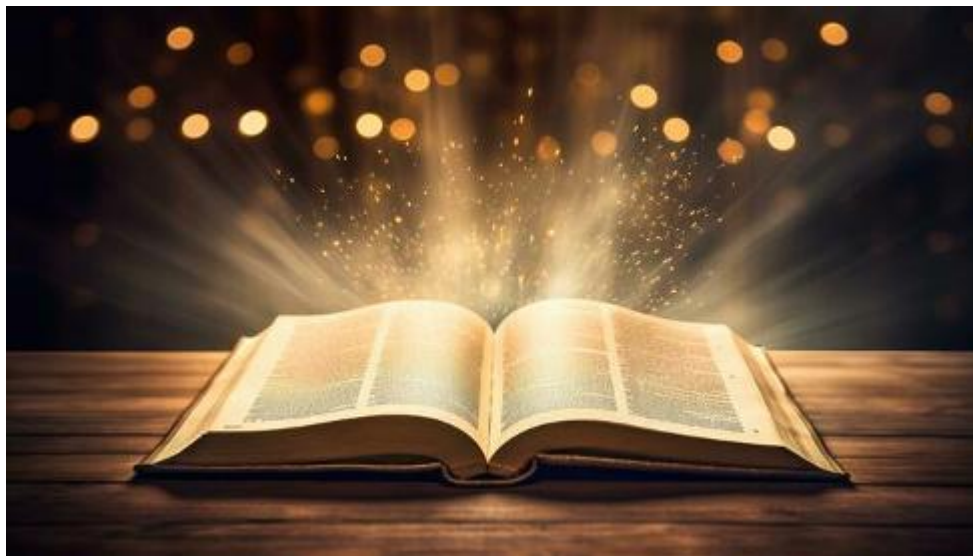


St George the Martyr Shirley



Christ in the Community

Bible Sunday 26th October



A Member of Churches Together in Shirley
October 2025 50p

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Prayer is doing. Doing is praying. No excuses for not doing.

Services at St. George's Church

Sundays 10 a.m. Sung Eucharist. Most Wednesdays 11 30 a.m. Said Eucharist. The Sunday Eucharist will also be available via live-streaming. See website or newsletter for access to the on-line option. There are shared worship opportunities throughout the week. Please see centre pages for details. We aim to avoid any changes, but illness, etc, may change things..

Priest in Charge: The Reverend Jennifer Walpole 2 The Grove,
West Wickham BR4 9JS 07947 585 326
020 8654 8747 rev.jennywalpole@gmail.com (Her main day off is Friday.)

Hon. Curate: The Reverend Hilary Fife 19 Greenview Avenue, Shirley, Croydon
CR0 7QW 07931 761320

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020 8777 5271

Reader: Mrs Liz Bebington 79 Shirley Way, Shirley, Croydon CR0 8PL
020 8777 4840

Website: www.stgeorgeschurch.co.uk
Parish Office: parish.office@hotmail.co.uk

Bible Sunday 26th October
Recognise the characters?



View from the Vicarage :Pumpkin spiced latte anyone? Rev Jenny Walpole



The month of October brings with it various resonances, there's a distinct crispness in the air, and the rustle of leaves underfoot are a sure sign that Autumn is here. Well-known coffee shops have returned to offering their seasonal drinks: hot apple teas and pumpkin spiced lattes. This year, October marks my first anniversary as Priest in Charge of St George's, Shirley. Thank you for being an inclusive and vibrant Parish, I love being your Priest. And now as I look forward to my second year, I will be more prepared and less surprised. Rather than asking myself: What on earth is going on here? I can simply say: Oh, that ole chestnut! One of the many things that I appreciate about at St George's is the variety of things going on. It is good that our liturgy changes to reflect that. In September we honoured the season of Creation and in October we celebrate Black History Month. With a nod to the flags that we will hang from our gallery when we celebrate BHM and to acknowledge the many flags that have been seen all over the UK on lamp posts and roundabouts, I share this poem **British** by Benjamin Zephaniah.

Take some Picts, Celts and Silures And let them settle,
Then overrun them with Roman conquerors.
Remove the Romans after approximately 400 years Add lots of Norman French to some
Angles, Saxons, Jutes and Vikings, then stir vigorously.
Mix some hot Chileans, cool Jamaicans, Dominicans,
Trinidadians and Bajans with some Ethiopians, Chinese, Vietnamese and Sudanese.
Then take a blend of Somalians, Sri Lankans, Nigerians And Pakistanis,
Combine with some Guyanese And turn up the heat.
Sprinkle some fresh Indians, Malaysians, Bosnians,
Iraqis and Bangladeshis together with some Afghans, Spanish, Turkish, Kurdish, Japanese
And Palestinians Then add to the melting pot.
Leave the ingredients to simmer.
As they mix and blend allow their languages to flourish
Binding them together with English. Allow time to be cool.
Add some unity, understanding, and respect for the future, Serve with justice
And enjoy. Note: All the ingredients are equally important. Treating one ingredient
better than another will leave a bitter unpleasant taste.

Warning: An unequal spread of justice will damage the people and cause pain. Give justice to all.

The wisdom of the young is often about energy, potential and a fresh perspective, seeking knowledge and leading by example in their communities.

That's what you get if you google "wisdom of the young". This what you get here this month to plug a temporary gap in the new series of articles by young people. The Bible offers various reflections on youthful wisdom: In 1 Timothy 4:12, the Apostle Paul advises young believers not to let any one look down on them because of their age. Instead, he encourages them to **"set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, and in purity."** This highlights the potential for young people to demonstrate wisdom through their actions and character. Youth is often seen as a time filled with opportunities for growth and learning. Ecclesiastes 12.1 reminds young people to

"remember your Creator in the days of your youth," emphasizing the importance of establishing a relationship with God early in life to build a strong foundation for the future.

From years of working with young people, I remember: A girl, saying "At least you know my name" - a gentle reminder that young people, like the rest of us, are individuals not just group members. A boy saying "When you are labelled C stream Secondary Modern (bottom of the educational pile), you tend to live down to that label". A girl quizzing all the God praising with "Does God need praise?" A boy with a CND badge saying "I might have no future if the destroyers get their way!" A girl reading the lesson in Coventry Cathedral in a way that out-ranked the cathedral magnificence. A boy pushing bare-legged through the nettles to find his sister, saying "I don't like her; but I love her". A girl losing the lead part in a play to another girl who was less of an actress but more physically suited to the part "If I can help you at all, just say",

A boy reflecting quietly on a slightly younger girl: "She hovers between 14 and 40". A girl rallying a rather despondent play cast, on whom the producer was making no impact, "Come on, we can do this better". A boy with a guitar picking up something I had said and turning it into the theme tune of a young people's conference. Girls and boys who brought in the outsider in a way the leaders were completely failing to do. *Thank God for the hope that lies in the wisdom of the young!*

Faith Partners



After his induction, Harry met the leaders of the other denominations

In a community where the majority of people are not formally signed up to a formal set of faith beliefs and practices (political or religious?), there is a certain pressure/temptation to join up with others who do have faith beliefs and practices—even if they are not wholly in line with your own convictions. Christians talk about "One Church, One Faith, One Lord"; and so sign up, with enthusiasm or with gritted teeth, to inter-church partnerships. Hence, Churches Together [in Shirley]. For many Christians (see the September magazine), which Church you belong to is a matter of taste more than conviction; and "We are right, and they are wrong" is not really an issue. Beyond that, though maybe less of a new norm, God-believers are willing to work together on an inter-faith basis: Jews, Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists, Christians, etc, getting together both to discuss things and to do things. Christian Aid works with Muslim partners in many parts of the world to bring help to people in need, irrespective of their faith or lack of it. We might still have a desire to convert "them", but we respect their beliefs and history, and are even willing to learn from them. After all, it would be very odd if God only partnered with Christians, and not with all those who daily, and for generations, talk to Him other than as the Trinity.

Jehovah's Witnesses and White Witches are perhaps not all that likely to be parts of wider faith groupings, but I remember a young JW friend finding herself next to a White Witch in the small group of girls at her school who had opted out of the (Christian) school assembly. White Witches would not dress like the witch in the cartoon; and they do not major in putting curses on people. JW's use much the same Bible as Christians do (and make much more use of the Bible than many Christians do), and they are often very conscientious citizens even though they tend to opt out of national and local politics.

Let's agree where we can agree; and do things together where we agree on what needs doing.

The Assumption of Mary: Oliver Clayton

The 15th of August is a feast day in both the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church. In the Church of England we celebrate the Blessed Virgin Mary, whereas in the Roman Church it is called the Feast of the Assumption of Mary. It might be tempting to think of this as two days celebrating the same thing, just with different names. The reality, as we shall see, is rather different.



The Assumption of Mary is not only a celebration of Mary, as the Blessed Virgin Mary, but also a celebration of her Assumption into heaven, which, according to the Roman Catechism, involved "The Immaculate Virgin, preserved free from all stain of original sin, when the course of her earthly life was finished, was taken up body and soul into heavenly glory, and exalted by the Lord as Queen over all things". The Assumption was adopted as a Catholic dogma as recently as 1950 by Pope Pius XII, but has roots much further back in history. As far back as the 4th Century, the bishop Ephiphanius stated that Mary never died, but was assumed like Elijah.

The example of Elijah is very important, as it acts as a precedent for the assumption. We might say this is all very well, but all this isn't mentioned anywhere in the Bible. The biblical justification is a bit thin on the ground, but the main passage pointed to by the Roman Church in justification is Revelation 12:1, "A great portent appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars." While it doesn't directly refer to Mary, this along with the previous verse referencing the Ark of the Covenant in heaven, is taken to refer to her, as Jesus represents the New Covenant, so Mary and the Ark can be linked. (Jesus Ascension not Assumption! He was in charge.)

The main tradition of this feast day is a bank holiday in most Catholic countries, including Poland. As it is in the middle of the summer holiday season there are not a great number of traditions associated with it, although some parishes do host processions. *Does Mary unite or divide Christians? We all owe her!*

Churches Together in Shirley

St John's with All Saints
St George's

West Wickham and Shirley Baptist

Shirley Methodist
Prayer Meetings



Our Lady's

Church of God Apostolic

Shrublands Christian Fellowship

(Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday)

Churches Together in Shirley

CTIS is offering an Advent Quiet Day on Saturday November 26th at St John's. Contact Brian McGinnis to book a (free) place.

For further CTIS information, see the Churches Together in Shirley website

Martyn Payne in BRF Prayer Diary

*Gracious God,
keep us teachable
so that we might be changed;
keep us vulnerable
so that we can be moved;
keep us breakable
so that we might be recreated.
Draw us back to our true identity,
which is to be like you,
who is always all about others and not yourself.
Amen.*

Birth, Death and Thereafter: Some Bible reflections

Oliver Clayton's article from Poland on page 7, about Mary of Nazareth, combines with the fact of October 26th being Bible Sunday to prompt a short Bible study on birth, death and what follows. Since the Bible doesn't deal with evolution, its Adam and Eve (first humans) birth stories (Genesis 1.26 Adam AND Eve) (Genesis 2.7 Adam) (Genesis 2:21-22 Eve) have God creating us without the usual formalities. The Bible has Adam and Eve living a very long time and having many children. Adam is said to have died at the age of 930 (Genesis 5.5). Eve's death and age at death are not reported.

Successive generations are reported as being born, living a very long time, and dying; with the possible exception of Enoch, who "one day was simply gone. God took him." (Genesis 5.24) Ascension is what I do, Assumption what God does.. The next, indeed the only other, going "up" without dying comes with Elijah, who "went up in a whirlwind into heaven". (1 Kings 2.11) Elijah has the credit for an Old Testament raising from the dead. (1 Kings 17. 17-24) Elijah's successor Elisha is also reported as raising a child from the dead. (2 Kings 4. 30-35)

The most famous pre-Jesus miracle birth (birth outside medical norms) is probably the birth of a son to Abraham and Sarah when Abraham was 100, and Sarah past normal child-bearing. (Genesis 21) But, in Genesis 25, Abraham re-married after Sarah's death and had 6 more children - perhaps by then he was 150 years old!

The Virgin Birth of Jesus is probably not prophesied in the Old Testament: "Young woman" rather than virgin. It is stated by Matthew (1.16-19) and Luke (1. 26-35). It is not asserted as a fact or a doctrine elsewhere in the New Testament: where Jesus, Son of God, son of Mary and Joseph, might be understood. (Our Creeds do say Virgin Mary.) Jesus raising the dead is recorded a number of times - probably most notably the raising of Lazarus. (John 11. 43-44) The death (and resurrection) of Jesus is central to the New Testament. The Ascension of Jesus is recorded in e.g. Luke 24.50-51. Mary's death is not reported in the New Testament. As regards Assumption, Revelation 12 does point to Mary, since "the child" is clearly Jesus. But "the woman" also represents reformed Israel and reformed Church. There is silence on Mary going to heaven without dying (or sinning). Feel free to believe this. Don't look to the Bible for support.

Some notes for you to note

- ♥ **Deadline for the November magazine, Sunday October 19th**
- ♥ **The Bible Reading Group: Monday evenings 7 30 p.m. To 8 10 p.m. On Zoom.** See notes on the parish website. We are reading the Book of Revelation.. Tom Wright's "Revelation for Everyone" commentary available for everyone who would like to join us. Tom says in his introduction: "*This book offers one of the clearest and sharpest visions of God's ultimate purpose for the whole of creation, and of the way in which the powerful forces of evil, at work in a thousand ways,....can be overthrown through the victory of Jesus the Messiah and the consequent costly victory of his followers,*"

A Celtic Blessing

May the blessing of light be on you—light without and light within.

*May the blessed sunlight shine on you like a great peat fire,
so that stranger and friend may come and warm themselves at it.*

*And may light shine out of the two eyes of you,
like a candle set in the window of a house,
bidding the wanderer come in out of the storm.*

*And may the blessing of the rain be on you,
may it wash upon your spirit and wash it fair and clean,
and leave there a shining pool where the blue of heaven shines,
and sometimes a star.*

*And may the blessing of the earth be on you,
soft under your feet as you pass along the roads,
soft under you as you lie out on it, tired at the end of the day;
and may it rest easy over you when, at last, you lie out under it.
May it rest lightly over you that your soul may be out from under it.
May it rest so lightly over you that your soul may be out from under it
quickly; up and off and on its way to God.
And may the Lord bless you, and bless you wholly. Amen.*

(Thanks to Andy Reynolds and TearFund.
Could you write your own blessing?)



No comment. Photograph by courtesy of Margaret Derrick

Bible Sunday requires a Bible Quiz—one which anyone willing to do a little research can complete. £20 prize for best answer by end of October—with bonus points for under 17's and over 70's
(Apologies for extreme gender bias in questions)

1. How many Bible books have a woman's name?
2. Who is the first woman named in the Bible?
3. What does her name mean?
4. Who is the second woman to be named in the Bible?
5. . What does her name mean?
6. Which Bible book is written from a woman's viewpoint?
7. Which Bible book do some scholars say was written by a woman?
8. There seems to have been only one female "Judge". Her name?
9. In the Gospel stories, a number of women had the same name. The name was?
10. She is remembered for getting the better of the strong man?
11. She seems to have been the first person to see the Resurrection Jesus?
12. Not named, but she used her position to try to stop the Crucifixion?
13. Were Peter and Paul both unmarried?
14. Paul names at least 4 women church leaders. Name any one of them?
15. King Solomon was proud to welcome the Queen of where?
16. One woman seems to have made Jesus change his mind. Her nationality?
17. How many women were there on the Ark?
18. Abraham, on an off-day, pretended that his wife was.....
19. How many wives did Abraham have (over time)?
20. Which woman in the Bible impresses you most? (No wrong answers are possible; but please give a brief explanation.)

If you want to do further research, try "All the Women of the Bible" by Lockyer

Poetry Page

Robert Frost: The Road not taken
(See Tanya White's article in the September Magazine)

*Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveller, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;
Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,
And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black,
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
I doubted if I should ever come back,
I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less travelled by,
And that has made all the difference.*



That odd business of praying: Number 169
resa of Avila (October 15th) Prayers

Te-

Lord, you are closer to me than my own breath, nearer to me than my hands and feet. Amen.

Lord, You know me better than I know myself

Let nothing disturb you,
let nothing frighten you,
all things will pass away.
God never changes;
patience obtains all things,
whoever has God lacks nothing.
God alone suffices. Amen.

Knowing that I am growing older and will someday be old. Keep me from the fatal habit of thinking I must say something on every subject and on every occasion.

Release me from craving to straighten out everybody's affairs.

Make me thoughtful but not moody; helpful but not bossy.

With my vast store of wisdom, it seems a pity not to use it all;
but You know, Lord, that I want a few friends at the end.

Keep my mind free from the recital of endless details; give me wings to get to the point.

Seal my lips on my aches and pains; they are increasing, and love of rehearsing them is becoming sweeter as the years go by.

I dare not ask for improved memory, but for a growing humility and a lessening cock-sureness when my memory seems to clash with the memories of others.

Teach me the glorious lesson that occasionally I may be mistaken.

Keep me reasonably sweet, for a sour old person is one of the crowning works of the devil.

Give me the ability to see good things in unexpected places and talents in unexpected people; and give, O Lord, the grace to tell them so. Amen.

Govern everything by your wisdom, O Lord, so that my soul may always be serving you in the way you will and not as I choose. Let me die to myself so that I may serve you; let me live to you who are life itself. Amen.

Fair trade goods are back!

The Meaningful Chocolate Company are again offering fairly-traded chocolate goods ahead of Christmas and especially ahead of Advent. Advent calendars come with a Christmas story book, aimed at telling younger people why Christmas matters; and, of course, with a Fairtrade chocolate for each day. Fairtrade goods do cost more than the equivalent non-Fairtrade high street offering, but that's the premium we pay towards trade justice.

This year's range: (see the poster in church for more info)

- The Advent calendar (milk or dark chocolate) - £5.95
- A chocolate orange (with Christingle features) - £3.50
- The Christmas Blessings bar (milk or dark chocolate) - £3.20
- The Christmas Angels (milk chocolate only) come in various "guises", being
 - 6 Angels Tree decorations, with a sticker set and a Christmas activity poster – £5.50
 - 6 Angels in a mug (with an angel image on the mug) – £9.95
- "Joy to the World" sharing box with 30 Angels and 30 story-activity posters at £30 (also available as 90 for £85)
- And for those who want to do this every year, there's a reusable Real Advent Calendar made by an Indian cooperative with 24 embroidered pockets, each with a chocolate and with the 2025 Activity Book at £27 (for those who already have the "basic" refillable calendar, the 2025 refill pack costs £5.50)

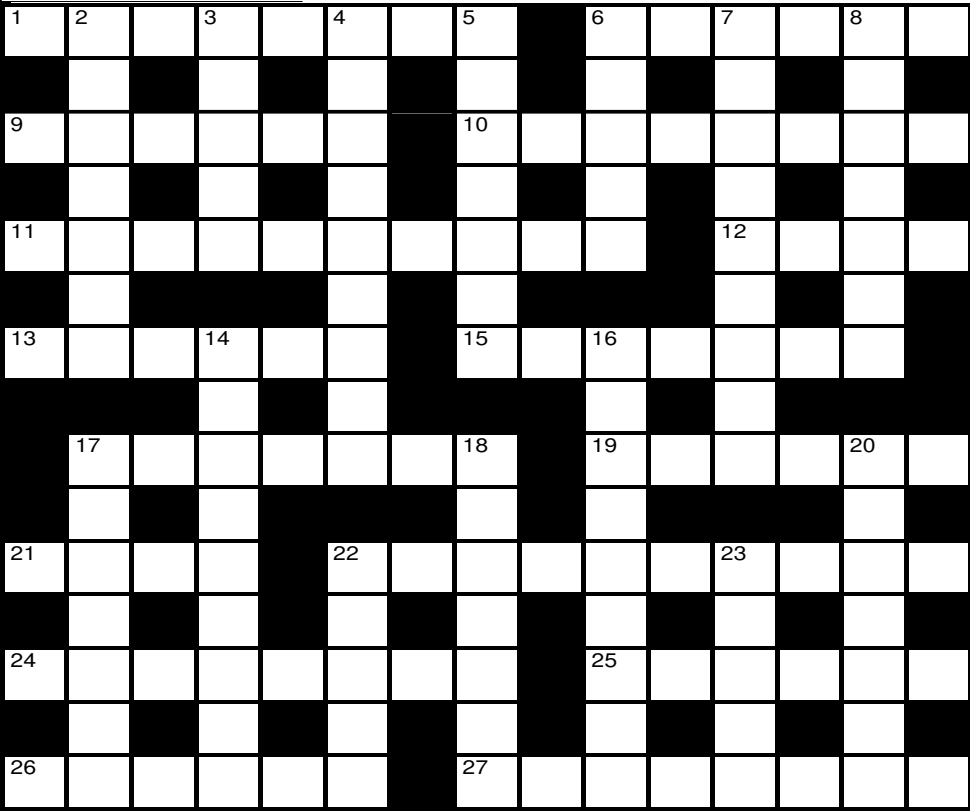


We are collecting orders ready to place a combined St George's **order on Sunday 9 November**, to ensure that delivery is made in time for Advent. Cash with order, please – or credit AP & ME Bebington at 56-00-46 a/c 01038893.

We hope to get enough orders (£89.10+) to avoid the £6 postage and packing charge on smaller orders. Any other discount we can secure by bulk buying will go to church funds.

CHURCH DIARY FOR OCTOBER 2025			Dates for All Souls S Safeguar Church C
▼ Morning Prayer: Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri 9.00am Zoom only			
			▼ W
			11.30am E Lady Chap
Sun 5 Oct TRINITY 17	▼ Mon 6 Oct	▼ Tue 7 Oct	▼ W
10.00 A Rocha Gold Celebration - Sung Eucharist	10.30am-12.00 Pop-In 9.30-11.30am Little Dragons 7.30pm Bible Reading Group		11.30am E Lady Chap
Sun 12 Oct TRINITY 18	▼ Mon 13 Oct	▼ Tue 14 Oct	▼ We
10.00 All-Age Sung Eucharist	10.30am-12.00 Pop-In 9.30-11.30am Little Dragons 7.30pm Bible Reading Group		11.30am E Lady Chap
Sun 19 Oct TRINITY 19	▼ Mon 20 Oct	▼ Tue 21 Oct	▼ We
10.00 Sung Eucharist	10.30am-12.00 Pop-In 7.30pm Bible Reading Group		11.30am E Lady Chap
Sun 26 Oct TRINITY 20	▼ Mon 27 Oct	▼ Tue 28 Oct	▼ We
10.00 Sung Eucharist	10.30am-12.00 Pop-In 7.30pm Bible Reading Group		11.30am E Lady Chap

your Diary: Service: Sunday 2 nd November 4.00pm ding Sunday: 16 th November 10.00am Christmas Fair: Saturday 22 nd November			
ed 1 Oct	Thurs 2 Oct	Fri 3 Oct	Sat 4 Oct
ucharist - el			
ed 8 Oct	Thurs 9 Oct	Fri 10 Oct	Sat 11 Oct
ucharist - el			
ed 15 Oct	Thurs 16 Oct	Fri 17 Oct	Sat 18 Oct
ucharist - el			
ed 22 Oct	Thurs 23 Oct	Fri 24 Oct	Sat 25 Oct
ucharist - el			
ed 29 Oct	Thurs 30 Oct	Fri 31 Oct	
ucharist - el			



- Solon 189
- Across**
- 1 Pilots advertise coast on the radio (8)
 - 6 Indicate again one wants to leave (6)
 - 9 Coolness of a bachelor eating fruit that has nothing replacing upstart (6)
 - 10 Artist, not mad, could be aimless (2,6)
 - 11 Insanely I sell off US petrol, coal and gas (6,4)
 - 12 Dismiss skipper after cricketer kidnapped heads (4)
 - 13 Guarantee grounded it's said (6)
 - 15 Particle in any structure (7)
 - 17 Performer could be tastier (7)
 - 19 Scoffed at beginnings of Jeff, Eric and Edie (6)
 - 21 Tranquil when Labour leader jumps in the river (4)
- Down**
- 2 Irreverent little child has promises to pay (7)
 - 3 Angry in transit (5)
 - 4 Becomes inspired when blondes and me get together (9)
 - 5 Kitchen utensil broke at Paul's (7)
 - 21 Tranquil when Labour leader jumps in the river (4)
 - 22 Rubbish newspaper to receive qualification (10)
 - 24 Issues of leader of insurrection moving back (8)
 - 25 Sleep with family linen (6)
 - 26 Sensual layer returns (6)
 - 27 Make committed cadet die in a horrible way (8)

- 6 Rustic sport attracts artist at the end of April (5)
 7 Rock singer opens with Jagger? (9)
 8 Marx almost has nothing to lose at the end of the day to be bad tempered (7)
 14 Threat when leaders of Utah like to irritate many a trade union member (9)
 16 Dad's upset over shortened tour that's been postponed for a while (9)
 17 Leave a group playing (7)
 18 Pleased to be shaken when passed (7)
 20 Selfish person will get it so wrong (7)
 22 Sound mature learner may make (5)
 23 Subject found when blowing into piccolo (5)

Thanks to Solon for puzzles
 For questions or help, contact Solon at
 Solon1across@gmail.com

Answers to September puzzles:-

Across: 1 Bless you, 6 Finite,
 9 Ashlar, 10 Hornpipe,
 11 Compositor, 12 Ring, 13 Et alii,
 15 Habitat, 17 Sparkle, 19 Roster,
 21 Thus, 22 University, 24 Organise,
 25 Ink-jet, 26 Look-in, 27 Enmeshed.

Down: 2 Lash out, 3 Salop,
 4 Yardstick, 5 Unhitch, 6 Firer,
 7 Nephritis, 8 Topknot,
 14 Leafstalk, 16 Berkelium,
 17 Scherzo, 18 Evil eye,
 20 Extreme, 22 Union,
 23 Sikhs.

Sudoku: 849157263/
 265438971/ 137692845/
 572986134/ 398541726/
 614273598/ 953714682/
 786325419/ 421869357

Reckless Driving

A reckless driver is seldom
 reckless for very long.

Statistics show that an average
 of 39,000 people are killed by
 gas annually. Sixty inhale it, forty
 light matches in it, and 38,900 step
 on it.

Bumper sticker: "Watch out for the
 driver in the car following me"

The menace is not the used car but
 the mis-used car.

Reckless Driving

A telephone pole never hit a car except in
 self-defence,

Don't drive as if you own the road - drive
 as if you own the car, and owe the other
 drivers.

Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in
 Judges 6:36 - 7:8, 16 - 22

God had told Gideon he would drive the
 Midianite invaders out of his country.
 32000 men had come to fight with Gideon.

Gideon asked God for proof.

If you
 are really going to help
 me, tomorrow this wool will
 be wet but the ground be dry.

God did as Gideon
 had asked.

But Gideon
 was still worried.

Could you show me again,
 but with the wool dry and
 the ground wet?

And God did.

God said
 The army is
 too big. They will think that
 they beat the Midianites,
 not Me.

So Gideon sent home
 all who were afraid -
 22,000 of them

There were still too many,
 so Gideon told them to
 drink from the spring.

300 scooped up water to drink,
 and the rest were sent home.

Each man was given a
 jar with a lit torch in it
 and a horn.

That night they
 surrounded the
 Midianite camp.

At the signal, they blew the
 trumpets, smashed the jars
 and shouted a war cry

The Midianites were so
 shocked they attacked
 each other, and then ran

The Israelites won
 without having to
 do any fighting.

A funny way to win a battle

A bit of essential background: the story begins with the potential Jewish army outnumbered 4:1 by the Midianites. This was at a time when numbers mattered more in battle than they do now—since hand to hand fighting was the norm. So you can understand Gideon being rather nervy about his God-given task, despite Gideon's belief that God was on his side. So he tests God out with a request for a couple of miracles. This sort of negotiation is not unusual in the whole history of relationships between humans and God. I have kinda mixed views about it: it could be taken to mean that if at first you don't succeed, you give up what you thought God was calling you to do. We know that immediate success is often not on offer. We know that if we give up at the first set-back, we are very unlikely to achieve very much. (After all, the Devil doesn't give up easily!)

The Bible is explicit that it is God not Gideon who wants the numbers of Jewish soldiers twice reduced. You can picture Gideon, who had been nervous about winning with 32,000 being very nervy about winning with 300—outnumbered by 450 to 1. Indeed he might have felt that if the test was being a bit scared, he ought to be going home himself.

The drinking test maybe makes sense. Some Bible texts get confused, but it seems to be that those who scooped up water from the river to drink stayed in the army, and those who stuck their faces in the water were sent home. I'm no expert on drinking from a river, but logic suggests that the scoopers (a) stayed on the alert for any enemy approach, and (b) were less likely to swallow something other than drinking water. (Though, in the days before porta loos, river water drinking was inherently risky.)

The non-battle technique looks quite convincing, especially if you know that trumpet blowing was normally an officer thing—so the Midianites might think they faced an army with 300 officers, rather than an army with only 300 soldiers. However, the full story in Judges provides an in-between of considerable importance. God had helped Gideon creep up to the Midianite camp and listen in to the conversations of the Midianite troops. So he had a pretty good idea what he needed to do.



The RSPB reports and invites

A much-loved garden bird, blackbirds have been a part of UK culture for centuries – from the nursery rhyme 'Sing a Song of Sixpence', to the Victorian poetry of Thomas Hardy and that iconic 60s chart hit by The Beatles. But now, a new threat has **blackbird populations plummeting** and scientists from the British Trust for Ornithology working to better understand the spread and potential impact of the disease responsible – the Usutu virus. Usutu virus has been linked to **mass blackbird mortality**, with UK birders – especially in the Greater London area – reporting that blackbirds are **noticeably less abundant** in the last few years. As the disease spreads, scientists and ecologists are calling on the public for help.

Male, female and Juvenile blackbirds shown above. We used to take them and their beautiful songs for granted in Shirley. No longer. The Usutu virus is spread by mosquitoes. We can help by keeping water containers refreshed rather than stagnant, and by cleaning bird feeders regularly.



Free Coffee Morning



Volunteers Needed!

We're looking for new volunteers to join us helping older people in our local community

**Join us at our Recruitment Coffee Morning
Shirley Methodist Church on
Friday 7th November 2025 - 10.30 -12:00
to find out more.**

Many Roles Available including:

Helping at our lunch club

Going out on the shopping bus

Film club

Driving clients to medical appointments

Helping with outings

Chatting to clients on the phone

Can't make the coffee morning? Why not call us on

0208 662 9599

Come and make new friends and get involved

Observations on our (Christian) pilgrimage

The fruit of the Spirit is not push, drive, climb, grasp or trample.... Life is more than a climb to the top of the heap. – *Richard J Foster*

He who passively accepts evil is as much involved in it as he who helps to perpetrate it. – *Martin Luther King*

Genuine art was never created for its own sake, it was always a means of worship, an affirmation of belief, an aspiration pointing beyond itself. The beauty of art is reflected beauty. – *Thomas Molnar*

Your Rock is Christ, and it is not the Rock which ebbs and flows, but your sea. – *Samuel Rutherford*

Beauty is God's handwriting. – *Ralph Waldo Emerson*

There is a living God. He has spoken in the Bible. He means what He says and will do all He has promised. – *J Hudson Taylor*

You can't build a church with stumbling blocks. – *Fred Beck*

Be united with other Christians. A wall with loose bricks is not good. The bricks must be cemented together. – *Corrie ten Boom*

The church is a workshop, not a dormitory. – *Alexander MacLaren*

Miscellaneous observations on everyday life

People who sing their own praises usually do so without accompaniment. – *Anon*

Confidence is keeping your chin up; overconfidence is sticking it out. – *Anon*

A man shows his character by what he laughs at. – *Anon*

There is no better proof of friendship than to help our friends with their burdens. – *Augustine*

Knowing is not enough; we must apply. Willing is not enough; we must do. – *J. Wolfgang*

Activity which lacks thought is blind. – *John Murray*

I not only use all the brains I have, but all I can borrow. – *Woodrow Wilson (US President 1913-1921)*

Sharp words make more wounds than surgeons can heal. – *Anon*

Man is the only animal that blushes. Or needs to. – *Mark Twain*

Half our mistakes in life arise from feeling where we ought to think, and thinking where we ought to feel. – *J Churton Collins*

Interest does not tie nations together; it sometimes separates them. But sympathy and understanding does unite them. – *Woodrow Wilson*



"Good news on the lottery-funding for the organ repairs. Vicar – three of our numbers came up for £25!"

Money and Mission

Money is a sensitive issue in church as in other contexts. Listening to a 10th/11th Century story on an audio book shows up the sensitivities at that time - when the obligation to fund the church was much more widespread, and most ordinary folk lived a hand to mouth existence which left little to spare for the church plate.

Some individuals and some groups and some churches do practice tithing. The term "tithe" is derived from the Old English word "teogotha," meaning "tenth." In biblical terms, tithing refers to the practice of giving 10% of one's income or resources

to support the church or religious community. Tithing has a rich history, seen throughout both the Old and New Testaments. Abraham offered a tenth of his spoils of war to the priest Melchizedek Genesis 14: 18-20. Under Mosaic Law, the Israelites were required to give a tenth of their crops, livestock, and income as an offering to the Lord, which encouraged cheerful, voluntary giving.

Nowadays, tithing usually supported the Levites—Leviticus 27: 30-32. The New Testament does not command tithing in the same way as the Old Testament, it emphasizes generosity and giving from the heart. Jesus praised the widow's offering as an act of true faith, and Paul refers to cash income (not property/livestock), but one tenth of gross income or net income? The wage earner only gets net income (after paying tax), and most people would argue that, realistically, tithing must relate to income net of all "essential" expenses. You can't transfer rent or mortgage money to the church; and family starving to fund church? Particularly when many church-going individuals are not part of a church-going whole family, a realistic approach to church funding is probably to look at church funding in the context of a broader charity-funding budget. As with (other) charities, the church has to justify its claims on your funding: collective projects, not pet projects. In the case of the Church of England, we should not rely on previous generations to fund our faith in action.

Organisations

St George's Table Tennis Club (in the Church Hall)

Tuesdays 8—10 p.m. Doubles Table Tennis. £3 per evening, including refreshments. New members welcome. Contact Ron 020 8656 9176, Ken 020 8654 3233.

Whist Drive (in the Church Hall)

Wednesdays 7 45p.m. Inquire in Hall Wednesday 7 - 7 45 p.m.

Medau (in the Church Hall)

Tuesdays 1.30-3.00p.m Mrs Gammon 01689 815646

Shirley Neighbourhood Care Scheme

020 8662 9599

info@shirleyneighbourhoodcare.co.uk

Your Local Councillors and Safer Neighbourhood Police Teams The dividing line between Shirley North and South Wards is roughly the Wickham Road, but some roads at the Croydon end on the south side of Wickham Road (St John's parish) are in Shirley North Ward

Shirley South Ward - Councillors: Jason Cummings (020 8651 2575) and Scott Roche (07783 152370) **Police Contact:** Phone 0208 721 2469 Email SNMailbox.ShirleySouthSNT@met.police.

Shirley North Ward - Councillors: Sue Bennett (0208 768 0561), Richard Chatterjee (07710 183564) and Mark Johnson (07716 092484). **Police Contact:** Email SNMailbox.ShirleyNorthSNT@met.police.uk Phone: 0208 721 2474.

URGENT 999 (Other crime reports 101)

Luck

*A rabbit's foot is a poor substitute for horse sense;
and it didn't do the rabbit much good.*

Good luck often has the odour of perspiration about it.

Organisations

St George's Church Hall Bookings -

Mrs Jan Payne 020 8776 0185

Overseas Missions Committee

Mr Brian McGinnis, Ms Pauline Russell 020 8654 6190

Georgettes

Contact Mrs Jan Payne 020 8776 0185

Beavers Boys and Girls age 6 to 8 approx. Mr Darren Hawken 07903 399185
Wednesdays 5-6.15 p.m. 31stcroydonscoutgroup@gmail.com

Cubs Boys and Girls age 8 to 10.5 approx. Mr Darren Hawken 07903 399185
Wednesdays 6.30-8.00 p.m. 31stcroydonscoutgroup@gmail.com

Scouts Boys and Girls age 10.5 to 14.5 approx. Mr Darren Hawken 07903 399185
Thursdays 6.30 - 8 p.m. 31stcroydonscoutgroup@gmail.com

Beavers, Cubs and Scouts are currently meeting at Pinewood Scout Activity Centre

Rainbows (Church Hall) Girls age 5 to 7

Tuesdays 5 - 6p.m. Mrs Ruth Clery 020 8651 4116
07702 870030

Brownies (Church Hall) Girls age 7 to 10

Tuesdays 6.15-7.30p.m. Miss Sheila Fenner 020 8655 0023
fenner240@btinternet.com

Guides (in the Church Hall) Girls age 10 to 16

Fridays 6.00 -7 30p.m. Mrs Ruth Clery 020 651 4116
07702 870030

Pop In (in the Church Hall)

Mondays 10.30-12noon Mr Ron Bright 07972 607823

Little Dragons (in the Church) Toddlers 0-5

Mondays 9 30a.m. -11 30a.m. Mrs Mary Brown marylbrown250@gmail.com
07704311523

Luck

Industry is the mother of success - luck a distant relative.

Choice not chance determines destiny.

Luck always seems to be against the man who depends on it.

St. George's Church Directory

Churchwarden: Mrs Jan Turner 020 8654 6552

Members of the PCC

Mr Alexander Baldwin-Smith, Mrs Jan Payne, Mrs Susan Wheeler, Mrs Katie Francis, Mr Steve Westray, Mrs Elizabeth Birchenough, Mr Owen Whalley, and those office holders who are PCC members.

Hon. Secretary PCC.

Mr Eric Baldwin-Smith

Treasurer

Deanery Synod Representatives (also on PCC): Mr Ray Wheeler Mrs Helen Aylward, Mrs Fay Westray

Electoral Roll Officer

Mr. Owen Whalley 020 8655 1349

Organist and Choir Mistress

Mrs Sophie Clayton-Wareham 07703554159

Safeguarding Representatives

Mrs. Susan Wheeler. 020 8777 5271
Dr Toyin Magbagbeola

Church Flowers

Mrs. Marion Sheehan 020 8777 7308

Environment (ECO) Group

Mrs Jan Turner 020 8654 6552

Magazine Editors

Mr. Brian McGinnis 31 Woodmere Avenue, Shirley CR0 7PG 020 8654 6190

Mrs A L Clayton

Accounts

Mrs. Janet Fitt 020 8777 7823

Adverts

Janet Fitt or Brian McGinnis

ADVERTISING DIRECTORY

Making friends with your Bible

The Monday Evening Bible Reading Group offers you Zoom joining in, or notes to support your own personal Bible reading. See Bible Reading Group section of church website and page 10.

Shirley Neighbourhood Care

St George's Church

Elstan Way

The Glade

CR0 7PR

020 8662 9599

info@shirleyneighbourhoodcare.co.uk

Weekday mornings 10 a.m.—12 30

Phone Sockets/Broadband

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FULLY INSURED

G. NUGENT 07845 705900

Gifts to share?

if you feel that St George's is not doing something it should be doing, or that you have a gift to offer/ share that is not being used by St George's, please do not keep your mouth shut!

Prayers on weekdays

Tuning into God doesn't require a minimum number of people: one to One is fine.! But if you want prayer company, there are Zoom prayers at 9 a.m. Monday to Friday. All are welcome.

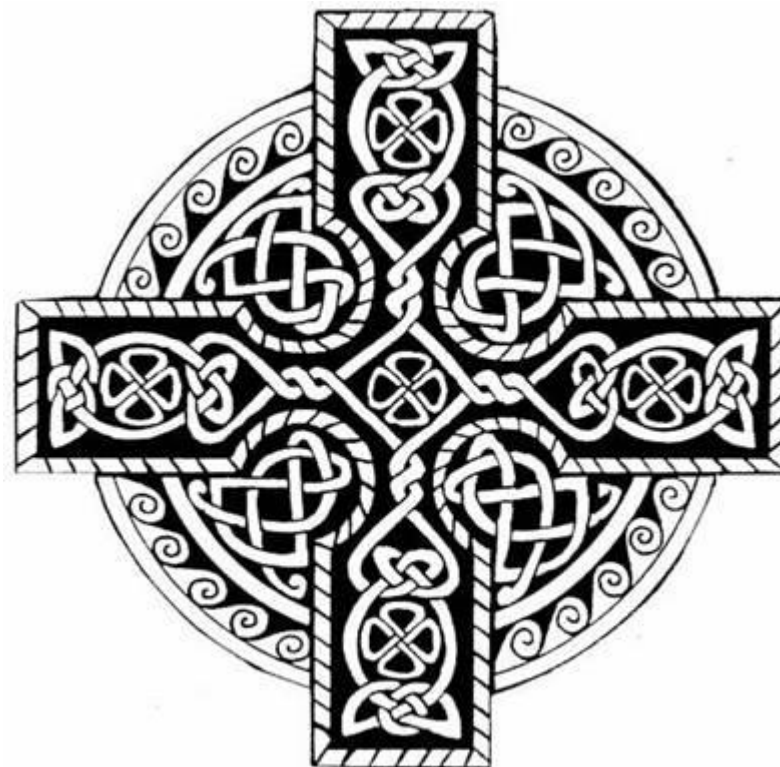
TV Repairs

Need a Repair, Installation or User Training, Then phone Peter your local TV Engineer on Telephone: 078855 09319

Look

Do you want to know a secret?
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For FREE Taster call 020 8688 0659

*+ Following Christ + Serving Community
+ Welcoming All +*



St George the Martyr

Elstan Way, Shirley, Croydon. (off the Glade)

parish.office@hotmail.co.uk

www.stgeorgeschurch.co.uk

(Charity Number: 1134140)