

# TORRIDGE METHODIST CIRCUIT

## MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

### January/February 2024 - Issue 143

Welcome to Edition Number 143

**Contact e-mail address is [newsletter@torridgemethodistcircuit.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@torridgemethodistcircuit.org.uk) or [bucklanddave1953@btinternet.com](mailto:bucklanddave1953@btinternet.com)**

Any comments or items you wish to share, please contact the editor, Dave Watson by e-mail; phone 01237 451437 or to 6 Greenings Road, Buckland Brewer, Bideford, EX39 5LU.

#### **Circuit Contact details: -**

Superintendent Minister – Rev Rob Blackhall – 01805 628041 – [robertjblackhall@gmail.com](mailto:robertjblackhall@gmail.com)

Minister – Rev Andrew Vidamour – 01237 478453 – [vidamour@mybroadbandmail.com](mailto:vidamour@mybroadbandmail.com)

Lay Pastoral Assistant – Frank Watson – 07446 157329 -: [pastoral.torridgecircuit@outlook.com](mailto:pastoral.torridgecircuit@outlook.com)

Circuit Administrator – Sarah Richards – 01237 472649 – [sarahrichards185@gmail.com](mailto:sarahrichards185@gmail.com)

Circuit Safeguarding Officer – Jacqui Watson – [safeguarding@torridgemethodistcircuit.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@torridgemethodistcircuit.org.uk)

As well as the Circuit Facebook page – **Torridge Methodist Circuit**, we have a private Facebook Group where we care share thoughts, prayers & other material on **Torridge Methodist Circuit Group**. If you wish to join please push the Join button & I can add you.

Please pray for our Ministers, Rob Blackhall & Andrew Vidamour, for Frank Watson & Sarah Richards and all involved in the varied life of the Circuit; for those connected to the various Chapels & the communities in which they live & work.

#### **CIRCUIT ZOOM SERVICES**

The Circuit Services continue to take place ON VARIOUS Sunday's on Zoom using the Services that are printed in the Circuit Newsletter. The Services are on Sunday Evenings starting at 6.30pm – but the 'doors will be open' at about 6.15pm. The contact/entry details will be send out during the preceding week & the Service can be accessed via a computer/laptop with camera/microphone, I Pad/Phone or using a 'normal' phone. Even if you have a device with camera/microphone & do not wish to be seen – you can join in without the camera on.

If you do not receive an email or want further information – please contact Sarah Richards, Circuit Administrator on 01237 472649 or [sarahrichards185@gmail.com](mailto:sarahrichards185@gmail.com)

#### **FROM REV ROB BLACKHALL – SUPERINTENDENT MINISTER**

Dear Friends,

So much of Church life seems to be about what we do. There is always a long list of things to do, of meetings to attend and events to arrange. Those lists can be dispiriting, deflating and exhausting; as we are sometimes left with the feeling that there is too much to do; and that the Kingdom of God rests upon our shoulders.

But shouldn't the emphasis be on what God does in Christ? In Christ we can see most clearly God's graciousness and God's love. This of course has been evident from the beginning and shines through the pages of the Old Testament; and in the person of Jesus Christ this is focused most evidently. We have much to thank God for. At the Epiphany, the time we recall the revelation of Jesus to the Magi and thus the whole of the world, the light, that is Christ, shines bright, to

illuminate and guide. In the weeks that follow, the Churches calendar, through the readings, concentrate on who Jesus is, and what Jesus does, right up the Cross and Resurrection.

A good example is prayer. Often that involved too much talking and not enough listening. Indeed, in all life that seems to be so. Evagrius of Pontus, died 399, was highly influential in the early monastic era. He said of prayer that it is not so much an activity as a state, not so much something that you do as something that you are. Evagrius continues, "The state of prayer is an impossible habit which snatches up the soul that loves wisdom to the intellectual heights by a most sublime love." Prayer is about contemplation, is above rational thought; not about arguing with yourself or telling God about a series of things that God knows already. Prayer is the gift of God, the gift of grace.

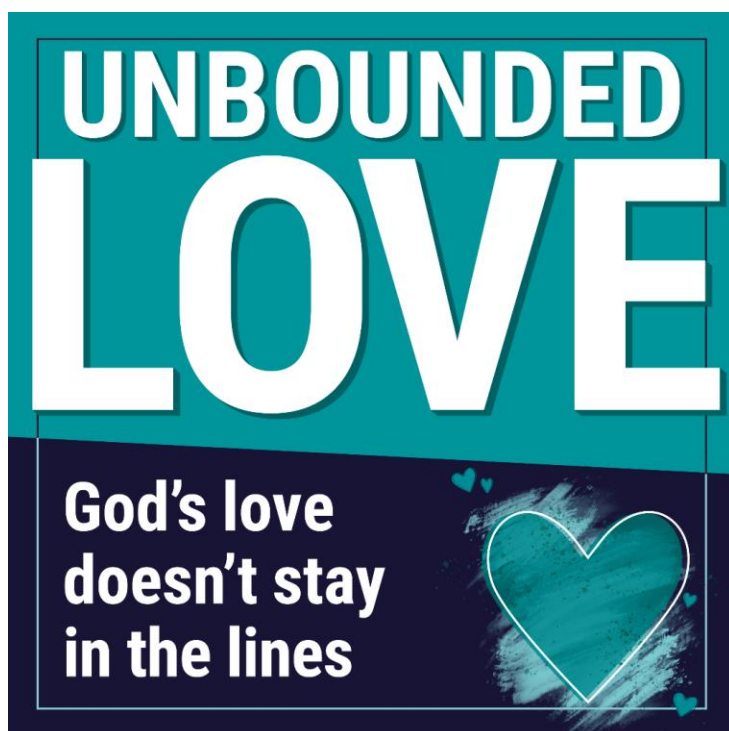
Or consider Mission, so central to our life together. It is God's mission, not ours, although God clearly invites us to join in the great adventure of sharing Love and compassion abroad. Worship too, is for God; although of course we are graciously invited to join in; and to give our very best to the Almighty and Loving God who has given us everything.

It starts with what God does in Christ Jesus.

With all this in mind, I commend to you the Lent Course that we shall be using this year – **UNBOUNDED LOVE** - God's love doesn't stay in the lines.

Charles Wesley's famous hymn *Love Divine, All Loves Excelling* talks about Jesus as 'unbounded love' – a kind of love that cannot be contained, that works in our lives and in our world to free us and heal us. Unbounded Love is the theme of the Lent campaign of the Methodist Church in 2024 – holding together our commitments to be a justice-seeking church, and a people who experience and proclaim the good news of God's uncontainable love.

I offer it to you.  
Every blessing - Rob



## Unbounded Love

Northam

Tuesdays 2pm on Feb 13, 20, 27, March 5, 12, 19

Torrington

Thursdays 2pm on Feb 15, 22, 29, March 7, 14, 21

The full programme will be available shortly.

## HOLY WEEK

The **challenge** for Holy Week is that we read the four Gospels on a single Day.

This will take place at Buckland Brewer on Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> March beginning at 7.30am and concluding with a service of Holy Communion at 6.30pm.

We have chosen Buckland Brewer as we can live-stream this event. However, we are clearly going to need some readers – 66 in total. I have split the Gospels up into ten-minute slots; and offer those to you.

Please can you sign up for one or more of the slots. It would be good if a car full from one Church could take a series of readings.

Please could you either email or phone Sarah Richards, who will keep a record of who is doing what.

We invite you to use the New International Version of the Bible, we will not insist on this, but using the NIV will give some coherence to the readings.

<b>THE GOSPELS</b>	
<b>Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> March 2024</b>	
<b>At Buckland Brewer</b>	
7.30 a.m.	<b>MATTHEW 1:1 - 3:17</b>
7.40	4:1 - 5:26
7.50	5:27 - 6:34
8 a.m.	7:1 - 8:34
8.10	9:1 - 10:25
8.20	10:26 - 11:30
8.30	12:1 - 13:23
8.40	13:24 - 14:36
8.50	15:1 - 16:12
9 a.m.	16:13 - 18:14
9.10	18:15 - 19:30
9.20	20:1 - 21:17
9.30	21:18 - 22:46
9.40	23:1 - 24:14
9.50	24:15 - 25:46
10 a.m.	26: 1-56

10.10	26:57 - 27:66
10.20	28:1-end & <b>MARK 1:1-45</b>
10.30	2:1-28
10.40	3:1 - 4:29
10.50	4:30 - 5:43
11 a.m.	6:1-56
11.10	7:1 - 8:26
11.20	8:27 - 9:32
11.30	9:33 - 10:52
11.40	11:1 - 12:17
11.50	12:18 - 13:37
12 noon	14:1-72
12.10	15:1-47
12.20	16:1-end & <b>LUKE 1:1-56</b>
12.30	1:57 - 2:52
12.40	3:1 - 4:30
12.50	4:31 - 5:32
1 p.m.	5:33 - 6:49
1.10	7:1 - 8:21
1.20	8:22 - 9:17
1.30	9:18-62
1.40	10:1-42
1.50	11:1-53
2 p.m.	12:1-59
2.10	13:1 - 14:14
2.20	14:15 - 15:32
2.30	16:1 - 17:37
2.40	18:1 - 19:10
2.50	19:11 - 20:26
3 p.m.	20:27 - 21:38
3.10	22:1-71
3.20	23:1-56
3.30	24:1-53
3.40	<b>JOHN 1:1-51</b>
3.50	2:1-25
4 p.m.	3:1-35
4.10	4:1-54
4.20	5:1-47
4.30	6:1-71

4.40	7:1-52
4.50	8:1-59
5 p.m.	9:1 - 10:6
5.10	10:7 - 11:37
5.20	11:38 - 12:50
5.30	13:1-38
5.40	14:1-31
5.50	15:1 - 16:33
6 p.m.	17:1 - 18:40
6.10	19:1-42
6.20	20:1 - 21:25
<b>6.30pm HOLY COMMUNION</b>	

## GENERAL ELECTION

*“What is truth?” asked Pilate*

It is almost certain that there will be a General Election sometime this year. Indeed, across the globe a large number of countries will be having important elections: - UK, USA, India, Russia (I think we already know the result of that one!) amongst others.

How do we as Christians engage with the process? What sort of country do we want to live in? How do we decide how to vote?

These are all questions that will face us in the coming months.

Recent elections across the globe have been short on quality debate, and long on negativity.

As Christians we should be concerned with Truth. I suspect that this is going to be in short supply in the coming months. Sorting out truth from the variety of positions postulated is going to be tricky. What sources do we trust? How do we know that our politicians are being as truthful as they might be.

As we start this process can I commend to you the recent series on the BBC “Fixing Britain” with Louise Casey. Baroness Casey looked at some of the challenges facing whoever wins the general election.

Rough Sleeping

Hunger

Children in Care

Violence against women

Cohesion

The series can be found at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/series/m001tr23>

## ADVANCED NOTICE

May 9-19 THY KINGDOM COME

June Bible Month: Genesis

More news of these to come, but please be advised of the dates.

## PRAYER HANDBOOK

One of the best resources we have is our Prayer Handbook. This year's theme, matching that of our President and Vice-President is 'Hidden Treasures'. This is based on Isaiah 45:3, with inspiration from Romans 8:22-29 and Psalm 139.

Preparation is underway for next years. Would you like to contribute a prayer? The deadline is 8<sup>th</sup> January. For more details see <https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-faith/prayer/methodist-prayer-handbook/>

### Praise and Protest – 2024/2025

We need your prayers!

The 2024/2025 Methodist Prayer Handbook title and theme is: Praise and Protest.

Please use the following to craft and submit a prayer:

In her song of praise, the 'Magnificat' (Luke 1:46-55), Mary thanks God for the child Jesus, who will announce God's kingdom which "brings down the powerful from their thrones and lifts up the lowly."



To engage in God's mission and be part of that transformation, we believe the Methodist Church is called to become an increasingly evangelistic, inclusive and justice-seeking Church.

Following the prophet Isaiah's call, echoing through the ages to us and reflected in Mary's prayer, the 2024/2025 Prayer Handbook will focus on how the Church can "learn to do right; seek justice and defend the oppressed" (Isaiah 1:17a, NIV).

We invite you to offer prayers using Isaiah's three key actions for becoming the justice-seeking Church we are called to be, in response to God's love in Christ:

#### Learn

We invite prayers that we might be attentive to God's ways, and discern how we go about learning to live justly in our local communities and churches.

#### Seek

Please offer prayers that seek God and God's ways, and invite us to love God and to love our neighbours. Prayers could relate to looking actively for what God is showing us as the Body of Christ corporately, or more personally, to become people who recognise injustice and take action.

#### Defend

Finally, we welcome prayers for the Church to become more aware of the voices of the people we are called to defend – those who are marginalised and silenced. We welcome prayers that support others in their protest and prayers for how we get involved.

## DATES 2023/24

### CIRCUIT MEETING

Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2pm

Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> June 7.30pm

### CHURCH COUNCILS

Mar 5-16

May 20-25, June 3-7

PASTORAL  
MEETINGS

April 8-19

LOCAL PREACHERS 7pm

Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> March  
Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> June

CIRCUIT SAFEGUARDING 7pm  
Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> March

WAYS OF WORSHIP (TBC)

CIRCUIT CONVERSATIONS (Sunday 3-5)  
Once a Quarter

ZOOM SERVICES  
2 a month (TBC)

**LEADERSHIP MEETINGS**

2pm Kendor

April 23

June 4

(July 9)

March 5

**QUIET MORNING / TIME FOR GOD**

Time for Quiet and for reading 10-12.30

11-12 Guided Meditation

Thurs 8<sup>th</sup> Feb Langtree

Wed 6<sup>th</sup> March Lake

Thurs 11<sup>th</sup> April Northam

Wed 1<sup>st</sup> May Black Torr

Wed 5<sup>th</sup> June Milton D

Thurs 4<sup>th</sup> July

THY KINGDOM COME  
May 9 Ascension Day to  
May 19 Pentecost, 2024

BIBLE MONTH  
June 2024

SYNODS  
Sat 27<sup>th</sup> April TBC

**LENT STUDY**

Thursdays 2pm

Feb 15<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup>

March 7<sup>th</sup>, Wed 13<sup>th</sup>, Tues 19<sup>th</sup>

**HOLY WEEK**

Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> March Palm Sunday

Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> March EASTER DAY

**ADVANCED NOTICE**

District Service with the President of the Methodist Conference, Revd Gill Newton on Sunday 21st April 2024 at Bude Methodist Church. Time 6pm TBC

Please put this afternoon in your dairies. We will confirm the time later

## FROM REVD ANDREW VIDAMOUR

Dear Friends,

A Christian festival which is sometimes overlooked is Candlemas, which falls on the 2nd of February. This marks the end of the Christmas season in the Church year, and it focuses on the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple by his parents (Luke 2: 22-40).

Central to this story are the figures of Simeon and Anna, people who have been watching and waiting for the coming of the Messiah for many years and who now welcome the Christ-child to the Temple at Jerusalem. Later in his life, Jesus was to compare himself to the Temple as one who, unlike that huge religious building, would rise again in three days after apparently being destroyed by death (John 2: 13-22). And Paul picks up this picture by calling those who follow Jesus to be 'temples of the Holy Spirit' in the way they live (1 Corinthians 6:19). All that reminds us that, in the end, people are more important than buildings – even precious places of worship.

Also, this story of the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple is about memory and longing. When they became aware that Jesus was indeed a special child, Simeon and Anna's minds would perhaps have gone back to many similar occasions which held promise but not the unique hope Jesus brought. This would have been a very poignant moment for them both: Simeon was able to say as he praised God, 'Now, Lord, you are releasing your servant in peace, according to your promise', and Anna 'talked about the child to all who were looking for the liberation of Jerusalem.' As well as being thankful, though, maybe these old people were sad as they were conscious that their own lives would soon be drawing to a close and they would probably not see the child grow to a man, even as they longed for him to bring the sense of freedom and peace we all seek in our lives and communities and for the whole world. Yet there is also a feeling of completion and fulfilment in this story of the Presentation – along with a sense that all our human memory and longing are sanctified in Christ.

### **A prayer for Candlemas:**

*Almighty God, whose Son Jesus Christ was presented in the Temple and acclaimed the glory of Israel and the light of the nations: grant that in him we may be presented to you and in the world reflect his glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.*

Andrew Vidamour

### **EDI TRAINING**

- If you wish to do the EDI course online, can you let Sarah Richards know.

To do the training online please take the following steps:-

1. Go to <https://mcb.theologyx.com/> If you have already used Theology X (probably for the Advanced safeguarding module) use the same username and password to sign into MCBX (the new Methodist online training platform).
2. If you do not have a Theology X account, just go straight to the MCBX and register there to create an account.
3. There you will find the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Module
4. You do not need to do it all at once but can do as little or as much as your time allows.
5. At the end you will be given a certificate (via email). Please could you let Sarah Richards have a copy of that so we can keep a record.



## FRANK WATSON – CIRCUIT LAY MINISTER

### The Bible in One Year

<b>February</b>	<b>Old Testament Reading</b>	<b>New Testament Reading</b>	<b>Reading from Psalms/Proverbs</b>
Thu 01	Job 22:1 – 24:25	Matthew 21:18-32	Proverbs 3:21-35
Fri 02	Job 25:1 – 29:25	Matthew 21:33 – 22:14	Psalm 18:7-15
Sat 03	Job 30:1 – 32:22	Matthew 22:15-46	Psalm 18:16-24
Sun 04	Job 33:1 – 34:7	Matthew 23:1-39	Psalm 18:25-36
Mon 05	Job 35:1 – 37:24	Matthew 24:1-31	Proverbs 4:1-9
Tue 06	Job 38:1 – 40:2	Matthew 24:32 – 25:13	Psalm 18:37-42
Wed 07	Job 40:3 – 42:17	Matthew 25:14-46	Psalm 18:43-50
Thu 08	Exodus 1:1 – 3:22	Matthew 26:1-30	Psalm 19:1-6
Fri 09	Exodus 4:1 – 6:12	Matthew 26:31-46	Proverbs 4:10-19
Sat 10	Exodus 6:13 – 8:32	Matthew 26:47-68	Psalm 19:7-14
Sun 11	Exodus 9:1 – 10:29	Matthew 26:69 – 27:10	Psalm 20:1-9
Mon 12	Exodus 11:1 – 12:51	Matthew 27:11-44	Psalm 21:1-7
Tue 13	Exodus 13:1 – 14:31	Matthew 27:45-66	Proverbs 4:20-27
Wed 14	Exodus 15:1 – 16:36	Matthew 28:1-20	Psalm 21:8-13
Thu 15	Exodus 17:1 – 18:27	Mark 1:1-28	Psalm 22:1-11
Fri 16	Exodus 19:1 – 20:26	Mark 1:29 – 2:17	Psalm 22:12-21
Sat 17	Exodus 21:1 – 22:31	Mark 2:18 – 3:30	Proverbs 5:1-14
Sun 18	Exodus 23:1 – 24:18	Mark 3:31 – 4:29	Psalm 22:22-31
Mon 19	Exodus 25:1 – 26:37	Mark 4:30 – 5:20	Psalm 23:1-6
Tue 20	Exodus 27:1 – 28:43	Mark 5:21 – 6:6a	Psalm 24:1-10
Wed 21	Exodus 29:1 – 30:38	Mark 6:6b-29	Proverbs 5:15-23
Thu 22	Exodus 31:1 – 33:6	Mark 6:30-56	Psalm 25:1-7
Fri 23	Exodus 33:7 – 34:35	Mark 7:1-30	Psalm 25:8-15
Sat 24	Exodus 35:1 – 36:8	Mark 7:31 – 8:13	Psalm 25:16-22
Sun 25	Exodus 37:1 – 38:31	Mark 8:14 – 9:1	Proverbs 6:1-11
Mon 26	Exodus 39:1 – 40:38	Mark 9:2-32	Psalm 26:1-12
Tue 27	Leviticus 1:1 – 3:17	Mark 9:33 – 10:12	Psalm 27:1-6
Wed 28	Leviticus 4:1 – 5:13	Mark 10:13-31	Psalm 27:7-14
Thu 29			

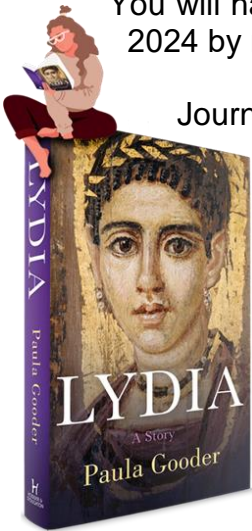
### Circuit Knitters

The knitted items now arriving in my office thick and fast. The latest count is... 22 Hats and 9 Mufflers, but still no mittens yet. Thank you so much!

If you are busy knitting, don't panic! (there is no time deadline). If anyone else thinks they would like to make any of the items then please feel free and remember that once they are finished just let one of your church stewards have them and they will make sure the items get to me to be collected and sent off to the Mission. Happy Knitting!

## Circuit Book Club

You will have seen from emails and posters in churches that the Circuit Book Club starts 2024 by reading the book... 'Lydia' A Story.



Journey with Paula Gooder as she tells Lydia's story – who she was, the life she lived and her first-century faith – and in doing so opens up Paul's letter to the Philippians, giving a sense of the cultural and historical pressures that shaped Paul's thinking, and the faith of the early church.

Written in the gripping style of Gerd Theissen's *The Shadow of the Galilean*, and similarly rigorously researched, this is a book for everyone and anyone who wants to engage more deeply and imaginatively with Paul's theology – from one of the UK's foremost New Testament scholars.

If you missed the sign up date but would like to take part I once again have order two extra copies which will be given out on a first come basis.

Discussion Sessions (7 in total) will normally be held on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday's of the month held on Zoom at 7.00pm. However!... Starting on Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> January 2024.

Discussion Sessions have changed to Tuesday's due to diary commitments.

### **'Lydia' A Story Discussion Dates are as follows:**

30<sup>th</sup> January – Session 1: Chapters 1-4

20<sup>th</sup> February – Session 2: Chapters 5-7

5<sup>th</sup> March – Session 3: Chapters 8-10

Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> March – Session 4: Chapters 11-14

2<sup>nd</sup> April – Session 5: Chapters 15-20

16<sup>th</sup> April – Session 6: Chapters 21-27

30<sup>th</sup> April – Session 7: Chapters 28 – Epilogue

## Encircled in Care Course

**PLEASE NOTE:** The Encircled in Care Course will finish its last two sessions (listed below) after Easter, dates to be arranged. This is due to the Circuit Lent Course being run at both Northam and Torrington this year to just as many people as possible the chance to engage with this important season in the life of our church year.

Session 9: Loss and Bereavement			
In this session we... <b>increase</b> the confidence of all in working through issues of loss with people, <b>consider</b> how churches might help people 'return' following the loss of a loved one, and <b>explore</b> the stages of grief.	TBC	Northam	14:00
	TBC	Torrington	14:00

Session 10: Domestic Abuse			
In this session we.. <b>recognise</b> that Domestic abuse affects people within the life of the Church as well as in the wider community, <b>reflect</b> on the issues of domestic abuse, and <b>consider</b> what appropriate responses we might make.	TBC	Northam	14:00
	TBC	Torrington	14:00

## SAFEGUARDING INFORMATION

### Online Training Programme 2023 - Foundation

This training will now only be delivered in person in the Circuit.

**CIRCUIT SAFEGUARDING FOUNDATION TRAINING SESSION** – Dates for this will be announced later so people who need to do the training again as a ‘Refresher’ can be accommodated.

The next **Live Training Session** will be held on **Monday 12<sup>th</sup> February at 2pm at Buckland Brewer Methodist Church** – Jacqui or Sarah will be in touch if you require this training.

### OPTIONS FOR ADVANCED TRAINING:

#### E:Learning - Online through the MCBX platform

A learning experience which allows the learner to move through the course at their own pace. With a facilitated Gathered Session at the end of the learning via Zoom. Booking for this option will now be through Eventbrite, where delegates will first book onto a gathered course, which will generate their registration to the e:learning site automatically. These dates will be advertised shortly.

#### Streamed Training Events

Designed to offer a face-to-face experience for more people across the District at once, the Advanced Module (Live-Streamed) allows leaders in your church to do this training all together, but without needing to travel as far. Teaching will be offered over a live-stream, delivered via YouTube, with space for conversations in your local context, and ways to interact with the trainers. This option is open to Circuit Safeguarding officers to host in Circuit venues. Individuals will not be able to register and do course alone

#### Onsite Facilitated Training Events

Central locations will host District wide events facilitated by the District Safeguarding Officer, Revd Julian Albrow and Learning Network colleagues.

The courses coming to PEMD in 2023-2024:

Plymouth Mission. Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2024. 9-30am-4-00pm.

Taunton Deane & South Sedgemoor Circuit. Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2024. 9-30am/4-00pm.

South Devon Circuit. Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> June 2024. 9-30am/4-00pm.

More details regarding venues to follow.

#### Streamed Training Event explained and booking guidance

Designed to offer a face-to-face experience for more people across the District at once, the Advanced Module (Live-Streamed) allows leaders in your church to do this training all together, but without needing to travel as far. Teaching will be offered over a live-stream, delivered via YouTube, with space for conversations in your local context, and ways to interact with the trainers.

We will offer the Advanced Module Training as a live stream. This includes:

- All the teaching content, taught in-front of a live class, with breaks for discussion and coffee in your local venues
- A way to interact with the training team live during question and answer sessions
- A register sheet to enable your attendees to have a certificate of completion. This will be sent to them directly, or to yourself if for later distribution, via email

Host churches will offer:

- A warm, comfortable venue for 4.5hrs of training
- A chaplain for attendees
- A Circuit Safeguarding coordinator/officer for local questions and answers
- A way to show and interact with a live-stream, suitable for the size of your group. The solution you use depends on the size of the group: for a 5 or below, a TV with a laptop plugged in may suffice. A larger group may benefit from using a projector and PA system connected to a computer. Regardless, a reliable internet connection will be required throughout the event
- Printed or electronic copies of the Participant resources available here:  
<https://www.methodist.org.uk/safeguarding/training/advanced-module-2023-edition-participants/advanced-module-2023-edition-materials/>.

To register your venue as a host:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/creating-safer-space-advanced-module-live-streamed-registration-588260221157?aff=oddtcreator>

## **ANNUAL DISTRICT SAFEGUARDING CONFERENCE**

This will take place on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> March at Plymouth Central Hall from 9.30am – 4pm. We will be joined by friends from the Cornwall & Isles of Scilly District as we work towards joining our 2 Districts.

### **BUCKLAND BREWER**

We continue to Live Stream Services on the Buckland Brewer Methodist Church You-Tube Channel on the 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in the Month & the 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday if there is one.

The Weekly '**Time Together**' **Toddler Group** continues Mondays, during Term Time at **Buckland Brewer Methodist Church** with both Methodist & Anglican volunteers being present. We meet on Monday's from 9.30am to about 12noon, The cost is £1.50 per family & the numbers have been steadily increasing – families do not just come from Buckland but from neighbouring communities – they often come as friendship groups – so if anyone is aware of any Babies & Toddlers, who with their parents, grandparents or carers are looking for a 'chilled out' session of play & chat with tea/coffee/biscuits – just point them in the direction of Buckland Chapel – Dave Watson 07484 223515 or [bucklanddave1953@btinternet.com](mailto:bucklanddave1953@btinternet.com)

The **Wednesday Weekly Coffee Morning** also continues at **Buckland Brewer Methodist Church** from 10am-12noon – this is for **ALL** but especially for those who have moved into the parish/village since lockdown or anyone who would like to meet others in the community over a mug of tea/coffee with Biscuits & possibly Cake!!

The **Monthly 'Mini Market'**, raising funds for Community Groups in Buckland will restart in March at **Buckland Brewer Methodist Church**. – Tea/Coffee/Biscuits will be available for Chapel Funds.

The **Community Choir**, based in the Chapel has returned to practice after having a couple of months off.

### **TORRINGTON METHODIST CHAPEL**

Torrington Methodist Church welcome all to their Coffee Mornings where delicious Bacon Butties are served and where cakes and bric-a-brac are sold. The next Coffee Morning is on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> February from 10am till 1pm.

### **NORTHAM AND BIDEFORD BIBLE STUDIES UPDATE**

After the Christmas Break, we will meet on February 20<sup>th</sup> to discuss a LENT STUDY on Tuesdays at 2pm at Diana's home

Shrove Tuesday 13th February.

For more info. Contact Julia Spencer

### **MILTON DAMEREL NEWS**

Our new BIBLE STUDY group, joint 'venture' with Thornbury St Peter's Church, will be meeting in our Schoolroom, at Milton Damerel, & this will re-commence on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2024 at 10.30am in the Schoolroom and will be held fortnightly from therein. A warm welcome to anyone wishing to join us.

Many thanks – Grace

### **CIRCUIT ZOOM SERVICE: Sunday 11th February 2024 (6.30pm)**

#### **Call to Worship**

**Hymn: 'Angel voices, ever singing' (39)**

**Prayers of Adoration and Confession**

**The Lord's Prayer**

**Psalm: 50: 1-6**

**Hymn: 'Jesus, on the mountain peak' (259)**

**Bible Reading: 2 Corinthians 4: 3-6**

**Bible Reading: Mark 9: 2-9**

**Hymn: 'Come Holy Ghost, our hearts inspire' (155)**

**Sermon**

**Silence**

**Hymn: 'Transfigured Christ, none comprehends' (261)**

**Prayers of Intercession**

**Hymn: 'Colours of day' (167)**

**The Blessing**

**Hymns from 'Singing the Faith'**

### **LOCAL GANGS TAKE OVER METHODIST CHURCHES IN HAITI**

Mission Coordinator for the Methodist Haiti District\*, David Draeger gives us an update on the situation in Haiti and how it affects daily life.

It is hard to believe that another year has come and gone. Most days are like the one that precedes and the one that follows. The unending grief from continuous gang warfare, with murder,

rape, extortion, and robbery tends to lull us into complacent oblivion. It is sad to say that I do not get as much accomplished as I would wish because hope for the future dwindles. It seems easier to just go with the flow and do nothing rather than to try and change the unchangeable.

When I stop for a moment and look around, I see evidence that the Church, specifically Eglise Méthodiste d' Haiti [The Methodist Church in Haiti] is moving forward. There are some church buildings, like St. Martin and Croix d' Boquets, that have been taken over by the local gangs so that the people are unable to worship in their own sanctuary. Other congregations are unable to travel through gang-infested areas to their normal places of worship. At the same time, I see congregations like Frères and Jérémie that are relatively safe, and their worship services are full every Sunday. Throughout the whole country there is the same pattern; some churches are hampered by the gangs and others remain as a light in a darkened world.

But then I am awakened by the Hope proclaimed by Jesus Christ and my faith in the future is renewed. Throughout the year there are births and deaths, weddings and funerals, there are still confirmation classes and Bible studies where people are coming to Christ and as a result are professing their membership in the Methodist Church of Haiti."

## **PRAY**

For peace in Haiti

For an end to gang violence

For healing for victims

For compassionate, just and democratic governance

For the Methodist District Annual Conference at the end of January

For international support for Haiti to create Haitian solutions to Haitian issues

If you use the Methodist Prayer Handbook, you can pray for Haiti on day 11 (page 34) of the book.

Please keep supporting the World Mission Fund that serves partners with solidarity grants. These grants are given to a partner who is facing particularly difficult circumstances or an emergency situation. Although the grants may seem quite small in the global scale of things, they are a rapid response that express solidarity in partnership and can often open the door for our partners to receive other funding from around the world.

In 2023, your donations to the World Mission Fund enabled the Methodist Church in Haiti to support hundreds of people in their communities affected by the prolonged political and social crisis. With these funds, the church set up mobile clinics to tackle the outbreak of cholera and other health problems, as well as distribute dried food packages to support community health promotion.

\* The Methodist Church in Haiti is a District of the Methodist Church in the Caribbean and the Americas, one of 107 global partners of the Methodist Church in Britain.

## **ARMED FORCES LOCAL PREACHER SCHEME**

Joe Navoka has become the first member of the armed forces to be admitted to the office of Local Preacher in the Methodist Church having participated in the new Armed Forces Local Preacher Scheme. He was admitted at a service that took place at Castle Methodist Church, Colchester in December. The new scheme recognises the realities of life in the armed forces that may be a barrier to becoming a local preacher within the Methodist Church. Joe was admitted alongside Sally Crafer from the local circuit who had followed the more traditional pathway to become a local preacher.

Joe is serving in the Army as a Company Quarter Master Sergeant in 16(VHR) Military Intelligence Company based in Colchester, part of the 16 Air Assault Brigade Headquarters.



He began his faith journey as a young man in Fiji. He was raised in a Methodist household and joined the British Army from Fiji in 2000. "I saw it as a fantastic opportunity to explore the world," explains Joe." Coming to the UK as a 'military migrant' gave me the opportunity to write my own story by embracing the secular lifestyle that western society provided. However, I quickly realised that my calling was undeniable, and that God had not allowed me to travel too far from the humble roots of my family's faith.

"Our calling as Methodists is to respond to the gospel of God's love in Christ by living out its discipleship in worship and mission. I decided that I wanted to do this through becoming a local preacher. Even though it was difficult to juggle employment, family, ministry, and studies, the Armed Forces Local Preacher Scheme provided me with a wonderful opportunity to answer my call as a disciple of Christ while still serving as a soldier.

"My faith has been well received by the Army. In the military, we are exposed to experiences and emotions that you don't often find in civilian life. Soldiers are more spiritual than many people realise. Faith has played an important role in keeping my co-workers morally and ethically grounded when faced with some extremely challenging situations."

The Armed Forces Local Preacher Scheme is coordinated by the East Solent and Downs Circuit in Hampshire. They maintain a section for the military local preacher applications as part of the plan for all students.

Joe's tutor for the course was RN Commander Mark Barton, a Methodist local preacher himself who also sits on the Methodist Forces Board. He explained how military life can make becoming accredited difficult for those in the military. This is because service personnel frequently move location and many of the places and churches they attend are not in circuits, as no circuit looks after the ships at sea or those serving in bases abroad. Therefore, the practical parts of the course can be difficult to arrange. This new pathway allows the assessed services that all local preachers must undertake to be in garrison chapels and other military locations with the student able to undertake the elements in different places.

“The course uses all the same elements as the regular local preacher course with all the same materials and assignments. The circuit receives the relevant reports and the allocated tutor works with the student to ensure they have a mentor as they move around different garrisons, bases and ships.

“It has been a huge privilege to work with Joe and go on this journey together,” says Mark. “We come from very different backgrounds and worship styles, not least with Joe being Army and myself Navy but this has led to many great discussions.”

Revd Chris Preece is Superintendent Minister in the Colchester Methodist Circuit who supported Joe, “It is always a huge privilege to accompany people through their training to be a local preacher. For Joe, the Colchester Circuit facilitated the interviews and trial services as requested by East Solent and Downs Circuit, this has brought an important localised context to the armed forces scheme and a chance to involve him in the life of our circuit. We hope we can work with more candidates from the military community in the future.

“There are a number of pathways to becoming a local preacher in the Methodist Church and at the admission service, alongside Joe, we also welcomed Sally who had followed the more traditional local pathway.”

Sally Crafer describes herself as a “cradle born Methodist.” She felt that God was nudging her further and to share her gifts. “The Worship and Local Preacher Course is challenging, and the assignments were soul searching and encouraged creativity,” commented Sally. “I had already made the commitment to serve God with faithfulness when I exercised my call to be a local preacher. The service was a moment to celebrate but it only represents a stage along my journey of learning as a disciple of Christ.”

Joe hopes that other members of the armed forces will follow him to become local preachers, “I am honoured and humbled to be a trailblazer in answering my call. This is an accomplishment that I hope will inspire others who are called to both a life in the military and to a life of Christian service.”

## **FIVE REFLECTIONS REGARDING THE FUTURE OF THE CHURCH FROM MEXICO**

Holly Adams, the Evangelism and Contemporary Culture Officer for the Connexional Team, shares five reflections about the future of the Church that she brought home with her from a recent visit to Mexico.

It might feel backwards, in a blog about the future, to begin in the past. However, this is where we begin: in 1825, a group of Cornish tin-miners disembarked from the nearly-3,000-mile boat journey from England to Mexico, coming to work in the silver mines. With them, they brought Methodism, and along with missionaries from the US, they began to spread the Wesleyan tradition in Mexico.

It wasn't until the reform laws in the 1860s that allowed freedom of religion in Mexico that Methodism was formally established, and in 1873 the Mexican Methodist Church held its first service on Christmas Day. 150 years after that service, I disembark from the nearly-3,000-mile flight from England to Mexico, to celebrate their anniversary alongside our Methodist siblings. Throughout it all, I reflected on the things I felt God might be saying to our church in Great Britain and have pulled out five lessons I think we might be learning together.

### **Lesson 1: Participate in the ‘bigness’ of Connexionalism**

District Superintendent Rev. Ivan Jiménez chaired the committee for the celebrations, which included a conference on ‘Renewal and the Future’. Rev. Iván said: “The highlight of the week for



me was to be with people with so many differences of contexts and ideas. It was a symbol of renewal in our relationships.”

I was reminded, as I stood alongside representatives from the UMC, from Latin America, and from the six Conferences in Mexico, about the real beauty to be found in global Connexionalism. On Sunday morning I had the privilege of preaching in a small Methodist church in Mexico City that meets in an old factory building. As I was leaving, one of the members said to me, “a piece of your heart stays here with us”. And he was right. It is a deep privilege to be part of a global Methodist family, who will love and welcome you as a sibling. We are connected by a bigger story than difference or division.

Bishop Juan de Dios Pena, President of CIEMAL, (Council of Evangelical Methodist Churches in Latin America and the Caribbean) spoke at the Conference, saying: “we are all in a time of transition, that to survive we will need stronger Connexionalism.”

When I asked Rev. Iván what he felt God was saying to the Methodist Church in Mexico, at this important epoch in their Church’s life, he said: “that no matter what, we can come together and be united in worship.” For us, too, in Great Britain, often worshipping in small congregations, we need ‘bigness’ – to join with others, across our circuits, districts, and Connexion to witness and praise God’s presence and power.

How might our local mission be encouraged and empowered if we were to participate more frequently and meaningfully in the ‘bigness’ of Connexionalism?

### **More to follow next month**

#### **The following is the Plan for February**

HC= Holy Communion  
MC= Methodist Church  
Café= Café Worship  
T = Transport

PC= At Parish Church  
C& F= Coffee and Fellowship  
SB=Sunday Breakfast  
LUAL – Light Up A Light

#### **Post codes of Chapels**

Alverdiscott – EX31 3PT

Black Torrington – EX21 5QF

Langtree – EX38 8NF

Milton Damerel – EX22 7DJ

Parkham – EX39 5PG

Sheepwash – EX21 5NA

Bideford (High Street) – EX39 2AN

Buckland Brewer – EX39 5LP

Littleham – EX39 5HW

Northam – EX39 1BS

Shebbear – EX21 5SJ

Torrington – EX38 8AL

#### **Lectionary Readings for February**

4<sup>th</sup> Feb - Epiphany 5 Year B

Isaiah 40.21-31; Psalm 147.1-11,20c; 1 Corinthians 9.16-23; Mark 1.29-39

11<sup>th</sup> Feb - Transfiguration Year B

2 Kings 2.1-12; Psalm 50.1-6; 2 Corinthians 4.3-6; Mark 9.2-9

18<sup>th</sup> Feb - Lent 1 Year B

Genesis 9.8-17; Psalm 25.1-10; 1 Peter 3.18-22; Mark 1.9-15

25<sup>th</sup> Feb - Lent 2 Year B

Genesis 17.1-7,15-16; Psalm 22.23-31; Romans 4.13-25; Mark 8.31-38

	<b>Feb 4</b>	<b>Feb 11</b>	<b>Feb 18</b>	<b>Feb 25</b>
	<b>Ord 5</b>	<b>Sunday before Lent Cuttack Sunday</b>	<b>Lent 1</b>	<b>Lent 2</b>
<b>At Home Worship</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>Vidamour Zoom 6.30pm</b>	<b>Buckland Live Stream 10am</b>	<b>Buckland Live Stream 10am</b>
<b>Bideford 10.30am</b>	<b>Davis</b>	<b>Vidamour HC</b>	<b>Withall</b>	<b>Vidamour</b>
<b>Northam 10.30am</b>	<b>Spencer T</b>	<b>Macbeth</b>	<b>Vidamour HC</b>	<b>Harris</b>
		<b>SHEBBEAR</b>	<b>METHODIST</b>	<b>CHURCH</b>
<b>Black Torrington Friday 3pm</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>Vidamour on 9<sup>th</sup> Feb</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>D Watson on 23<sup>rd</sup> Feb</b>
<b>Langtree 11am</b>	<b>Hall-Tomkin</b>	<b>@Parish Church</b>	<b>Ley HC</b>	<b>@Lake</b>
<b>Milton Damerel 11am</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>Harris HC</b>	<b>Cafe</b>	<b>@Lake</b>
<b>Shebbear 10.30am</b>	<b>Bate</b>	<b>C&amp;F</b>	<b>United @Parish Church</b>	<b>Hill HC United</b>
<b>Sheepwash 11am</b>	<b>Ley</b>	<b>@Baptist Church</b>	<b>@Parish Church</b>	<b>Village</b>
	<b>TORRINGTON</b>	<b>WITH</b>	<b>ALVERDISCOTT</b>	<b>METHODIST CHURCH</b>
<b>Alverdiscott 11am</b>	<b>F Watson</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>Blackhall HC</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>Torrington 10.30am</b>	<b>Blackhall</b>	<b>Price</b>	<b>Booth HC</b>	<b>Davis</b>
	<b>WEST</b>	<b>TORRIDGE</b>	<b>METHODIST</b>	<b>CHURCH</b>
<b>Buckland Brewer 10am (PC)  10am (MC)  3pm (MC)</b>	<b>HC @Parish Church @9.30am   Circuit Consultation @3pm</b>	<b>D Watson @Parish Church</b>	<b>Anglican</b>	<b>Blackhall HC</b>
<b>Littleham 10.30am</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>Potter</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>Price</b>
<b>Parkham 11am</b>	<b>Hill HC</b>	<b>SB @10am</b>	<b>@Parish Church</b>	<b>HC @Parish Church</b>

## Activities, Events and Meetings - February 2024

Thu 01	LGBT+ History Month Coffee Morning	10:00-12:00	Alverdiscott
	Thursday Fellowship (Egypt, 500 years of History)	14:15	Northam
Fri 02	The Presentation of Christ in the Temple (Candlemas)		
Sat 03	Coffee Morning	10:00-11:15	Northam
Sun 04	Circuit Conversations	15:00	Buckland Brewer
Mon 05	Race Equality Week (until Sun 11)* 'Time Together' Toddler Group	09:30-12:00	Buckland Brewer
Tue 06	International Day of Zero Tolerance to Female Genital Mutilation Circuit Staff at District Retreat (until Thu 08)		Newton Abbot
	Toddlers Tune Time	09:00-10:30	Northam
Wed 07	Coffee Morning	10:00-12:00	Buckland Brewer
	Worship and Community Lunch ( <i>Booking for Lunch required</i> )	11:30	Northam
Thu 08			
Fri 09			
Sat 10	Coffee Morning	10:00-11:15	Northam
Sun 11	Church Action on Poverty Sunday Racial Justice Sunday Sunday before Lent Coffee and Fellowship	10:30	Shebbear (Lake)
	Sunday Breakfast	11:00	Parkham
	Circuit Online Worship	18:30	Zoom
Mon 12	Foundation Safeguarding Training	14:00	Buckland Brewer
Tue 13	Pancake Breakfast Circuit Lent Course	10:00-12:00 14:00	Northam Northam
Wed 14	Ash Wednesday Coffee Morning	10:00-12:00	Buckland Brewer
	Holy Communion with Ashing	19:00	Torrington
Thu 15	Circuit Lent Course Thursday Fellowship (RNLI)	14:00 14:15	Torrington Northam
Fri 16			
Sat 17	Coffee Morning	10:00-11:15	Northam
	Coffee Morning	10:00-12:00	Torrington
Sun 18	First Sunday in Lent Student Sunday Café Worship	11:00	Milton Damerel
Mon 19	'Time Together' Toddler Group	09:30-12:00	Buckland Brewer
Tue 20	World Day of Social Justice Toddlers Tune Time Circuit Lent Course	09:00-10:30 14:00	Northam Northam
	Circuit Book Club (Session 2: Lydia, Chapters 5-7)	19:00	Zoom
Wed 21	Coffee Morning	10:00-12:00	Buckland Brewer

Thu 22	Circuit Lent Course	14:00	Torrington
Fri 23	Christian Aid Lenten Lunch	12:00-13:45	Torrington Baptist Church
Sat 24	Coffee Morning	10:00-11:15	Northam
Sun 25			
Mon 26	'Time Together' Toddler Group	09:30-12:00	Buckland Brewer
Tue 27	Toddlers Tune Time	09:00-10:30	Northam
	Circuit Lent Course	14:00	Northam
Wed 28	Coffee Morning	10:00-12:00	Buckland Brewer
Thu 29	Rare Disease Day**		
	Circuit Lent Course	14:00	Torrington
	Thursday Fellowship (Admiral Nursing Team – Dementia)	14:15	Northam

\* Race Equality Week is an annual UK-wide movement uniting hundreds of thousands of organisations and individuals to address the barriers to race equality in the workplace.

\*\* Rare Disease Day is the globally-coordinated movement on rare diseases, working towards equity in social opportunity, healthcare, and access to diagnosis and therapies for people living with a rare disease.

### **A Prayer for Holocaust Memorial Day**

Saturday 27 January is **Holocaust Memorial Day**

The Revd Michaela Youngson, Assistant Secretary of the Methodist Conference and Connexional Ecumenical Officer, shares this prayer.

*God, source of all freedom,*

*on this Holocaust Memorial Day we pray to you.*

*We remember the freedoms stolen from millions of Jewish, Sinti, black, gay, disabled people and other groups despised by the Nazis in the lead up to and during the Second World War.*

*We remember the lives lost in that War and in genocides since, in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur.*

*We remember that today, in the UK and around the world, millions of people face prejudice, discrimination and hostility simply because of their identity.*

*God, source of all freedom,*

*help us to find courage to challenge attitudes of hate and intolerance,*

*help us to work for the protection of fragile freedoms that we often take for granted.*

*help us to see in others your image and to love our neighbours, that all might live in peace.*

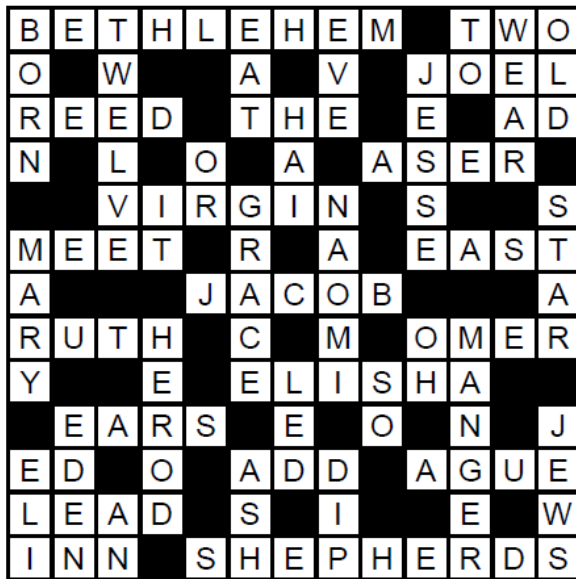
*In the name of Christ.*

*Amen*

# TEA TIME PUZZLE BREAK

December 2023 and January 2024 - Solutions

## CHRISTMAS CROSSWORD - SOLUTION

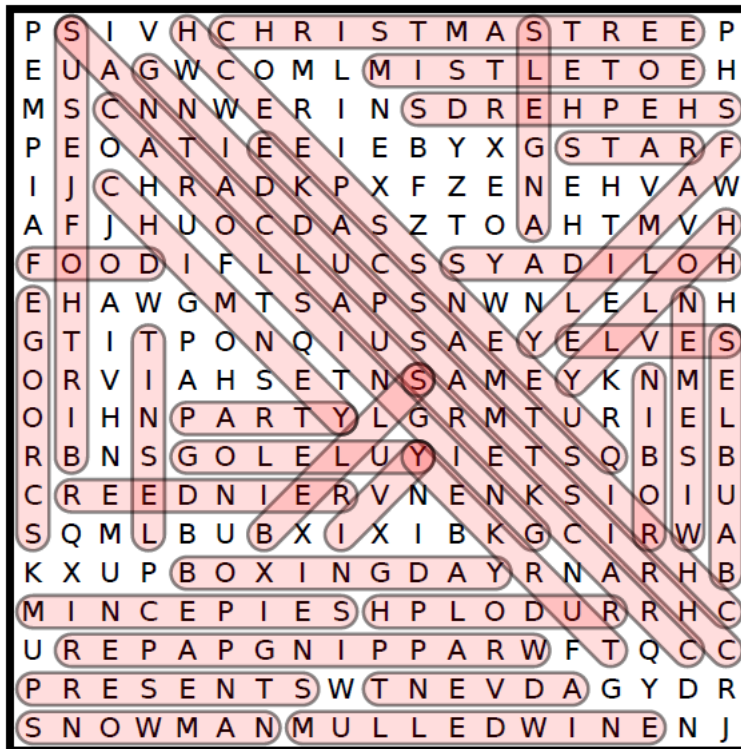


Across: 1 Bethlehem, 5 Two, 8 Joel, 9 Reed, 10 The, 12 Ad, 14 Aser, 15 Virgin, 20 Meet, 21 East, 22 Jacob, 23 Ruth, 25 Omer, 27 Elisha, 30 Ears, 32 Ed, 33 Add, 35 Aque, 36 Lead, 38 Inn, 39 Shepherds.

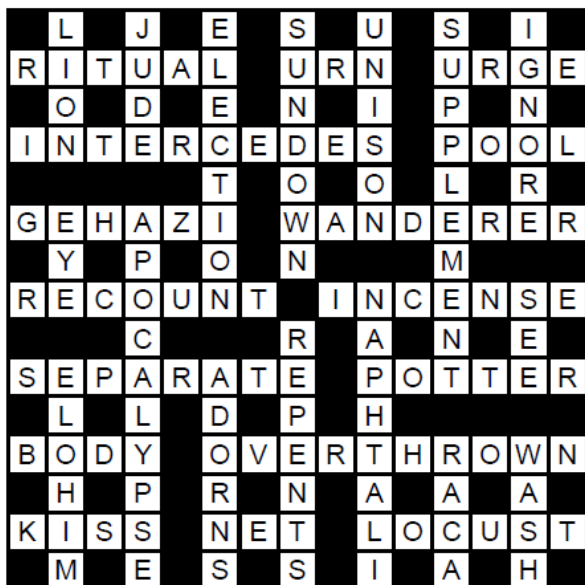
Down: 1 Born, 2 Twelve, 3 Eat, 4 Eve, 5 To, 6 Wear, 7 Old, 8 Jesse, 11 Hai, 13 Or, 16 It, 17 Grace, 18 Naomi, 19 Star, 20 Mary, 24 Herod, 25 Oh, 26 Manger, 28 Led, 29 So, 30 Eden, 31 Jews, 32 Eli, 33 Ash, 34 Dip, 37 An.

Bible Crossword by BiblePuzzles.org.uk

### Christmas Word Search – Solution



# BIBLE CROSSWORD II - SOLUTION

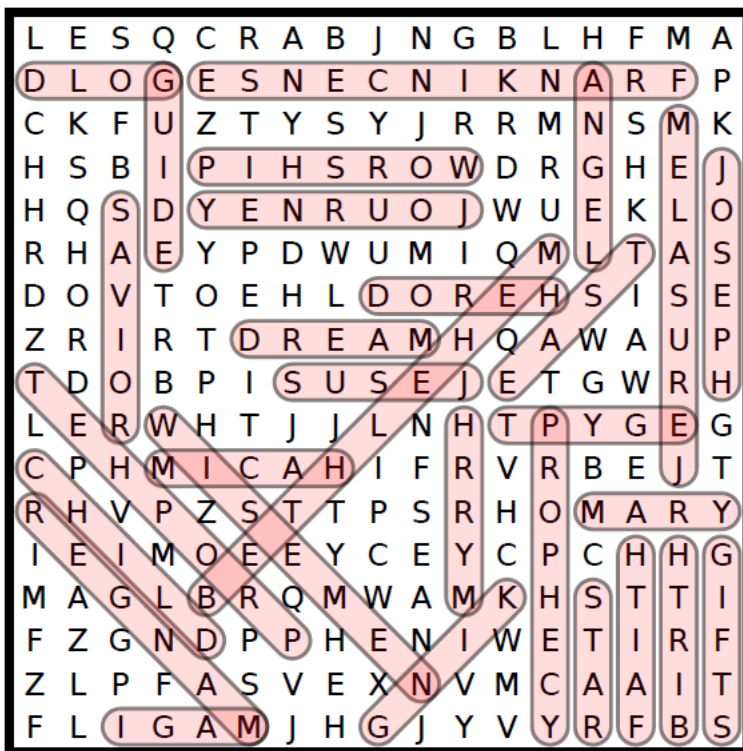


Across: 8 Ritual, 9 Urn, 10 Urge, 11 Intercedes, 12 Pool, 13 Gehazi, 16 Wanderer, 17 Recount, 18 Incense, 22 Separate, 25 Potter, 26 Body, 27 Overthrown, 30 Kiss, 31 Net, 32 Locust.

Down: 1 Lion, 2 Jude, 3 Election, 4 Sundown, 5 Unison, 6 Supplement, 7 Ignore, 14 Eye, 15 Apocalypse, 19 Naphtali, 20 See, 21 Repents, 23 Elohim, 24 Adorns, 28 Raca, 29 Wash.

Bible Crossword by BiblePuzzles.org.uk

## The Wise Men Word Search – Solution



## THE TRANSFIGURATION WORD SEARCH

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

**AWESTRUCK**

**BRIGHT**

**CLOUD**

**DIVINE**

**ELIJAH**

**GLORY**

**JAMES**

**JOHN**

**LISTEN**

**MESSENGER**

**MOSES**

**MOUNTAIN**

**PETER**

**PROPHETS**

**RADIANT**

**REVELATION**

**SHINING**

**TABERNACLE**

**TRANSFIGURATION**

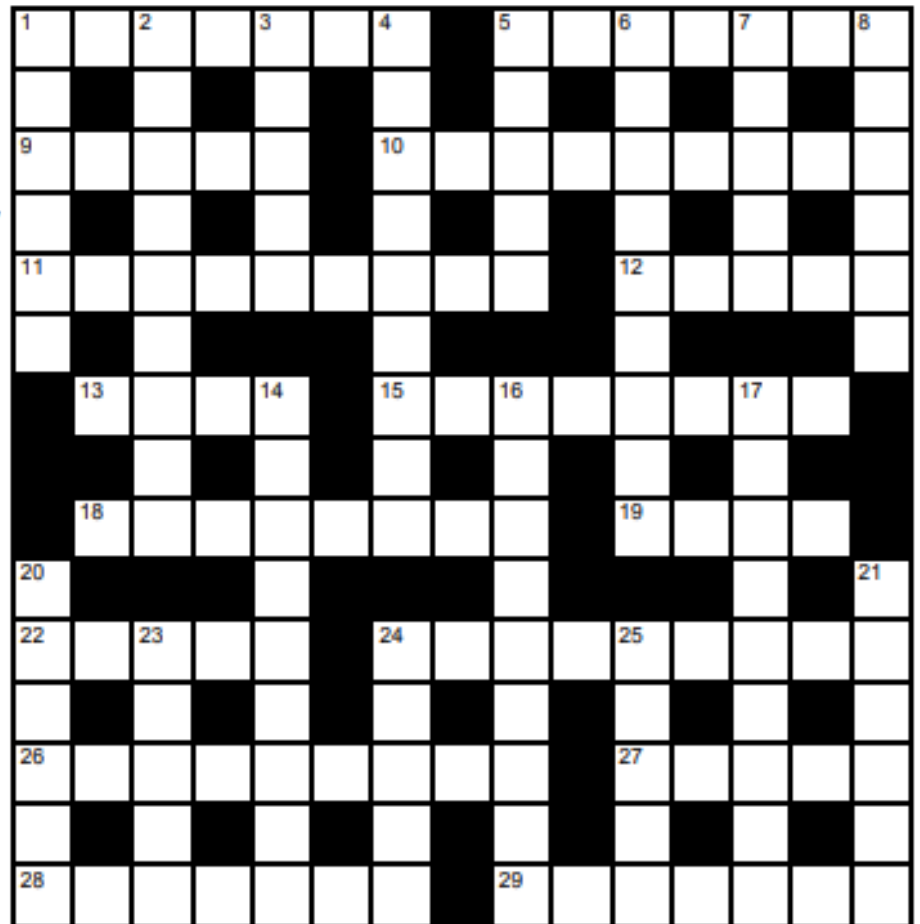
**VISION**

**VOICE**

# BIBLE CROSSWORD III

## Across

- 1 Desperation; Praised (anag) (7)
- 5 God, doing this on day 7 (7)
- 9 More refined (5)
- 10 One of Paul's letters (9)
- 11 Uncared for (9)
- 12 Encamp against city (5)
- 13 Charitable giving (4)
- 15 Consecrated (8)
- 18 Abraham received these (8)



by Philologus

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- 19 Jesus raised in 3 (4)
- 22 Colour found only in Ezekiel (5)
- 24 Someone who shields (9)
- 26 Continuance of life (9)
- 27 Grind together (5)
- 28 Unusual (7)
- 29 Athalia's cry (7)

## Down

- 1 Rely on (6)
- 2 Tail-ender (9)
- 3 Be in harmony (5)
- 4 Not wicked (9)
- 5 Reigned (5)
- 6 Contented (9)
- 7 Picture (5)
- 8 Good news (6)
- 14 The first, first-aider? (9)
- 16 Fradulent (9)
- 17 Slain by Moses (9)
- 20 They get the hump (6)
- 21 Parentless (6)
- 23 Prickly shrub (5)
- 24 300 bought ointment to anoint Jesus (5)
- 25 Keen-sighted bird of prey (5)