



JULY & AUGUST

2026

Stratton Team Ministry
Seeking, Sharing, and Serving God Together
www.strattonteamministry.co.uk



STRATTON TEAM MINISTRY

Rector: Reverend Elveen Mead [Usual Day off Friday]

Curate: Reverend Charlotte Stansfield [Usual Day off Friday]

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Alison Burston
Dan Read

Church Administrator Georgina Martin 826505
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CHURCHWARDENS

St. Margaret's Church and St Mary Magdalene Church

Mr Ian Jones 07769703385

Anna-Marie Jenkins

Mrs Diane Whitford 824339

Deputy Warden

Mrs June Lewis 822954

St Leonards Church

Mrs Liz Hillman 762935

Mr Chris Pope

Joint Parish Safeguarding Officers & DBS Lead Recruiters

Dr Mike Boshier 07799835437

Mrs Mary Boshier

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL for St. Margaret's and St Mary Magdalene

Mrs Rosalind Mitchell (Secretary) 764146

Mrs Diane Whitford

(Deputy Secretary of St Mary Magdalene) 824339

St Leonards

Mr Michael Curtis

(PCC secretary St Leonards)

LOCAL CHURCH CONTACTS

Stratton Methodist Church, 829335

St Mary's R C Church, The Presbytery, Swindon 535089

Dear Friends

The circle of life

If you're a visual person, you might see your journey through life as a line – or do you see the year as a circle?

Luke's gospel tells us that on the first day of the week, after resting on the Sabbath Day, the women who had come with Jesus from Galilee came to the tomb and found the stone rolled away. So Sunday – the first day of the week – was chosen as the day when Jesus' followers celebrated his resurrection.

Over time, the church adopted different patterns of worship through the year, to remind people of significant events in the life of Jesus. The church year begins in Advent, then we celebrate Christmas and go through different “liturgical seasons” as the year goes on. Each season is colour-coded – the seasonal colours were first described by a 12th-century pope and are used to this day not only in Catholic and Anglican churches but others too – with minor variations in different churches.

So What?

Before we look at those colours and seasons, you might be wondering how they relate to you.

Our lives have ups and downs, days of celebration and times of sadness. Marking times of sadness and joy in the life of Jesus not only through the colours around us in church, but in the liturgy – including the words we say and hear in services, the Bible readings we reflect on, the actions we engage in together – can help us when our own lives mirror what we are focusing on in church.

However, how each of our lives feels at a particular time may not match at all with the season in church. I remember going through difficult times, but making the effort to go to church, only to be told by the person leading the service that we should all be smiling because God loves us – when that was the last thing I felt like doing! Our services in Stratton Team churches often open with the words, “The Lord is here – his Spirit is with us” or “The Lord be with you – and also with you”.

We are gathering to worship God, however our lives are going, to remind ourselves and each other that in all the ups and downs, however wobbly, doubtful or smiley we may each feel, God is with us, there to help us through life's joys and challenges, through the support of our sisters and brothers in Christ, and through his Spirit working in and with us.

Sometimes, then, if it's Lent but you have something to celebrate, you may feel more like it's Christmas or Easter in your life – and your experience of those joyful celebrations in church may help you, even while Lent is going on around you. You might say, pray – or sing! – a joyful Psalm such as Psalm 146 (“Praise the Lord, O my soul! I will praise the Lord as long as I live”).

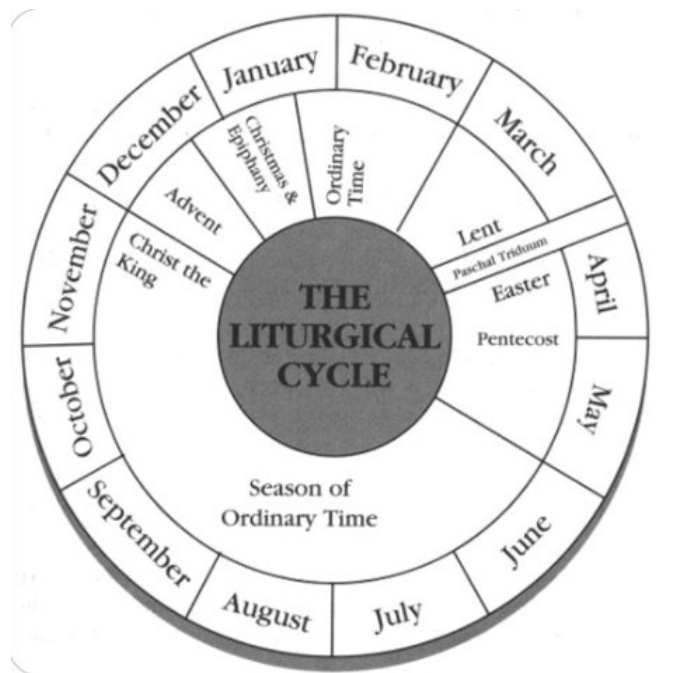
If however the church is celebrating joyfully while you are going through a dark time, you may recall something from how Lent was marked – praying by using a Psalm such as 69 (“Save me, O God!... I am sinking in deep mud”). Or you might go to a Bible reading about Jesus' suffering in Holy Week – as you process your own thoughts and feelings of suffering.

Seasons and colours of the church year

Items such as the altar frontal (large piece of cloth hanging over the front of the altar), Bible marker, pulpit “fall”, and the priest's stole are changed as one season follows another.

The season's names and their colours are these:

Ordinary time – Green. The season we are currently in, and the longest of them all, running from Pentecost through to Advent. Sunday Gospel readings in this season focus on the ministry of Jesus. (A short Ordinary time is squeezed in between Epiphany and Lent.) Green is traditionally connected with life and growth – so we look at Jesus' life, and doing so helps us as we takes steps of growth in our faith.



Advent – Purple. A more sombre time of waiting and self-examination as we prepare to celebrate Jesus’ birth - his first coming - and look forward also to his second coming.

Christmas and Epiphany – White/Gold. We celebrate Jesus’ birth and his revelation to the Gentiles marked by the visit of the wise men.

Lent – Purple. Ash Wednesday to Holy Week. A time of reflection, self-examination and repentance in preparation for Holy Week and Easter.

Holy Week – Red/White. We recall the days leading to Jesus’ arrest and crucifixion.

Easter – White/Gold. We celebrate the pivotal event in our faith – Jesus’ rising from death!

Pentecost – Red. The coming of the Holy Spirit – red symbolises fire: flames appeared over the heads of each disciples who received the Spirit that day.

And then Ordinary time returns as the cycle begins again.

An “ordinary” time?

Why “ordinary”? This doesn’t mean nothing important is happening! I found two different explanations: “Ordinary” comes from the Latin “ordos”, a word used to describe the way threads were aligned in weaving and the way soldiers were aligned in formation. The threads, the soldiers, are placed in an ordered way. “Ordinary” may also refer to the “ordinal numbers” – I had to check what these are! – first, second, third etc. (If you find any other explanations, please let me know.)

The illustration shows the church year and the months of the year: but actually they may not fit together exactly like that because Easter is a “moveable feast”, meaning its date is tied to the moon cycle and can fall anywhere from 22nd March to 25th April.

Many of the jobs that happen in and around church are unseen, though we’d soon notice if they weren’t done! Sincere thanks go to all our volunteers who work so hard in many ways behind the scenes – including those who change the altar frontals etc as the seasons change. Since it’s ordinary time till November, they can now have a well-deserved rest!

Blessings

Rev Charlotte

This magazine is available online and, for those without online access, it is also printed – in black and white to save costs. That’s why the diagram above is not in colour.



Afternoon Tea at the Church with Bells and Steam

Once again we were blessed with a delightful afternoon of sunshine to have tea and cakes in the churchyard last Sunday.

This year, the added attraction was a static bell set sited on the Glebe, which, with the help of five or six ringers demonstrated how bell ringing works. It also offered the chance for people to have a try at bell ringing on a smaller scale. The bell ringers rang our beautiful church bells as people ate cake, drank tea and chatted with new and village friends. Along with the bells

came two small steam engines which had chugged their way along from Highworth.

It was a very successful and enjoyable afternoon for everyone. Grateful thanks go to those who worked behind the scenes and the makers of the cakes. The standard was extremely high. Particular thanks to the bell ringers and to Rusty for organising the steam engines to join us and huge thanks to Tony Crabtree from St Andrew's Church at Shrivenham for bringing the static bell set, which proved to be such a delight. Thank you all for coming.

£540 was raised to be shared between the bell fund and church maintenance which will one day include the addition of a toilet for the church which is very much needed.

Diane Whitford



BLACKBIRDS

A few years ago, despite having two predatory cats and two more living next door, a pair of blackbirds decided to nest in one of the fir trees beside the fence separating our gardens.

The whole of that early summer, we were constantly on the alert for the blackbirds' warning cries. We had no peace!

When the alarm went up, we'd drop everything and rush out to shoo away the skulking cat.

We must have proved ourselves as the following year they decided to choose our garden again – one of the tall conifers at the entrance to the barbecue patio. We groaned, not wishing for another tense, noisy summer.

One afternoon I was sat in the conservatory when George called my attention. He thrust his arm, shoulder height, into the conifer's dense foliage. He withdrew his arm with Max, our black cat, on the end of it!

Luckily the eggs were still intact and the birds returned to sit on them. We put netting around the base of the tree to prevent any further feline raids!



Each year nests have appeared in other trees and shrubs. The blackbirds are getting increasingly better in their choice of secure nesting positions. Last year it was the prickly pyracantha. No sane cat would attempt to penetrate that. That nest was used twice that year. The birds don't seem to mind our presence in the garden. At nesting time, they'll sit on the wooden arch next to the pyracantha, head inclined, and watch us.

Yesterday, a fat, dark brown female (easily mistaken for a thrush, while the male is black with a yellow bill and eye ring) perched on the hedge by the garage calling to her handsome, sleek mate on the garage roof. Soon they'll build their nest from mud, grass and household odds and ends.

Any time from April, the female will lay three to six blue/green eggs with reddish-brown speckles. These take about two weeks to incubate. It takes a further two weeks for the bald fledglings to grow feathers and down and a few more weeks to learn to fly. There may be three broods in a good year.

Their song is beautiful as they perch on the top of the poplar tree or TV aerial. They sound as though they are bursting with happiness – a very infectious message. They announce their territories in this way and bravely see off any intruders. They've even been known to attack their own reflections.

Marcia Hinton



FISHERS OF MEN

The Sea of Galilee is around 13 miles long by 8 miles wide and is up to 140 feet in depth. It has 19 native fish of which three are and were, in Biblical times, commercially of use. Chief amongst these is the Tilapia, or St Peter's fish. In 1986 during a drought the remains of a boat, dated 50 years BC to 50 AD were discovered and are on exhibition. Commercial fishing is still carried out and is a link to Jesus' "Fishers of Men" parable.

It is a salutary thought to relate in such a way to the times of Our Lord and together with recent archaeological discoveries of carvings mentioning such persons as Pontious Pilate and others gives us a tangible and physical link to those momentous times.

Do we need such proof for surely as Jesus preached "how great it is to see and believe, how much greater to believe without seeing"

Colin Howell



5TH SWINDON BOYS BRIGADE



The Anchor Boys, the youngest section of the Boy's Brigade, have been busy exploring and experimenting over the past few weeks.

We went bug hunting around the Centre garden, once we found anything we looked at it under a microscope, which was very interesting, before letting the bugs go back safely into the garden. Our spider web game tested our throwing skills with bean bags. We searched around the hall for pictures of different bugs, then we had a bug quiz. For our craft we made a giant spider with googly eyes and pipe cleaner legs.

We have played a variety of games including football, cricket, hockey, mountains and valley game.

We have made mini windmills for Pentecost, a card and delicious biscuits for Father's day. We experimented with Oobleck, a mix of cornflour, water and food colouring. We saw how it reacted to being pushed with a spoon or being poured, which was fun.

If you would like to find out more about the Boy's Brigade, come along and see what we do on a trial evening. Please contact 5swindonbb@gmail.com



Events Team Update

As part of the Swindon Churches Green Festival, we held a litter pick on Saturday June 6th. Despite a 'changeable' weather forecast, an erstwhile group including Elveen and Charlotte found a dry spell to cover the churchyard, local park and streets and removed litter ranging from sweet wrappings, cans to odd bits of metalwork including scaffolding components left over from the recent building work. We recycled whatever we could. In parallel with the litter picking Charlotte also recorded plants and flowers growing in the churchyard as part of a programme to understand the breadth of species supported in churchyards across the region. Thanks to all who supported the event.



We have a number of events coming up. On July 5th we had another very successful Summer Garden Concert in the Rectory Garden, with cream teas and the opportunity to partake of some Pimms in the Summer sunshine! Thanks to all who supported the event.

And on July 18th, St Margaret's will be participating in a Stratton Combined Churches stall at the Stratton Festival at Grange Leisure Centre.

BEER FESTIVAL



Looking a bit further out, we will be holding the 2nd St Margaret's Church Beer Festival on Friday September 11th & Saturday September 12th.

Building on our inaugural festival last year there will be over 20 beers and ciders on offer, plus wine, soft drinks and nibbles.

Great food will be available throughout the event from 'Food for Thought' and there will be live music from top local bands on both days.

Tickets are on sale now and price includes a festival glass, programme and first drink free (additional free drink for CAMRA members).

On Saturday 12th September in the morning there will be a heritage event starting in the church and then featuring a heritage walk around Stratton.

On Sunday 13th in the evening there will be the 'Beer & Hymns' with any of the leftovers.

A big thank you to everyone who helps with organising and running St Margaret's events, and those who help publicise them to the wider community."



ST MARGARET'S CHURCH

BEER FESTIVAL

Over 20 Beers & Ciders on tap!

Friday, September 11th, 6pm - 10pm

Saturday, September 12th, Noon - 10pm



- ❖ Hot food available
- ❖ Live music on both days

Tickets are £12 per day or £17 for both days, this includes a festival glass and a free drink (2 free drinks for CAMRA members)

ST MARGARET'S CHURCH, SN3 4NB // ducks.lung.furniture

Scan the QR Code to book your tickets

<https://tickets.myknowchurch.co.uk/gb/NDYyMS04/t>



*Proceeds in aid of St Margaret's Church Building Fund
With 10% to church backed charities*



“Join us, Join in!”

Mothers' Union Swindon Deanery Branch

Our July meeting will be on Friday 10th and it will be at St Margaret's Centre at 2.30pm

this will be our 150th Celebration Tea.

If you would like to come, please let me know, *

(for catering purpose)

For more info, visit the Bristol MU website www.mubristol.co.uk



480 million women around the world can't read or write

Anne Pope - MU Swindon Deanery Area Coordinator



Weekly Prayers for July

Theme: Sharing our Faith

Reflection for the theme of sharing our faith (from the Prayer Diary 2026)

Jesus tells us to go and make disciples of all nations. At this time of year, we seem to have more time to do things, but do we have the courage to witness to our faith with pride, showing respect for others while remaining steadfast to our calling? St Francis of Assisi said, 'Go out to preach the Gospel, and only if necessary, should we use words.' Mothers' Union was founded on faith; it continues to be built on faith by lives lived in faith for the future of our faith. Let us share this rich faith generously.

Monday - Prayer for Boldness and Clarity.

Heavenly Father, we pray for boldness to share our faith with those around us. Fill us with your Holy Spirit, so that we may speak with clarity and conviction, and that our words and actions may be a reflection of your love and truth.

Lord, help us to overcome any fear or hesitation we may have in sharing our faith. Grant us the courage to speak openly and honestly about the hope that we have in Jesus Christ. Father, we pray that you would give us wisdom and discernment in our interactions with others.

Tuesday - Prayer for Opportunities to Share

Lord, show us the people you want us to connect with and the opportunities you want us to take to share your love. Father, we pray that you would use us as instruments of your grace. May our lives be a testimony to your goodness and may others come to know you through our words and actions.

Lord, we pray that you would give us a heart for the lost, just as you have a heart for them. Help us to be a witness to your love and truth, and to share the good news of salvation with those who do not yet know you.

Wednesday - Prayer for Guidance and Protection.

Heavenly Father, we pray for your guidance and protection as we share our faith. Keep us safe from harm and evil and help us to be a faithful witness to your truth. Lord, we pray that you would surround us with your Holy Spirit. May your Spirit be our constant companion, teaching us and guiding us in all our interactions

Father, we pray that you would protect us from any negative reactions or misunderstandings. Help us to respond with grace and love, even in challenging situations.

Thursday - Prayer of Gratitude.

Lord, thank you for your love and for the gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ. Help us to live a life that is worthy of your calling and to share your love with others. Father, we are grateful for the blessings you have given us. Help us to be generous and giving people, sharing our resources, time, and talents with others.

Lord, thank you for your faithfulness and for your endless grace. Help us to follow you with all our hearts and to live out your teachings in our daily life.

Friday - Prayer for a Contagious Faith

Heavenly Father, we pray for a contagious faith. May our lives be a reflection of your love and grace, inspiring others to seek you and to experience the joy of knowing you.

Lord, help us to live with the assurance of your presence, regardless of our circumstances. May our faith be a beacon of hope, shining brightly for all to see.

Father, we pray that our faith will be contagious, inspiring others to live for you and to experience the fullness of life that comes through a relationship with Jesus Christ.

Saturday - A Prayer for Courage and Wisdom

Heavenly Father, fill us with your Holy Spirit. Give us the courage and boldness to share Your truth and Your Gospel with those around us. Grant us wisdom and discernment so that we may speak Your words and demonstrate Your love in every interaction. Help us to overcome our fears and to see every person as one of Your children.

Gracious God, we surrender our fears and weaknesses to you. We pray for your Holy Spirit to be our constant companion, teaching us in the very hour of need what we ought to say, as you promised. Empower us to speak with boldness and clarity, and to be a true witness to Your goodness in the world.

Final Blessing Prayer (monthly prayer from the Prayer Diary 2026)

Heavenly Father, we thank you for the gift of faith that we have received from you. Please help us to know more deeply for ourselves the transforming power of the Gospel in our own lives. Give us a greater desire to share the Good News with the people we meet, so that they, too, may find hope and may know for themselves the riches of your love. Through your Holy Spirit, may our words and actions bear witness to your presence, through Christ our Lord. Amen.



“Join us, Join in!”

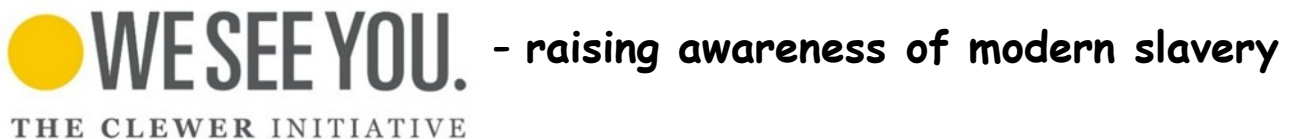
Mothers' Union Swindon Deanery Branch

Our August meeting will be on Friday 14th and it will be at St Margaret's Centre at 2.30pm We will be having a quiz on 150 years of MU.

Everyone is welcome

Do come and join us.

For more info, visit the Bristol MU website www.mubristol.co.uk



480 million women around the world can't read or write

Anne Pope - MU Swindon Deanery Area Coordinator

Weekly Prayers for August

**Theme: Be still - a time to rest,
reflect, rejoice, replenish**

**Reflection for the 'Be still – a time to rest,
reflect, rejoice and replenish' theme (from the
Prayer Diary 2026)**

Rest and peace go together. Instead of racing through another task-driven month, be encouraged by Proverbs 14:30: *'A heart at peace gives life to the body.'* As we may gift others a retreat or a welcome break from routine this month, do take time for some selfcare. Whatever the circumstances we find ourselves in, let us take our lead from Scripture and our founder, Mary Sumner, and pause to pray before we rush to action. On 9 August, we celebrate her legacy – 150 years of faith in action.

This August, let us take time to be still, to rest, reflect, rejoice and replenish ourselves for future faithful actions.

Monday: Pause before God

"Be still, and know that I am God." - Psalm 46:10
O God of the present moment, at this midday hour we turn aside to You. In the fullness of the day, draw near to us, and gather our scattered thoughts. Still our minds, steady our hearts, and root us again in Your deep presence. Be with us in all that has been and all that lies ahead this day.
Amen.

Tuesday: Trust his ways

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding.” - Proverbs 3:5

Faithful God, in the midst of this day's journey, we look to You. Where the path feels uncertain, be our guide; where we grow weary, renew our trust. Help us to walk on in Your wisdom, to notice Your hand in the ordinary hours, and to trust that even now, You are leading us in love. Amen.

Wednesday: Lay your burdens down

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.” - Matthew 11:28

Christ, our companion, in the heat and busyness of this day, we come to You. We bring the weight we carry - the worries, the pressures, the demands. Lay Your gentle hand upon us, and free us from what we cannot hold. Lighten our spirits, and help us continue in Your peace. Amen.

Thursday: Lift your praise

“Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!” - Philippians 4:4

God of light at its height, we pause to lift our praise to You. In this day, we notice Your goodness among us. In work and word, in silence and sound, You are here. Let gratitude rise within us like sunlight at noon, and let our lives give honour to You. Amen.

Friday: Welcome his praise

“The Lord gives strength to his people; the Lord blesses his people with peace.” - Psalm 29:11

God of quiet strength, at this turning point of the day, we welcome Your peace. Draw a stillness around us in the midst of all that moves and demands. Where we are stretched, bring ease; where we are worn, bring strength. Let Your peace dwell within us and carry us through the remaining hours. Amen.

Saturday: Receive new strength

“Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength.” - Isaiah 40:31

Renewing God, in this midday pause, restore us again. As the day unfolds, breathe new life into us. Refresh our minds, steady our bodies, and deepen our hope in You. Send us onward with strength for what remains, and trust for the days to come. Amen.

Final Blessing (monthly prayer from the Prayer Diary 2026)

Lord, in this quiet month of August, help us to be still, to rest from our busyness, reflect on Your goodness, rejoice in Your faithfulness, and replenish our hearts with Your peace. As we remember Mary Sumner, we thank You for her vision and love. May her example inspire us to walk in faith, speak with courage, and serve with joy. Amen.

Times Change

In my lifetime there have been many changes, some are subtle others more dramatic. Climate change affects us all and whilst past Ice Ages and the like, were over many millennia the current change is vastly more speedy. I have read that in parts of the World the lack of small insects is affecting crop yields and whilst bees are essential to crop pollination, the part played by small, less obvious insects is of equal importance. Going back a mere fifty or so years a road trip on a spring, or summer evening resulted in the windscreen becoming smothered in squashed midges, no longer is this so and the swarms to be seen in our gardens likewise. Is there a need to address this change and to be less keen to spray chemicals so lavishly, do a few insects appearing whilst we enjoy our outdoor times matter so much that we have to wage war on them, surely, they have their place in Nature?

The 1956 Clean Air Act resulted, almost unnoticed in the brighter skies now taken for granted, Midland towns rarely saw the sun as I well remember before the war as a child when visiting relatives. There is no doubt that we need to protect our natural surroundings and use less chemicals in agriculture and to adopt regenerative practices to protect the very soil upon which we rely for our food.

With the advent of even hotter weather remedial action needs to be adopted and evolution needs to be considered, but of one thing we can be sure and that is that Our God never changes and on Him we can always rely.

Colin Howell

ST LEONARD CHURCH, STANTON FITZWARREN

CALVARY MEDITATION GARDEN

There is a green hill far away
outside a city wall
Where the dear Lord was crucified
who died to save us all

Hymn written by Cecil Frances Alexander (1818-1895)



During recent building work, the land had to be cleared to make way for machinery. Unfortunately, this left us with an area compacted and difficult to manage. There is a mound situated in the middle, without some form of ground penetrating radar, it is impossible to know what sits below. It was felt this would make an ideal Calvary Meditation Garden, somewhere visitors to the church could sit, meditate and reflect.

The Calvary Garden Includes:

- A mound which represents Calvary/Golgotha, the site of the crucifixion – [Matthew 27:33](#) – “They came to a place called Golgotha (which means the place of the Skull)”
- On the left-hand side sits a clump of nettles – depicting those who called for Jesus to be crucified – [Luke 23:21](#) – “But they kept shouting crucify him, crucify him”
- A row of stones - the Jerusalem City Wall - [Luke 19:44](#) - “They will dash you to the ground they will not leave one stone on another because you did not recognise the time of God’s coming to you”
- On top of the wall sits two angels – Archangel Uriel – according to Ethiopian Homily Uriel dipped his wing in Christ’s blood, placed it in a chalice and sprinkled it around the area. Where the blood fell a church was built. It is suggested that Archangel Michael stood guard at the cross to prevent demonic interference.
- Also sitting on the wall are Viola flowers - representing the purple robe – [Mark 15:20](#) – “And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple robe and put his own clothes on him. They led him out to crucify him”.
- A group of thistles sit on top of the mound – the crown of thorns – [John 19:2](#) – “And the soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head”
- The Cross – [Luke 23:26](#) – “And when they led him away, they seized Simon of Cyrene.... and placed on him the cross to carry behind Jesus”
- A border of Dicentra - represents those who witnessed the crucifixion - [Matthew 27:56](#) – “Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, Joseph of Arimathea and the other Mary”
- Sitting to the right of the Calvary Garden is the Tomb Garden – [John 20:17](#) – “.... Jesus said ‘Do not hold on to me for I have not yet returned to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them’”
[Mark 16:19](#) – “After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, he was taken up into Heaven and he sat at the right hand of God”



DID YOU KNOW?



What is a Spokeshave? It is recorded as long ago as 1510 and is still in use today. It is a small hand held plane originally used to shape the spokes for wooden wheels..... and now you know!



What is a Tantulus? It is a movable, lockable, wooden cabinet to house two or three wine decanters and the key was held by the head butler of a large household. Its purpose was to prevent theft of the contents and now you know!

Q

What an Ard is?

It is a very basic wooden plough pulled by a pair of Oxen dating from before the arrival in Britain of the Romans



Q

What a Parsec?

it is an Astronomical measure of distance equal to 19.5 Trillion miles.



Q

What a Otis Tarda?

It is The Bustard", Wiltshire's County Bird and is depicted in the centre of our County Flag.



JOKES

Would You Believe It?



AUSTIN ALLEGRO 1300. Taxed, MoT, radio. £395 ono.
Btn. 776155 after 6pm.

AUSTIN-Cyril. Forever in our thoughts. Ivy, Jim & family.

AUSTIN PRINCESS 2000 HL, 1979, Superb, low mileage, history. £10,956. 673620. (*London Evening Standard small ads*)

Spelling tests in English and French are to be demanded in Parliament for officials responsible for British passports. The current passport contains a non-existent French word and the visitor's passport misspells "Gibraltar". When an MP queried it with the Passport Office, he was told: "Oh, really, have we? We spelt Sweden wrong in the last issue." (*Daily Telegraph*)

Can anyone recommend school for boy 14, where reincarnation is accepted and astrology understood?
(*Advert in Daily Telegraph*)



Court Report from Reynolds News ...

Mr T. Belk, clerk to the Middlesbrough magistrates:

Why have you not sent your child to school regularly?

Mr J. T. Howlett: Because he has no boots.

Clerk: But you went to school without boots when you were young, did you not?

Parent: Yes, sir.

Clerk: Then why cannot your son do the same? It will not do him any harm.

Brighton Film Studios are making a Conservative propaganda film without a name. The public will not be allowed to see it. (*Brighton and Hove Gazette*)

How many of us at school realised that Perkin Warbeck was a figure in the Jewish World plot against Aryan sovereignty? (*Aristocracy, published by the Imperial Fascist League*)

Newport Council are holding an open day at their Telford Depot in Corporation Road on Wednesday 1 July. Among the attractions is a sewer jetting model display, a display of cesspit emptying plant and graffiti removal techniques.

(*Newport Free Press*)

Renewal notices for three books from Lincoln City Library have come from the Saudi Arabian desert, where Mr Ronald Paing, a local schoolteacher, inadvertently took them on a nine months' stay in Mubbaraz. The books were treatises on central heating. (*Guardian*)

And now, just before The Sinking of the Scharnhorst, attention all shipping. (*BBC Radio 4 continuity, 1984*)

The road leading to St Michael's School has been affected by severe flooding - traffic is reduced to a crawl. (*BBC Radio 2 traffic news, 1984*)

There will be widespread fist and mog. (*Radio 4*)

More about that delay on British Rail Southern Region. We have our reporter on the line ... (*Radio 4*)

Defending solicitor, Mr Richard Snow, suggested that Brother Finbarr, a teacher, was mistaken in identifying his client, as he had spoken to him through a row of runner beans. (*M. Rendall, Western Gazette*)

Overheard in Rimini:
"Hey, Mam, they've even got pizzas in Italy."



Overheard in playground:
"Well, her dad's the head-teacher, she's bound to get RIP treatment."



1st boy: Hey, Sean, what's that on your cheek?
2nd boy: It's a birthmark.
1st boy: Really. How long have you had it?



In restaurant ...
Mother to waiter: Could I take what my son has not eaten, which is most of his dinner, home for the dog?
Three-year-old: We don't have a dog, Mammy.





Stratton
Team Ministry

Everyone
welcome

**St Margaret's Church Stratton
Hosts Coffee Morning**

at

St Margaret's Centre

Every Thursday

9:30am - 11:30am

Tea also available

ST MARY MAGDALENE CHURCH SOUTH MARSTON

Welcomes you to a
Community Coffee
Morning



Just drop in

Come and Join Us for Refreshments
(including bacon butties and delicious cakes)

In the Village Hall

10 - 12

Every third Saturday in the month

18th July & 19th September

Enquiries or for tabletop sales please call

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St Leonard's Church Stanton

Hosts Coffee Morning now at
Stanton House Hotel

10:15am - noon

On the 3rd Wednesday

Of the month

Everyone Welcome



No meetings

July & August

Will be back 16th September

**St Mary Magdalene
Church
South Marston**

**Invite you for
All Age Worship**

**10am Every First Sunday
of the month**





GIVING

You may be aware that many charities and organisations are struggling at this time, this includes churches.

Great News! You can now sign up to join the Parish Giving Scheme (PGS) online. There is a link for this on the Giving page of our website:

<https://www.strattonteamministry.co.uk/giving/>

-

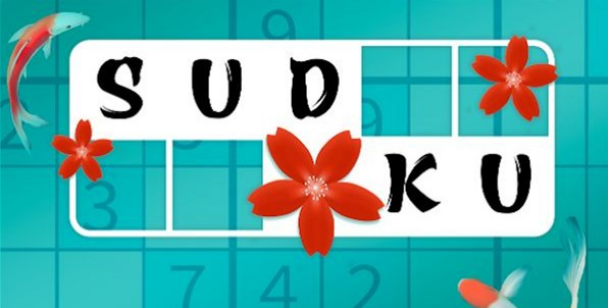
If you haven't considered the PGS before, we would ask you to prayerfully consider doing so. It's very easy to sign up and it works in a similar way to a Direct Debit (that it is intended to replace), in that a regular payment authorised by you goes out either weekly, monthly or yearly straight to the church. It is perfectly safe and can be stopped or changed at any time.

PGS is a great way to give to the work and mission of St Margaret's Church. Donations given through PGS come straight to the Church, there are no admin fees or bank charges for us to pay. 41 people have now signed up to do this - Thank you



Scan me & choose the Church for your kind donation

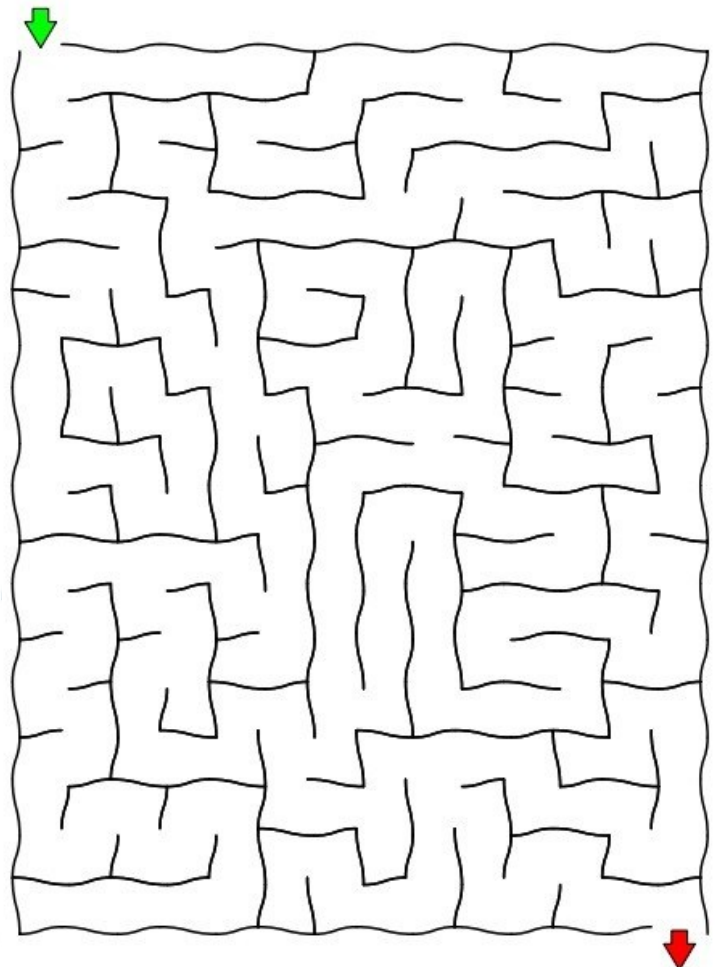
PARISH
GIVING
SCHEME



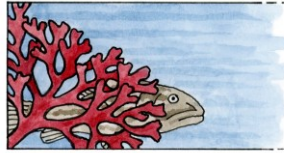
			6			2	3	
9					8	6		5
	6	3				9	1	
				4	7	1	8	9
1			8		5			3
2	7	8	1	9				
	9	6				4	7	
8		1	9					6
	5	7			6			

The rules for Sudoku are to fill a 9x9 grid with the numbers 1–9, without repeating any numbers in a row, column, or 3x3 box.

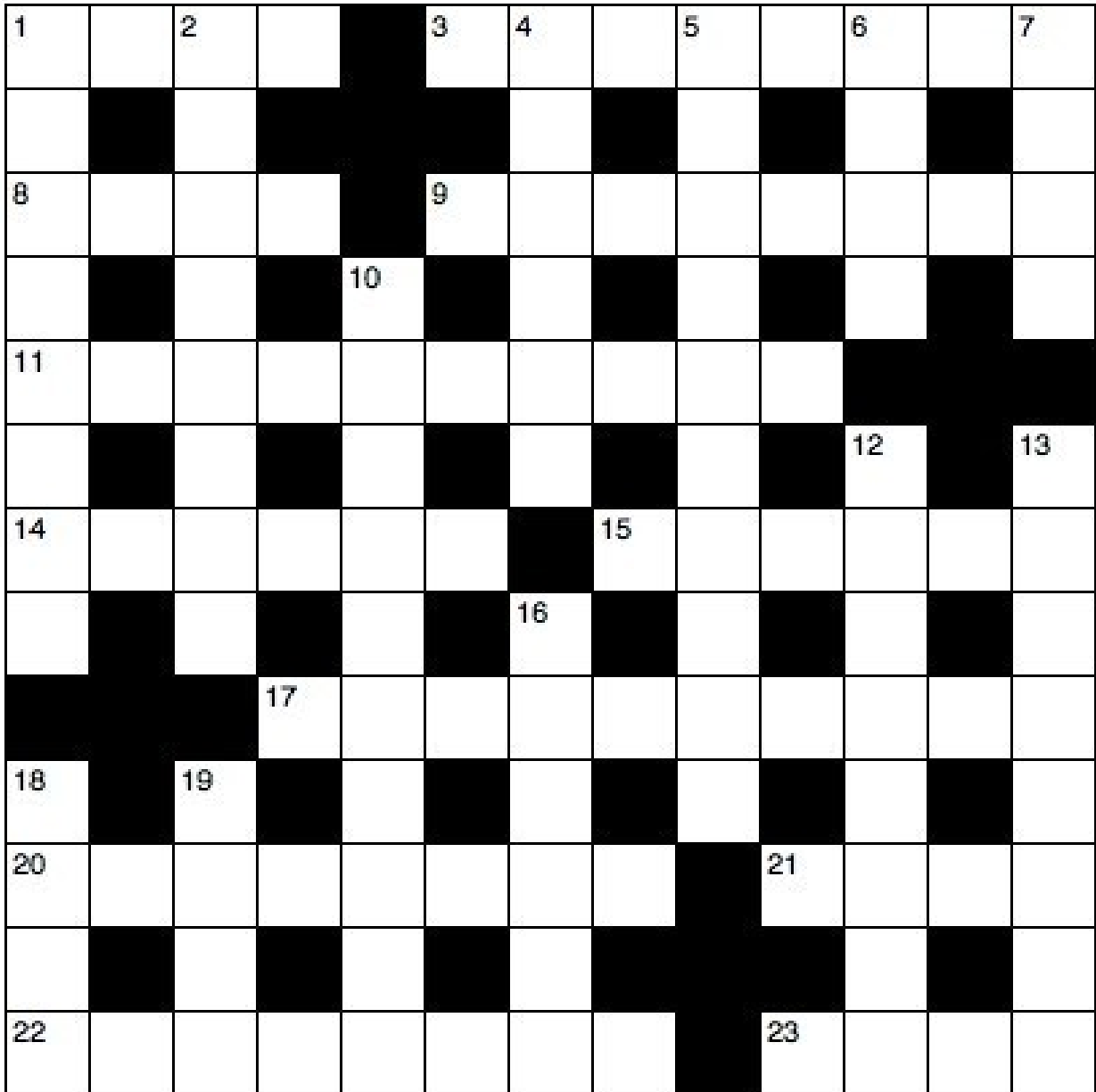
5					2			8
	8	3	1			9		4
9			8			1	5	
			9				8	3
	6	9	7	4	8	5	2	
8	1				6			
	9	2			4			6
6		4			9	2	1	
1			6					5



CROSS WORD



July
2026



Across

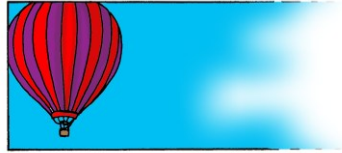
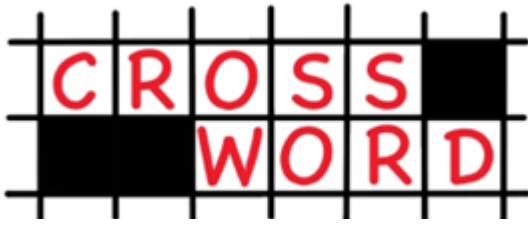
- 1 Proverbs describes her as being 'of noble character' (Proverbs 31:10) (4)
- 3 'Shall we go up again — — against the Benjamites, our brothers?' (Judges 20:23) (2,6)
- 8 A descendant of Shem (Genesis 10:28) (4)

Across

- 9 'Anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my — ' (Luke 14:27) (8)
11 Resentment(Ephesians 4:31)(10)
14 In Cain(anag.)(6)
15 'Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to—' (Psalm 139:6) (6)
17 Intense (1 Thessalonians 4:5)(10)
20 Third Order of the Roman Catholic Church(8)
21 'At midnight the cry rang out, "Here's the bridegroom!Come out to — him"' (Matthew 25:6) (4)
22 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in — ' (2 Corinthians 12:9) (8)
23 'As the — pants for streams of water,so my soul pants for you, O God' (Psalm 42:1) (4)

Down

- 1 Nickname of popular First World War chaplain, the Revd G.A. Studdert Kennedy, — Willie (8)
2 Occasion of religious joy (Lamentations 2:22) (5,3)
4 'We three kings of — are' (6)
5 Allegation or charge (Jude 9) (10)
6 Kind (1 Chronicles 12:33) (4)
7 'Open your — and look at the fields!' (John 4:35) (4)
10 Also known as the Feast of Lights (John10:22)(10)
12 Area that saw the healing of two demon - possessed men and a herd of pigs stampeding to their deaths (Matthew 8:28) (8)
13 Forebear(James2:21)(8)
16 Name given to the first two books of the Apocrypha(6)
18 Esau sold his birthright for this (Genesis25:34)(4)
19 Rear(anag.)(4)



August
2026

1		2		3		4		5		6		7
8												
9				10								
11	12					13		14			15	
16		17				18		19		20		21
22				23						24		
25												

Across

- 8 One of the titles given to the Messiah in Isaiah’s prediction (Isaiah 9:6) (6,2,5)
- 9 International Nepal Fellowship (1,1,1)
- 10 Single(1Corinthians7:27)(9)

Across

- 11 Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's seminal book about Soviet prison camps, The — Archipelago (5)
13 Treachery(2Kings11:14)(7)
16 Of India(anag.)(2,3,2)
19 'God has put us apostles on display at the end of the procession,like men condemned to die in the — ' (1 Corinthians 4:9) (5)
22 Follower of a theological system characterized by a strong belief in predestination (9)
24 'Put these old rags and worn-out clothes under your arms to— the ropes' (Jeremiah 38:12) (3)
25 They brought together all the elders of the Israelites in Egypt (Exodus 4:29) (5,3,5)

Down

- 1 The season when kings 'go off to war' (2 Samuel 11:1) (6)
2 Simon Peter's response to Jesus by the Sea of Galilee: 'Go away from me, Lord; I am a — man' (Luke 5:8) (6)
3 Beaten with whips (1 Kings12:11) (8)
4 'You shall not — adultery' (Exodus 20:14) (6)
5 Encourage (Hebrews 10:24) (4)
6 Service of morning prayer in the Church of England (6)
7 'Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for you, and — — him in your heart by faith with thanksgiving' (4,2)
12 Run(anag.)(3)
14 Member of 17th-century party that denied the right of autonomy to the Church (8)
15 'We will triumph with our tongues; we—our lips'(Psalm12:4) (3)

Down

16 Earnings(1Corinthians16:2)(6)

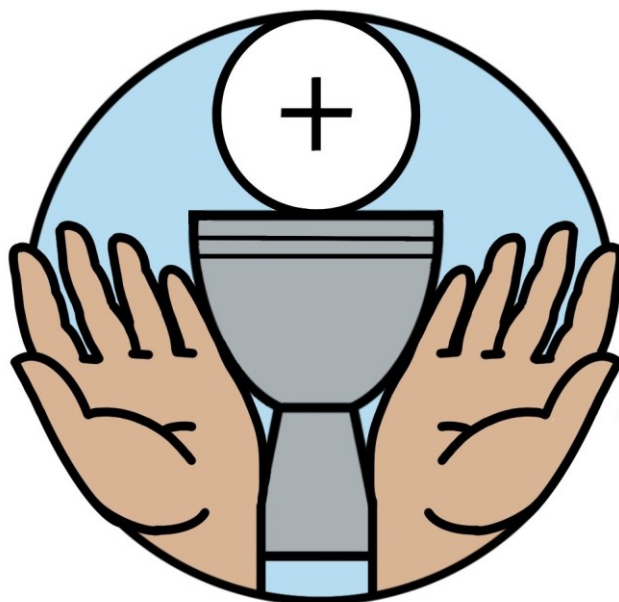
17 'I rejoice greatly in the Lord that—you have renewed your concern for me' (Philippians 4:10) (2,4)

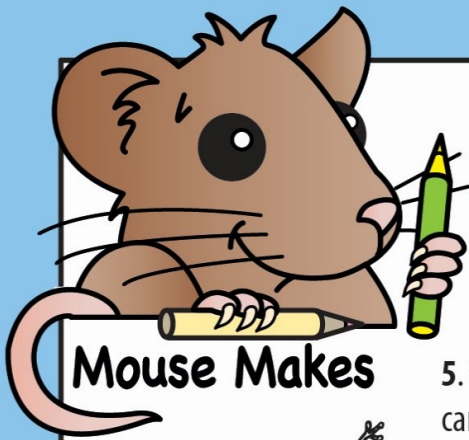
18 How Paul described Philemon (Philemon 1)(6)

20 Multiple territories under the rule of a single state(Daniel11:4)(6)

21 'You have been unfaithful; you have married foreign women,—to Israel's guilt' (Ezra 10:10) (6)

23 This month(abbrev.)(4)





Mouse Makes

1. What bird makes its nest on high?
Job 39:27



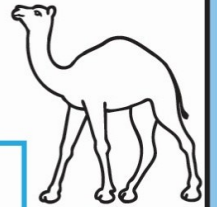
2. What ate the seeds along the path?
Matthew 13:4



3. The hair of which animal was used to make curtains?
Exodus 36:14



4. What insect can we learn from?
Proverbs 6:6



7. Which animal was Jesus compared to?
John 1:29



5. What plague came out of the River Nile?
Exodus 8:6

6. What animal would go through the eye of a needle easier than a rich person?
Luke 18:25

B I B L E



8. What bird did Noah release from the ark first?
Genesis 8:7



9 across.
In what creature's mouth was a coin found?
Matthew 17:27



C R E A T U R E S



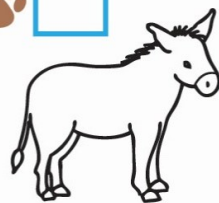
9 down.
What lives in holes?
Matthew 8:20



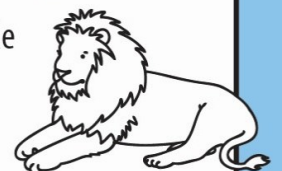
12. Which bird did the Holy Spirit appear as?
Luke 3:22



13. Which animal did Jesus ride on?
Matthew 21:7



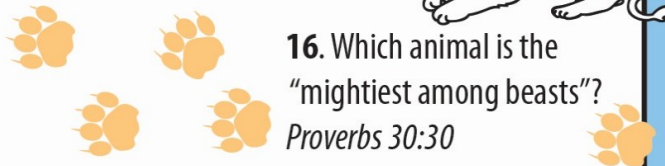
14. What bird did God provide for food in the wilderness?
Exodus 16:13

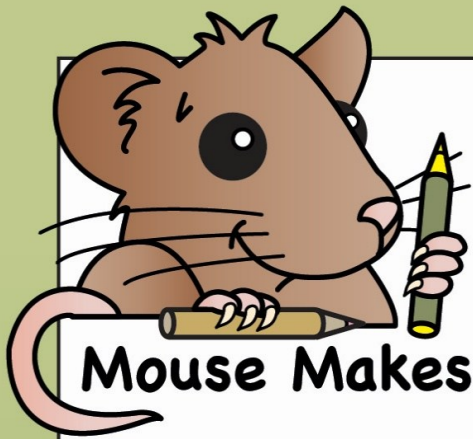


15. What insects did John eat in the wilderness?
Matthew 3:4



16. Which animal is the "mightiest among beasts"?
Proverbs 30:30





Mouse Makes

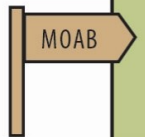
1. To which city did God send Jonah?

Jonah 1:1-2



2. Where did Paul travel to after seeing a vision?

Acts 16:9-10



3. Which sea did Jesus walk beside before he went up on the mountain?

Matthew 15:29

5. Which town did Naomi and Ruth travel to after leaving Moab?

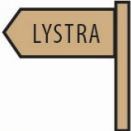
Ruth 1:22



4 across

After Paul was stoned, where did he travel to with Barnabas?

Acts 14:19-20



1
B I B L E

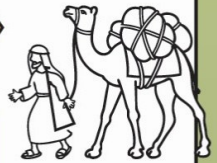
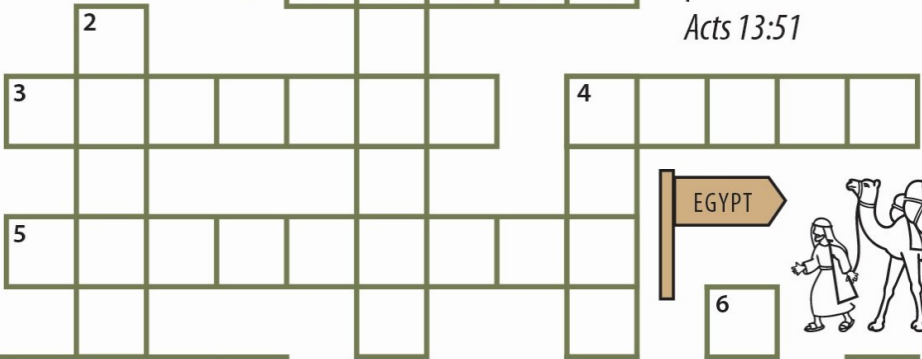
6. Where did Paul and Barnabas go after being persecuted in Antioch?

Acts 13:51

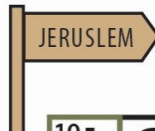
4 down

Where was Saul travelling to when Jesus appeared to him?

Acts 9:3



7



7 across

Where did the Church in Jerusalem send Barnabas?

Acts 11:22

10
J O U R N E Y S



9



11

12



8. To where did Mary and Joseph flee to get away from Herod?

Matthew 2:13



7 down

Where did Noah's ark come to rest after its journey?

Genesis 8:4

13

11. After a five day journey where did Paul arrive?

Acts 20:6



9. To which city did Philip travel to proclaim Christ?

Acts 8:5

10. To which river did people travel out to to be baptised?

Mark 1:5



12. Which sea did Moses walk through to get away from the Egyptians?





Exodus 15:4

13. Where did Paul travel to after he left Athens?

Acts 18:1

Recycling at St Margaret's Centre

Please bring clean and dry:

-  Bread Bags
-  Milk Bottle Tops
-  Blister Packets
-  Ink Cartridges
-  Stamps

These help support Charities such:



IMPORTANT

Please ensure these are all sorted into correct bins.

They are taken by various volunteers



Crossword Solutions – July

ACROSS: 1, Wife. 3, To battle. 8, Obal. 9, Disciple. 11, Bitterness. 14, Niacin. 15, Attain. 17, Passionate. 20, Tertiary. 21, Meet. 22, Weakness. 23, Deer.

DOWN: 1, Woodbine. 2, Feast day. 4, Orient. 5, Accusation. 6, Type. 7, Eyes. 10, Dedication. 12, Gadarene. 13, Ancestor. 16, Esdras. 18, Stew. 19, Area.

Crossword Solutions – August

ACROSS: 8, Prince of Peace. 9, INF. 10, Unmarried. 11, Gulag. 13, Treason. 16, In aid of. 19, Arena. 22, Calvinist. 24, Pad. 25, Moses and Aaron.

DOWN: 1, Spring. 2, Sinful. 3, Scourged. 4, Commit. 5, Spur. 6, Matins. 7, Feed on. 12, Urn. 14, Erastian, 15, Own. 16, Income. 17, At last. 18, Friend. 20, Empire. 21, Adding. 23, Inst.

STRATTON TEAM MINISTRY NEWS - NEXT EDITION DEADLINE

for Articles and Information anytime before 15th August 2026

Georgina Martin:

Church Office,

Tel: 826505

St Margaret's Centre

Email:

stmchurchoffice020@gmail.com

Also, by hand or call Georgina Martin on 07768 243675

Errors and omissions — while we do try to ensure that all details are correct, some things may slip through and we apologise for that.

PARISH DIRECTORY & CENTRE USERS ORGANISATIONS

Babies & Toddlers	Georgina Martin	07768 243675
Bell Ringers	Wendy Sears	07769 788821
Boys' Brigade	Teresa Daghish	07796 925621
Brownies - Mon	Yvette Webster-May	825398
Bumps and Babes	Bekki	bumpsandbabes9@gmail.com
Centre Bookings	Richard Pflieger	828367
Choir	Geoff Walters	822006
Church Cleaning Rota	Pat England	822786
Coleview	Church Office	826505
Church Flowers	Richard Pflieger	828367
Mothers' Union Deanery Branch	Anne Pope	07790 730 685 email eannepope@gmail .com
FWO Envelopes	Ray England	822786
Gift Aid Sec.	David Horne	07717447855
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recognition of our high standards of service.