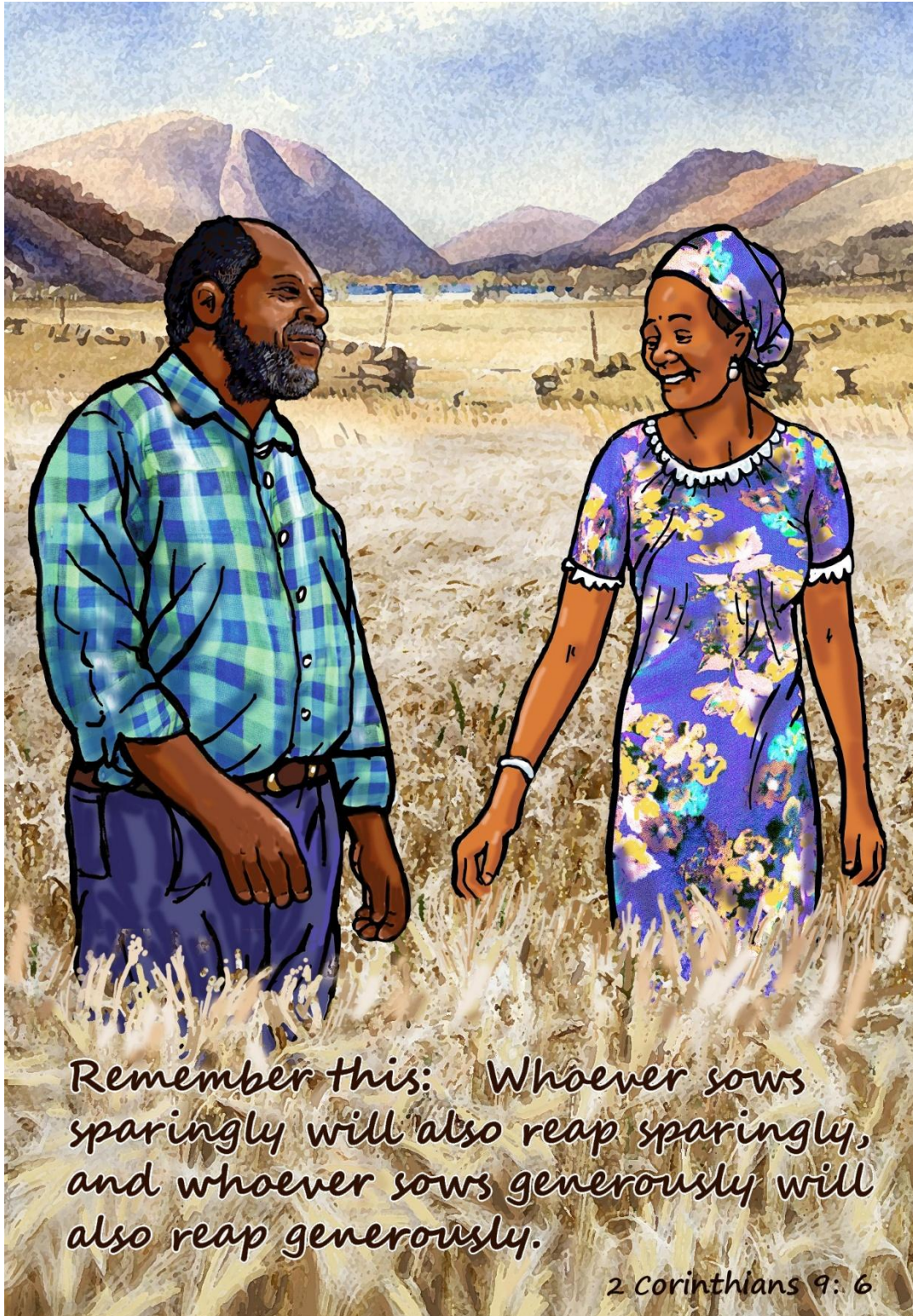


Newsletter September



I hope you read the “letter” I wrote straight after my sabbatical, about my vision – my hope – that our church would become even better at loving and caring for each other. If you missed it, here are a few highlights:

*Despite what it sounds like, **‘pastoral care’ is definitely not just the responsibility of the pastor!***

The church isn’t a religious organisation but a fellowship, a family even; and through the Holy Spirit God lives in each one of us. And according to the Bible we – every child of God – are all called and equipped to help each other grow as disciples of Jesus (Eph 4:12-13).

This means being there for each other through all the ups and downs of life: illness and bereavement; money troubles and debt; anxiety and depression; doubts and questions; sin and temptation; addictions and bad habits; conflict and confusion; unemployment or promotion – and let’s not forget about the celebrations and joys of life!

It might simply mean being there with a sympathetic ear and a prayer; it might mean offering biblical advice (in a compassionate way – we don’t want to hit strugglers over the head with the Bible!); it might mean offering practical help of various kinds; or it might mean supporting someone who needs professional help which we as a church can’t offer.

Remember our church motto? It’s up on the screen every Sunday:

A church where Jesus Christ is at the centre, the Bible is our guide, and people matter.

Pastoral care simply means taking those last two words seriously: with Jesus as our example and the Bible as our guide, we want to show in practical ways that people matter.

I would like to invite you – challenge you, even – to take this seriously. Please pray for our church, that this vision of what a church should be like may become more and more true in our fellowship!

On Sunday 9th September I announced that we have appointed Mary Bonds as *Pastoral Care Lead* to serve alongside myself. This is a new position in our church, and it represents a concrete step forward towards the fulfilment of this vision.

This doesn’t mean that Mary will now be doing all the pastoral care in our church (I’m sure she’ll find this reassuring!); but it means that there are two people whose special responsibility it is to look after the well-being of the church – as they say, two pairs of eyes see more than one, and I expect Mary will pick up on situations that I have missed...

However, I also hope that our homegroups will be natural hotbeds for pastoral care – members of these groups already know each other better, and it may well feel more natural to share struggles and problems in that safe context. However, if homegroup leaders feel out of their depths, they can always refer people to Mary or myself!

And if you are not yet part of a homegroup, why not consider joining one? You can start by coming along to the Romans course (starting Monday 14th / Wednesday 16th September), which replaces the homegroups for a few months – then you can join one of the groups once they restart afterwards.

And whatever you do, remember that Jesus loves you, and we want to be there for you, to express that love in concrete action whenever necessary. After all, we are in this together!

David

Dates and information

Wednesday 9 September – 7.30pm – Deacons' Meeting

Thursday 10 September 11.00am – 2.00 pm Harm Reduction

Sunday 13th September 11.00 a.m. Worship Service

Monday 14th September 8.00p.m. Romans Course (produced by the Bible Society)

Wednesday 16th September 2.30pm Romans Course

Wednesday 16th September 8.00pm Zoom Prayer Meeting

Sunday 20th September 11.a.m. Harvest Service

Friday 18th September 6.15pm screening of the People's Emergency Briefing film about the climate crisis. Venue Redditch Ecumenical centre. See <https://view.nebriefing.org> for more information.

Saturday 19th September 7pm. Charity Concert for CAP with Alcester Male Voice Choir. Venue: Oasis Christian Centre. Price £12.50.

Prayer for harvest

Dear Lord,

As we give thanks for the harvest and pray for the farmers who have struggled through the summer's drought and heatwaves, we also give thanks and pray for those who work to share the good news of Your kingdom, to bring in Your harvest of people who are searching for You.

May we, who know You, join those workers and share the good news that Jesus brings. So many people are lost and without hope or direction. Help us to reach out to them, maybe with an invitation, or simply a smile, or an act of kindness. May they see Your love reflected in us and turn to You.

May they put their trust in Jesus, who alone is the answer to all life's great questions.

Lord, may we be workers in the harvest field where You have placed us, for Your glory. In Jesus' name. Amen.

By Daphne Kitching

Lester Amann considers a great prophet of Israel.

Samuel - the exceptional man who put the crown on David's head

The Bible contains descriptions of many kinds of leaders. These men (and sometimes women) were responsible for the well-being of groups of people. Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt. Joshua led the wilderness wanderers into the Promised Land. Gideon, Ezra and Nehemiah led people to fight against their enemies and improved their moral and spiritual lives.

While these people may be familiar to us, the Bible also mentions other individuals who had different leadership responsibilities. Some fulfilled their positions readily while others, like Joseph and Esther, gradually became aware of their roles and achieved the purposes God had for them.

As a baby, Samuel was dedicated to the service of God. While a young boy, God spoke directly to him. Samuel grew up gaining favour with both God and men. At an early age, God was with Samuel and made everything that Samuel said come true.

Samuel became the ruler of Israel. His style of leadership was based on godliness, fairness and good organisation. He settled disputes, served as a judge and banned pagan gods from the land.

When Samuel became old, the people became restless. They demanded to have a king to rule over them. God reluctantly agreed. Under God's guidance, Samuel chose Saul. Unfortunately, Saul failed to lead the people in the way of God. So, Samuel was directed by God to anoint David - to be the next king of Israel.

Samuel, it appears, was acutely aware of his responsibility to be a good leader. He was a man of good reputation but his obedience to God brought about difficulty, uncertainty and hardship. He wanted Saul to be a good leader, but Saul failed to live up to his high calling. Samuel was deeply upset and departed from the king's presence. He knew that a bad leader would bring about the nation's downfall.

Nevertheless, Samuel treated Saul with respect and courtesy. He understood the principle of submission to God-ordained authority. He was loyal to Saul, even though he turned out to be a bad leader.

Samuel's grief over Saul's failure is a reminder for us to pray for our leaders on a regular basis (whether or not they fall short in their official capacity!) We need God to provide us with leaders who are trustworthy and honourable. Let's pray for good leaders that they may enhance truth, peace and justice throughout the world.

David Pickup, a solicitor, considers a seaside resort confectionary...

Hard Times

There is the sea, vast and spacious, teeming with creatures beyond number, living things both large and small. Psalm 104:25

Do you remember rock? I do not mean the music, but the confectionary sticks sold at seaside resorts. They were pink cylinders about a foot long and an inch wide with a white centre and had the name of the place in letters. They were covered in film and had a small label with a picture of the place on. It is sometimes referred to now as Rock Candy which does not seem right. They were hard as, well, hard as rock and very difficult to break up to eat. Real teeth breakers.

One source says it started at fairgrounds in the 19th Century, when sugar was plentiful and inexpensive. It was not brightly coloured or lettered in those days, but it was of similar shape and size as it is today.

Ben Bullock was an ex-miner from Burnley, who conceived the idea whilst holidaying in Blackpool. He began producing sticks of brightly coloured lettered candy at his Yorkshire-based sweet factory in 1887. He sent his first batch of lettered rock to retailers in Blackpool, where it was well received. Other sources say a Victorian character by the name of Dynamite Dick, who came from either Morecombe or Blackpool.

It takes a lot of skill to make it. I think it is still available on sale to eat or keep as a souvenir.



*Brian recited the 39 articles as
he did up each button*

Rosie's poem

Under Gods loving gaze.

Under Gods loving gaze

We lift our songs of praise

Hallelujah is our cry

To the one lifted on high.

Under Gods loving gaze

We are transformed for the new age.

Like for like, inside and out

Enjoying Gods presence without a doubt.

Under Gods loving gaze

We reflect the brightness of His ways.

Love overflowing love everlasting and

His acceptance and understanding.

Under Gods loving gaze

We find rest and peace.

Contemplating heaven on earth

Ensured our lives will never cease.

Under Gods loving gaze

All earths troubles fall and fade

All heaven acknowledges that He is Lord

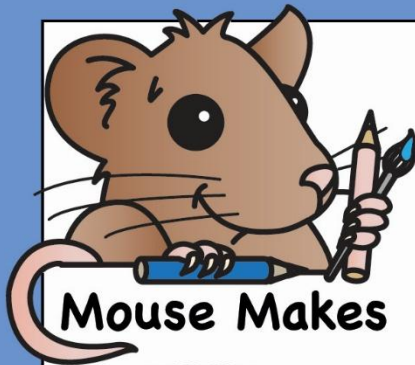
And mankind bow before Him in one accord.

May Gods loving eyes rest on you,

Like a warm and gentle breeze

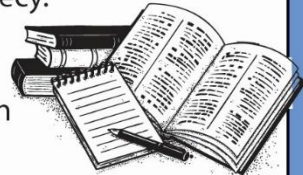
Urging you onward into His light

Saving you from Satan's sight.



The **Bible** is a collection of books, written by many different people who were helped and inspired by God. The **Bible** includes books of history, law, poetry and songs, wisdom, testimony, letters and prophecy.

The **Bible** encourages us, corrects us and teaches us about God and how we can be friends with Him.



2. Which book of the Bible has the shortest title?

1. How many books are there in the New Testament?

2



3

3. The Word of God is sharper than a two edged

Hebrews 4:12



B I B L E S U N D A Y

4. He was an Old Testament prophet that has a book named after him.



5. The first book of the Bible.



6. God's word is like?

A _____ and a _____
Psalm 119:105

8. The last book in the Bible.

5

6

7

9. The Old Testament book of poetry and songs.

9

10

11

12

11. The last book in the Old Testament.

10. Who wrote the third book of the New Testament?

13

14

7. What are the first four books of the New Testament known as?

12. Which book tells the story of the spread of Christianity?

13. The Bible is also known as the

14. A book of the Bible named after a woman



of God.
Hebrews 4:12



8 Crossword Clues

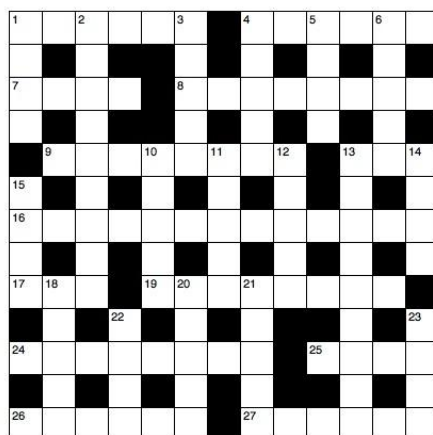
Across

- 1 'Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders — in vain' (Psalm 127:1) (6)
- 4 Season of the year (Psalm 84:6) (6)
- 7 'My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. — here and keep watch with me' (Matthew 26:38) (4)
- 8 It came over the whole land from the sixth to the ninth hour on the first Good Friday (Luke 23:44) (8)
- 9 Paul invariably did this in the synagogues he visited on his missionary journeys (Acts 17:2) (8)
- 13 'It is God who works in you to will and to — according to his good purpose' (Philippians 2:13) (3)
- 16 Members of the Church of Scotland (13)
- 17 'Now when he saw the crowds, he went up on a mountain side and — down' (Matthew 5:1) (3)
- 19 Mock(Luke14:29)(8)
- 24 Disgrace(Psalm44:13)(8)
- 25 First month of the Hebrew calendar (Exodus13:4)(4)
- 26 Christianity of the Britons before Augustine arrived from Rome(6)
- 27 Mean (Numbers 35:23)(6)

Down

- 1 'Whoever finds his life will — it' (Matthew 10:39) (4)

- 2 'My lord the king, let the — — on me and on my father's family, and let the king and his throne be without guilt' (2 Samuel 14:9) (5,4)
- 3 O raid (anag.) (5)
- 4 'If two of you on earth — about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven' (Matthew 18:19) (5)
- 5 Take care of (1 Samuel 17:15) (4)
- 6 What the older son heard as he came near the house the day his prodigal brother came home (Luke 15:25) (5)
- 10 'Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with — judgment' (Romans 12:3) (5)
- 11 Do ten(anag.)(5)
- 12 Architectural style first used in Greek temples in the sixth century BC (5)
- 13 Capable of being used(1Kings7:36)(9)
- 14 'Each one should — his own actions'(Galatians6:4)(4)
- 15 Among the items imported by Solomon's fleet of trading ships (1 Kings 10:22) (4)
- 18 'But I am afraid that just — — was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray' (2 Corinthians 11:3) (2,3)
- 20 Outstanding 18th-century hymn writer, — Watts(5)
- 21 One of the four sons of Asher(Genesis46:17)(5)
- 22 Be distressed(Proverbs24:19)(4)
- 23 He was the father of Gaal, who threatened rebellion against Abimelech (Judges 9:28) (4)



9David Pickup, a solicitor, considers all those possible doors we can take...

Enter through the Narrow Door

²² Then Jesus went through the towns and villages, teaching as He made His way to Jerusalem. ²³ Someone asked Him, "Lord, are only a few people going to be saved?" He said to them, ²⁴ "Make every effort to enter through the narrow door, because many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able to. (Luke 13)

I was waiting for Evensong to start and had got most things ready. I usually sit outside while I wait if it is nice. It was a very hot day and I wondered where everyone was. My seat was beside the south door and people normally trundle in past me, some early some just in time.

This Sunday I did not see anyone and I was getting worried. What I had forgotten was I had opened the west door and the north door to get a breeze blowing in. The congregation had all gone in those entrances.

We normally use the south door because that has a porch, notices and the smartest entrance. The west door is normally for brides and the north door rarely used at all. It has lots of steps going up and down.

Houses are similar. In many places the front door was hardly ever used except very special occasions and friends and family would go around the back because they knew mum would be in the kitchen, near the rear door.

What did our Lord mean "enter by the narrow door"? Perhaps walled cities had big gates and if you went in you would be seen by everyone, but authorities would check what your business was. It was the obvious way in but there would also be small secret doors which only locals knew. Perhaps they were short cuts or direct routes to the best places.

The easiest and obvious are not always the most direct, or best.

Crossword Solution:

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

How Tyndale affects what you say - today

It is 500 years since William Tyndale printed the very first English translation of the New Testament.

And hundreds of millions of people today are still quoting him, though they don't know it. For in 1526 Tyndale invented what would become some of the most famous idioms in the English-speaking world.

For instance –

"The salt of the earth"; "Go the extra mile"; "The powers that be"; "Eat, drink and be merry"; "A city on a hill"; "The apple of his eye"; "In the twinkling of an eye"; "Signs of the times"; "My brother's keeper"; "Fight the good fight"; "Broken-hearted"; "Fallen flat on his face."

These phrases were all invented by Tyndale, during his translation from the original Greek of the New Testament.

As a young Catholic priest in England, Tyndale had been inspired by Martin Luther's groundbreaking translation of the Bible into German, and he went to work doing the same for English speakers. No wonder that the Bible Society describes Tyndale as a 'background radical' during Henry VIII's reign (he's mentioned in *Wolf Hall* but doesn't get involved in the action).

Tyndale invented words, too, when he couldn't find a direct English equivalent for a Greek or Hebrew concept. Here are just some:

Scapegoat: To describe the goat burdened with the sins of the people and sent into the wilderness.

Atonement: Literally "at-one-ment", created to describe being at one with God.

Passover: Coined to describe the Jewish holiday where the angel of death passed over the homes of the Israelites.

Busybody: Invented to describe someone who meddles in other people's business.

Tyndale's work has survived multiple revisions of the Bible down the centuries. It is found in the Authorised Version of the Bible, the RSV, the ASV or the ESV, among others.

More at Bible Society's website: <https://www.biblesociety.org.uk> Just type 'Tyndale' into its 'search' box.