

# Holyhead Herald

June & July 2021

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The magazine of Holyhead Road United Reformed Church, Coventry

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*The*  
**United  
Reformed  
Church**

**Donations  
welcome**

# From our Minister

Dear Friends,

New beginnings and possibilities keep hope alive during times of challenges and holding on to the promises of God, allowing them to unfold and take shape in ways we cannot imagine, is the gospel we are called to talk about and share. God loves us and cares deeply about us and, when the injustices of life break us, he is still there, and God asks us to trust in the plans he has for us. We are not finished.



The Christian calling is to be committed to working together to demonstrate the life of Jesus in word and action and to speak about love, justice, peace and the care of creation. That wonderful passage in the New Testament from Philippians chapter 4 verses 6-8 tells us, "In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God."

May we add our heartfelt prayers for mission and an outpouring of God's Spirit in our communities and, like Peter on the day of Pentecost, may we be ready in prayer and through the reading of scripture to see what God can do in us, through us and around us.

God bless

***Love, Debbie***



Congratulations to Katrina Clifford (nee Sked), who has reached the final of *Preach* magazine's Sermon of the Year competition 2021. Katrina used to worship with us at Holyhead Road. She is now an Elder at Trinity URC in Wimbledon and is in training to be a Synod-Recognised Lay Preacher. The final takes place on 24 June 2021.



## Worship Leaders

**All services will begin at 10.30am**

June	6	Debbie Brown
	13	Debbie Brown
	20	Tom Baird
	27	Debbie Brown
July	4	Debbie Brown
	11	Debbie Brown
	18	Tony Pedley
	25	Debbie Brown
August	1	Debbie Brown

***Please remember: we need to comply with Government regulations and guidance to ensure that we have Covid-19 secure arrangements for worship. Therefore, until restrictions are eased, you will be required to wear face coverings at all times whilst you are in the church building and must maintain social distancing. Sadly, we are not permitted to sing. If you wish to chat to your church friends, please do so outside the building. Please follow the guidance offered by the stewards.***

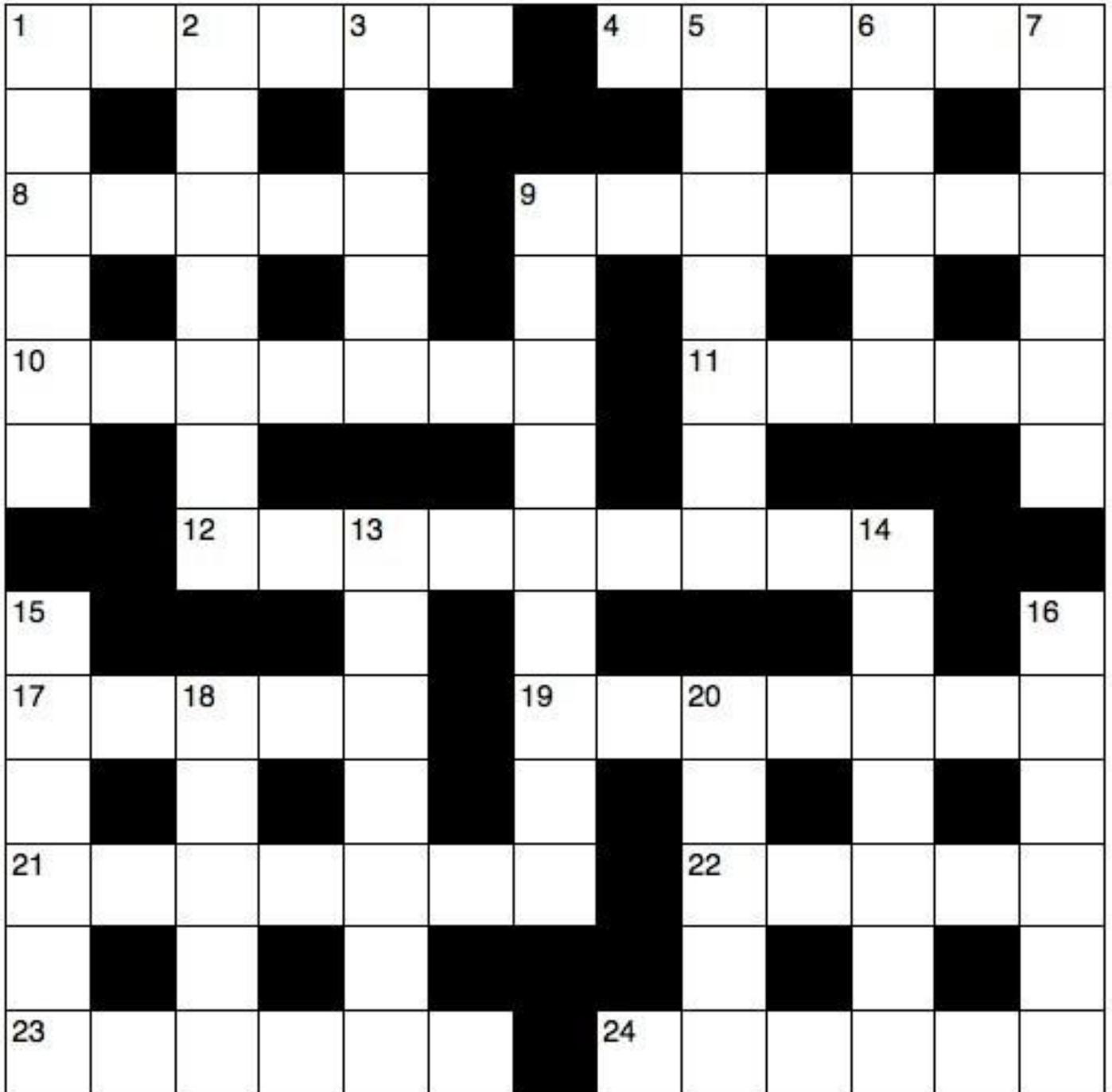
# Crossword Clues

## Across

- 1 Military tactic used by Joshua to attack and destroy the city of Ai (Joshua 8:2) (6)
- 4 Place of learning (6)
- 8 'When Moses' hands grew — , they took a stone and put it under him and he sat on it' (Exodus 17:12) (5)
- 9 Unpleasant auguries of the end of the age, as forecast by Jesus (Matthew 24:7) (7)
- 10 Stronghold to which girls in King Xerxes' harem (including Esther) were taken (Esther 2:8) (7)
- 11 Where Saul went to consult a medium before fighting the Philistines (1 Samuel 28:7) (5)
- 12 Propitiation (Hebrews 2:17) (9)
- 17 Turn away (Jeremiah 11:15) (5)
- 19 So clear (anag.) (7)
- 21 'I have just got — , so I can't come': one excuse to be absent from the great banquet (Luke 14:20) (7)
- 22 Long weapon with a pointed head used by horsemen (Job 39:23) (5)
- 23 Musical beat (6)
- 24 What the Israelites were told to use to daub blood on their door-frames at the first Passover (Exodus 12:22) (6)

## Down

- 1 Fasten (Exodus 28:37) (6)
- 2 Art bite (anag.) (7)
- 3 'The people of the city were divided; some — with the Jews, others with the apostles' (Acts 14:4) (5)
- 5 Contend (Jeremiah 12:5) (7)
- 6 Possessed (Job 1:3) (5)
- 7 Sheen (Lamentations 4:1) (6)
- 9 'You love evil rather than good, — rather than speaking the truth' (Psalm 52:3) (9)
- 13 Large flightless bird (Job 39:13) (7)
- 14 They were worth several hundred pounds each (Matthew 25:15) (7)
- 15 'A — went out to sow his seed' (Matthew 13:3) (6)
- 16 How Jesus described Jairus's daughter when he went into the room where she lay (Mark 5:39) (6)
- 18 The part of the day when the women went to the tomb on the first Easter morning (John 20:1) (5)
- 20 Narrow passageway between buildings (Luke 14:21) (5)



## Dates for your Diary

Coffee mornings: fortnightly on Tuesdays (11.00am) from 15 June onwards

Prayer meetings: last Wednesday in each month (7.00pm)

6 June Environment Sunday [www.arocha.org.uk](http://www.arocha.org.uk)

6 June Tax Justice Sunday [www.catj.org.uk](http://www.catj.org.uk)

14 – 20 June Refugee Week [www.refugeeweek.org.uk](http://www.refugeeweek.org.uk)

26 June International Day in Support of Victims of Torture  
[www.fiacat.org/en](http://www.fiacat.org/en)

# Editorial Comment

I went on a long walk recently, to Honiley and back. I pondered on a number of things while I was out – after all, I did have a few hours to fill with thoughts!

I had felt that, when I got away from the built-up areas, I would find respite from all the noise: from traffic, music, building work (it's amazing how much of that is going on, though by far the most dilapidated property was in Kenilworth!). However, I was struck by how much sound carries in the countryside. At one point I even thought that a bike approaching me from behind was a car, and birdsong and the sound of the wind in the trees can be quite loud too.



As if I didn't already know it, I observed that God's creation is both beautiful and tremendously varied. I found myself bursting into song at one point – fortunately, nobody else was around! Whilst I do profoundly believe in the role of evolution, I don't understand how anyone can think that something so wonderful and intricate has been arrived at by chance, without some overarching, and divine, purpose and plan.

I also reflected on the fact that everything is very inter-connected. Whether that be different species in a food chain, or the interaction between people and their environment, there is very little that goes on in the world that doesn't have an impact on someone or something else.

Just on my walk, if I had made lots of noise, failed to close gates, or disturbed the various animals I encountered, it would have affected others. Most of our behaviour has some kind of an effect on others, either because of the things that we do or those that we fail to do. Some of those consequences might be obvious and immediate but others, such as the pollution from driving a car, might be more long-term – but no less significant and, possibly, more so.

As a result, isn't it self-evident that Jesus's summation of the law is the only sensible way: firstly, to love the Lord our God, with our whole being and, secondly, to love our neighbour as we love ourselves?

Is that the way we lead our lives, though, or do we rely on a concept of 'enlightened self-interest' as an excuse?

**Steve Powell**

# Who was the Apostle Peter?

Some churches remember Peter the Apostle on June 29th. But who was he? Well, he was full of faith, clearly loved by Jesus, but also had his flaws. So let's have a look at this man and what we can learn.

Peter was a fisherman. According to the Gospels of Matthew and Mark, when Jesus first met him, he was fishing with his brother Andrew. Jesus said, "Come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men," and Peter and Andrew immediately left their nets and followed him. Luke and John have slightly different versions but in all, Peter gives up home and livelihood to follow.

Peter was trusted. There are three occasions in the gospels where Jesus allows only Peter (and the sons of Zebedee, James and John) to witness things none of the other disciples saw.

Peter saw Jesus talking to Moses and Elijah. He declared impulsively, "Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you wish, I will put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah". While Peter was still speaking, God interrupted to say that Jesus was his son. Not long before this, Peter had called Jesus the Messiah. Now Peter's insight was confirmed: God hadn't just sent his people a saviour. He sent them his son.

Later, on the night he knew he would be captured, Jesus took his disciples to Gethsemane. He told them to keep watch while he prayed, and took Peter, James, and John further in. They were the only ones to see Jesus suffer in the garden, and his willingness to be vulnerable with them but not the others demonstrates their privileged relationship with him. The three of them struggled (and failed) to stay awake while Jesus prayed fervently, asking God to find another way to save his people.



Peter's name meant 'rock'. Jesus gave him this name when he first met him (John 1:42) and he later said that Peter would be the rock "on which I will build my church", solidifying Peter's position as a leader.

Peter was very human. After Jesus' arrest, although he wanted to be near, he was also fearful of suffering the same fate. As a result he denied knowing Jesus when challenged three times. As the cock crowed, Peter was devastated to remember Jesus telling him that this would happen. After the crucifixion he – like the other disciples – hid in fear.

After the resurrection, without Jesus physically there to follow, Peter returned to what he knew - fishing. According to the Gospel of John, when Peter saw the resurrected Jesus on the shore, he jumped into the water and swam to him. This shows how firmly he believed that Jesus had risen. It also again shows that he was impulsive!

After Pentecost, Peter, filled with the Spirit, lost his fear and spoke of his Master with conviction and great love – Paul described Peter as a “pillar”, and he is viewed as the founder of the church. In the last chapter of the Gospel of John, Jesus tells Peter, “when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go”. The author then remarks, “Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God”. According to church tradition, Peter was killed by Emperor Nero around 64 AD, after the Great Fire of Rome which he famously blamed Christians for starting. A second-century apocryphal text called Acts of Peter was the first record claiming that Peter was crucified upside down because he didn't consider himself worthy of dying the same death as Jesus.

So who was Peter? A passionate believer – but also a man who got things wrong! He was utterly human, experienced fear and elation, veered between misunderstanding and great insight, even when he was right beside Jesus. He was a gruff fisherman who became an eloquent spokesperson for God and His love for all. Peter's faith – Spirit filled after Pentecost – supported many others. He placed all his trust in God, facing good times and truly terrible ones firm in the assurance that he was loved.

What can we learn? We are as human as Peter was. We experience the good and the bad. We may not feel that we have the skills to serve...but if an uneducated fisherman can achieve so much, through faith, what might we achieve if we also put our trust in God?

Adapted from material available at [www.overviewbible.com](http://www.overviewbible.com)

# Quotable Quotes

Mission is not just something that the church does; it is something that is done by the Spirit – *Lesslie Newbigin*

Jesus didn't commit the gospel to an advertising agency; He commissioned disciples. - *Joseph Bayly*

Salvation is free, but discipleship costs everything we have. - *Billy Graham*

Nothing is ever lost by courtesy. It is the cheapest of pleasures; costs nothing and conveys much. - *Erastus Wiman*

Nature is the art of God. - *Thomas Browne*

The reason some people know the solution is because they created the problem. - *Kelly Fordyce*

To reply to a nasty remark with another nasty remark is like trying to remove dirt with mud. - *Anon*

The ability to speak several languages is an asset, but to be able to hold your tongue in one language is priceless. - *Anon*

Job cursed the day he was born. Most babies can't even speak till they are at least 18 months old. - *Anon*

People treat the Ten Commandments like a history test - they attempt only three. - *Anon*

## Church notices that didn't quite come out right....

The preacher for Sunday next will be found hanging on the notice board in the porch.

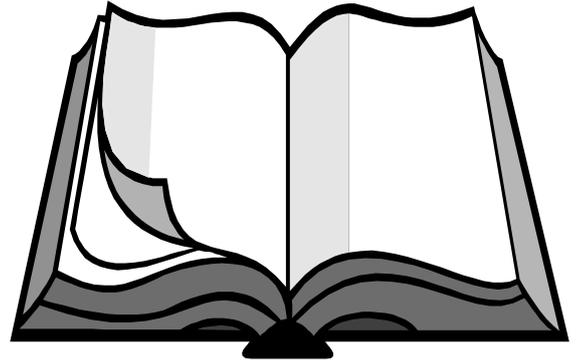
When you have emptied the teapot, please stand upside down in the sink.

There will be a procession in the grounds of the monastery next Sunday afternoon. If it rains in the afternoon, the procession will take place in the morning.

# Bible study notes for 6 June

## Genesis 3.8-15

When God calls to Adam 'Where are you?', we can immediately sense a rupture in this ancient story.



Until this point, there has been harmony and community between the man, the woman and God. There has been a singleness of purpose and an ease of communication. All that has changed. Now there is separation and self-consciousness. Adam and Eve want to hide, not only their naked bodies, but also the truth about what they have done. A fissure has appeared between human and divine presence, between God's will and human choices. There can never be a return to that previously unconscious, instinctive communion. From this point onwards, for all human beings, a relationship with God will always involve repentance and redemption, with the knowledge of being not only welcomed but also rescued. Communion will in one sense be deeper, as we know only too well what it means to be alienated and lost, but it will always be bittersweet. This story describes our human condition – self-conscious, struggling to make decisions, inclined to blame one another for our mistakes, mortal, and separate from the direct presence of God.

## Psalm 130

The psalmist expresses confidence that God brings forgiveness, steadfast love and the power to redeem. Rather than hiding from God, as Adam and Eve did, the psalmist is determined to wait for God. Indeed, waiting in trust is the only plan. 'My soul waits' expresses the intensity of the longing and hope; 'more than those who watch for the morning' brings to mind a night watchman waiting for the moment he can go home, or a mother sitting by a sick child, waiting for the dawn.

## 2 Corinthians 4.13-5.1

Paul has confidence in a kind of community that extends beyond what is obvious and visible: grace flows to more and more people as God, through the power that raised Jesus from the dead, gathers people to be in community with God and with one another. This promised fellowship will happen, even if physical death intervenes ('the earthly tent we live in is destroyed'). Relationships exist in a dimension beyond the visible. So, Paul can declare: 'We do not lose heart.' There is nothing trite about this

confidence, however; verse 13 contains a quotation from Psalm 116 – the words spoken in faith here are: ‘I am greatly afflicted.’ This kind of faith does not require a denial of reality, simply a sense of a greater reality alongside and beyond the difficulties.

### **Mark 3.20-35**

This passage calls us to be brave in facing the conflict that can arise in response to one who brings God’s blessing to others. In the early part of chapter 3, Jesus healed many people, but he also called out the religious leaders in the synagogue on their legalism – they cared more about sabbath regulations than they did about the health of a worshipper. His question – ‘Is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the sabbath, to save life or to kill?’ (v.4) – has an obvious answer, but they resist it.

They now see Jesus as their enemy. What happens next is very instructive. It is impossible to claim that the deeds of Jesus are not powerful, so they assert a conspiracy theory for the source of his power: ‘He has Beelzebul, and by the ruler of the demons he casts out demons.’ Don’t trust him, this is all a con, his power is evil – this sounds just like a comment on social media rubbishing an individual or a movement! And it reminds us that there is nothing new under the sun. Hatred will always find a cover story and a way to dismiss the truth rather than respond to it. Jesus responds to them with logic and a warning. He points out that their accusation makes no sense, but that in closing their hearts and minds to the voice of God they are risking their ability to listen to God in the future. After all, if the Holy Spirit is ‘an unclean spirit’, who is left to call us to repentance? Jesus’ family members also spark a conflict, this time through their desire to protect him and keep him safe within their circle of identity. Yet Jesus resists their claims too. Creating a new community to serve God is his only criterion for his mission.

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<p><b>Crossword Answers</b></p> <p><b>ACROSS:</b> 1, Ambush. 4, School. 8, Tired. 9, Famines. 10, Citadel. 11, Endor. 12, Atonement. 17, Avert. 19, Oracles. 21, Married. 22, Lance. 23, Rhythm. 24, Hyssop.</p> <p><b>DOWN:</b> 1, Attach. 2, Birretta. 3, Sided. 5, Compete. 6, Owned. 7, Lustre. 9, Falsehood. 13, Ostrich. 14, Talents. 15, Farmer. 16, Asleep. 18, Early. 20, Alley.</p>
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# Lectionary Readings

If you would like to “read ahead”, in preparation for worship, the lectionary readings for the next few weeks are as follows:

6 June	Genesis 3.8–15	Psalms 130	2 Cor. 4.13–5.1	Mark 3.20–35
13 June	Ezekiel 17.22–24	Ps. 92.1–4, 12–15	2 Cor. 5.6–17	Mark 4.26–34
20 June	Job 38.1–11	Ps. 107.1–3, 23–32	2 Cor. 6.1–13	Mark 4.35–41
27 June	Lament. 3.23–33	Psalms 30	2 Cor. 8.7–15	Mark 5.21–43
4 July	Ezekiel 2.1–5	Psalms 123	2 Cor. 12.2–10	Mark 6.1–13
11 July	Amos 7.7–15	Psalms 85.8–13	Ephesians 1.3–14	Mark 6.14–29
18 July	Jeremiah 23.1–6	Psalms 23	Ephesians 2.11–22	Mark 6.30–34, 53–56
25 July	2 Kings 4.42–44	Psalms 145.10–18	Ephesians 3.14–21	John 6.1–21
1 August	Exodus 16.2–4, 9–15	Psalms 78.23–29	Ephesians 4.1–16	John 6.24–35
8 August	1 Kings 19.4–8	Psalms 34.1–8	Ephesians 4.25–5.2	John 6.35, 41–51
15 August	Proverbs 9.1–6	Psalms 34.9–14	Ephesians 5.15–20	John 6.51–58
22 August	Joshua 24.1–2a, 14–18	Psalms 34.15–22	Ephesians 6.10–20	John 6.56–69
29 August	Deut. 4.1–2, 6–9	Psalms 15	James 1.17–27	Mk 7.1–8, 14–15, 21–23