ENC.

(2) OED – The origin as an 'intensive' is uncertain but is seen from 1680s, possibly as a reference to the "bloods" or aristocratic rowdies of the time.

Sources: Wikipedia, including: Hughes, Geoffrey (1991). *Swearing: A Social History of Foul Language, Oaths and Profanity in English*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.

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## SPRING HARVEST LOCAL EVENT

**At Emmanuel Church  
Twelvetree Avenue  
Werrington  
Peterborough PE4 5DT  
Thursday 5 October 2017  
7.30 pm  
ONLY THE BRAVE**

**exploring  
the theme of determined  
discipleship  
Tickets £7 adults  
£5 for concessions  
To book visit  
springharvest.org/local**



Enabling the church to house the vulnerable

Dear Friends,

You have supported us in many ways, but how do you know we are 'successful'?

A verse from Isaiah 58 inspires me: *'Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice, to set the oppressed free and break EVERY yoke.'* If we do that we are successful. We try to understand what breaking 'every yoke' means; breaking one is rarely enough.

We measure 'success' through 'seven outcomes', hoping each 'area' (Isaiah's 'yokes') improves. We share last year's outcomes. But first read how one tenant responded to 'What is success?':

Success is different for everyone. As far as success goes for the homeless it's not as simple as putting a roof over their head because their life probably has been difficult and complicated.

Success can only be measured by an individual, at their own pace. It could be healing an angry emotional wound. It could be learning to love yourself. It could be finding peace. For some, staying out of prison longer than last time, or held a tenancy without debts is success – any step in the right direction is a success.

Outcomes year ending April 1<sup>st</sup> 2017:

Maintaining tenancy 87%. We housed 152 people. 13 were children. Average stay was 266 days. Of those who moved on: 16% went to a friend, 31% to private rental, 21% to social housing, 6% to a relative and 26% to 'other.'

Abstaining from crime 89% (**national average less than 40%**). We housed 36 people previously in custody and 32 abstained from crime. One was removed from the police 'prolific offenders' list.

## HOPE INTO ACTION

Many are at risk of committing crime: only one served time.

Reducing alcohol or drug intake: 81%. 57 tenants had a previous relationship with drugs or alcohol; 46 reduced their dependence. One has now been clean for 20 months – her longest for 20 years! New drugs add to the challenge.

Improved social relations with family. 82% have improved family relations. We focussed on this more this year as we feel it is vital to a sense of wellbeing.

Volunteering, education, or training 47%. 65 were involved.

Secured a job 23%. 32 have overcome huge hurdles to get a job.

Financial. This year we focussed more on personal financial management: 92% have a bank account, 71% pay for their water regularly, 46% by standing order. 85% are either addressing arrears or are free of rent debts!

Two tenants, have said:

"Thanks for making me feel like I matter;"

"The support and relationships I've developed through the church have hugely improved my wellbeing, self-esteem and the way I feel about myself. This has given me the confidence to begin to tackle my problems."

That last sums up our mission and success: enabling churches to engage in relationships and create an environment where people make positive life choices.

We thank you for your support in prayer, giving, investing or partnering – each contribution is noticed and highly appreciated. I hope you are encouraged, as are we, that your inputs are serving a need and 'breaking yokes'.

With warmest love,

*Ed and everyone at Hope into Action  
(Abbreviated from an email)*

## 1st–9th September

Churches: Orton Waterville (Methodist); Castle Square, Wisbech (URC)  
Events: CTiCP Forum (5th)\*\*; Prayer Day at St. Mark's (9th)\*\*  
People: all victims of modern slavery\*  
Organisations: Churches Together in Central Peterborough\*  
Give thanks: for all the wonders of creation\*



## 10th–16th September

Churches: Oundle (Methodist); St. John's (CofE)  
Events: CTiCP United Service (10th)\*\*  
People: everyone who suffers from racial intolerance\*  
Organisations: the URC as the church considers how to deploy ministers in the future\*  
Give thanks: for the joy brought into our lives by flowers\*



# SEPTEMBER PRAYER PROMPTS



## 17th–23rd September

Churches: Southside (Methodist); St. Andrew's, Netherton (URC)  
Events: our regular events at Westgate new Church\*\*  
People: all victims of violence and terrorism\*; people mourning a loved one or awaiting an expected imminent death  
Organisations: Hope into Action\*  
Give thanks: for holidays already enjoyed or anticipated



## 24th–30th September

Churches: Thorney (Methodist group without a chapel); All Saints (CofE)  
Events: Our Harvest Festival Service (24th)\*\*; Eco Faith Meeting (26th)\*\*  
People: Recipients of our harvest gifts; people who go hungry while we have plenty  
Organisations: Sightsavers\*  
Give thanks: for local and international harvests and the pleasures of eating and drinking

The Churches mentioned are taken from the Methodist Circuit and from a list of Churches in CTiCP and other churches with whom we have a close association. \*Further information elsewhere in the magazine \*\* See Diary on next page

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*Tuesdays, 10.30: Pause for Prayer in Walsingham*  
*First Tuesday in the month, 2.30: at Park Road Baptist Church:*  
*Tuesday Fellowship*  
*Wednesdays, 10.30: Circuit Intercessions Service in Lindisfarne*  
*Wednesdays, 1pm at the Cathedral: Wednesday at 1 (W@1) is expected to*  
*resume in September, but no details yet.*  
*Saturdays, 10.00-12.00: Morning coffee*  
*Saturdays, 12.30-2.30: Foodbank open*

\* \* \*

Sat.	2	8:30	At Park Road Baptist Church: CTiCP Prayer Breakfast
Sun.	3	10:30	Morning worship, led by Mr Des Kellard
		4:30	In Walsingham: Communion Service and Café Worship, led by Revd. Dr. Langley Mackrell-Hey
Tue.	5	7.00	for 7.30: Churches Together in Central Peterborough Forum at St. Mary's
Sat.	9	9.00 -	4.00 Prayer Day at St. Mark's. Drop in when convenient.
Sun.	10	10:30	Morning worship, led by Mrs Monica Sturgess
		6.00	CTiCP united service at Park Road. Check church notices for details
Tue.	12	1:00	In Walsingham: Crafty Capers
Sun.	17	10:30	Morning worship with Holy Communion Service, led by Revd. Lesley Moseley
Sun.	24	10:30	Morning worship and Harvest Festival Service, led by Revd. Lesley Moseley
Tue.	26	1:00	In Walsingham: Crafty Capers
		7.30	CTiCP Eco-Faith Group. <i>The Global Perspective</i> : Pam Richardson, new co-ordinator for Eastern Area, Christian Aid. Venue to be announced.
Wed.	27	7:30	At The Friends Meeting House: Peterborough Theological Society; Speaker: Dr. Eeva John, Director of Pastoral Studies, Ridley Hall, Cambridge, <i>In- formation, trans-formation or re-formation? Winds of Change in theological education and the Church</i>
<b>October</b>	Sun.	1	10:30 Morning worship, led by Revd. Joe Goodrich
		4:30	In Walsingham: Communion Service and Café Worship, led by Revd. Lesley Moseley

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The person who loves you will never leave you, because even if there are 100 reasons to give up, he or she will find one reason to hold on.

Make sure that you eat your food as your medicines, otherwise you have to eat medicines as your food.

The Six Best Doctors in the world are:

1. Sunlight. 2. Rest, 3. Exercise, 4 .Diet
5. Self Confidence and 6. Friends.

Don't educate your children to be rich. Educate them to be happy, so when they grow up they will know the value of things not the price.

. Found by Trevor