

SPOTLIGHT

May 2026



Offington Park Methodist Church



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Some content was created using AI tools and reviewed by the Editors

COVER PICTURE

When it comes to sparrows (this month's cover), the Bible shows that in Jesus' time they were so common they were essentially valueless except, perhaps, for food.



In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus used sparrows as a kind of 'unit of worthlessness': "Are not two sparrows sold for a penny?" he said, "Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father's care." He added that his followers need never worry, since God cares for them even more than he does sparrows.

A modern equivalent might be something like sewing pins. You can buy 1,000 plain pins on Amazon for £3.99 (less than half a penny each). If you lost one, you might not notice; you certainly wouldn't lose sleep over it if you did. And yet that's exactly the kind of deep concern God has for us.

This month's wildflowers: hawthorn blossom, red campion, oxeye daisy.



Dear Friends,

Two amazing evenings - how blessed was I? On Saturday 25 April, "Shout to the Lord" at Offington and on Sunday 26 April, Pentatonix at the O2 arena. I have used their version of "Mary, did you know?" in church at a service before. Two incredibly different venues and music genres, but both able to transport the participants to a place of pure joy.

There are some things in life that you cannot describe unless you were there: a football match, a wedding, a concert or standing in a field surrounded by bluebells. I am sure you can think of others. "Shout to the Lord" was one of those occasions.

I cannot begin to describe the atmosphere, there are simply not enough adjectives. A superb group, a place full of expectant, excited people of all ages, and a God waiting to bless his people. We were not disappointed, even if our ears did need to get accustomed to the volume of sound.

We are fortunate at Offington Park to have such a wide variety of music open to us which can appeal to all age groups. Martin Luther wrote, "next to the word of God, the noble art of music is the greatest treasure in the world". Psalm 96 begins, "O sing to the Lord a new song and bless his name".

On 8 May we are hosting a professional theatre group performing a musical drama depicting the story of how the well-known hymn, 'It is well with my soul' came to be written. Another date for your diary (albeit some time ahead) is the evening of 31 October when we will be welcoming back Jonathan Viera. So, lots to look forward to and the opportunity to invite other people.

Thank you to all the people who help to lead our worship through music in any way.

I finish with a quote from Johann Sebastian Bach, who wrote, "I play the notes as they are written, but it is God who makes the music." I pray that you will be blessed by music, word, or silence in the coming days.

Every blessing....Dawn

Offington Park Methodist Church, South Farm Road, Worthing



coffee morning

and Box
Opening



Can we beat last year's record??

Saturday 2 May

9:30am - 12:00pm



Light Refreshments available (donations welcome):

Tea / Coffee / Juice / Cakes / Scones

Stalls selling:

Cakes and Greetings cards

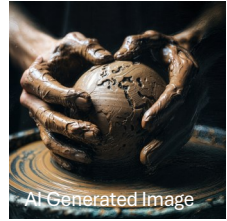
If you have a pre-loved item you think someone
else could love, bring it along to sell!

please support this Methodist charity

Action for
Children

THEY CHANGED THE WORLD

Charles Correa Indian Architect



Charles Correa is a fascinating example of someone who used architecture for more than aesthetics, prestige, or profit. Correa used his vocation to mirror the Kingdom values of justice, dignity, stewardship, community, beauty and care for the vulnerable. But how?

He designed with the poor in mind—not just elites: many architects build monuments for wealthy clients. Whilst Correa designed major cultural landmarks, he also spent enormous energy thinking about ordinary people who were struggling in rapidly growing cities. For example, he helped plan Navi Mumbai as an alternative to overcrowded Mumbai and intentionally rejected many high-rise solutions because they often isolated poor families from community life. Correa believed cities should work for everyone and not just the wealthy.

He respected creation instead of fighting it: long before sustainability became trendy, Correa designed buildings that worked ‘with’ the environment and featured natural ventilation, shaded courtyards which reduced dependence on air conditioning, and he used local materials.

He preserved cultural dignity: Correa resisted copying Western glass towers that ignored Indian realities. Instead, he drew from Indian courtyards, regional materials and local climate wisdom. Rather than saying, “modernity means becoming like the West,” he honoured the beauty already present in Indian traditions.

He created spaces for human flourishing: Correa cared deeply about how architecture shapes everyday life. His buildings often included gathering spaces, natural light, walkability and communal interaction. He wanted architecture to support relationships, reflection, and belonging - not just efficiency.

He saw work as public service: Correa wasn’t only designing private buildings - he stepped into public policy. He served as chairman of India’s National Commission on Urbanisation and helped shape broader conversations about cities. He recognised that his profession wasn’t just about personal success – it was a way to serve society.

ANCESTORS TO EPITAPHS TOUR

Saturday 2 May 2026 @ 11:00 am

The warmer weather offers you another great opportunity to join one of these fascinating **FREE** tours which delve into late Victorian living and often provide interesting historical facts about the town.



The May Broadwater tour will visit the graves of several individuals from a variety of walks of life: men and women who were businesspeople, centenarians, religious figures, gardeners or community leaders.

Their lives and characters will be viewed through the lens of their ancestors and through the epitaphs which recall their achievements and qualities.

The tour starts at 11 am (arrive from 10:45am) by the Chapels in South Farm Road. Booklets about the tour and hot and cold refreshments (including delicious home-made cakes) are available for a small donation towards cemetery upkeep.

Please help the environment by bringing your own cup.

Why not become a member of FBWC?

Membership of the Friends costs a very reasonable £5 per year, all of which helps to pay for the production of the modestly priced tour booklets and offset the cost of refreshments.

You can sign up on one of the tours.

Please do join one of the tours and, if you find them suitably fascinating, please consider becoming a member and keeping this wonderful Victorian cemetery open for future generations.

Join us on Tuesday 12 May at 10:00am:

You're invited to come along for a drink and chat -
you don't have to be grumpy, old or even a man!



PAT pending!

A welcome return visit from the West Sussex Prevention Assessment Team

The PAT team will be on hand to advise on (amongst many other things) :

- how to keep healthy and manage health issues
- agencies that can maximise your income
- remaining independent through practical tasks such as shopping, cleaning and gardening, and keeping homes safe, secure and warm

They will also be offering blood pressure and pulse checks..

This is an **OPEN MEETING** which anyone can attend.

We'll be meeting in the Quiet Room
(after coffee and cake in Zach's Café). Please join us.

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WERE YOU THERE WHEN THEY CRUCIFIED MY LORD?...



I could almost believe that I was. Impossible, I know, but for half an hour or so on Good Friday I was helped to relive those awful events, here at Offington Park. Perhaps I'd better try to explain ...

Silence settled first, then darkness. Then came a familiar voice, quiet, but with authority; it seemed to fill the whole church. What followed was a "performance" that proved how little is needed to hold an audience transfixed by words spoken with amazing confidence and presence by ten ordinary/extraordinary people. Each speaker carried an item which had relevance to their story and allowed us to identify them.

A servant came first carrying a pitcher. "I was on duty in an upper room which I had laid with cups, bowls and bread. I met His eyes and He smiled. I poured water and was confused as He used it to wash his friends' feet. Later as I went about my work I heard Him say "This is my body." The room's atmosphere changed. I can still see him there kneeling and I wonder how the world can continue when God himself stooped to touch the feet of ordinary folk like us."

Judas came next. "One of you will betray me. He caught my eye. I knew I should speak. If He had named me perhaps I could have stood up and shouted, as everyone else was asking who He meant. He handed me a morsel of bread. I took it then left quietly clutching the bag of silver coins."

A soldier spoke next. "We were expecting shouting, a riot - but before we had arranged ourselves for battle a man stepped forward, unafraid. "I am He." Then suddenly I felt a pain in the side of my head. My hand touched it. Blood. Then His voice said "put your sword away." I touched my head, it had healed! He helped me stand, someone seized His arms and He was gone."

A courtyard servant described seeing someone trying not to be seen. "I said, "You were with him", but he replied "I don't know the man." They could have let it go, they said, but they wanted to prove they were right, so they said again, "You are one of them." Again came the denial. "Then a cock crowed and the man fled."

Peter spoke next. "I do not know the man. I'd said it, but how could I deny Him? I had sworn to stay with Him, and He had said to me "Before the cock crows you will deny me three times." And I knew that Jesus would love me

just the same, even knowing I had failed him. He had called me The Rock, but I was sand and that night the tide had taken me.”

The narrator then reminded us that Jesus was passed from authority to authority, being seen as a threat to the Romans. The crowd demanded a sentence and Pilate, unable to bear what it might cost him to do what is right, washes his hands and gives Jesus over.

Pilate spoke quietly. “I have known he is innocent all along, but that crowd is restless. Rome is watching and I must keep order. My wife has told me to release him, but....”

Then Pilate’s wife speaks. “I begged him to let Him go. I watched him wash his hands. Water won’t cleanse his guilt”. Her narrative was short, but telling: “Some sins are not committed by cruelty, but by silence”.

Next we heard from the Centurion, a man well used to watching death. “He was different. He spoke to God when we were driving the nails home. The crowd roared, laughed, dared him to come down. At midday the light failed, not an ordinary storm. His mother was standing nearby, in agony. His death was not ordinary. I knew and heard myself saying out loud “Truly this man was the Son of God.” I walked away having witnessed something truly amazing”.

And finally, Joseph of Arimathea, a late disciple of Jesus. “I should have spoken out but I was too careful. Now the hour to speak had gone and He hung on the cross whilst I stood helpless. I asked Pilate for the body. He agreed so I returned to the cross with linen. The thorns had been cruel so I whispered “forgive me” and Nicodemus and I wrapped Him and carried Him to my tomb, followed by some women. We laid Him on the shelf. I felt my future had been altered beyond words. We rolled the great stone in place”.

The final words of this extraordinarily moving experience were spoken by the narrator. “This is Good Friday. The day God does not turn away from suffering. The day love bears the full weight of the world. We cannot explain it. We do not rush past it. This is the Passion – not just the suffering of Christ, but the mirror held up to every human heart. In their stories, we find our own. And in His death, we discover life.”

We all left the church in silence, moved by this simple performance by our own congregation. It was more than a privilege to have been there. If it is repeated, I hope to have the opportunity to see it again.

RP

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JC's LITTLE NUGGETS

The women followers of Jesus (based on Luke 8, v1-3)



On my wedding day, my Dad said to me, "You now have a precious person in your life – a wife. Listen to her and respect her. If you do, she will be a true and steadfast friend."

And here we are, 46 years later, still together.

There are many players in the story of the first Easter, but for me, there's one group that stands out and bears witness to my Dad's advice: the women followers of Jesus.

At the time Jesus lived on the earth, women were not valued by society. He changed that. Jesus turned the world's attitude upside down. Jesus showed the world that we are all equal in the eyes of the Lord by openly showing how much he valued the role of women, and how much he appreciated them and their courage, perseverance and love.

Let's not underestimate that perseverance and courage. At the time, it was dangerous to be a follower of Jesus, especially in the final dark days before his crucifixion. Don't forget, some of the male disciples deserted Jesus. His 'rock', Peter, denied him three times.

The women, however, stood resolutely at the foot of the cross - what pain they must have borne watching the man they loved die in agony. And it was the women who bravely attended the burial of the Master, and who made their way to the tomb, on that first resurrection day.

The other day, all these thoughts were brought home to me when I spoke to a lady in church who has been caring for her sick husband for a number of years. I asked, "how are things?" She replied, "they're alright, because the Lord walks with me."

What perseverance; what courage; what love; what faith. I felt put to shame by my worrying about the little bits of pain I have.

Thank you, Lord, for your sacrifice and for all the women in our lives and in the world around us. God bless you all.

JC

SNAKES ALIVE!



Snakes might not be the first animals that come to mind when we think of the UK, but these fascinating reptiles are more common than many realise. From sunny heathlands to

woodland edges, several species can be found across Britain. While most are harmless and shy, knowing how to identify them can help people appreciate their role in local ecosystems - and avoid unnecessary alarm. Let's explore the snakes found here, where they live, and their easily recognisable key features.

Grass Snake

Grass snakes are olive-green with distinct dark spots on their upperparts and a black and yellow collar. It is our largest snake, with some females reaching over a metre in length. They are not venomous. Grass snakes can be found across much of mainland England and Wales, and in southwest Scotland.

Adder

Adders are variable in colour: males tend to be a silver-grey while females are a warm brown. They have striking red eyes and a defined black zigzag pattern on their upperparts. Although quite small in length (60-80cm), this is the UK's only venomous snake species. Its venom is mainly used for subduing its prey. It is a timid snake and bites to humans are uncommon, but it's wise to keep a respectful distance! If you accidentally disturb one and get bitten, you will need to seek medical treatment.

The adder can be found as far north as the top of mainland Scotland. They generally keep a low profile, so the best way to spot one is by scouting out south facing areas in early to mid-spring and scanning for a basking snake. At this time of year, they'll soak up as much sun as possible, after emerging from a long winter hibernation.

Smooth Snake

These non-venomous 'heathland specialists' are both shy and incredibly scarce. As a result of commercial forestry and development, smooth snakes are now found only in isolated pockets of Dorset, Devon, Hampshire, Surrey and West Sussex, and are highly dependent on nature reserves and managed RSPB sites such as Arne near Poole, Dorset.

Smooth snakes are slender, about 50-70cm in length, usually coloured grey or brown and with a mottled pattern on the back.

Now, let's take a peek at some of the UK's lizard species.

Slow Worm

Although often mistaken for a snake, the wildly inaccurately named slow worm is actually a legless lizard. Reaching around 50cm, they're small in comparison to snakes and have a metallic bronze sheen to their skin. Females sport dark stripes along the body, while mature males can also show lines of fine blue spots.

Slow worms have a rather patchy distribution but can be found in many parts of England, Wales and Scotland, though along with all species of snake are absent from Northern Ireland. They may be encountered on heathlands, moorlands, grassy woodland edges and they love compost heaps in gardens.

Common Lizard

The common lizard is the most widespread and numerous of all our wild reptiles. It is the only native reptile to be found in Northern Ireland. This small lizard may be found in a wide range of habitats including sea cliffs, moorlands, grasslands, woodlands, crags and around dry-stone walls. They are very small, around 10 - 16cm, highly variable in colour and covered in scales, making them easy to separate from Common Newts which have smooth skin.

Sand Lizard

The sand lizard is larger than the common lizard, at around 20cm. They are generally brown in colour though the males adopt dazzling bright green faces, flanks and legs in the breeding season. Barely commoner than the super-rare smooth snake, the sand lizard is also a severely threatened species, found only at a few heathland and coastal sand dune sites in England. Along with restoring and protecting the few remaining sites where sand lizards still occur, environmentalists have introduced them at several other suitable locations in an effort to increase the overall UK population.

Although snakes are often misunderstood, the UK's native species are an important part of the natural environment and are rarely a threat to people. The nearest likely place to find these creatures is RSPB Arne, a large reserve which is great for walking and provides a haven for all six of our native reptile species, as well as lots of other amazing wildlife.

We all should take some time learning how to identify our native species and also understanding and respecting their habitats so that we don't lose them forever. By recognising them, we can also feel more confident (and less concerned) if we are out wandering and happen to spot one in the wild.

WHAT'S ON - MAY 2026

Sat	2	10:00am	Coffee Morning for AFC	Including Box Opening
Sun	3	8:00am	Rev Dawn Carn	Holy Communion
		10:30am	Rev Dawn Carn	Café Church
Mon	4		BANK HOLIDAY	Zach's Café will be CLOSED
Tue	5	12:00pm	Tuesday Lunch & Social Club	
Thu	7	11:00am	Bible Fellowship	
Fri	8	10:30am	CAMEO	See page 15
		7:00pm	It is Well with my Soul	Tickets from Welcome Desk
Sun	10	10:30am	Rev Janet Tanner	Holy Communion
		3:30pm	Messy Church Team	Messy Church
Tue	12	10:00am	Grumpy Old Men	OPEN MEETING - see page 7
		12:00pm	Tuesday Lunch & Social Club	
Thu	14	11:00am	Bible Fellowship	
		2:00pm	Knit 'n' Natter	
Sat	16	7:30pm	Spring Concert	With the Salvation Army Band
Sun	17	8:00am	Breakfast Church Team	Breakfast Church
		10:30am	Rev Geoff Bell	Morning Worship
Tue	19	12:00pm	Tuesday Lunch & Social Club	
Wed	20	10:30am	Mid-month Communion	
Thu	21	11:00am	Bible Fellowship	
Fri	22	10:30am	CAMEO	See page 15
Sun	24	10:30am	Rev Dawn Carn	Pentecost
Mon	25		BANK HOLIDAY	Zach's Café will be CLOSED
Tue	26	12:00pm	Tuesday Lunch & Social Club	

WHAT'S ON - MAY 2026

Thu	28	11:00am	Bible Fellowship	
		2:00pm	Knit 'n' Natter	
Sat	30	3:00pm	Bells Concert	
Sun	31	10:30	Rev Dawn Carn	Morning Worship

A JOURNEY THROUGH THE BIBLE ROMANS



We've all heard that "Jesus died for our sins" but what does that really mean? And what's the deal with sin; do real Christians still struggle with it? Or should we stop worrying about sin because God has forgiven us anyway?

The answer to these big questions - and many more - are found in the book of Romans! Romans is the Bible's most complete explanation of what Jesus did on the cross.

It explains things like: who needs forgiveness, what difference Jesus' death makes, what we need to do to have God's forgiveness and be part of His kingdom, and how we can win our battle against daily temptation.

Would you like someone to sit down with you, explain the gospel from beginning to end and show you your part in it? Then let Paul walk you through it all in the book of Romans!

OFFINGTON CAMEO

Friday 8 May:

"Worthing Twinning Association"

David Short talks about this organisation

Friday 22 May:

"Poets Corner"

Lynn Jennings returns with a selection of her popular poetry

In the Allan Fletcher Hall, 10:15am for a 10:30am start

CAMEO

MH

GREAT CHRISTIAN HYMNWRITERS EDWIN HATCH

*Breathe on me, Breath of God,
Fill me with life anew,
That I may love what Thou dost love,
And do what Thou wouldst do.*

Edwin Hatch is one of those fascinating Victorian figures whose scholarly reputation was enormous in his own lifetime, yet today he's remembered almost entirely for writing one short hymn: Breathe on Me, Breath of God.

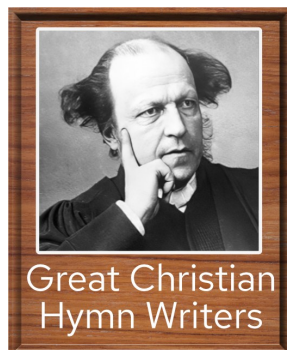
That contrast tells us a lot about both the man and his era.

Hatch was born to Samuel Hatch, a grocer and accountant, and his wife Charlotte Mooney on 4 September 1835 in Derby. His family was non-conformist and as a young man, he was educated at King Edward's School, Birmingham and later attended Pembroke College, Oxford, where he graduated in 1857. The college was home to a group of men called the Birmingham Set, whose function was simply the appreciation of arts and literature. The group was known to venture across Europe, visiting notable churches and medieval sites. Though they were well established when Edwin joined the college, by 1856 Edwin had become the group's most dominant figure.

While at Oxford he moved in unusually creative circles – he knew figures associated with the Pre-Raphaelite world, including William Morris and Edward Burne-Jones. At the same time, he underwent a religious shift: though raised outside the Church of England, he joined the Anglican Church in 1853 and was ordained in 1859. That trajectory was very Victorian: intellectual ambition, religious searching, and movement between old denominational boundaries.

After ordination, Hatch spent time ministering in poor districts of east London before moving to Canada, where he held the posts of Professor of Classics at Trinity College, Toronto and Rector of a high school in Quebec. This period reflects the broader British imperial world of the 19th century, when clergy and scholars often moved between Britain and colonial institutions.

Hatch returned to England in 1867, where he entered the academic world



that made him much more famous than his hymn-writing. Hatch was drawn to the study of deep theology, for it combined God and learning. He became so well versed in theology that he became one of Victorian England's major scholars of early Christianity. He held various academic and clerical positions including Vice-Principal of St Mary Hall, Oxford, Rector at Purleigh, Essex, and Reader in Ecclesiastical History at Oxford.

He is most remembered for lectures with a profound theological discourse. These displayed Edwin at his most studious and were published and translated into many languages. However, the most famous publication of this highly educated man ended up being a prayer of the simplest and most humble nature: *Breathe on Me, Breath of God*.

Hatch wrote *Breathe on Me, Breath of God* in 1878 and kept it private for many years. This adds to the unique nature of the hymn: it was originally meant only for Edwin and God. Though the hymn's original intent was to be a private prayer, it reached new ears when, in 1886, *Breathe on Me, Breath of God* was published by Henry Allen in *The Congregational Psalmist*. Since then, Edwin's private prayer has become a prayer of the many.

Its strikingly simple opening lines ("Breathe on me, Breath of God, Fill me with life anew...") draws on the book of Genesis, chapter 2 verse 7 (God breathing life into Adam) and on the Gospel of John, chapter 20 and verse 22 (Christ breathing on the disciples). It is framed around the Pentecost theme of spiritual renewal.

What's remarkable is how plain the language is. Nearly all the words are monosyllables and the hymn feels deeply personal. For as much as Edwin Hatch loved complex thoughts and theologies, he understood that at the core of Christianity is something incredibly simple: faith in God. It is not too far a stretch to assume Edwin wrote the hymn as a reminder to himself (and perhaps to others) to never get bogged down in complex theology.

Edwin Hatch died suddenly in Oxford on 10 November 1889, aged only 54. His widow later published his religious poems in "*Towards Fields of Light*" (1890). He is buried at Holywell Cemetery in Oxford.

Many scholars of his era are now read only by specialists. Hatch somehow escaped that fate because he left behind a hymn ordinary worshippers still sing. That may be his real legacy: a man who spent his life wrestling with the intellectual architecture of Christianity is remembered for what may have been a simple private prayer accidentally given to the world.

CHRISTIAN AID WEEK

10 – 16 May 2026

together we can beat poverty

Christian Aid has been working in Kenya for 29 years. Through partnerships with organisations like Beacon of Hope, they reach the communities who need our support the most.



Kenya has a growing debt burden, driven by high interest rates set by international private lenders. Over half the residents of Nairobi live in semi-permanent homes.

We shall be putting envelopes on seats at our morning worship service on Sunday 10 May and we would be immensely grateful for your generous contributions.

This approach to giving for Christian Aid Week was very successful last year, so please help us help people who are in great need.

Please bring your envelopes back as soon as possible or drop them in to the Welcome Desk during the week. If you're giving by cheque, please make it payable to Christian Aid and not to the church. Also, please complete the Gift Aid form (which is part of the envelope) if you are a taxpayer.



Many thanks to you all.

Chris & Liz, Frances

A BAKER'S DOZEN

In the early 1800's, Mrs Abigail Baker of Bedford, Ohio, gave birth to 13 children. Exactly half of them were girls. How can this be so?

A: So were the other half!



DIAMOND WEDDING

Angela and John T

With very best wishes for your special day!

THANK YOU

The “public house” of The Risen King sends a really big thank you to everyone who came to the Gastropub Lunch. We had great fun together, whilst raising amazing funds for Action for Children and singing our praises to God. Thanks to you we were able to send them £650 (and your thoughtful use of gift-aiding will augment that sum by a further £150).

THANK YOU (AGAIN!)

A really big thank you also to everyone who supported the Good Friday lunch in aid of Christian Aid. We raised £286 plus Gift Aid on top.

OFFERTORIES

Month	Cash & Cheques	Standing Orders
March	£559.00	£6,006.66

GOING FROM HOUSE TO HOUSE!

A new minister’s first position was to a church sited next door to a public house. After his first Sunday evening service, he watched as most of the congregation marched straight from the church into the pub. This happened every Sunday evening for several weeks and the minister eventually asked his Senior Steward, “Why is there a rush for the pub after the service?” “Well”, replied the Steward, “I suppose you could call it the thirst after righteousness!”



Love looks through a telescope;
envy looks through a microscope.

A PERSONAL INVITATION

Questions of Life? Questions of Faith?

YOU ARE INVITED TO a six-week series of short videos and small-group discussions to help you explore, and then become confident on, matters of faith.



The programme is designed to help people wishing to strengthen the faith they already hold, and also for those exploring faith for the first time. The video presentations are from the Alpha course, attended worldwide by some two million people in the UK.

The programme will help you address such questions as:

Who is Jesus? There is strong evidence to support the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Why did Jesus Die? To offer us a different quality of life: life to the full, and freedom indeed.

How Can I Have Faith? You can be sure of the relationship you have with God through Jesus.

Why and how should I pray? You can be confident that the power of prayer changes things.

Why and how should I read the Bible? You can know that the teachings in the Bible are both true and relevant today.

What is the Holy Spirit ? Understand the work of the Holy Spirit, and how you can be filled with the Holy Spirit.

The programme will run over six consecutive Saturday mornings.

The first day is **Saturday 30 May** and we start **at 10:00am**, with coffee and pastries. We aim to finish by 12 noon.

There will be an opportunity, if you wish, to extend the programme by a further 4-5 weeks, exploring topics including: How Can I Resist Evil?; God's Healing Today; and How to Make the Best of the Rest of Your Life.

We so look forward to welcoming you on this journey of faith. It would really help our planning if you could confirm your attendance with Steve or Karen Clayton or at the church reception desk.

With love from your Offington Park family Alpha Team

Offington Park Methodist Church



Spring Concert

with

**The Salvation
Army Band**

Saturday

16 May 2026

7.30pm

Doors open 7.00 pm

**Retiring Collection
in support of
Community
Development
Initiatives**

**FREE
ADMISSION**

**Refreshments
available**



OFFINGTON PARK
METHODIST CHURCH

MENTAL HEALTH IN THE BIBLE

This month in our series following the men and women in Scripture who battled with their mental health, we look at



John the Baptist: The eccentric prophet with heavy doubts

What do you do when you have doubts about the big stuff? Is Jesus really who He says He is? Does God really care about me?

If you've ever had worries like this gnawing away, you are in excellent company: John the Baptist. His job was to prepare the way for Jesus.

"Look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world," he announced when Jesus approached. But that's not the end of John's story. He was later arrested and imprisoned.

From his cell, he heard stories of what Jesus was doing, and perhaps opinionated rumours. And the doubts and anxieties began to surface. Is He really the one? Did I make a mistake? Should we still be waiting for the Saviour?

We will all face doubts. We'll all have questions. It's hard to trust someone you cannot see. But John shows us how to handle such times. He didn't hide his anxieties in his heart, where they might have consumed him. He brought his questions straight to Jesus (via a messenger).

And Jesus responded to John in the same way He'll respond to us: by directing him back to the rock-solid, reassuring truth of the Bible. "The blind see, the deaf hear, the lame walk!" All the Old Testament promises about the Saviour were coming true.

"Poignant, elegant, and deeply moving."



LondonFringeTheatreReviews

HANDIWORK PRODUCTIONS
PRESENTS

IT IS
WELL
WITH MY
SOUL

THE MUSICAL

THE TRAGIC TRUE STORY BEHIND
ONE OF THE MOST BELOVED
HYMNS OF ALL TIME



West Sussex (Coast and Downs)
Methodist Circuit

Friday 8th May
7:00pm

Offington Park Methodist Church

Tickets available from your local Methodist Church or
by scanning the QR code

Two tickets for £20 or one for £13

"A truly remarkable show."

The Baptist Times



Handiwork

A BIGGER BARN

I had always believed that abundance was proof. Proof that I had worked harder than other men. Proof that God had favoured me. Proof that I had done something right.



My father left me a modest piece of land - not poor soil, but nothing remarkable. I spent years learning its moods: when the rains would come, where the earth stayed warm longest, which workers could be trusted before sunrise and which needed watching. I expanded little by little. I bought neighbouring fields when other men fell into debt. I hired more servants. I built better irrigation channels. While others feasted during harvest, I counted seed.

And then came *that* year.

The rains arrived at the perfect time. Not too much, not too little. The wheat rose thick and golden, bending in the wind like waves on the sea. The olives were heavy on their branches. The vineyards groaned with fruit. Everywhere I walked, men smiled nervously and said the same thing:

"Master... where will we put it all?"

At first, I laughed. A good problem, I thought. Then I went to my barns.

They were full. Every granary packed. Every basket accounted for. Every corner overflowing. Grain spilled onto the ground despite our efforts. My servants looked at me waiting for instruction, but I had none. For the first time in my life, I had more than enough - and didn't know what to do with it.

That night I could not sleep. Not because I was afraid. Because I was excited. I walked through my courtyard beneath the moon and began speaking aloud, as though hearing the words would make them real. "What shall I do?" I remember smiling at my next thought. "I know."

I could see it in my mind - larger barns, perhaps two-storey ones with stronger walls and much greater capacity. Tear down the old barns. Build new ones. Organize every bushel. Preserve every ounce of profit. This harvest would not be wasted on generosity or careless distribution.

No. This was security. This was freedom. Once it was all stored safely away, I would finally rest. No more anxiety about drought. No more concern over market prices. No more working hard under the scorching sun. I had earned my peace.

I said it aloud to the darkness, savouring every word: "Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years. Relax. Eat. Drink. Be merry." It sounded like wisdom. It sounded like victory.

Then came the voice. No footsteps approached. No servant interrupted me. The night itself seemed to hold still. And then: "You fool."

The words struck harder than any physical blow. Who was speaking? I turned, but saw no one. "This very night your life is required of you."

My chest tightened. My breath shortened. Suddenly the stars above me seemed impossibly distant.

"And the things you have prepared—whose will they be?" I wanted to answer. Mine. They're mine. I planted them. I earned them. I protected them. But the words would not come. Because in that moment I understood what I had refused to see.

I had spoken often to my servants. To merchants. To builders. To my own soul. But never to God. In all my planning, I had not once asked what wealth was actually for. I had measured my life by what I could accumulate and keep. I thought that larger barns could save me from uncertainty. I thought wealth could bargain with death. But death does not negotiate. And barns cannot hold a soul.

As my strength left me, strange thoughts entered my mind. I remembered my workers whose names I never learned. The widows who came asking for grain and left empty-handed because prices would rise in winter. The beggars I avoided at the city gate. The prayers I rushed through. The poor relatives I called burdens.

I had so much. And yet somehow I lived as though there would never be enough. That was my true poverty.

By morning, men would discover my body. They would whisper about my success.

Then argue over my property. My barns would belong to someone else. My fields would pass into hands I had never intended. My name, once spoken with admiration, would eventually fade into dust. And all that would remain of me would be this:

A man who stored up treasure for himself – and arrived empty-handed before God.

Offington Park Methodist Church presents a...

BELLS CONCERT

SATURDAY

30

MAY

3:00pm

REFRESHMENTS
AVAILABLE

ADMISSION FREE

Donations Welcome for
funding Community
Development Initiatives

Thank you all so very much for the “eggstraordinarily” generous donation of Easter eggs. We were able to send over 100 eggs (see picture below) to SHOUT for distribution to needy families. Your generosity made a lot of children (and parents) happy!

SHOUT’s work among the homeless, people with serious problems and families in need relies heavily on the income generated from our charity shops. We are desperately in need of donations for these shops, especially bric-a-brac, kitchenware, handbags, shoes, costume jewellery, and vinyl records. Of course, books, CDs and DVDs are always very welcome along with clothes for adults and children. The shops are located at:
*219 Tarring Road, near Wall Bros carpets (also home to our food bank); and
147 Montague Street, next to Silverthorne’s jewellers*

If you have a donation but cannot get to the shop, please let me know via the church office. I can arrange collection.

Please also remember our food bank (donate at our Tarring Road shop or via the box in the church vestibule). We have an ongoing need for all types of food including pasta, tinned goods, baby food, nappies, cooking oil, tea, coffee and more.

Please be as generous as you are able.
Wishing you all many blessings.

JB



NEXT EDITION

Copy Deadline

Publication Date

Sunday 24 May 2026

Thursday 28 May 2026

Please submit material for the next edition
to the Editors at:

offingtonspotlight@gmail.com

What do you call a man who's always there when you need him?

Andy.

What do you call a man with a seagull on his head? **Cliff.**

What do you call a man with a crane on his head? **Derek.**

What do you call a man in a pile of leaves? **Russell.**

What do you call a man with a wig on his head? **Aaron.**

What do you call a man with cat scratches on his head? **Claude.**

What do you call a man with a coat on his head? **Mac.**

What do you call a man with two coats on his head? **Max.**

What do you call two men standing in the window?

Kurt and Rod.

What do you call a man who likes gardening? **Herb.**

What do you call a man with a car on his head? **Jack.**

And finally, what do you call a man with an elephant on his head?

An ambulance.

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