

St Helen's Church Magazine

March 2024



Mothing Sunday - March 10th

We would love to see you at our special All-Age Community

Service 11.00am starting with a cup of tea or coffee at 10.40am

Palm Sunday – 24th March

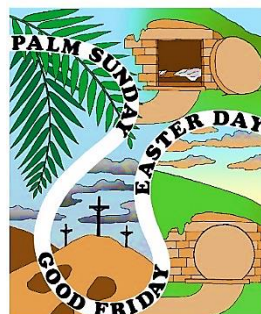
Maundy Thursday – 28th March

Good Friday – 29th March

Holy Saturday – 30th March

Easter Sunday – 31st March

Service details on Pages 6 and 27



£We do not charge for our magazine but a regular donation would be appreciated£

Rev. Stephen Monk - Rector of St. Helen's



10 Normanhurst Park, Darley Dale, Matlock DE4 3BQ Tel. 734257
Email: rev.stephenmonk@btinternet.com

Churchwardens

Steve Walker



01629 55863

Chris Long



01629 735778

Joint Parochial Church Committee Members for St Helen's

Penny Dakin (Secretary)	
David Wills (Treasurer)	davidr.wills@icloud.com
Freda Brill (Safeguarding)	733360
Chris Townsend	56622
Ann Bradley (Verger)	735776
Roger Young (Deanery Synod)	<u>mrrby54@gmail.com</u>
Susan Young (Deanery Synod)	

Church Social Committee

Roz Woodley	733033	Penny Dakin	
Sandra Brown		Janet Rickinson	
Stephen Monk	734257	Chris Townsend	56622

Please feel free to contact any member of the PCC or Social Committee if you have a question or suggestion.

All enquiries and more information on all services and events:

www.sthelensdarleydale.org.uk

A Thought

In February and March, we move through the desert of Lent. But this is a season of new opportunities and new life, not simply a time to confess our sins and see these as days of giving things up. These sacred days give us space and solitude (if we so wish) to reconnect with God and with each other; and also, with ourselves.

All this is to prepare once more to celebrate the Easter Mysteries. God in Jesus loved us all so much that he freely and with great love suffered and died for us all. But I truly believe that to engage with this love of God we need firstly to love ourselves, and value ourselves. Following on from this first action we need to love each other. This solitude and silence doesn't belong to one churchmanship or another. It belongs to our humanity and to be truly human we have to be open to our spiritual side. I know myself that to ignore the need for silence and solitude gives me a sense of being disquieted or uneasy.

To move forward with outreach and real loving service to our 5 parishes, we first need to make time to be still and pray. If we don't then there's a danger of being reactionary and superficial, not God centred. However, don't be too hard on yourself. We are all a work in progress. When we mess things up, we simply stand up and brush ourselves off and try once more.

"To live a spiritual life, we must first find the courage to enter into the desert of our loneliness and to change it by gentle and persistent efforts into a garden of solitude." When I went to theological college it was for 8 years. Within the education there was also a lot of space for formation. Formation calls us to have the courage of emptying ourselves. This is a way of growing closer to the 'real' me and by doing that growing closer to the 'real' God.

I hope this makes sense: if I don't turn away from ego, sin, self-obsession etc. there's a real temptation to make or recreate God in my own Image and likeness. In the history of most religion this is when things start to go wrong. To let things go from my history and to find solitude, the

image of the desert is life giving. This isn't easy. It's hard to let go of the image of 'me'. This requires not only courage but also a strong faith.



As hard as it is to believe that the dry desolate desert can yield endless varieties of flowers, it is equally hard to imagine that our loneliness is hiding unknown beauty. "The movement from loneliness to solitude, however, is the beginning of any spiritual life because it is a movement from the restless senses to the restful spirit, from the outward-reaching cravings to the inward-reaching search, from the fearful clinging to the fearless play."

In the shadow of Easter, we know how much God loves us. Post-Easter God once more offers us His hand and His love and forgiveness. God's love and God's grace and forgiveness is offered to all people. God sees our potential; God sees the real me' and 'you' if only we have courage to stop and seek times of silence and rest.

This is a real challenge today but the truth is, "the busier we are then the more silence and space we need." there's no accident that today there are more people suffering from mental health issues than ever before. This month, this year - we have an opportunity. Let the real 'you' shine forth. And be open to the truth that you are truly a beautiful child of God. For people who like the media of Music to help them reflect please look up the two songs from Shinedown: 'Unity' and 'Get Up'

This month please know you are precious and you are daily in my prayers and thoughts.

Yours.

Revd. Stephen Monk



St Helen's Finances



January is a busy time for church treasurers: collecting together all the statements, receipts, invoices necessary for a complete set of accounts. The picture for 2023 at St Helen's is sobering. We ran at a loss for the year of £5,763. In order to remain solvent, we cashed £10,000 of investment units.

Our contribution to Common Fund of £19,800 was down by 25% on '22 and represented 54% of the diocesan assessment. As predicted a year ago, our energy bills increased from £3,875 to £10,045.

Our committed giving (PGS, standing orders and other planned giving) was down by 9%, and our loose plate collections were down by 23%. We now have below 30 regular givers: 2 died in 2023.

The 4 weddings and 26 funerals we conducted through the year generated ~ £650 p month after paying the diocese, compared with £280 p month in '22.

For 2024, we will balance income and expenditure by reducing our Common Fund from £1,400 p month to £800, which represents 29% of the diocesan assessment. We make the final payment on our printer lease in October: future arrangements for printing have yet to be agreed. The current EDF energy contract expires in January '25: I expect our total energy expenditure to increase further this year: January's gas bill was £2,958. The church roof and the hall boiler are 'known unknown' factors.

The accounts are now being inspected, are due to be authorised by the PCC on 12th March, and will be presented to the APCM on 14th April.

If you have any questions about our finances, please do not hesitate to speak to me in church or drop me an email.

David Wills
19th February 2024



St Helen's March Diary

Special services



From Churches together in Matlock and Darley Dale: The **World Day of Prayer service for 2024**, prepared by an ecumenical group of Christian

women from Palestine, will be held at: **2.00pm on Friday 1st March at Matlock Methodist and UR Church, Bank Road**, with most of the Matlock churches represented and taking a part. As we participate in this service, we will be part of a great wave of prayer in native languages encircling the globe. We will be joining with people in over 146 countries and islands around the world to pray with and for the people of Palestine.

All are welcome. Please join us.

8th March 11.00am Friday Ecumenical Holy Communion

We are joined by our Methodist brothers and sisters so do come if you can. There will be tea and coffee afterwards in the hall.

**10th March 11.00am Mothering Sunday
All-Age Community Service**

There will be prayers and poems from Churchtown School pupils
We will be making a final collection for the Baby Basics Charity.

**24th March 10.00am Palm Sunday Service
at St Mary's**



24th March 11.00m New Beginnings
(Café in church hall from 10.30am)

This year New Beginnings is happening on Palm Sunday for those who would prefer an alternative style of worship.



28th March

7.00pm Maundy Thursday Service

**29th March 10.00am Good Friday Family Service
at St Mary's**

3.00pm Good Friday Meditation

7.00 p.m. Night Prayer at St. John's.



30th March 10.00am Tenebrae Service

**31st March 11.00am United Benefice
Easter Sunday
Holy Communion**



**We would like to serve cake with our refreshments
after the service – Easter themed if possible.
Please let Roz know if you can bake or buy
something.**

Easter Lilies

This year we will once again be decorating the altar and chancel with lilies bought in remembrance of loved one. Roz is once again organising this.



The price per lily has increased to £4.50. Please put the amount into an envelope with the name it is in memory of printed on the front of the envelope. There will be envelopes in church if you haven't got one.

Please give the envelope to Roz or Ann, if Roz is not there.

The last day for giving the money to Roz is **Mothering Sunday, 10th March)**


Regular Events and Services

Open Door Sunday 3rd March 2.00 – 3.00pm



Chill and Chat with Coffee Toddler Group in St Helen's Church Hall

Thursdays 8.45 to 11am term time only



Coffee bar open for tea, coffee, toast and biscuits throughout the morning. Children's snack followed by singing and story time at 10.15. No charge but donations to cover the costs welcome if you are able.

The church is also open for quiet reflection and prayer

Thursday Coffee Social – every Thursday 12noon to 2.00pm



a space and time to relax and enjoy good company.

Everyone is welcome

As well as light refreshments there is soup with bread.

Prayer Meeting 9th March - 9.30 – 10.00am in church

You can pray as you feel led or prepare something in advance. You don't need to pray aloud at all, other than an Amen at the end of a prayer. Don't forget there's coffee/tea and cake in the hall afterwards! See below.....

Coffee Morning – 10th March in the Church Hall



Home-made scones and cakes and a time to relax with friends. Take time out from Saturday chores and come and join us! Bring a friend or neighbour!

If you are a baker, a cake contribution would be great!

N.B. Help appreciated - Roz Woodley will be preparing the flowers to give away on Mothering Sunday. Do lend a hand if you can.

Monday Lunchers

Salt 11th March and Pepper 18th March

11.45 am for 12noon at the Whitworth Terrace Café

For more information contact Kath on 01629 732805



Ecumenical Holy Communion Friday 8th March

11.00am

Come if you can for a time of worship and fellowship with our Methodist brothers and sisters.

Home Groups and Worship Group



Thursday Ecumenical Home Group

For more details contact Margaret on 735778. New people welcome.

Thursday Group led by Diana Wills

In winter we meet on Zoom (2x40minute sessions), term time only.

We are studying Ephesians using Tom Wright's study guide.

For details and a Zoom access link, contact Diana on

dwills@doctors.org.uk

The Worship Group meets most Wednesdays 6.00pm in church, as arranged. Contact Dea Ayling or Stephen and Jayne Walker for more information and if you are interested in joining.



BUNNY HUNT

around Whitworth Park

Saturday March 23rd

11am-1.00pm

£5 each



Includes a Carriage Ride

& Raffle Prize

(weather Permitting)

All Proceeds to

Darley Dale-in-Bloom

Courtesy of Red House Stables, Darley Dale

Tel: 01629 733 583 / 07717 334 359

whilst all due care is taken, carriage rides are
at your own risk

Growing your faith

Editor: Langham Partnership (UK and Ireland) has a '9-a-day' initiative to encourage Christians to grow their faith. More info at:

www.9aday.org.uk/ Langham Partnership The following article is adapted from their blog,

Inability does not equal inactivity

It is perhaps a well-polished truth, but one well worth remembering again: when it comes to salvation, "We were justified by faith alone, through grace alone, *but we are not sanctified by faith alone*".

In other words, we are made acceptable to God only through the death and resurrection of Jesus, who dealt with our sin. But then the Bible calls on Christians to take their transformation into Christlikeness very seriously. Repentance and conversion and receiving the Holy Spirit into our lives is just the beginning. Now we need to do all we can to allow the fruit of the Spirit to grow in our lives.

From now on, our daily walk is never alone: we are to keep in step with His Spirit, and to 'work out' our salvation in our daily lives. In other words, *obedience* to God is fundamental in our Christian pilgrimage.

St Paul stressed this again and again. In Romans 12 he set forth 23 directives to clarify what we must do as we cooperate with the Spirit in our transformation. St Peter adds (2 Peter 1:10,11) "...make every effort to confirm your calling and election. For if you do these things, you will never stumble, and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ".

When we truly want to "know Christ and the power of his resurrection", we will see the Holy Spirit beginning to transform us. As Augustine wisely noted about the walk into a sanctified Christlike life: "**Without us, God will not; but without Him, we cannot**".



Editor: Paul Hardingham considers that first Easter morning...

Looking for the Resurrection

An old couple are driving down the motorway when the wife gets a call from their daughter. *'Mum, there's a car driving the wrong way down the motorway!'* The wife warns her husband that there is a lunatic on the motorway. Her husband, clutching the wheel in terror, replies: *'One lunatic? There are dozens of them, all headed straight for us!'* What we see is determined by our perspective on life.

In the Nicene Creed we say: *'We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.'* In the gospel accounts of the Resurrection, there is a lot of looking and seeing. Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Salome went early to the tomb. They saw the stone rolled aside and inside the tomb a young man dressed in white said to them: *'Don't be alarmed. You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid Him...He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see Him'* (Mark 16: 6,7).



Like the women we would probably have been left *'trembling and bewildered'* by what we saw that morning. Had the body been taken? Was the young man an angel or deceiver? Was Jesus raised to life again, or was this an elaborate hoax?

Easter gives us a choice. We can approach life looking for disappointment, fear and despair. Or we can look for resurrection and find not just an empty tomb, but encounter the living Christ. He continues to meet us in our daily lives bringing new hope, forgiveness of sin, healing and wholeness and the assurance of His presence through the darkest of times. God invites us to see our lives differently and look for Christ's resurrection life at work in our lives and the people around us.



Editor: Canon Paul Hardingham continues a new series which will run for the next two years.

What's the Big Idea? –

An Introduction to the Books of the Old Testament: Leviticus & Numbers

These books are concerned with Israel's wandering in the desert, on their journey from slavery in Egypt to the promised land of Canaan.

Leviticus focuses on the regulations about worship, ceremonial cleanness, moral laws and holy days. The key theme is that of *holiness*, as every detail of our lives is affected by the presence of a holy God. The aim of the sacrifices, feast and Sabbaths was to enable the people to enter God's presence. We should see the instructions and practices in Leviticus as pointing to Jesus. He totally fulfilled the law through the sacrifice of His life, as Easter reminds us. He demonstrated the love and holiness of God, so that we can share His life: *'Be holy, because I am holy'* (1 Peter 1:16, cf Lev 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:7).

The book of Numbers tells the story of Israel's journey through the wilderness. The people were coming to terms with their *identity* as God's people and the *call* to serve Him. They didn't always respond with faith, gratitude and obedience, but with unbelief, ingratitude and rebellion. As a result of their refusal to enter Canaan (ch 14), they were condemned to spend the rest of their lives in the desert. However, God in His grace allowed their children to enter the Promised Land. The book reminds us that the Church is called to be a community that honours God, learns how to deal with sin in ourselves and others, and lives out love and justice in daily life.

'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.' (Numbers 6:24-26).

As someone once put it: “Each morning we must raise the sails of our boat and go where the Spirit leads. He brings the wind and He governs the speed and direction, but we must cooperate by ensuring that we join Him on the journey.”

Thanking two kinds of Mother on 10th March

Mothering Sunday, the fourth Sunday in Lent, is the day for honouring our Mother Church, and has been celebrated since the Middle Ages.



Mother's Day is an annual day to honour our mothers, and it began in America in May 1907.

In the US, Canada, Australia and Mexico, Mother's Day is still held in May. In Britain, Mothers' Day is held on Mothering Sunday, so the two days are often merged in people's minds.

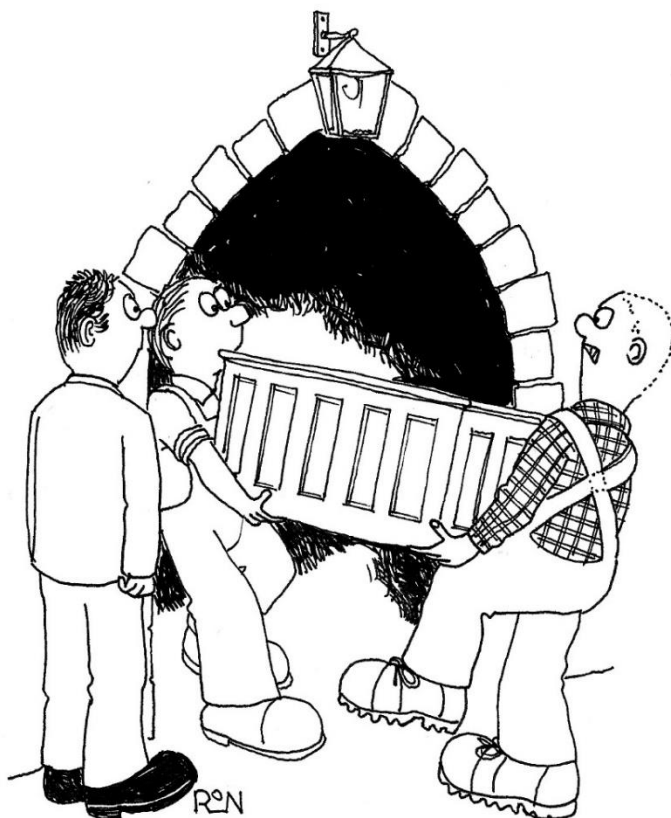
If you ask Google for ideas of how to be nice to your church on that day, you won't find much. But if you want to be kind to your mother that day, you will be spoilt for choice. High on all the lists are suggestions for taking her to lunch, giving flowers, a card, or paying for her to have a day doing something she loves.



Whatever you choose to do, probably the best thing to give your mother must surely be yourself: some time and some love. Remind her of the funny and touching stories of your childhood and thank her for all the things that she did for you. Give her some good company and show her some gratitude. Let her know that you love her and appreciate her.

Remember that the Commandment 'Honour thy father and mother' was the first commandment that came with a promise of blessing on you, if you obey.

The funny side of church life!



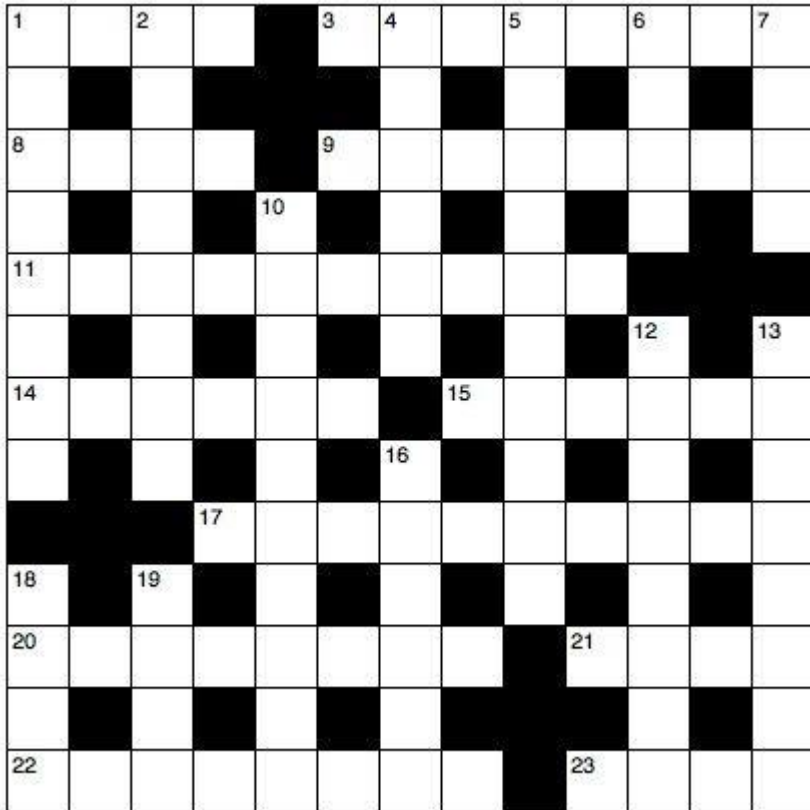
It was Lent, so they took it back

Smile Lines

Violets?

When my husband was six years old, he thought the creed included the line: "He suffered under a bunch of violets." It took him years before he realised that he should have been saying: "under Pontius Pilate."

Crossword for Easter 2024



Across

- 1 Made from the fruit of the vine, symbol of the blood of Christ (4)
- 3 'You are to set an ambush behind the city. Don't go very far from it. All of you be on — — ' (Joshua 8:4) (3,5)
- 8 Seep (4)
- 9 Celebrated by Jesus on the night of his betrayal (Luke 22:15) (8)
- 11 One of the supposed sites of Christ's burial place in Jerusalem (6,4)
- 14 'A city on a hill — be hidden' (Matthew 5:14) (6)
- 15 He inherited Elijah's mantle (2 Kings 2:12–13) (6)

- 17 Where Jesus prayed 'Not as I will, but as you will' (Matthew 26:36, 39) (10)
- 20 'Only in his home town and in his — — is a prophet without honour' (Matthew 13:57) (3,5)
- 21 Sail (anag.) (4) 22 How Jesus was punished before his crucifixion (Matthew 27:26) (8)
- 23 Eye sore (4)

Down

- 1 Can't grow (anag.) (5,3)
- 2 A servant girl to Peter, 'You also were with that — , Jesus' (Mark 14:67) (8)
- 4 Well-being (Proverbs 3:8) (6)
- 5 Pentecostal denomination, — of God (10)
- 6 One of the 'obvious' acts of the sinful nature (Galatians 5:19, 21) (4)
- 7 'I preached that they should repent and — to God' (Acts 26:20) (4)
- 10 ' — — , the world will not see me any more, but you will see me' (John 14:19) (6,4)
- 12 He betrayed Jesus: Judas — (Luke 6:16) (8)
- 13 Jesus to Peter: ' — — of my sheep' (John 21:16) (4,4)
- 16 The centurion said, 'Surely this man was — — of God' (Mark 15:39) (3,3)
- 18 Baked bread (Mark 8:14) (4)
- 19 'Blessing and honour, glory and power, be — Him' (Handel's Messiah) (4)

Answers on Page 25

All the armies that ever marched, and all the navies that ever were built, and all the parliaments that ever sat, and all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of mankind on this earth as powerfully as has that one solitary life. - *James Francis*

More Smile Lines...

Palm Sunday visit

It was Palm Sunday, but because of a sore throat, five-year-old Bobby was kept home from church with his grannie. When the family returned home, they were carrying several palm fronds and Bobby asked them what they were for. "People held them over Jesus' head as He walked by," his father explained.

Bobby was aghast. "I don't believe it! The one Sunday I don't go, and He shows up!"

Noah had problems, too

When Noah sailed the waters blue,
he had his troubles same as you.
For 40 days he drove the Ark
before he found a place to park.

St Patrick's Day

"I married an Irishman on St Patrick's Day."

"Oh, really?"

"No, O'Reilly!"

Helping

If it's true that we are here to help others, what are the others doing here?

Expensive boat

A vicar was planning an Easter pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and was aghast when he found it would cost him £50 an hour to rent a boat on the Sea of Galilee. He protested to the travel agent that the cost was ridiculous. "That might be true," replied the travel agent, "but you have to take into account that the Sea of Galilee is water on which our Lord himself walked."

"Well, at £50 an hour for a boat, I am not surprised!"

In the News – for your awareness and prayers

Support for Russian priest who prays for peace



Thousands of Russian Orthodox Christians have been urging Patriarch Kirill of Moscow to reinstate a very popular priest in the capital, the Revd Alexei Uminsky, who has refused to recite an official prayer for Russia's victory over

Ukraine.

An open letter, which attracted more than 11,000 signatures, including the heads of local charities, says:

“The decree banning this priest from serving will deprive thousands of people of spiritual support – a great tragedy for many believers, for children's hospice patients, for hundreds of prisoners and thousands of homeless people.”

Uminsky had repeatedly warned that he could not endorse the invasion of Ukraine.

Now Russia's online news agency, Gazeta.ru, says that Fr Uminsky was banned from ministering under a decree issued by the Moscow Patriarchate, for suggesting in a YouTube interview that Christians should “pray for peace, rather than victory”.

The Russian news agency went on to say that Uminsky has long been seen as “a thorn in the Kremlin's side” for his anti-militarism. He was branded a ‘criminal in a cassock’ by the Russian Orthodox Church's own TV channel Spas, after calling for mercy for the opposition leader Alexei Navalny, during his prison hunger strike.

For the moment, Uminsky remains banned, and may face defrocking as a priest. More than 300 Russian Orthodox priests, who signed an appeal against the Ukraine invasion of 2022, have since been silenced, or forced to emigrate.

Editor: This is adapted from an article by Jules Gadsby, Church Engagement Specialist at London Institute for Contemporary Christianity (LICC).

Worldwide persecution of Christians on the increase

More than 365 million Christians worldwide now face persecution and discrimination for their faith.

Entire Christian communities face extinction in some parts of the world. Those in sub-Saharan Africa are especially at risk, because of increasingly authoritarian regimes and violence.

So warns the latest global study of persecution.

The World Watch List 2024 is compiled by the charity Open Doors. It rates the top 50 countries where it is most dangerous to be a Christian. This year, something new has emerged: the countries listed have not changed since 2023, and there are no new countries to the list, but the level of violence experienced by Christians globally has grown exponentially in just this past year.

Open Doors reports a *sevenfold* increase in reported attacks on churches, Christian schools, and Christian hospitals. In 2022 there were 2,110 such attacks. In 2023 it was 14,766.



Attacks on the homes of Christian have also soared – by 371 per cent.

A staggering *one in seven* Christians worldwide now faces a high level of persecution and discrimination.

This is the 30th year that the World Watch List has been compiled and published. The countries are scored by various factors: pressure levels in private life, family life, community life, and national life, and on

church communities, as well as violence levels. This year's list covers the period between 1st October 2022 to 30th September 2023. The chief executive of Open Doors UK, Henrietta Blyth, says that Christian minorities in East and West Africa face an existential threat from jihadists and autocratic regimes. Jihadists are viciously attacking Christians across sub-Saharan Africa: Somalia, Nigeria, Burkina Faso and Mali, to name just some countries.

In Nigeria, things have got particularly bad, where Islamist extremism is threatening many Christian communities. In fact, the murder of Christians in Nigeria accounts for a staggering *82 per cent of ALL Christians killed for their faith worldwide*. Last year 4118 such murders were recorded, though many more were never even reported.

Open Doors has praised UK government efforts to become a global leader in standing up for the freedom of religion and belief, but it urges that the position of the Prime Minister's special envoy, currently held by Fiona Bruce MP, should be turned into a permanent, statutory post.

Mr Bates vs The Post Office: not the only one



“We’re here because the Post Office told every single one of us sat here today, told us over and over, ‘You’re the only one.’ And that was wrong. That was a lie, actually. Because... well, look at us. Here we all are. And from this moment forwards, none of us will be the only one ever again.”

By now, most of us know what the Post Office did all those years ago. It's hard to believe that hundreds of innocent sub-postmasters were repeatedly lied to and prosecuted in what has been called ‘the biggest miscarriage of justice in British legal history’.

Yet when Horizon, the computer system rolled out to each post office, incorrectly showed huge account shortfalls, these were blamed on sub-

postmasters. They were told that nobody else had any issues, that they were the only one.

Except that they weren't – *and the Post Office knew this.*

But still the Post Office went ahead and prosecuted these sub-postmasters. Some went bankrupt, some went to prison, some committed suicide.

The anger and outcry against the Post Office is welcome. The cry for justice is right. We all want to live in a society where justice is done.

As Jules Gadsby of the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity says: "As Christians, this should be close to our hearts. The Lord is a God of justice. Righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne (Psalm 89:14).

"And Christ stands by those who suffer. He doesn't look on from a distance, but as one who, at the cross, has experienced it Himself.

"It's through His people, reflecting His character and His priorities, that He reveals this.

"We may never have to battle like Alan Bates and the sub-postmasters. But each of us will, in some way, be called to be a mouthpiece for truth and justice in our workplaces, homes, or community.

"In doing so, we show what God is like. And we show those facing unfairness and injustice that they're not alone. We are there with them. God is there with them."

Ripple Effect reaches more than a million people

Ripple Effect, the humanitarian Christian agency working in Africa (formerly Send a Cow), has reported a bumper year of ministry for 2023.

"Last year we reached more people than ever before – 1.38 million **people** in rural Africa."

The people have taken part in projects that help them adapt to the climate crisis, regenerate tired land, boost food security and give them the tools to transform their own lives for the better.

Ripple Effect tells its supporters: “Because of your generosity, **hundreds of thousands of women** have gone through gender training with their families, helping to share workloads and reduce intimate partner violence.



“Those same women have been supported to start small agribusinesses, which provide essential products and services to their communities, whilst also giving them vital financial independence, and the ability to pay for medical care and their children’s schooling.”

172,500 young people have been supported to access jobs, and many have been linked with artisans so they can learn the skills to create their own businesses.

19,175 refugees in Uganda have taken part in Ripple Effect projects, helping them to connect with their host communities and build a reliable income through farming the land they have.

More at: <https://rippleeffect.org/blog/our-biggest-year-yet>

World Water Day, 22nd March

World Water Day became a UN observance day in 1993.

It wants to focus attention on the global water crisis, and raise awareness of the 2.2 billion people still living without access to safe water. It hopes to inspire action to tackle the water and sanitation crisis. This year, World Water Day 2024 will focus on the theme, ‘Leveraging Water for Peace’.

Looking at you

Update from which? on Scams

This month, we mark significant progress by our long-term campaigning work on scams. Not only will banks be required to reimburse victims of bank transfer scams from later this year, but online platforms are also now legally responsible for hosting scam ads on their sites.

As Ofcom, the regulator, figures out how to enforce the law in practice, we've found plenty of new examples of fraudulent ads, suggesting nothing has changed since the law was passed late last year. When we point out scam ads, platforms are quick to take them down. But if we can find them, why can't they? As *our cover* says: no more excuses.

Rules of living well after 60

The King is 75. Last year he did 516 engagements, and before his recent diagnosis for cancer, he had no intention of slowing down. Instead, he was keen to be 'back up and running' as soon as possible after his prostate operation. Was he right?

"Absolutely he was – you shouldn't slow down," says Sir Muir Gray, 80, former chief knowledge officer for the NHS. "Ageing exists as a normal biological process but until the age of 90, it has little effect on your ability to look after yourself, engage with others or get about independently. In fact, paradoxically, as we get older, we need to become more active – physically and mentally. Ageing doesn't make you feel old – disease and loss of fitness will."

A study from the Yale School of Public Health found that people who had positive ideas about their own ageing ("I have as much pep as last year") lived for an average of 22.6 years after they first participated in

the study, while the people who felt less positively about ageing, lived for just 15 years more on average.

Of course, getting older does involve some loss of energy. But slowing down a bit is never something to be ashamed of, and getting enough rest is the very cornerstone of leading a good life.



Exercise is also crucial as we get older. Focus on the four Ss: stamina, strength, skill (balance) and suppleness. Maintain your stamina by brisk walking every day for 30 minutes.

When you are ill, get up again as soon as you reasonably can. Otherwise, you are at risk of ‘deconditioning syndrome’, a physiological decline where muscle strength can decrease dramatically if you are over 70.

Thoughtfully review of your personal life-balance. Try to find the ‘sweet spot’ between activity and rest. Gray advises: “If you’re only doing activities, you are inevitably going to burn out. But if you only rest, you will become sedentary and you’re more likely to fall ill, feel disconnected and lonely.”

Finally, don’t run on a hamster wheel of someone else’s making. This Lent, before God, rethink your real purpose and calling in life. And live it!

Crossword Answers

ACROSS: 1, Wine. 3, The alert. 8, Ooze. 9, Passover. 11, Garden Tomb. 14, Cannot. 15, Elisha. 17, Gethsemane. 20, Own house. 21, Lisa. 22, Flogging. 23, Stye.

DOWN: 1, Wrong act. 2, Nazarene. 4, Health. 5, Assemblies. 6, Envy. 7, Turn. 10, Before long. 12, Iscariot. 13, Take care. 16, The Son. 18, Loaf. 19, Unto.

Ed's Endings

I once jokingly said I was giving up giving up things for Lent. Alas, it has turned out to be true this year.

While there are several things I could have and probably should have given up for my soul and body's sake, I am working on things I can add on – or spend more time on.

These include prayer, reading the bible and as Stephen writes in his Thought, reconnecting with God. The journey through Lent is the way to do this.

I hope Easter is this for you too – and includes Hot Cross buns and



Easter Eggs, of course and a great time with family and friends.

I found this Easter Prayer online and hope it speaks to you as it did to me.

Blessings all

Chris

An Easter Prayer

Loving Lord, today we remember the veil of darkness transforming to the brightest light. The most dreadful end becoming the most beautiful beginning. We remember with trembling hearts the depths of despair fading to reveal hope everlasting. The curse of death defeated by eternal life. Today we remember with thankfulness your willingness to be pierced for our sins. We sing with abounding joy of your miraculous rise, from death's tomb to resplendent life. Thank you for the promise of heaven and your generous invitation of eternal life for all. Amen.

Prayer by Julie Palmer

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All items for the April Magazine to be with me by 16th March.

christownsend2@skycom

Thank you.

United Benefice Services in March

St Helen's:

- 3rd March** 11.00am Holy Communion
2.00pm Open Door
- 8th March** **11.00am Friday Ecumenical Holy Communion**
- 10th March** 8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)
11.00am **Mothering Sunday** All-Age Community Service
- 17th March** 11.00am Holy Communion
- 22nd March** 11.00am **Friday** Holy Communion
- 24th March** **10.00am Palm Sunday Service at St Mary's**
11.00m New Beginnings
(Café in church hall from 10.30am)
- 28th March** **7.00pm Maundy Thursday Service**
- 29th March** **10.00am Good Friday Family Service at St Mary's**
3.00pm Good Friday Meditation
7.00pm Night Prayer at St John's
- 30th March** **10.00am Tenebrae Service**
- 31st March** **11.00am United Benefice Easter Sunday**
Holy Communion

St Mary's:

- 3rd March** 10.00am Holy Communion
- 10th March** **10.00am Mothering Sunday Service**
- 17th March** 10.00am Holy Communion at St John's
- 24th March** **10.00am Palm Sunday Service**
- 28th March** **7.00pm Maundy Thursday Service at St Helen's**
- 29th March** **10.00am Good Friday Family Service**
3.00pm Good Friday Meditation at St Helen's
7.00pm Night Prayer at St John's
- 30th March** **10.00am Tenebrae Service at St Helen's**
- 31st March** **11.00am United Benefice**
Easter Sunday Holy Communion at St Helen's

St John's:

3rd March	4.00pm Service
10th March	tbc
17th March	10.00am Holy Communion
24th March	10.00am Palm Sunday Service at St Mary's
28th March	7.00pm Maundy Thursday Service at St Helen's
29th March	10.00am Good Friday Family Service at St Mary's 3.00pm Good Friday Meditation at St Helen's
30th March	10.00am Tenebrae Service at St Helen's 7.00pm Night Prayer
31st March	11.00am United Benefice Easter Sunday Holy Communion at St Helen's

Please note – you are free and welcome to attend any of our United Benefice services, especially over the Easter period.

We encourage you to make the journey from Palm Sunday to the Cross and the joyful glory of Easter Sunday.

Monday Evening Zoom Service 7.00 to 7.30pm

every Monday except Bank Holidays

For details and an invitation contact christownsend2@sky.com



May you have a Happy, Joyful
and Blessed Easter