



Pier Avenue
Baptist Church

FAMILY MAGAZINE

2026 FEBRUARY





If this is your first time at Pier Avenue Baptist Church or even your second or third visit, we are so glad that you are here. Someone should come to chat to you but if, amongst all the rushing about, they don't, then please say hello to one of the people with a card hanging around their necks. It is always a delight when we have new friends to join us

Deuteronomy 11:14: "Then I will give you rain in its season, and the ground will yield its crops and the trees their fruit."

A very big thank you goes to all the contributors of the magazine. I am so grateful for the time and effort put in to write these reports and send photographs. There wouldn't be a magazine without them. A special thank you to Mel for the puzzles and her extra help with articles. The next issue is planned for two months time.



Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find
knock and the door will be opened to you.

MATTHEW 7:7

M ichelle's usings



Say The Lord's Prayer with Gusto!

Many people, even those who aren't regular church-goers, know The Lord's Prayer off by heart. Whether we prefer the traditional or contemporary version, the essence of the prayer, which the Gospel of Matthew tells us that Jesus taught his disciples, is this:

“Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.”

(Matthew 6: 9 – 13, NIV)

It has been pointed out that this famous prayer should actually be called 'The Disciple's Prayer', rather than 'The Lord's Prayer' as it is us, as followers and students of Jesus, who need it, rather than the Lord himself! It forms a part of Jesus' core teaching known as The Sermon on the Mount or the Beatitudes (Blessings).

There's one thing that frustrates me about how churches and other organisations, such as schools, sometimes include this prayer: when it is recited in a dull monotone. This is Jesus' manifesto, a call for the transformation and redemption of the world, not a boring piece of homework!!

Although it is comforting to say these well-known words, it should not make us feel cosy but equip us, like putting on armour, for fighting the fight of God's mission!

Jesus called his father 'Abba', which was an intimate, although respectful way, for Jews to speak to their fathers, who were meant to be loving, trustworthy and dependable. Therefore, we are invited to approach our perfect, heavenly 'Dad' with confidence. Yet, at the same time God's name is not to be taken lightly, but rather 'hallowed', meaning holy, venerated and sacred, as Jews would (and still do) treat it. He is not just any dad, but the only one who lives in heaven, the perfect realm.

In my opinion, the most important lines of this prayer are 'your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven'. This should be our cry as we look around at our broken, hurting world and long for God to come and put it right, for heaven to come down and God to remake and redeem the world, so that it is again (as it was in its original creation) the perfect place that God desires it to be. This is what God ultimately intends, his will. In a smaller way, these lines also ask for God to make things right in our own lives now and in the lives of those around us.

We can give thanks that God meets our needs as we say, 'Give us today our daily bread'. Nothing we have should be taken for granted or as a given. All good things come from God. He sustains us physically, mentally and emotionally. In the history of the Jewish people, he sustained his people, travelling through the desert to the promised land, for forty years.

The prayer goes on to urge us to ask forgiveness of our 'debts' and 'debtors'. The ancient Jewish people were required to write off financial debts every seventh and fiftieth year. But Jesus is also expanding on the Jewish teaching on the forgiveness of sins. In this fallen world, we all do wrong. We must forgive those who have hurt or wronged us and ask forgiveness for our own wrongdoing. We must take it all to the foot of the cross, where Jesus attached all the sin of the world to himself.

Realistically we know that the temptation to sin will come to all of us. Jesus' words 'lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one' (e.g. the devil) don't mean that we won't be tempted, but rather that we can ask God to fortify us against sin and evil.

As Protestants, we usually add 'For yours is the kingdom ...' at the end of The Lord's Prayer. This was added by the early church as a doxology or expression of praise (probably sung) rather than being Jesus' recorded words.

Next time you say The Lord's Prayer, either alone or with others in worship, please say it with enthusiasm, with excitement, with longing or even broken-heartedly. These are words that are changing and will change the world, as we join in with God's mission of redeeming the world to himself ... Say them with gusto. *Your kingdom come!*

Michelle

giftaid it

From your Church Treasurer:-



At the Church Meeting in November the question was asked why the £9,218 Gift Aid we receive from the Inland Revenue for 2025 will be lower than the £4,423 we received in 2024.

I was able to answer this at the latest meeting. A significant one-off gift was received from a tax paying donor who had signed up to the HMRC Gift Aid scheme. One-off gifts of a significant size may not be received too often, but we are grateful when they do.

However, it is not just large Gift Aided donations that we are grateful for because smaller donations make a big difference too, and if you are a tax-payer to any extent (even if you are taxed by just a few pounds) then it really is so important to the Church if you would sign up to the Gift Aid Scheme.

The form is simple to complete, and once signed, you need do nothing more. Your gifts/tithes can still be given via the bank, but if you place cash offerings or one-off gifts then I will supply you with some envelopes that contain a unique code so we can identify it as a Gift Aided donation. Some people are worried about this, but don't be! Instead, please be assured:- I will never claim more Gift Aid back from the Inland Revenue than has actually been deducted in tax from you; I submit the Gift Aid claim on behalf of the Church, so I am the ONLY person who will know how much the Church can claim back from the Inland Revenue. An important aspect of being the Treasurer is to have the integrity to know that such private and personal information must never be shared to any other party, except the Inland Revenue, when I make PABC's claim.

Please do seriously consider using Gift Aid alongside your tithes, gifts, donations. It makes a massive difference. We'd have been £9,218 lighter on our Income this year if it were not for thee tax-payers in our Fellowship who have signed up to Gift Aid!

Thank you. Heather Baines, Church Treasurer.

A Week in the Life of a Baptist Minister

A couple of church members have asked me to share what I do during my working week, as they said that people probably don't know and / or will be surprised!

If church members and attendees are unclear about what a minister's work involves, then imagine how much more baffled those who aren't part of a church are ... When I gave my title as 'Rev' to a store assistant last summer, he looked at me as if I were speaking an alien language and then followed it up with 'So, how long have you been doing that?' More amusingly, a child recently saw my badge and exclaimed, 'You're the prime minister!' Then of course there's the often-repeated joke, 'You only work one day a week!'

In reality, I think that there are some core duties that nearly all ministers will undertake and then there's choice and flexibility for the rest, according to his or her priorities. All ministers with an established congregation obviously lead worship services, preach messages on God's word, lead Bible study and exploring faith or baptism classes, pray with and for people and give pastoral care. (This may look different for pioneering ministers, however, who are more implicit than explicit with worship in their communities.) Ministers are what is sometimes described as the 'resident theologian', someone who has studied and can explain the Bible to the people they live amongst. I absolutely love this part of my role, particularly the digging into and wrestling with how we understand scripture.

Another key priority for me has been to develop links with the community outside the church building, our local mission field. Jesus tells us to be his 'hands and feet' and to 'make disciples'. We can't do that if we are only with those who are already his followers in the church. Community work means doing something to support the vulnerable and hurting within our local area and to partner with other organisations -

both faith-based and secular -that are doing the same. I am a mission leader as well as an in-house church leader. I am always keen to take up opportunities to be out in the town centre etc to offer the love of Jesus, which brings me joy.

A less exciting aspect of my role is that of being a charity trustee (as our church elder and deacons also are), which means ensuring that all our policies and other governing documents are adequate and up-to-date and meeting with the rest of the leadership team to discuss practical as well as spiritual and pastoral matters.

Therefore a week in my working life will usually include preparation for Bible study, worship leading and preaching, a pastoral visit to somebody who can't get to worship in our building, responding to many emails on a range of subjects, being at our Enfold group (every week) and boys' club (usually alternate weeks). Some weeks I will also be responding to people in difficulty and distress, preparing meeting agendas and liaising with Churches Together in Clacton and other local organisations. Every couple of months I will have a meeting or phone call with my mentor and spiritual advisor (two different people).

Every few months I will be part of a NAMS' (Newly Accredited Ministers') meeting. Once a year I will be away at an Eastern Baptist Association ministers' conference for three days.

A new role that I have taken on since being at Pier Avenue is that of being a line manager firstly to our parish nurse and then to our employed cleaner. As we are now looking to appoint a new parish nurse, I have been in a recruitment process, in partnership with Pauline and our regional co-ordinator for Parish Nursing Ministries. There has been a lot for me to learn, but I am happy to be moving forward with this.

Come my day off every Saturday (unless there is a special community event on), I am happy to lay down my church responsibility for a little while and do things like clean the bathroom and listen to history programmes!

My role as minister is often undefined, varied, challenging, but also a great privilege. I am thankful to serve alongside a very hard-working leadership team and church members.

Michelle



Q. What kind of man was Boaz before he married Ruth?

A. Ruthless.

Q. What do they call pastors in Germany?

A. German Shepherds.

Q. Who was the greatest financier in the Bible?

A. Noah. He was floating his stock while everyone else was in liquidation.

Q. Who was the greatest female financier in the Bible?

A. Pharaoh's daughter. She went down to the bank of the Nile and drew out a Little prophet.

Q. What kind of motor vehicles are in the Bible?

A. Jehovah drove Adam and Eve out of the Garden in a Fury. David's Triumph was heard throughout the land. Also, probably a Honda, because the apostles were all in one Accord.

Q. Who was the greatest comedian in the Bible?

A. Samson. He brought the house down.

Q. What excuse did Adam give to his children as to why he no longer lived in Eden?

A. Your mother ate us out of house and home.

Q. Which servant of God was the most flagrant lawbreaker in the Bible?

A. Moses. He broke all 10 commandments at once.

Q. Which area of Palestine was especially wealthy?

A. The area around Jordan. The banks were always overflowing.

Q. Who is the greatest babysitter mentioned in the Bible?

A. David. He rocked Goliath to a very deep sleep.

Q. Which Bible character had no parents?

A. Joshua, son of Nun.

Q. Why didn't they play cards on the Ark ?

A. Because Noah was standing on the deck.

PS : Did you know it's a sin for a woman to make coffee?

Yup, it's in the Bible. It says...

'He-brews'.

PART 2. My move back to Lancashire.

1998 As previously mentioned, I was greeted on arrival by the local C/E minister. My Christian background was Brethren and then Baptist. However, I decided to go to St Cuthberts while I was settling in. I had not moved with a job in hand (always worked since leaving school), so decided to make use of my time when a Christian mentioned the local college. The C&G 730 and 740 courses seemed the right ones to do. They were to enable me to teach adults and those with special needs.



Also my time at St Cuthberts was stimulating as it was a charismatic evangelical church led by a minister who encouraged his members to realise that Christians need to develop in understanding of scripture, live in the power of the Spirit and to seek God's will for their lives.

We had prayer cells and met regularly. We were taught in the gifts of the Spirit, how to use them safely and to test them, and the use of these gifts in the services was encouraged. We had a Sunday evening service and 25% of attendees were from the local college. When the Spirit moves its exciting. In my prayer cell I was given some prophetic scriptures.

Matt 4:19 I will make you fishers of men

Isaiah 42:3. A bruised reed He will not break.... This turned out to be the Prison Fellowship Logo which I learned much later

Isaiah 42:9 See the former things have taken place, and new things I declare; before they spring into being I announce them to you.

Isaiah 43:18,19. Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland.

I recorded these and kept them in mind.



Also at this time during a Bible study we got onto the subject of capital punishment. I said that I believed in it. When I got home and praying I was convicted about my statement. I prayed saying I was sorry, but God would need to help me change my mind. I was willing to be willing. This was then laid aside.

During 1989-1990 I taught communication skills in the local colleges though I didn't feel this was why I had been led to take the C&G courses. In 1993, (again a Christian friend) mentioned that they did education in the local prison. I contacted the Director of Education at Preston Prison (never seen outside a prison never mind entered one at this stage). He rang me back and asked that I attend for an interview. I looked at this daunting building (one of the oldest prisons) and was escorted across the courtyard and suddenly a 'voice' said to me "now you will understand". I remembered my prayer a few years earlier about being willing to change my mind about capital punishment.

Be careful what you pray, God had put me in the lions den.

I was offered a job as a tutor teaching basic Ed and craft work etc. I helped out in the chapel some evenings when they had Christian visitors put on sessions. That can have its own humour. One lady trying to make a point and said she was trying to put a picture up on the wall but only had a bent screw and 'what can you do with a bent screw'? It took a few moments for her to understand why this was so funny.

1993 I was asked if I would teach parenting skills at a new YOI in Lancaster. It was known I had been a midwife so was qualified to teach there. This was an education in itself. You try to understand a class of young lads all from Liverpool. They have a language of their own 🗨️ We obtained a specially weighted doll so they could practice bathing a baby etc. they seemed to really enjoy these sessions. The course was over 16 sessions.

In my Christian life I had been encouraged to train as a Reader (lay minister in C/E) and this felt right. I had the privilege of going with a group of Readers to Goslar in Germany. A beautiful place. We met with Christians who were in similar ministry. We preached there and had wonderful fellowship.

Also while I was training I did a placement in a Cat B prison. During lunch I sat with someone who was taking a new (1st year launched) degree - BA (hons) Christian Ministry. Having prayed I really felt led to pursue this. I contacted the Uni in Lancaster and was granted an interview. I was accepted onto the 1995 course and it overlapped the final year of my Reader training, so quite intense for the first year.

During the degree I went on placement with London City Mission working with the homeless and prostitutes around Kings Cross.

Though I knew I was doing what I was called to do I still had no idea where this would lead once qualified.

Then, just as my degree ended I was reading the church times paper when I turned to the ads and (literally) an ad jumped out. Chaplain in the new Cat B mens prison in Leyland. I applied for the job and yes I was offered it. Please note that now my prophetic verses were to be fulfilled. It is important to note and go back to prophetic utterances to test them.

BUT MY SPACE IN THE MAGAZINE HAS RUN OUT.

I am now licensed to work as Chaplain, covered by the Bishop of the Anglican Church.

Have you heard the last? No! This is just the beginning of my next journey to ordination by the Baptist Church and a free church prison Chaplain

Wait for part 3 - My onward journey.

A message from our Treasurer



Operation Agri have written to thank the Fellowship of Pier Avenue Baptist Church for their kind gifts totalling £155 in 2025. They say:

“This is greatly helping our project partners to show Christian love in action, as they enable people to gain the skills to lift themselves out of poverty.

For example, the 2025 annual appeal, **Bees, Trees and Seeds**, focussed on empowering farmers in Tanzania through the incredible IMARIKA project. IMARIKA brings together community groups and equips them with essential skills in village community banking, conservation agriculture, fuel-efficient stove making, afforestation, beekeeping and poultry keeping. These initiatives not only enhance livelihoods but also promote sustainable development. Discover more about this life-changing work through the **Operation Agri magazine** or online at

<https://operationagri.org.uk/current-appeal/> “

As a Fellowship we should give great thanks to Chris Brooks, our OA representative, who organises and publicises this work on behalf of Operation Agri at PABC. Thank you, Chris.

"Hey, how are you?" the eraser asked the pencil kindly.

"I'm not your friend," the pencil snapped. "I hate you."

Surprised and hurt, the eraser asked, "Why?"

"Because you erase everything I write."

"I only remove the mistakes," the eraser replied gently.

"That doesn't make it right," said the pencil.

"But that's what I'm here for. It's my purpose."

"Then your job is meaningless," grumbled the pencil. "Writing is more important than erasing."

"To erase the wrong is just as important as writing the right," the eraser said.

The pencil paused, then quietly said, "But I see you getting smaller each day..."

"That's because I give a little bit of myself every time I help correct a mistake."

"I feel smaller too," the pencil admitted.

"We can't do good for others unless we're willing to sacrifice something," the eraser smiled.

Then she looked at him and softly asked, "Do you still hate me?"

The pencil smiled back:

"How could I hate someone who gives so much of themselves?"

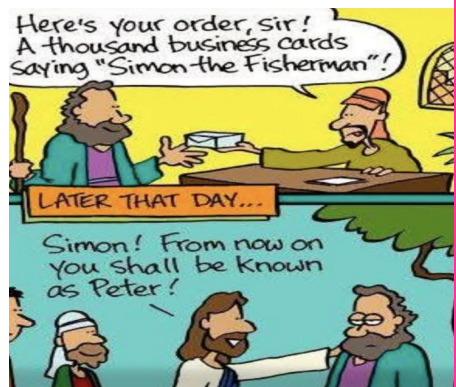
Each day we wake up with one day less.

If you can't be the pencil that creates joy for others, be the eraser that wipes away their pain, planting hope and reminding them:

The future can still be better than the past.

**Husband: "I can do
all things through
Christ who
strengthens me."**

**Wife: "Just
unscrew the pickle
jar lid please"**



Valentine Emoji Pictionary Quiz



Pancake Evening

**1st Clacton Girls' Brigade
Pier Ave. Baptist Church
(in the Welcome Centre)**

Tuesday 10th Feb

6pm-7.30pm

All money raised will go to
Girls' Brigade & Pier Avenue Baptist
Church



*** Pancakes**

*** Tea & Coffee**

*** Soft drinks**

*** Cakes**

Everyone welcome

12:25

Pancake & 1 topping = £2.00 each

* Lemon & Sugar

* Vanilla Ice cream

* Strawberry sauce

* Chocolate sauce

* Toffee sauce

* Golden Syrup

* Fruit filling

Extra topping – 50p each

Drinks

* Tea - £1.00

* Coffee - £1.00

* Orange - 50p

* Blackcurrant - 50p

* Coke - 50p

* Lemonade - 50p



12:25

GIRLS' BRIGADE

As we approached the end of the year the girls completed their second badge with Explorers taking Our Feelings, the Juniors explored Joy, our Seniors studied Traveller and the Brigaders tackled Technology when they produced a PowerPoint for our Carol Service.

We submitted a tree for the Church Christmas Tree display when each girl made a decoration to hang on its branches. It all looked very colourful and added to the brightness of the wonderfully decorated church building.

On 6th December we held a quiz night when 5 teams battled it out through 8 rounds of subjects on a Christmas theme. These were – Music, Film, Traditions, Food, TV, Pantomimes, Carols and The Bible. There was an extra round which had to be completed during the first half of the evening where pictures had to be identified. Refreshments were provided and we successfully raised around £100. We would like to thank all who supported us for this popular event.

All the girls spent several weeks rehearsing for the Nativity, which included an alternative version of 'The 12 Days of Christmas', readings, songs and dressing up in the various characters of the Christmas story. This took place on 9th December when we were joined by parents, friends and members of the church. Michelle brought us a Christmas message when the girls were asked questions about the events they had portrayed.

Our term concluded with our usual Christmas parties when girls from all sections enjoyed a variety of games, craft, food and each took home a party bag containing a chocolate item and a magazine about the Christmas story.

Over the last few weeks we have welcomed a few new members in our Explorer, Junior and Senior sections, which is most encouraging. We hope they will enjoy coming and will want to continue in attendance with us. We hope you all had a good Christmas and that 2026 has started well for you.

DATE FOR YOUR DIARY – Pancake Evening on Tuesday 10th February (a week early as the following week is half term) at 6.00pm in the Welcome Centre. Come and enjoy some pancakes with a variety of fillings together with a drink. A cake stall will also be available. Proceeds will be split between Girls' Brigade and the Church.

Gill Stennings



St. Valentine

St. Valentine was a Roman priest martyred during Claudius' II (Claudius the Cruel) reign. The story tells that St. Valentine was imprisoned for marrying Christian couples and aiding Christians being persecuted by Claudius in Rome. Both acts were considered serious crimes. A relationship between the saint and emperor began to grow, until Valentine attempted to convince Claudius of Christianity. Claudius became enraged and sentenced Valentine to death, commanding him to renounce his faith or be beaten with clubs and beheaded. St. Valentine refused to renounce his faith and Christianity and was executed outside the Flaminian

Gate on February 14, 269. The romantic nature of Valentine's Day may have derived during the Middle Ages, when it was believed that birds paired couples in mid-February. Others that Valentine's Day was most likely created to overpower the pagan holiday, Lupercalia. Although the exact origin of the holiday is not widely agreed upon, it is widely recognized as a day for love, devotion and romance. Whoever he was, Valentine did really exist, because archaeologists have unearthed a Roman catacomb and an ancient church dedicated to St. Valentine. In 496 AD Pope Gelasius marked February 14th as a celebration in honour of his martyrdom. (There are other stories of St. Valentine's life and death) <https://www.catholic.org/saints>

There was once a little worm who lived in an apple and heard there would be a flood to wipe out all life. He heard that Noah was building an ark to save all the animals. He rolled up to Noah in his little apple, and ran right into his ankle to get his attention. Noah said "what would you like friend?" the worm replied "I wanted a spot on your boat." Noah just nodded his head and said "Sorry little guy, we only take animals in pears, not apples."

...Driving home tonight I saw a bumper sticker that read: WWJD? What Would Jesus Drive? And I thought probably a Honda because the Bible says we should all be in one Accord. 😊



SOME MORE WONDERFUL TALES FROM RICHARD'S TIME AT SEA

Peace, and may the joy of the Lord be with you.

Let the tale of the 'half-life' of the Chief Engineer' continue so to speak:-

In 1986 to 1988 I served on a Salvage/Fire-Fire tug in the north of the Persian Gulf based at Khark Island, (KI). My ship, the MST YORKSHIRE-MAN, AKA YORKIE, call sign the NINE-FOUR, had been bare-boat chartered out from under my feet to a foreign flag company, SEMCO Salvage, based in Singapore for service in the Northern Persian Gulf. However, as part of the dirty tricks department running through the salvage business at that time, their Chief Engineer was shanghaied by his previous employer as he came through Sharjah airport. As a result he could not relieve me thus preventing YORKY from sailing and going on station. As a result I was asked if I would take her north to KI and be relieved there. As it was only a runner job for a month I agreed.

After bunkering and taking stores through the night we sailed the following morning and on arrival at KI it was found that reliefs were not possible either! Disappointing as I was only supposed to have served one month as a runner Chief. However, God soon changed that[!] and I ended up doing seven months before coming home for a brief leave during which our youngest son, Ralph, was born. I returned to duty for a further 12 months until the ceasefire in August 1988 effectively made me redundant.

YORKIE and me.



For nearly three years, I lived a life that no doubt reads like a story out of the Victor or Hotspur boys comics and at times it was like being inside a movie especially when an aircraft or helicopter was shot down. We would be tasked to rescue the crew but all we would find was a few bits of floating wreckage. It was hard to think that least two men had just died. It was different with the tankers for we had to board them to fight the fire and get them underway clear of the war zone. Then we would look for the dead and wounded amongst the twisted steel and deal with them accordingly.

However, God put me in that war for a reason and where I lived a larger than life existence. Not for me the Naval Discipline Act to back my authority, rather leading by example and force of personality combined with some very necessary



‘theatre’ and ‘grand gestures’ to inspire my men. Always playing the cool, calm Oscar Charlie, mug of tea and pipe in hand, wearing a white, smart ‘used but good’ clean boiler suit with polished boots, walking while others ran, standing while others took cover, my stomach knotted with fear, knees like jelly and hands trembling as I exercised my ‘right’ to be the first man in and the last man out. Not for nothing did I wear my boiler suit tucked into the tops of my boots! Reckless, maybe, but then as now, it goes with the territory; When I went into it I did not expect my men to love me, but trust me they must and my ‘theatre’, earned me their loyalty, and yes, the love of my all Pilipino crew.



For example: During my time in the PG I was blown-up twice and on each occasion my lads risked themselves to get me back on board. Interestingly, the arrival of the explosion was heralded with a sound something akin to that of the roar of an express train, giving one a few moments to hit the deck before blasting itself out of the tank lid. I must remember that for future use!



Another day in the office.

While serving on YORKIE during the so called ‘Tanker War’; my watchman prided himself on keeping me well supplied with mugs of coco during the long night watches when we escorted convoys of laden tankers between KI in the north and Ras-al-Moutaf in the south. It always had a funny after-taste, and one night I determined to find out what he did.

So I surreptitiously watched him, noting that he put the coco, tea and coffee in together with the coní-oni and sugar into my mug before giving it a good stir and adding the boiling water. I could say nothing for he had made it out of respect or love if you will, for his Officer and to complain would have been churlish of me, so.....



'Rocket Richard'.

[My nickname. Note the tanker in the background is aground and a prime target.

However, she was ignored and survived!]



Over the 12 months we served together I drank a lot of coco and I got used to it. It certainly kept me a-lert at night! (SEMCO needs lerts). Today, whenever I drink MILO, AKA coco that does not taste quite 'right', I am transported back to those night watches we shared together all those years ago on the YORKIE when the

darkness cloaked an unfriendly horizon.

A horizon from whence a diamond bright pin-prick of light would suddenly flicker into existence, tracking low, moving fast. Glasses trained, no fishing dhow this with its spluttering carbide lamp. Instead, 165 kg/364 lbs, of armour piercing, ship killing missile skimming across the sea at 700 mph [Mach 0.93], its radar implacably searching for you, seeking to disunite body and soul. The klaxon sounds it's strident, clarion call; Ougah, ougah, ougah. Tannoy squawking: One-oh-five, one-oh-five, one-oh-five. Men reaching for helmets and flak jackets, fumbling in the night; One-oh-five, one-oh-five; boots thudding in the alleyways, one-oh-five, one-oh-five. Hearts pounding, adrenaline flowing, one-oh-five, one-oh-five. Reports quietly passed and acknowledged, damage control closed-up, emergency teams mustered, fire pumps running and on line.

Flames leap high into the night sky. A dull boom, felt, rather than heard as the stricken tanker slows and falls out of position, spewing blazing oil as the convoy steams on, closing ranks. Relief mixes with guilt, them not us, this time, as we turn and increase revolutions to go to their assistance relying on the unreliable discipline of the lumbering tankers to hold station and not run us down as we race, blacked-out, through the convoy in the darkness.



However, now she is a straggler inviting further attack from the marauding Iraqi helicopter gun-ship and no friend to us as we surge alongside, the men tense as they grip the fire hoses washing away the burning oil. My team leap over the rails like hurdlers at the fence and YORKIE is made fast to the casualty as equipment is swung across and hoses run. What will we find amongst the shattered, twisted steel? A basic one day First Aid course, the Ship Captains Medical Guide and five ampoules of morphine do little to help you prepare for the reality of shocked, burnt, broken, men some calling out in the darkness, as they gently slip their moorings. Men with wounds you could put your boot into, men whose flesh was burnt down to the bone and falling off in charred lumps. Who to ignore, who gets the morphine, who gets the codeine and aspirin combo, and sometimes, you are grateful for the darkness. Decisions, decisions, always decisions, some right, some wrong but mine and mine alone to make, and make **NOW**, for indecision is the precursor of disaster. An officer is valued for his ability to make decisions, even more so if he makes the right ones!

I make a quick survey of the situation, deploying my men and equipment to contain the fire and rig the tow as YORKIE's crew move the wounded to safety. the dead left where they lie. I attend the seriously wounded and patch them up as best I can, leaving them in the care of their shipmates and my men become fire-fighters. No more containment now, but an aggressive assault on the fiery-foe we know so well, beating it back, compartment by compartment, tank by tank.

Dawn breaks as the fire is finally tamed and then extinguished, the decks steaming in the early morning sun. The morning is cool but not for long as the day soon heats up with temperatures reaching +45C in the mid-day shade. Nice and comfortable once you get used to it! But hard graft when you have to fight a fire in it!

***Wow, what a story and it is to be continued in the April magazine
Thank you Richard***



Valentine Bible Couples Match



- | | |
|---------------|--------------|
| 1. Adam | A. Mary |
| 2. Abraham | B. Eve |
| 3. Boaz | C. Rachel |
| 4. Isaac | D. Naomi |
| 5. Jacob | E. Gomer |
| 6. Elkanah | F. Elisabeth |
| 7. Hosea | G. Zipporah |
| 8. Xerxes | H. Jochebed |
| 9. Moses | I. Hannah |
| 10. Zacharias | J. Michel |
| 11. Ahab | K. Ruth |
| 12. Joseph | L. Rebecca |
| 13. David | M. Jezebel |
| 14. Amram | N. Bathsheba |
| 15. Uriah | O. Esther |
| 16. Elimelech | P. Sarah |

The first cordless phone was created by God. He called it prayer. It never loses its signal and you never have to recharge it. Use it anywhere. Amen

Communications Sub Group

This article is to introduce you to our Communications Sub Group and as of 2025 those mainly involved though we have others joining in 2026—there is space for you as well, think about joining for at least some of the agenda.

Attendees: Ian S, Michelle, Karen, Elaine, Ian D, James, Verity, Mel, Tony.

This section has the topics and some extracts from what was discussed:

Church Web—*Web updates from last meeting and information on our Web advent calendar launch for this Advent (2025).*

Magazine—*Publisher* secured for the medium term at least, so no immediate concern. Verity is using this. *Slimmed down editions* proposed for the future by Ian S, with only the Christmas Bumper Edition having more pages an extra colour, as otherwise too much toner and paper is used, which means greater expense. Most of us agreed that it will have to be shorter and possibly that we will need to ask for donations too. The puzzle section is enjoyed by readers, but will need to be slightly shorter.

Social Media – Facebook, Google and related media outlets

All the *Christmas worship and events* are being promoted by Elaine. Mel has been promoting the CTIC Carols in the town centre.

IT Developments—*Office 365* now Basic with Cloud storage and Web versions, but still very useful and saving us subscriptions. *Church service streaming.* We are still not fully settled on how we schedule live sessions, but Matthew has found a few hidden options and has got the live stream out so far.

TINY TREASURES PARENT/CARER BABY AND TODDLER

The children and parents/carers had a great time decorating decorations for our tree for the Tree Festival. We ended the term with our Christmas Party where the children enjoyed decorating hats, listening to the Christmas story and singing some Christmas song. Of course there was a visit from Father Christmas who gave each child a present.

We have started the term with a winter theme and are making snowmen and snowmen pictures.

Exciting news, one of our Tiny Treasures has a baby sister born in 5th January, mum and baby doing well, and one of our other little one's is expecting a sister in March. We continue to pray for both families for good health and the safe arrival of the little one in March.

Sylvia Burns



God is sitting in heaven when a scientist says to Him “Lord, we don’t need you anymore. Science has finally figured out a way to create life out of nothing.

In other words, we can now do what you did in the ‘beginning’.”

‘Oh, is that so? Tell me....’ replies God.

‘Well’, says the scientist, ‘we can take dirt and form it into the likeness of you and breathe life into it, thus creating man.’

‘Well, that’s interesting. Show Me.’

So the scientist bends down to the earth and starts to mold the soil.

‘Oh no, no, no.....’ interrupts God.

‘Get your own dirt.’

Zoom Boys Club



The first few sessions of 2026 at Zoom Boys Club has seen some ups and downs.

Our programme has been both exciting and engaging for the boys attending and we have seen much quieter engagement with the program week on week.

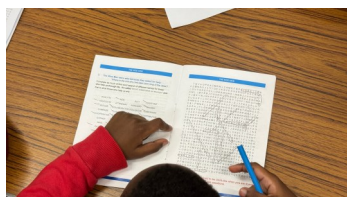
Numbers are down, in part due to dark nights/bad weather and the difficulties some families have in getting their family to the Club. With fewer attending (around 7) some of the games and activities are more difficult



to run effectively so we are going to begin a new recruitment drive over the next month as we move to the brighter evenings coming back.

We had a good time with the Epiphany story notes and workbook that was part of the Church service on the 1st Sunday of the year. The boys came up with some great answers regarding the Wise Men, why they were Wise and how we can be wise in our lives.

We were able to take an active part in the January All Age service along with GB and had a good attendance and participation which we plan to build on in the months ahead. Thanks for your prayers and keep on



praying for this exciting work to grow. There are opportunities to help out, either part time or on a regular basis, please contact a leader if you have some time spare on a Thursday evening.

Enfold

A time for new changes.

These past few months have been very busy but have seen a change at Enfold. DWP has started joining us weekly and that has been very good but also we have had a couple of new people join the team. They have proved to be valuable additions and we are grateful and blessed by them.



We continue to see more of our guests move off the streets and into their own accommodation and we have been working closely with the outreach worker to help rough sleepers get more support. The guests are also opening up more and we are glad to see them develop their faith. Some of the recent sessions have been really spirit filled and the guests are opening up about their faith. We have been looking at Advent and since Christmas looking at various parts of the new testament. We are also trying to be more intentional in sharing good news and asking for prayer which people have been shy to do in rest of the group but privately have been very open in doing both. We had a lovely Christmas celebra-



tion and a massive thank you to all those in the congregation who donated a present. The guests all really loved their presents and were touched by the thoughtfulness. Some were saying that is the only present they would get at all and so were really touched. I am also glad we got extra selection boxes as we had 55 guests that day which was one of the most we have

ever had. We also bought presents for the DWP and Peabody to say thank you and they were really touched as well. We opened New Years Day and thank you to those who stepped in especially and the guests were really pleased they had somewhere to go on New years day and they enjoyed all the extra chocs etc we put out.



Enfold is a really valued group by our guests and it is good to make a practical difference in people's lives but the most valuable thing people can give to Enfold is your prayers., let's not forget Enfold will always be here to `love people to Jesus`.



**Pier Avenue
Baptist Church**

PABC Wellness Drop In

Drop In – open to all

Our wellness session welcomes everyone looking to make positive health changes in their lives.

First and third Thursday of the month

at 10:00 -11:30

**Located at Pier Avenue Baptist Church
117 Pier Avenue**

You may pop in for a quick weigh-in or if you're looking for more, we're happy to see you. You're welcome to simply use our scales and be on your way, or feel free to stay a little longer. We offer a comfortable and supportive environment where you can enjoy a chat with us, we're here to lend a listening ear.



Weigh In

Drop in for a weigh in and a chat



Lifestyle Change

Encouraging lifestyle changes



Self-Help

Facilitating you to help yourself



Resources

Signposting to relevant services where necessary

'SAFE?

Said a shepherd's little laddie
To his father one bright day
'May I give myself to Jesus
Let Him wash my sins away?

Oh, my son, but you're too little,
Wait until you older grow.
Bigger folks 'tis true do need Him,
But little ones are safe you know.

Said the father to his laddie
As the storm was coming on
'Are the sheep all safely sheltered
Safe within the fold, my son?'

'All the big ones are, my father,
But the lambs, I let them go.
For I didn't think it mattered,
Little ones are safe, you know

Fearfully and Wonderfully Made

I am the potter; you are the clay.



AS A DISCIPLE, IT WASN'T EASY TO
SNEAK AWAY FROM JESUS FOR A
DAY OF GOLF.

Can't join you today, Lord.
Got a cold.

You're healed.

rats.



I'd rather attend
church with messed
up people who love
God, than religious
people who dislike
messed up people.



CHURCH EVENTS

Wednesday Feb 4th 7.30 p.m. Housegroup altogether @ Church for Bible Study and Prayer

Tuesday Feb 10th Pancake Evening with GB—6 to 7.30pm

Friday Feb 13th 7.00 p.m. Zoom prayer meeting

Tuesday Feb 24th 9.30 a.m. Prayer@church

Sunday March 1st - 4.00 p.m. 3 Church meet up with Holland and Thorpe including a bring and share tea, at Thorpe BC.

Friday 13th March Prayer on Zoom at 7pm

Tuesday March 24th 9.30 a.m. Prayer@Church

Sunday March 29th 12.00 approx - Church members' meeting

Friday 3rd April (Good Friday) 10.00 Short service on Town Square and then Walk of Witness. followed by 11.00 joint service at PABC

Sunday 5th April - Easter morning breakfast followed by 10.30 Family service

**Hiring the halls at PABC
for anyone within the
congregation will now be
£10 per hour.**

**Please speak to Ian D or
Karen for further
details, or email:**

hallhire@pabc.org.uk

HILLBILLY 10 COMMANDMENTS

1. Ain't but one God
2. Honor yer Ma and Pa
3. No tellin' tales or gossipin'
4. Git yer hide ta Sunday meetin'
5. Ain't nothin' come before the Lord
6. No foolin with another fellers gal
7. No killin', cept for critters
8. Quit yer foul mouthin'
9. No swipin' yer kin folks stuff
10. Don't be hankerin' for it neither



Magazine Editor Verity Coulthard 07770558771 or email
magazine@pabc.org.uk. Information to be included in the April issue will be
appreciated as soon as possible please