



Diocese of Chester

## STOCKPORT PARISH CHURCH


### St Mary's in the Marketplace

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[www.stmarysinthemarketplace.com](http://www.stmarysinthemarketplace.com)

 Stockport Parish Church - St Mary's

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### Service times at St Mary's

**Sunday: 10:30 Holy Communion /Morning Prayer**

Normally the first and third Sunday is Holy Communion with Morning Prayer on the second and fourth.

**15.30 Zeal Church**

**Tuesday: 10.00 Holy Communion**

**12.15 Lunchtime Service**

**Friday: 10.45 Café Worship**

**Wedding, Baptism, Funeral and other services by arrangement.**

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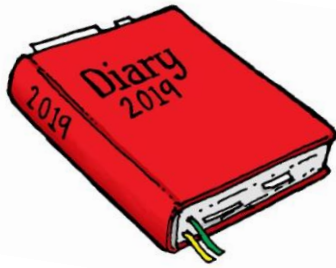
**St Mary's and the Nave Café is open – Tuesday, Thursday, Friday & Saturday from 9.00am – 3.00pm**

*This magazine is written (and other submissions edited as deemed necessary) by S M Heap with additional material used by permission from [www.parishpump.co.uk](http://www.parishpump.co.uk). Electronic copy available on pdf format via the church website.*



**STOCKPORT PARISH CHURCH**  
**[St Mary's in the Marketplace]**  
with St Andrew's , Hall Street.





## January

**Please note that with the exception of Sunday worship St Mary's is closed until Tuesday, 8<sup>th</sup> January**

Sunday, 6 <sup>th</sup> January	Holy Communion Zeal Church	10.30 15.30
Tuesday, 8 <sup>th</sup> January	Holy Communion Lunchtime Service	10.00 12.15
Friday, 11 <sup>th</sup> January	Café Worship	10.45
Sunday, 13 <sup>th</sup> January	Morning Prayer Zeal Church	10.30 15.30
Tuesday, 15 <sup>th</sup> January	Holy Communion Lunchtime Service	10.00 12.15
Friday, 18 <sup>th</sup> January	Café Worship	10.45
Sunday, 20 <sup>th</sup> January	Holy Communion Zeal Church	10.30 12.15
Tuesday, 22 <sup>nd</sup> January	Holy Communion Lunchtime Service	10.00 12.15
Friday, 25 <sup>th</sup> January	Café Worship	10.45
Sunday, 27 <sup>th</sup> January	Morning Prayer Zeal Church	10.30 15.30
Tuesday, 29 <sup>th</sup> January	Holy Communion Lunchtime Service	10.00 12.15

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## **Have you ever wondered where the name 'Jesus' comes**

The name Jesus is a transliteration of a name that occurs in several languages. It is of Hebrew origin, 'Yehosua', or Joshua. Or there is the Hebrew-Aramaic form, 'Yesua'. In Greek, it became 'Ἰησοῦς' (*Iēsoûs*), and in Latin it became 'Iesus'.

The meaning of the name is 'Yahweh delivers' or 'Yahweh rescues', or 'Yahweh is salvation'. No wonder the angel Gabriel in Luke 1:26-33 told Mary to name her baby Jesus: "because He will save His people from their sins".

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## **Epiphany**

On 6<sup>th</sup> January we celebrate Epiphany - the visit of the wise men to the baby Jesus. But who were these wise men? No one knows for sure. Matthew calls them 'Magi', and that was the name of an ancient caste of a priestly kind from Persia. It wasn't until the third century that they were called kings - by a church father, Tertullian.

Another church father, Origin, assumed there were three - to correspond with the gifts given. Later Christian interpretation came to understand gold as a symbol of wisdom and wealth, incense as a symbol of worship and sacrifice, and myrrh as a symbol of healing - and even embalming. Certainly Jesus challenged and set aright the way in which the world handled all three of these things. Since the 8<sup>th</sup> century, the magi have had the names Balthasar, Caspar and Melchior.

## **Happy New Year**

We start the new year in the knowledge that the legal processes are completed and the paperwork signed on the 13<sup>th</sup> December 2018 forming the new parish of Stockport and Brinnington, effective from the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2019.

A new calendar year and a new beginning for St Mary's, St Thomas' and St Luke's. Clearly there is a lot of work to be done making all the necessary administrative arrangements merging us into one parish and the next few weeks will be a little complicated to say the least, but we all accept the challenge and look forward to working together during 2019.

Things will slowly start to change and new arrangements emerge, but first of all our annual break following Christmas is a welcome one. With the exception of Sunday worship St Mary's remains closed to the public until Tuesday, 8<sup>th</sup> January 2019. It will be all systems "go" when we return with meetings scheduled with Ian Bishop (Archdeacon of Macclesfield) and lots to do!

We can tell you that the post of Rector will be re-advertised shortly - arrangements being made by the Archdeacon of Macclesfield - and we hope that this time round we will be able to complete the recruitment process. Temporary clergy cover for St Mary's is however more or less sorted up until Easter and a new programme now available for our Tuesday lunch-time services.

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## **BISHOP LIBBY LANE NAMED AS THE NEXT BISHOP OF DERBY**

It will also be a fresh start during 2019 for Bishop Libby as she prepares to leave us and become Bishop of Derby. Congratulations to Bishop Libby from all of us, as she returns to her "roots" as it were, in Derbyshire.

## The Beatles' last concert

**It was 50 years ago this month, on 30<sup>th</sup> January 1969, that the Beatles gave their last public performance** – on the roof of Apple Studios in London.

It was their first truly live show since their final tour ended on 29th August 1966, at Candlestick Park in San Francisco. They had become less popular in the US after John Lennon's controversial remark in an interview that 'we're more popular than Jesus now'.

In the rooftop concert, which lasted about 45 minutes, Get Back was the final song, and in the recorded version Lennon can be heard saying: 'I'd like to say thank you ... I hope we passed the audition.'

It was cold and windy, with a threat of rain. Lennon borrowed Yoko Ono's fur coat, and Ringo wore his wife Maureen's red raincoat. The group also varied their classic stage placements: Lennon took the middle spot, with Harrison to his left. Keyboard player Billy Preston guested.

The police are widely criticised for breaking up the session, but in fact they were nearby and could have shut it down after the first song; instead they let it continue and gave the band ten minutes' warning that they were about to intervene after complaints from neighbouring businesses.

The Beatles broke up formally in April 1970.

## What about the gifts of Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh?

The story of the coming of the Magi grew in the telling. By the 6<sup>th</sup> century they had acquired names: Gaspar, Melchior, and Balthasar. By medieval times they were considered to be kings. Whoever they were, we do know from Matthew that they brought three gifts to Jesus. What about their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh? While we cannot know for sure what was in the minds of first century Magi, one Victorian scholar has offered a possible explanation as to the significance of their gifts. He was the Rev John Henry Hopkins, an American Episcopalian minister, who in 1857 wrote his much-loved Christmas carol, 'We Three Kings of Orient Are'. Gold, said John Henry Hopkins, was a gift that would have been given to a king. Frankincense had traditionally been brought by priests as they worshipped God in the Temple. Myrrh was a spice that the ancients used in preparing bodies for burial. If that is true, then you could say that the Wise Men, in choosing their gifts for this infant, honoured Jesus with gold because He was King of the Jews, with frankincense because He was to be worshipped as divine; and with myrrh, because He would also become a sacrifice and die for His people. The Wise Men were the very first gentiles ever to worship Jesus. What faith they had! They travelled for months over difficult terrain, they never saw any evidence of Jesus' kingship, His divinity or His sacrificial death. They worshipped Him through faith in God's promises about Him. Isaiah foresaw this response to Jesus: 'Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.' The Magi's eyes of faith saw clearly and far into the future. Compare that with the High Priest and religious leaders whom the Wise Men saw in Jerusalem when they first arrived. These head priests knew all about the prophecies of their own coming Messiah, but NOT ONE Jewish religious leader travelled to look for Him in Bethlehem. And it is only six miles down the road!

## **2019: Is it even possible to make a New Start?**

The Christian faith teaches that a new start is endlessly possible. It is provided by a personal encounter with the risen and living Jesus Christ. He offers us the opportunity and the resources to make a new start, despite all our circumstances or failings. The Bible records many encouraging examples of people who were able to start again after encountering Jesus. These include a woman caught in adultery who was facing execution by an outraged community, a hated tax collector named Zacchaeus who had been collaborating with the enemy, and Peter, the close friend of Jesus who publicly disowned him. God's provision of a new start liberates people from the powerful hold that guilt, fear and memories of failure can have over a human. The life, death and resurrection of Jesus have made a way for humans to find God's forgiveness. A Christian is someone who has accepted God's forgiveness and now has the freedom to reject the old habits of bitterness, anger or revenge, like disposing of a 'shabby old coat'. Many Christians experience this as such a new beginning that they describe it as feeling like a different kind of life. Forgiveness, however, is not the same as perfection. Although many Christians can look back to a specific time at which they made a decision to make a new start as a follower of the way of Jesus Christ, living up to a new way of being is an ongoing struggle. There is a frequent need to revisit and remember the new start. Church services almost always include a point at which worshippers are encouraged to think about recent failures, confess them, and ask for the mercy of God in absolute certainty that He will forgive. The Bible describes God's promises of mercy as 'new every morning'. It is in the gracious nature of God that mistakes and failures are not a stick to be beaten with, but an opportunity to change into something better.

## **Stockport Homes**

### **– Gifts to children and young people.....**

**making a difference**



Our gifts were most appreciated by representatives from Stockport Homes – Kirsty Dunbar and student placement Wayne Brady at our “gift service” last month. We look forward to meeting up with Kirsty and working with Stockport Homes again in the future and to do what we can to support them again during 2019.



**A “gig” for the Wellspring** – thanks to John Barrett for arranging an evening with a difference - in collaboration with ourselves, Jason Skarratt from Fab Music Store Ltd and performers Howard Harcourt, Liv Mae, Kames and Barratt. It was a most enjoyable evening and proves yet again what a wonderful venue Stockport Parish Church can be.



This fundraising concert by “Seven Miles Out Records”, raised from donations received £363.85 for The Wellspring, Stockport. That pays for 72 dinners for the disadvantaged and homeless.



Photos: Adam Pinder

## Thank you

to the Rev Brian & Rev Susan Johnson

Our thanks to Brian and Susan Johnson for helping us out during over recent months/years.

They would love to have said goodbye in person before leaving the area, but although they had been preparing to move to Whitley Bay for some time to be nearer to their daughter, the actual move came quicker than expected.

Brian is to Hon Associate Priest at St John Percy in Wallsend, and Susan will be doing pastoral work at a nearby parish in Willington Quay, Wallsend.

St John’s is in an old former mining and ship building area in something of a decline and is to be merged with the neighbouring parish, St Peter's Balkwell, a large, deprived ex council estate. Both parishes are in vacancy.

Susan’s parish is the result of a merger some time ago. The vicar has readers for Sunday services, but no help during the week, and needs support. They are hoping that on Sundays Susan will be free to go to “Percy Main”, as it’s called, with Brian.

We wish them both well for the future and will be keeping in touch.

## Everything I need to know, I learned from Noah's Ark – a thought for the New Year

**ONE** - Don't miss the boat.

**TWO** - Remember that we are all in the same boat.

**THREE** - Plan ahead. It wasn't raining when Noah built the Ark.

**FOUR** - Stay fit. When you're ?? years old, someone may ask you to do something really big.

**FIVE** - Don't listen to critics; just get on with the job that needs to be done.

**SIX** - Build your future on high ground.

**SEVEN** - For safety's sake, travel in pairs.

**EIGHT** - Speed isn't always an adventure. The snails were on board with the cheetahs.

**NINE** - When you're stressed, float awhile.

**TEN** - Remember, the Ark was built by amateurs, the Titanic by professionals.

**ELEVEN** - No matter the storm, when you are with God, there's always a rainbow waiting.



### Help our hedgehogs – or lose them forever

The UK has lost half of its hedgehog population since the year 2000. The Christian conservation charity, A Rocha UK, is out to stop the decline. 'Project Hedgehog' is one result, a joint initiative between A Rocha UK and the Lea Brook Valley Project. 'Project Hedgehog' provides purpose-built, cat-proof hedgehog boxes for private gardens. There are also detailed information leaflets on how to make gardens hedgehog-friendly. 'We need to do this, for God, for nature and for people – and we need your help,' says Andy Atkins, CEO of A Rocha UK. If you could help hedgehogs, visit: <https://arocha.org.uk/>

**Caring for the Vicar – Canon David Winter** The Church of England is looking into ways of giving more support to vicars. You may think here's a nice life: house provided, regular salary, job security – and only one day's work a week! But from my own personal experience I can assure you it's not like that. In my working life I've had four jobs: teacher, then journalist, then BBC producer and finally vicar. The last was by some distance the most satisfying and rewarding, but also by far the most demanding. Your home is also the office seven days a week. It's true Sunday is the 'public' bit of your work, but while you may be free to pick up the kids from school forget about cosy evenings with the family. The bit of the vicar's work that is public is on Sundays, true. But the really defining part of the job is largely unseen and takes place all through the week. It was funny coming from an ordinary job to parish ministry. Previously, I had known what I was expected to do, the hours I was required to work and to whom I was answerable. Well vicars are technically 'self-employed', though they are licenced by the bishop and paid by the Church Commissioners. In practice, their work is determined by the local church – its needs, potential, aspirations. The churchwardens and the Parochial Church Council also help to shape the work-load. If all that sounds a bit confusing, yes, it is. Possibly the Church's current research may look into that. What won't change, I'm sure, is the priestly vocation. It is not a job, even if I've used the word, but a vocation – like nursing, teaching or care-work. It is always hopeless to treat a vocation as a job! Mind you, that is all the more reason for those who shape the work patterns of those 'called' with sensitivity and care. Clergy burn-out is not unknown, and nor is depression which stems from a feeling of failure. So, don't only just *pray* for the vicar - *show* him or her how much you value them and, where possible, share their burden. *Something for us to think about when a new Rector is appointed! [In February General Synod is going to debate a report on Care of the Clergy. The draft document sets out some ways of changing the culture of the Church to enable the care and well-being of its clergy to be more fully addressed]*

## The New Year 2019

2018 has slipped away  
And a New Year now comes into view,  
What will it hold, no-one yet knows  
What will it bring - good or bad news?

Whatever the way the wind will blow  
Our craft is safe in the Master's hand,  
Whether placid seas or sudden storms  
The wind and the waves are at His command

Our lives like a voyage keep journeying on  
With vistas new and vistas past,  
The Lord in His mercy holding us tight  
Steering us on to safe harbour at last.



*by Megan Carter*

## Sudoku

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## Word Search

I	A	H	S	G	I	M	M	E	A	I	G
M	S	C	R	T	O	E	Y	L	B	E	G
E	T	N	S	I	T	M	G	R	U	W	N
D	F	D	A	P	E	E	R	F	R	E	S
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*The Rev Paul Hardingham considers the Magi's search for the King.*

## **Wise Men Still Seek Him**

*'A cold coming we had of it. Just the worst time of the year. For a journey and such a long journey.'* ('Journey of the Magi', T.S. Eliot).

In this poem, T.S. Eliot imagines the journey of the Magi to worship Jesus, as told in Matthew 2. This story is at the heart of our celebration of Epiphany, as we remember the astrologers from the East following a star to find the baby: *'Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, 'Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw His star when it rose and have come to worship Him.'* (Matthew 2:1,2). The Magi provide a powerful picture of the journey we make in searching for God in our lives. Like them, it requires time and effort (they travelled for months) and will not always be easy! As they followed the star, so we are called to pursue God's light in our lives. What does this say to us at the beginning of a New Year? Are we ready to go deeper in our relationship with God? Are we looking for new ways to use our time, treasure and talents for Him? It is a great time to offer these things to Him, and like the Magi, commit ourselves to pursue them. His light, through prayer, worship and his Word, will be our guide on the way. T.S. Eliot used the imagined journey of the magi to reflect on his own spiritual journey. It reveals the pain and doubts he experienced on his long and troubled journey to find the light of Christ. He describes finding Christ as a *'hard and bitter agony for us, like Death, our death'*. Are we prepared to make this journey for ourselves?

## **'That They Be One' – a Week of Prayer for Christian Unity**

– Paul Hardingham

*'My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.'* (John 17:20,21).

The basis of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is Jesus' prayer for the unity of the Church. We need to pray for greater unity across the denominations, as this will help people to believe in Jesus for themselves. Paul reminds us that while we are *'one body and one Spirit'* (Eph 4:4), we have to strive for unity: *'Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.'* (Ephesians 4:3). What does this mean practically? *Love Christians across boundaries:* What opportunities do we have to build relationships with Christians in other churches, recognising all we share in our faith in Christ? As Paul says; *'Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.'* (Eph 4:2). *Serve Christian across boundaries:* How can we show love for other Christians or take opportunities to partner together? Despite the fundamental barriers that separate us, if we can demonstrate God's love together, those around see that we really are Christians. This brings glory to God! *'How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!.. there the Lord bestows his blessing'* (Ps 133:1,3). The picture of oil running down Aaron's beard is messy! Striving towards unity is worth the messiness, as it results in blessing. *'The Lord asks us for unity; our world, torn apart by all too many divisions that affect the most vulnerable, begs for unity'* (Pope Francis).

**The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity runs 18 – 26 January.**

## **Full extent of Church of England work to support local communities revealed**

More than 33,000 social action projects - from food banks to debt counselling - are run or supported by churches, according to figures setting out for the first time the full scale of the Church of England's service to communities. The findings - which amount to the largest survey to date of the extent of the Church of England's work with some of the most vulnerable in society - show that 80 per cent of congregations are involved in one or more forms of social action. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, says: "From food banks to debt counselling and lunch clubs to language classes, these figures spell out for the first time the sheer scale and range of our churches' commitment to their communities. "We are doing more to love and help people in need than at any time since 1945. "We don't just do this to be 'nice' but because our faith in Jesus Christ compels us to act." Data gathered from 13,000 churches shows that the biggest area of work is in food banks - with 60 per cent, or nearly 8,000 churches - involved in either running or supporting food banks through volunteers, donations and providing venues. Nearly a third, or 32 per cent, of Church of England churches run or support parent and toddler groups; just over a quarter, or 26 per cent, lunch clubs; and just over one in five, or 22 per cent, community cafes. Holiday clubs and breakfast clubs, often providing meals to children from low income families, are supported or run by nearly 17 per cent of churches. Other community action projects supported or run by the Church of England's churches involved a range of activities from bereavement support and community gardens to music events and English language tuition. The figures on the extent of social action by Church of England churches were collected as part of the annual Statistics for Mission 2017 survey. *One such project hosted by the Church of England is Micah Liverpool, the social justice charity based at Liverpool Cathedral. It runs a food bank which is one of the biggest food bank pantries in the North West. It also feeds more than 200 people on a regular basis.*

## **2020 Lambeth Conference**

The 2020 Lambeth Conference will be held in Canterbury from 23<sup>rd</sup> July to 2<sup>nd</sup> August. The theme is to be 'God's Church for God's world', and the aim is to help the Communion to 'look at something greater and bigger than ourselves, and not to quibble around the little things in the family'. It is certainly a big family: every 'active' bishop within the Anglican Communion's 40 Provinces will be invited, and with spouses coming, the total number of delegates will be more than 800.

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## **BBC to axe 'Something Understood'**

The Radio 4 programme *Something Understood* will not be made after April 2019, despite recent pledges from the BBC that it would protect its religious broadcasting.

No new series will be commissioned, but instead the programme's slot will be filled with repeats from the series. *Something Understood* explores spiritual and ethical topics through reflection, music and literature, and has been running since 1995.

The Bishop of Repton, the Rt Revd Jan McFarlane, who chairs Sandford St Martin Trust, said: 'The BBC has reneged on its professed commitment to religious and ethical broadcasting less than a year since the publication of its report.'

This year has also been designated by the BBC as the 'Year of Beliefs', in which specialist programming and documentaries about religion and faith were promised.

A BBC spokeswoman said that the BBC 'has to save £800 million by 2021, so ... has to make tough choices.'

**January Sales** *“It’s no good, it’s no good!” says the buyer – then goes off and boasts about the purchase. Gold there is, and rubies in abundance, but lips that speak knowledge are a rare jewel. (Proverbs 20:14-15)* People in Bible times loved to shop, just as we do today. People bought and sold and haggled for just about everything. They also boasted about getting good things for little money – just like we do today. If you are a shopping addict, the January sales will draw you like a magnet. Perhaps you will queue all night on the pavement, to get into the shops first. Perhaps you will push and shove a bit, to reach that coveted what-ever that is now a fraction of its normal price. Perhaps in the frenzy of bagging a bargain, you almost enjoy the challenge and crush of the January sales. So, what’s the legal angle on the sales? The first thing to note is that sales must be genuine. There are rules to prevent shops misleading customers. Pricing must be clear. They must not say a sale ends today if it does not. The saving must be clear. For example, a sign should not say ‘sale £15’ – it should say something like ‘was £50, sale price £15’. If it says, “half price” that must be true. You usually have the same rights to return faulty goods that are sold in a sale as ones that are not. It is different if the price label tells you there is a problem. Some shops allow you to return goods if you change your mind. Changing your mind is not the same as rejecting something that is faulty. The shop may impose a time limit for returns in a sale. You have similar rights for online sales. You can cancel most orders for goods bought online anytime from the moment you place your order up to 14 calendar days from the day you receive it. As always, this is a light-hearted introduction to a complicated subject and you always should take legal advice. But perhaps the best advice to consider when it comes to the January sales is: do you *really* need that?! [David Pickup]

## **Holding children back**

Children who spend more than two hours a day looking at a screen have problems: their memory is worse than average, their language skills are more limited, and their attention span is shorter. Such are the findings of a major study recently published by *The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health*. Overall cognition skills were found to be highest among the one in 20 children who still get nine to 11 hours sleep, less than two hours of recreational screen time, and at least an hour’s exercise daily.

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## **Can your family all eat the same meal? Probably not!**

A staggering three in four parents are having to cook multiple meals each evening because of their own/partner/children’s restricted diets.

This finding from a recent survey by Co-op follows the news that almost a third of us (30 percent) now have special dietary requirements or intolerances. According to the statistics, our diets are increasingly in flux, as dairy-, gluten- and meat-free diets become more popular.

When our households do manage to eat together, we say that dinner is our favourite meal, and that we value each other’s company and catching up on the day. On the other hand, the rise of food intolerances may also be what is leading almost one fifth of us to choose to eat alone.

## January – time for the gym

Up to a million of us will join a gym this month. Up to 800,000 of us will have given it up by February. But before you return to the couch, why not consider the following: *Only do exercises that you enjoy.* Have fun, and nothing else! Don't torture yourself on the cross trainers if you prefer salsa dancing. Your endorphins will still be released, leaving you stimulated, inspired and generally better. *Start small.* Okay, you like swimming, but why aim for 20 lengths your first time in the pool? You will never go back. Start instead with just two lengths, and then reward yourself with a coffee. Next time do three, and so on. Always end with a reward. *Go at the same time, on the same days.* Make it a part of your week. You will meet the same people, and it will begin to feel natural. *Make it a habit.* *Be friendly.* A lot of people are intimidated when they first go to a gym. So, the first week, smile at people, the second week try saying hello, and gradually you will get on friendly terms with enough of them so that you feel comfortable. *Don't forget the spiritual.* Away from the gym, give yourself time for your inner, spiritual well-being as well – on a daily basis. *Keep your mind active.* Read books or join an evening class. Do puzzles. Mental fitness is just as important as physical fitness. *Be creative.* Make the space around you more beautiful in some way – decorate, paint, sew, knit, or even just add a vase of flowers. *Give some things up.* As well as putting good things into your life, take some less-good things OUT of your life. What in your life is draining your time and energy, and giving little in return? Get rid of it!

## His grace really is sufficient [Tony Horfall]

*'To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."' 2 Corinthians 12:7-9.* We cannot identify for certain the nature of Paul's 'thorn in the flesh'. It may have been a physical illness like malaria or problems with his eyesight. It could refer to the constant opposition to his ministry from those Jews who hated what he was doing. What we do know is that whilst Satan used it to give Paul a rough time, God used it to keep him humble in the midst of the wonderful revelations that had been granted to him. Paul's instinctive response to the thorn is to ask God that it be removed. He persisted in prayer too, showing that he really expected God to deliver him. Prayer should also be our first response to crisis. Our belief is that God is able and willing to rescue us from any attack of the devil. However, in this case God in His wisdom chose not to deliver Paul from the thorn, but instead to pour His grace into his life in such a way that he could cope with the situation and continue to minister effectively. Grace has been defined as 'God's strength in our weakness.' Whether or not God chooses to answer our prayers for healing or deliverance, we can always count on the daily supply of His empowering and enabling grace. There is no situation outside of His protective care, no need too big for His resources to match. Let your weakness be the opportunity for God's all-sufficient grace to sustain you. His power is waiting to strengthen you.

A Prayer – Lord, today I choose to lean on you, and to receive again your grace into my life.

## **Ten things God won't ask you when you die**

God won't ask what kind of car you drove;  
He'll ask how many people you drove who didn't have transportation.

God won't ask the square footage of your house,  
He'll ask how many people you welcomed into your home.

God won't ask about the clothes you had in your closet,  
He'll ask how many people you helped to clothe.

God won't ask which diet you were on;  
He'll ask how many hungry people you helped to feed.

God won't ask what your highest salary was;  
He'll ask if you compromised your character to obtain it.

God won't ask what your job title was;  
He'll ask if you performed your job to the best of your ability.

God won't ask how many friends you had on Facebook;  
He'll ask how many people to whom you were a friend.

God won't ask in what neighbourhood you lived;  
He'll ask how you treated your neighbours.

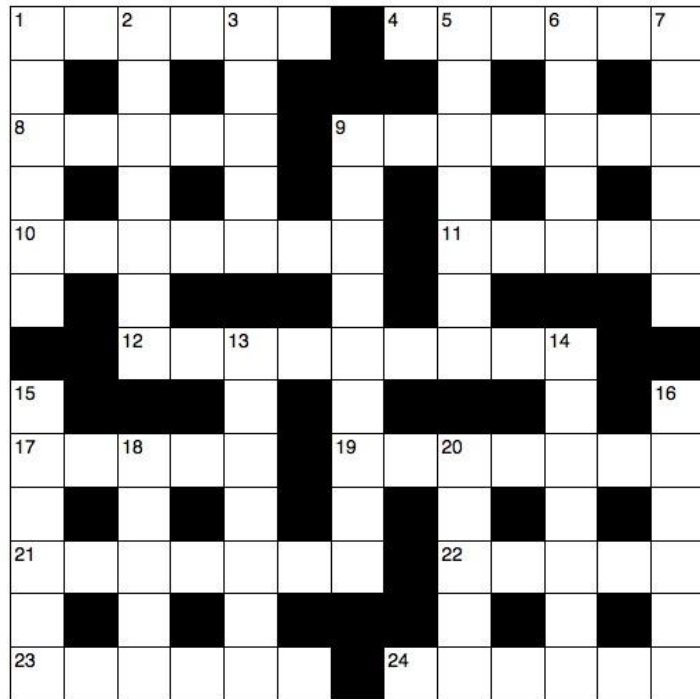
God won't ask about the colour of your skin;  
He'll ask about the content of your character.

God won't ask why it took you so long to seek Him;  
He'll lovingly take you into his Kingdom, not leave you at the gates of Hell.

**What a legacy!** *The Rev Tony Horsfall considers the extraordinary story of Richard Cousins' Will.*

The charity Oxfam recently received a legacy of £41 million following the death of business man Richard Cousins. Richard was killed in a plane crash in Sydney Harbour on New Year's Eve 2017, and he died alongside his two sons, his fiancée and her daughter, and the pilot. A year before the tragic accident Richard, the CEO of catering firm Compass Group, had inserted into his will a 'common tragedy clause', stating that in the unlikely event of him and his immediate family members all dying at the same time, the majority of his fortune should be given to Oxfam. Little did he realise that such an obscure clause would actually be triggered, and that so soon. A will comes into effect only on the death of the person who makes the will. The Bible speaks in the book of Hebrews about the death of Jesus in these terms: 'In the care of a will, it is necessary to prove the death of the one who made it, because a will is in force only when somebody has died; it never takes effect while the one who made it is living (9:16-17).' Just as Oxfam were the undeserving beneficiaries of such a wonderful legacy, so we too are the undeserving beneficiaries of the amazing benefits of what Christ has done on the cross. We receive an inheritance beyond our wildest dreams, which we could never have expected. His death triggered the clause whereby we could benefit from His suffering. And what is that inheritance? It is the knowledge that our sins can be forgiven, that we can enter in to a living relationship with God, that our eternal future is secure. This is a legacy far more valuable than any amount of money. Don't miss out on your amazing inheritance. Christ died for us all, and YOU are included in His will. The benefits of His death at Calvary are there for you to receive freely, and without condition. You too can be very rich!

## Crossword



### Across

- 1 Protective covering recommended to the Ephesians (Ephesians 6:11) (6)  
 4 The number of apostles (Matthew 10:2) (6)  
 8 Tenth-century Bishop of Augsburg for 48 years, who became the first saint to be canonized by a pope (5)  
 9 'Do not — what is evil but what is good' (3 John 11) (7)  
 10 Reading desk in a church (7)  
 11 'He looked up and said, "I see people; they look like — walking around"' (Mark 8:24) (5)  
 12 One of the qualities that Paul exhorted Timothy to pursue (1 Timothy 6:11) (9)

17 One of the meaningless pleasures acquired by the Teacher (Ecclesiastes 2:8) (5)

19 'Like — babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation' (1 Peter 2:2) (7)

21 Jesus said that Moses allowed this only because men's hearts were hard (Matthew 19:8) (7)

22 Girl's name (5)

23 Most sagacious (Judges 5:29) (6)

24 How Stephen, the first Christian martyr, died: after being — (Acts 7:59) (6)

### Down

1 A Jew whom Paul met in Corinth, whose wife was Priscilla (Acts 18:2) (6)

2 For example, turning water into wine, feeding the five thousand, walking on water (John 7:21) (7)

3 Abram's relationship to Lot (Genesis 14:12) (5)

5 'Jesus answered, "It is —: 'Man does not live by bread alone.'" (Matthew 4:4) (7)

6 'Peace I — with you; my peace I give you' (John 14:27) (5)

7 'May the Lord deal with me, be it — — severely, if anything but death separates you and me' (Ruth 1:17) (4,2)

9 Lack of knowledge (Acts 17:30) (9)

13 This woman 'followed Paul and believed' after his words to the Areopagus in Athens (Acts 17:34) (7)

14 Or noise (anag.) (7)

15 'Even though I walk through the valley of the — of death, I will fear no evil' (Psalm 23:4) (6)

16 ' — Christian soldiers, marching as to war' (6)

18 Saver (anag.) (5)

20 'Unless a grain of — falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed' (John 12:24) (5)