

SPOTLIGHT

Offington Park Methodist Church Magazine



July/August 2025

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Cover Picture - Chania Lighthouse, Crete

The 21-metre tall stone lighthouse at Chania, Crete, is one of the most iconic landmarks of the city. Positioned at the entrance of the Venetian harbour in the north western coastal town of Chania, it is one of the oldest lighthouses in the world. Originally built by the Venetians as part of the harbour's fortifications during their occupation of Crete (1595–1601), it has been rebuilt and restored by both the Ottomans and the Egyptians and is a curious mix of all three architectural styles.

The Egyptians gave it the minaret-like shape it retains today. This minaret makes it unlike typical European lighthouses.

The Lighthouse is a popular tourist attraction, especially when lit up at night. It is accessed by a lovely walk from the harbour along to the end of the breakwater and offers stunning views at sunset.

Though it is no longer operational as a lighthouse, which when active could be seen for seven nautical miles, it is maintained as a historical monument.



Dear Friends,

After the unusually warm spell at the end of last month, and amid the hope of continuing warm summer days, we find ourselves

reflecting on the unique rhythm this season brings. It's a time when the world seems a little less busy — gardens are in full bloom, children look forward to a longer holiday, church routines begin to slow and the longer days seem to stretch out before us.



This summer we remember our Minister Dawn, and we pray that she will use her sabbatical time well to rest, reconnect, and renew before returning to the busy church environment.

You know, we can all use a form of 'sabbatical', a natural pause in our lives to step back from the busyness and rediscover God in the beauty around us. Psalm 19:1 says, *"The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands."* This season, why not lift your eyes to the heavens, listen for God's voice in the warm wind, and give thanks for His faithfulness in every season of our lives.

Whether you are traveling, tending gardens, enjoying time with family, or simply soaking up the sunshine, we hope you find space to experience God's presence in fresh ways. But let us not forget those who may not find this season restful — those experiencing illness or grief, caring for others, or simply feeling alone. A phone call, a prayer, or a small gesture of kindness can shine the light of Christ into their lives.

Wherever this season takes you, and whatever it brings, may it be filled with rest, joy, and spiritual renewal.

With every blessing,

the Eds.



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SUNDAY

13TH JULY



TIME

3PM - 6PM



PUZZLE POWER?



The editor of a local newspaper approached a local business owner to ask him to advertise in the paper. The business owner refused, telling the editor, "I never read adverts, and I don't believe anyone else does. Waste of money."

"OK", said the editor. "Will you advertise in my paper if I can convince you that people do read the adverts?" The man thought for a moment. "If you can show me they work, then yes I will, but I'm pretty sure you can't!"

In the next issue of the paper, the editor ran a line of small type in an obscure corner. It read: "What is Jenkins going to do about it?"

The very next day, the business man, Jenkins, called the editor to tell him that he was being pestered out of his wits by people curious about the question. The editor said he would explain in the next issue, and in that issue he wrote, "Jenkins is going to advertise, of course."

The man paid for an advert!

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July

Services

Sunday 6 July

8.00am Holy Communion

Rev Richard Tanner

10.30am Café Church / Parade

Joy Barnes

Sunday 13 July

10.30am Holy Communion

Rev Richard Tanner

Sunday 20 July

8.00 am Breakfast Church

10.30am Morning Worship

Rev Rosemarie Clarke

Sunday 27 July

10.30am Fun Church

Joy Barnes

10.30am Morning Worship

John Carr

HOW TO BUILD A MINIBEAST HOTEL



Why not take our summer challenge? Enjoy crafting something unique and help the environment at the same time!

Choose a suitable site

Your site should be level and on firm ground. The residents or 'guests' will differ depending on where you place your hotel: some (woodlice, for example) enjoy cool, damp conditions, while others (for example, solitary bees) prefer the sun. Keep your hotel away from any vegetable beds - you don't want to attract the slugs!

Build the basic structure



You will need a strong, stable framework that's no more than a metre high. Old wooden pallets are perfect for a large hotel as they come with ready-made gaps and are quite sturdy, but hotels of any size will be welcomed by the insect community. Start by laying some bricks on the ground as sturdy corners. Leave some spaces in between the bricks for critters to move in. Add three or four layers of wooden pallets or whatever material you're using on

top of your bricks. If you leave larger gaps, you're more likely to attract hedgehogs, and if this is your aim, why not add a hedgehog box at the base?

Furnishing the 'rooms'

The idea is to provide all sorts of different nooks and crannies, crevices, tunnels and cosy beds to suit different types of creature. Make your rooms of:

- Dead wood and loose bark for creepy crawlies like beetles, centipedes, spiders and woodlice
- Holes and small tubes (not plastic) for solitary bees made out of bamboo, reeds and drilled logs
- Larger holes with stones and tiles, which provide the cool, damp conditions frogs and toads like – if you put these in the centre you'll give them a frost-free place to spend the winter (and they eat slugs!)
- Dry leaves, sticks or straw for ladybirds (they eat aphids) and other beetles and bugs
- Corrugated cardboard for Lacewings (their larvae eat aphids, too)

Add a 'roof'

A roof of old roof tiles or old planks covered with roofing felt will keep the hotel relatively dry. Try a 'green' roof by putting a bit of rubble or gritty soil on top, for plants that love dry conditions to take root, or wildflower seeds blown by the breeze. Pop some wildflower seeds around the hotel to give food for butterflies, bees and other pollinating insects. Finally, choose a name for your hotel and put up your 'vacancies' and 'all welcome' signs!

CHURCH FAMILY NEWS



SIGNIFICANT BIRTHDAYS

Chris L and Linda G (80)

Graham R (40)

Roz M



Action for Children Coffee Morning and Box Opening raised **£1,012** plus Gift Aid. Thank you to everyone who came and especially to those who manned the stalls and made the tea.

OFFERTORIES

Month	Cash & Cheques	Standing Orders
May	£348.00	£5,658.33

Fishers (...but not fish!)

*“Come, follow me,” Jesus said,
“and I will make you fishers of people” (Mark 1:17)*

Struggling to share your faith with others? You need this!

This seminar will take place in the Mary Humphrey Hall on Saturday 26 July, from 9:30am – 12:00pm. It aims to inspire you to share your faith, with practical tools to help you do it.

Broadly the programme will look at:

- Why we should want to share our faith
- Faith-sharing as a process and a partnership
- Where do I seek ... ?
- Your testimony
- Different styles of evangelism

There will be a focused presentation, then an opportunity for interactive role-play on sharing your own testimony.

Please let Steve C know if you're planning to attend

THE LIGHTHOUSE @ OFFINGTON PARK

the lighthouse
@ Offington Park

Be Cool...visit the Lighthouse!



SOFT PLAY AND CAFE

With the hot summer days just around the corner (why aren't they here already?) many of us turn our thoughts to holidays, while others (mums and dads especially) start to dread the school summer holidays. Well, whether you're a holiday-lover or holiday-dreader, we have some good news for you.

The Lighthouse will be open for soft play throughout the summer holidays (bank holidays excluded) and we also have a small number of party spaces left on Saturdays.

Now, what you may not know if you've never been to see us, is that the Lighthouse soft play area is actually quite a cool space - in what we offer, in our wonderful staff and volunteers, and in temperature. That's right, it is often much cooler in our café area than it is outside and, after all, there's only so much time you can spend on a pebbly beach, isn't there? So come and see us. We'd love to see you!

But it's not only soft play we can offer. During the holiday season, we will again be laying on special activities, including Dominic's Drumming Session and crafting sessions from our own resident artisan, Gill, who many of you will know from Wednesdays at Zach's. Look out for the information and book early, as these sessions are expected to be very popular.

We are also pleased to report the success of our collaboration with Home Start. This initiative, funded by the local authority, uses our kitchen with its excellent cooking facilities to help nominated people learn to cook more healthily. Each nominated family not only learns more about nutrition and eating health, but they get to eat what they've cooked, play in the soft play area and take home a free slow cooker afterwards! We are really pleased to be helping the community in this way.



Finally, we'd like to introduce a new member to our team. Ashley has joined us as a Deputy Community Outreach Manager, and he and Tess are looking forward to working together to make your experiences at the Lighthouse even better. Welcome, Ashley! There's STILL a LOT going on at the Lighthouse!!

OLD WORTHING FAMILIES TOUR

Saturday 5 July 2025 @ 11:00 am

Ten years ago, we held a tour themed around some of the local family names that have been part of Worthing's history. We thought it was time to revisit this theme in 2025.



So, for our July tour, we have selected five more families who lived in Worthing for several generations and have family members buried in Broadwater Cemetery. Some family names, like Blann, will be more familiar than others, but they all have interesting stories to tell.

Find out, for example, which house painter played football for Worthing Wednesdays and was also involved in the Salvation Army Riots when he was only 15.

RAILWAY BICENTENARY TOUR

Saturday 2 August 2025 @ 11:00 am

This year marks the 200th anniversary of the Stockton and Darlington Railway, the world's first steam-powered passenger railway, which opened on 27 September 1825.

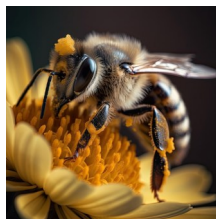
Come along to find out about how many dedicated their lives to the railway, and the people buried in the cemetery who either worked for, or met their demise on, the railway.

Both tours start at 11 am by the Chapels in South Farm Road. Hot and cold refreshments (including delicious cakes) are available for a small donation towards cemetery upkeep. Please help the environment by bringing your own cup.

Thank you.

GET POLLINATING!

The numbers of pollinating insects such as bees, butterflies and moths have fallen in the UK in recent years. Pollinators play a vital role in our ecosystems, not only as a source of food for birds and other animals, but also by pollinating our crops and providing pest control. And, of course, they all have their own intrinsic value, remarkable and often beautiful. One way we can help pollinators is by growing flowers that support them. Did you know that gardens cover up to 25% of urban land areas? Imagine the difference it would make if we all planted for pollinators!



Below are some easy-to-grow pollinator plants, which should be placed in a sunny, sheltered position. Each plant should take no more than 15 minutes a year to look after – a once-a-year prune and a drop of water in hot weather is all it takes. Easy!

Lavender: brilliant for bees. Grows to about 60cm (2ft) tall and the same wide. They do well in dry, rubbish soil – just don't overwater them—they don't like it! To look after lavender, just trim the ends of all the stems in early spring.

Marjoram: great for bees, even better for butterflies. Grows to about 30cm (1ft) tall and over time forms a clump. You might find it labelled Oregano. In spring, cut back all the stems that flowered the previous year.

Catmint: often labelled Nepeta. It forms a low, loose mound of foliage about 45cm (1.5ft) high. Two common ones are Walker's Low and Six Hills Giant. Let them flower in summer, then cut back to the base in July as they start to go straggly (be tough with your love!) and it will sprout again from the base.

Verbena bonariensis: grows slender wiry stems with clusters of lilac flowers on top that butterflies love. Leave the flower heads once finished as finches eat the seeds, and seeds on the ground may germinate and give you new plants. Prune back to the base in early spring.

Helenium: with daisy flowers in flaming reds and yellows about 60cm (2ft) high, these will have the bees queuing up! Most varieties will be fine to plant. Cut back last year's flowering stems in early spring. Water well in hot, dry weather.

Hardy geraniums: they have mounds of lovely leaves about 30-45cm (1-1.5 ft) high) and hundreds of large simple flowers in shades of blue, purple and pink, perfect for bumblebees. Some flower for weeks and weeks. Look for varieties such as Geranium Rozanne, Geranium x magnificum, Geranium sanguineum. Like catmints, most can be cut back hard after flowering, and will happily grow back and probably flower again.

BIBLE HEROES

Friends of the paralysed man

Are you a team player, or do you prefer flying solo?

Whether we love teamwork or loathe it, unity with our brothers and sisters in Christ is essential to living the Christian life well. Without their support and prayers, our faith is much more likely to waver when the going gets tough.

That could have easily been the story for the paralysed man. If he had been on his own, he would never have got to Jesus - there were so many barriers, aside from his physical limitations.

But he had four friends determined to carry him to the Healer who had entered town. Together, they kept going, thought outside the box (literally!) and overcame every obstacle to bring their friend to Jesus.

What impressed Him most? Was it their teamwork? Their tenacity? Maybe even their perseverance? No, it was their faith - their combined faith, bolstered and strengthened by the presence of one another.

*Fight through the crowds with the friends of the paralysed man and see how **faith encourages faith**.*



We invite anyone, grumpy or not,
to join us at 10:00am on
8 July for a discussion on



Repair - or don't care?

Do we live in a throwaway Society? What does that mean for the planet? Should we repair more, and care more?

We'll be meeting in the Quiet Room (after coffee and cake in Zach's Café). Do come and join us at this event or when we meet again in September!

JC's LITTLE NUGGETS

"God Never Forgets" **based on Isaiah 49 vv13-16**



What a day!!

Our two grandchildren – boys aged six and three – had come to stay for a few days. This particular day started at 5am with them jumping on us in bed.

We ate breakfast at the (some would say) unearthly hour of 6am, whilst watching Wallace and Gromit. And the day continued in this vein, with a constant need for entertainment.

Fortunately, they loved visiting the Lighthouse – it was just a pity that I was just slightly too big to get in! Hey ho! This was followed by a visit to the beach, then to a local museum, and so on until, finally, at 8pm, it was all quiet.

In that time of quiet, I suddenly realised that with everything going on, I had forgotten about the Lord. Normally during the day, I would pray, I would read my Bible and I would talk to Him (I get more sense out of God than talking to myself).

It's silly to think, I know, but what if the Lord had had a busy day himself and had forgotten me! That won't happen, I hear you say, for it says in Isaiah 49:15 "I will never forget you".

Yes, friends, the Lord never forgets us, and He is always with us – every step of the way.

God bless you all.

John C

August *Services*

Sunday 3 August

8.00am Holy Communion

Rev Richard Tanner

10.30am Café Church

Adam Cook

3.00pm Farewell to Rev Ian Couchman

Southwick Methodist Church

Sunday 10 August

10.30am Holy Communion

Rev Richard Tanner

3.00pm Songs of Praise

Sunday 17 August

8.00 am Breakfast Church

10.30am Morning Worship

Pam Frost

Sunday 24 August

10.30am All Age Worship

Joy Barnes

3.00pm Songs of Praise

Sunday 31 August

10.30 am Morning Worship

Rev John Jennings

“HANG UP THE PHONE!”

Have you been watching ‘Scam Interceptors’, a BBC One programme now in its third series?

This factual television programme, presented by Rav Wilding (pictured top right) focuses on Internet Fraud.



Assisted by journalist Nick Stapleton and ethical hacker Jim Browning, the programme seeks to disrupt the illegal activities of overseas-based organisations engaged in scamming. Inspiration for the programme came from a 2020 episode of Panorama featuring Jim Browning.

During each episode, the team, based in the BBC Pacific Quay studios in Glasgow, monitors and intervenes in scams **as they happen**, aiming to prevent victims from losing money. They use cutting-edge technology to track scammers' phone calls and warn potential victims. The victims are primarily elderly people with limited knowledge of the Internet, but with a high degree of trust in the person who has called them, allegedly from their bank, to 'help' them secure their money which is, they say, at risk from a hacker. Most calls to the UK originate from large-scale scamming call centres in Asia.

The main challenge the team face is identifying the person being scammed and getting hold of them to tell them to hang up the call. To help them, they have teams of Ground Interceptors, but sometimes they are just too far away to get there in time.

On several occasions, the team has identified that the victim is a churchgoer and has found that contacting local churches to ask them to call round is an effective means of intervention. On one occasion, a Methodist Minister answered the team's call and acted very quickly, successfully managing to prevent one of their congregation from being scammed.

This struck us as yet another example of how, in small and often unnoticed ways, churches provide valuable services not just to their members, but to the local community too. **The Eds**

WHAT'S ON - JULY 2025

Tue	1	12:00pm	Tuesday Lunch & Social Club	
Thu	3	11:00am	Bible Fellowship	
		7:30pm	Thursday's	Social Group
Sun	6	8:00am	Rev Richard Tanner	Holy Communion
		10:30am	Mrs Joy Barnes	Café Church / Parade
Mon	7	2:30pm	Offington Bells	
Tue	8	10:00am	Grumpy Old Men	Repair - or don't care?
		12:00pm	Tuesday Lunch & Social Club	
Thu	10	11:00am	Bible Fellowship	
		2:00pm	Knit 'n' Natter	
Sun	13	10:30am	Rev Richard Tanner	Holy Communion
Tue	15	12:00pm	Tuesday Lunch & Social Club	
Wed	16	10:30am	Mid-month Communion	
Thu	17	11:00am	Bible Fellowship	
Sun	20	10:30am	Breakfast Church Team	Breakfast Church
		10:30am	Rev Rosemarie Clarke	Morning Worship
Mon	21	6:45pm	Offington Bells	
Tue	22	12:00pm	Tuesday Lunch & Social Club	
Thu	24	11:00am	Bible Fellowship	
		2:00pm	Knit 'n' Natter	

WHAT'S ON - JULY 2025 (continued)

Sat	26	9:30am	Fishers...but not fish	See p8
Sun	27	10:30am	Mr John Carr	Morning Worship
		10:30am	Mrs Joy Barnes	Fun Church
Tue	29	12:00pm	Tuesday Lunch & Social Club	
Thu	31	11:00am	Bible Fellowship	

WHAT'S ON - AUGUST 2025

Sun	3	8:00am	Rev Richard Tanner	Holy Communion
		10:30am	Mr Adam Cook	Café Church
		3:00pm	Farewell Service for Rev Ian Couchman at Southwick MC	
Tue	5	12:00pm	Tuesday Lunch & Social Club	
Thu	7	2:00pm	Knit 'n' Natter	
		7:30pm	Thursday's	Social Group
Sun	10	8:00am	Rev Richard Tanner	Holy Communion
		3:00pm	Songs of Praise	
Mon	11	6.45pm	Offington Bells	
Sun	17	8:00am	Breakfast Church Team	Breakfast Church
		10.30am	Mrs Pam Frost	Morning Worship
Thu	21	2.00pm	Knit n Natter	
Sun	24	10.30am	Mrs Joy Barnes	All Age Worship -
		3.00pm	Songs of Praise	
Sun	31	10.30am	Rev John Jennings	Morning Worship

JOSEPH HART

*This, this is the God we adore!
Our faithful, unchangeable friend:
his love is as great as his power
and neither knows measure nor end.*

*'Tis Jesus, the first and the last;
his Spirit will guide us safe home;
we'll praise him for all that is past
and trust him for all that's to come.*



Joseph Hart was born in London in 1712. He received a classical education and was well-versed in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. For a time, he lived a rebellious life, deeply influenced by rationalist and libertine thinking. In fact, he wrote a pamphlet titled *"The Unreasonableness of Religion"* which attacked Christianity and ridiculed the teachings of preachers like George Whitefield.

During this time, Hart tried to justify his lifestyle with intellectual arguments. However, despite his outward confidence, he was deeply unsettled inside. He experienced seasons of guilt, fear, and spiritual turmoil - often feeling trapped between the pleasures of the world and the truth of the gospel.

Hart's conversion was not sudden, but came through a long and painful spiritual struggle. His heart was gradually softened through the preaching of the gospel and the writings of Christian authors, including the sermons of John Wesley and the works of the Puritans.

Eventually, in 1757, Hart experienced what he described as a powerful and freeing sense of God's mercy and grace. He publicly renounced his earlier writings and began sharing his testimony with others. His transformation was profound - moving from a critic of Christianity to a passionate believer and preacher of the gospel. Most of his well-known hymns were actually written in the two years following that awakening.

After his conversion, Hart became a minister at the Independent Chapel in Jewin Street, London, where he preached to large and eager crowds. His sermons were known for their sincerity, heartfelt emotion, and strong emphasis on grace and redemption. In 1759, he published his famous collection *"Hymns Composed on Various Subjects,"* which included 85 original hymns. These hymns reflected his own journey from

despair to hope, and many spoke directly to struggling sinners in need of comfort and assurance.

The hymn, "This, this is the God We Adore" (recorded in some texts as "This God is the God We Adore") is one of Joseph Hart's most enduring and beloved hymns. It serves as a brief but powerful doxology - an expression of praise to God - and is often used at the close of worship. Though it contains only two stanzas, "This, this is the God We Adore" encapsulates a mature, steady faith that resonates with Christians across centuries. The hymn offers a compact summary of core Christian beliefs and deep personal trust in God. Each line is rich with meaning:

"The God we adore" grounds the hymn in worship, emphasizing reverence and relationship.

"Faithful, unchangeable friend" highlights God's constancy.

"Love... as great as His power" affirms the balance of God's omnipotence with His boundless love.

"Neither knows measure nor end" points to God's infinite nature.

"Jesus, the first and the last" asserts Christ's divine and eternal nature (Revelation 22:13).

"Spirit shall guide us safe home" acknowledges the Holy Spirit's role in leading believers through life.

"Praise Him... trust Him" is in short a model for the Christian life: gratitude for past grace, and confident trust in future grace.

It remains a timeless expression of confidence in God's providence and care.

Joseph Hart died on May 24, 1768. The many thousands that attended his funeral were testimony to the deep impact he had, not only on his own congregation, but on the wider Christian community. His hymns and sermons continue to inspire Christians around the world. His works are treasured for their deep spiritual insight, emotional honesty, and powerful expressions of grace. Hart's legacy lies not only in his poetry but in the example of a life transformed by grace - proof that no heart is beyond the reach of God's mercy.



From a critic of Christianity to one of its most beloved hymnwriters, Hart's story is one of grace overcoming doubt. His hymns have comforted the weary and called many to Christ, making him a lasting voice in the history of Christian worship.

A JOURNEY THROUGH THE BIBLE

Zechariah



If. A small word with big meaning. And it's probably the most important word in the book of Zechariah.

This book is a bit of a wild ride. The first few chapters are filled with strange dreams Zechariah had about the four horsemen who ride round the earth, flying women with stork wings, olive trees that pour oil – and things like that.

But these dreams, alongside Zechariah's teaching, build a picture of hope. They promise the coming Shepherd King who will rule the world in peace and destroy all God's enemies. It's a stirring picture of the future we can be part of . . . if we are faithful to God.

There are lots of "if" statements in Zechariah; not because this future is in doubt, but because we must choose to love, obey and follow Jesus – the Shepherd King – if we want it to be our future.

Do you want to know if following Jesus is worth it when it feels so much easier to just do whatever you want? Zechariah's stunning vision of God's King will help you.

A scenic landscape with rolling green hills, a dense forest of evergreen trees, and a warm, orange-hued sky suggesting a sunrise or sunset.

Faith
is the substance of things hoped for,
the evidence of things not seen.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE PRAY?

What happens when we pray?
Do words rise up and drift away,
Like smoke from lips too tired to speak,
Or echoes lost on mountain peaks?

Do whispered hopes take shape in air,
And circle round without a care,
Until they find, through shadowed skies,
The ears of One who never lies?



Perhaps a tear that falls unseen
Is caught within a space between
The here, the now, the aching soul —
And something vast that makes us whole.

Perhaps the silence answers back,
Not with the things we think we lack,
But with a peace we cannot name,
A fire that doesn't burn the same.

We kneel with nothing left to give,
With hearts too cracked to even live:
A current moves beneath our skin —
Not out, but deep, and far within.

A breath becomes a kind of song,
A sacred pull that draws us strong,
And though the world may never change,
We do - through something soft and strange.



So what becomes of every cry?
They're not forgotten, nor passed by.
They're held in hands that shaped the stars,
And carried back to where we are.

For prayer is more than just a plea,
It's connecting with eternity—
A quiet thrum that helps us stay
Alive and open - when we pray.

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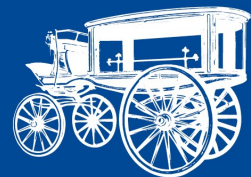


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FREE GIFTING - A GREAT WAY TO REMEMBER

The BBC recently ran a local story of a woman who, last Father's Day, set up a table piled high with free gifts and handmade items in memory of her late dad, and who was overwhelmed by the outpouring of love for her gesture. One of the Eds used to work with this lady and can honestly say that she really is as kind and generous as the BBC report suggested!!

The lady (Rachel) lost her father in 2022 and on the Saturday prior to Father's Day, she stacked a table in a local park with knitted hats, trinkets, flowers and food inviting people to take what they wanted.

Rachel was keen to stress that the items were free. "I don't want money at all", she said, "doing this keeps a little of dad with me and makes me happy. One woman came and took just one lily - she said she was on her way to the cemetery and she thanked me."

Rachel said she would like people to remember her late father if they took one of her gifts, many of which were lovingly made by her in the craft workshop in her garden. But this isn't a one-off gesture. Oh, no. She began leaving out free gifts for Mother's Day after her mum died eight years ago, and then the tradition continued for Father's Day.



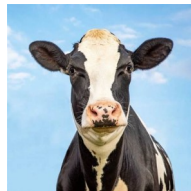
Rachel described her dad as a "good, kind, generous and jolly soul" on a note that she left along with photos of her parents. The items included not only craft gifts, but cake, chocolate, and a wrapped tea bag, reflecting some of the things her own father loved. "He could drink a gallon of tea," Rachel explained.

There were many other items that evoked Rachel's memories of her folk, and Rachel explained that it would give her comfort if people took items in memory of her father. Stacking a table with gifts is cathartic for her. "I like seeing people happy and I try to provide things they might like or want. Mum and dad loved this park and I want people to feel a bit of that love too."

Photographs of the gifting table posted on social media gathered over 2,600 likes, with people praising her generosity. A bunch of flowers was left for her anonymously at the table as well as a bottle of wine. Some people offered to make charitable donations in her father's name, but instead she suggested: "Just do something nice for someone else." So, you have been challenged!!

IN PRAISE OF COWS

Every one of us will, at one time or another, have seen a cow in a field. Many of us may have milked a cow and still others will recall the myths, for example that cows lie down to signify that rain is coming. But have you ever thought about the real value of a cow? Read on to find out why cows really are a farmer's best friend.



Clearly, we all know that cows produce milk. Dairy cows provide millions of litres of milk every day, and did you know that your supermarket two pints could contain the milk of up to 1,000 cows in the same bottle? Milk is nutritious, a vital source of calcium, protein, and vitamins. Of course, it also serves as the base for products like cheese, butter, yogurt, and cream, which are important both nutritionally and economically. A healthy cow can produce six to seven gallons of milk per day, turning a small herd into a profitable business. Additionally, cows often have a gentle temperament, making them easier to care for in comparison to other livestock.

Long before the rise of tractors and modern machinery, cows - oxen - were used to plough fields, pull carts, and carry heavy loads. Even today in many parts of the world, especially in rural or less mechanized areas, cows are still used for farming tasks. Their strength and endurance make them reliable partners during the planting and harvesting seasons.

Cows produce large amounts of manure, which, when properly managed, can be an excellent natural fertilizer. Manure enriches the soil with nutrients like nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium - key elements needed for healthy crop growth. By using cow manure, farmers can improve soil quality and reduce the need for chemical fertilizers, making their farming more sustainable and eco-friendly.

In addition to milk and labour, cows are raised for meat. Beef provides a rich source of protein for people around the world and the many by-products of a cow's hide - leather shoes, belts, bags, and furniture - support a farmer's income and the industries that rely on these by-products.

In many cultures, cows are not only farm animals, but symbols of wealth, prosperity, and even sacredness. In countries like India, cows are revered and treated with great care. In farming families, cows will live for many years and be treated with affection and respect. Their calm demeanour and strong connection to the land make them a comforting presence on the farm.

But surely we know all this, I hear you ask. Why are you telling us this?

Because we've kept a cow's greatest talent to last - and that is eating. It's their munching that enriches the land. Cows are tireless conservationists!

But their munching does need to be managed. Do you know what would happen if farmers didn't let the cows loose on their land? The land would change. The vegetation would get higher. Brambles and scrubby plants would move in. In time, there would be trees. Before long, you will have a wood, which dries out the land and changes its nature. And some bird species would have to go somewhere else to hunt for food.

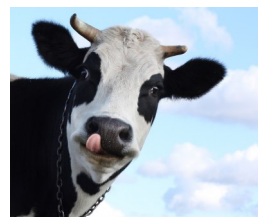
On the other hand, what if the farmer allowed all-round munching? They would graze the vegetation down very low, and that would decrease the number of plant species and take away all the places where animal species live and hide.

If you are essentially a 'townie', you'd likely think that a wood is a wood because it has lots of trees and that a grazing meadow is grassy because of the grass, and they will remain as they are for ever after. But that's not so. Landscapes are not timeless, but dynamic living things, forever in motion, forever changing. Did you realise that if the deer weren't grazing on Richmond Park, it would become a closed canopy oak wood? In such a wood, when a tree falls and creates a clearing, the deer keep it open and create a nice sward.

In modern times, the right level of grazing still creates and maintains wild places and allows thousands of species to thrive. By doing a favour to butterflies and many bird species, the cows enrich the landscape and do great good for humans at the same time.

So, the next time you see a cow, remember that they are far more than just animals in a field - they are hardworking, gentle creatures that provide countless benefits to the farming community.

By caring for cows, farmers not only support their own livelihoods but also contribute to a more sustainable and connected way of living. For sure, cows truly earn their title as a farmer's best friend.



Way to go, cows!!

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



Naomi, the woman who hit rock-bottom

Have you ever hit rock bottom? Not just a bad day, but a bad day that becomes a bad week – which turns into a bad month, a bad year and then just a seemingly dead-end life?

That was probably what it felt like for Naomi. Her husband had moved the family to Moab, a strange country with weird gods. Then he died. Then both her sons died. She was left alone with her daughter-in-law, in a foreign land, completely penniless and lost in hopelessness.

“Don’t bother calling me Naomi,” she said, “Call me Bitter from now on.”

Naomi genuinely hit rock bottom and felt she had nothing left to live for. But hers is a story of hope to encourage those of us who have experienced the same thing. She discovered we can lose everything in life, but we can’t lose God. He’s always ready to help us make little baby steps from the darkness towards His light.

For Naomi, it started with turning her feet back to Israel. As she saw God’s hand at work, her faith began to flicker back into life. A new day dawned for her.

When we hit the bottom, Naomi reminds us to look for God – He’ll be right there with us.

PUT YOUR SPARE EUROS INTO ACTION (for children)

Action for Children is the children's charity of the Methodist Church. It was founded in 1869 by Methodist minister Revd Thomas Bowman Stephenson in response to the poverty and danger faced by vulnerable and destitute young people living rough on the streets of London.

Today Action for Children has grown to become a leading children's charity running over 500 projects and working with more children and young people affected by poverty, disability and abuse than any other UK charity.

The Action for Children Covenant

*Every child has the right to live,
to be safe and to be loved.*

*Every young person has the right to be
housed, to have enough money to live
in dignity and to have enough support for the future.*

*Every young person has the right to justice, to realise
their potential and to be given the space to become
independent. In an often cruel and imperfect world, we
uphold the work of Action for Children with children
and young people in danger, in need and at risk. We
support the growth of this work and the pursuit of
these rights for the young, the discounted and the
vulnerable. We make this covenant with Action for
Children for the sake of all God's children. Amen*



Have you been on holiday and returned with a pocketful of Euro coins? Do you have a secret stash from years ago? If so, perhaps you'd like to give them to a really good cause?

Steve C – our new *Action for Children* representative - would be really happy to take them. Steve takes low denomination notes as well!

MONEY MATTERS

The joy of giving - something to celebrate?



Celebrating the joy of giving can be one of the most life-affirming and spiritually enriching practices. It turns a simple act of generosity into a moment of gratitude, connection, and purpose. But do we celebrate it enough?

Do we reflect on the Impact of our giving?

We sometimes hear in church that we have raised a substantial sum for a specific charity, and we applaud that amount. But do we take time to think about how that gift (and our own gifts of time, resources, or even encouragement) has made, or will make, a difference in the lives of the people we serve? We know that even small acts can have profound effects. Perhaps we should share more with each other to help us recognize and remember the good that comes from our giving, and that of others.

Do we give thanks where it is due?

God's generosity to us is the ultimate source of all we have, but do we acknowledge that enough? When we spend time in prayer or worship, do we thank God for our ability and opportunity to give? Perhaps we should do this more, as it helps ground our generosity in humility and gratitude.

Do we involve others, including the community?

How much of our giving is a lone act? How often do we engage with others to make giving a group effort? How much do we involve, say, our community in collective acts of generosity? Simple shared experiences, such as volunteering together, spreads the joy and deepens our relationships.

Do we celebrate the stories of change?

How much do we follow up when we have given to a cause or person to find out how it helped. We probably hear of this in our own church, but what about celebrating success stories in the organisations we support? Christian Aid and others often provide updates. Maybe we could take time to read them, share them, and rejoice in what our gifts accomplished.

Do we encourage others to give?

We are often reluctant to share our experiences of giving, for they can seem boastful. But what about using them not to boast, but to inspire? When people see the joy we find in giving, they may be encouraged to explore that joy themselves. Our example can be a light that guides others toward a life of generosity.

Do we celebrate with a grateful heart?

It is better to give than to receive, but how many of us really feel that? Instead of only celebrating what we've received, let's rejoice in what we've been able to give. This shift in perspective fosters deeper contentment and purpose.

Do we mark 'giving milestones'?

When we reach a giving target or feel that we've really contributed to something (our first stint in the Lighthouse or Zach's perhaps?) let's treat that generosity as special. Share it with others (but not in a boastful way!) or simply smile to yourself – and be grateful.

The joy of giving is in the heart, not in the act. When we take time to celebrate that joy, we reinforce a lifestyle of generosity that reflects God's heart and transforms both us the giver and the receiver. Giving becomes less of a duty and more of a celebration of love, faith, and abundance. *The Treasurer*

KENYA UPDATE

Many of you will remember Hazel, who is a keen supporter of Smart Child Kenya. Hazel relocated and left Offington a while ago, but she continues to support the project (as do several of our readers) and has sent this update, which we're pleased to publish.

Hello Everyone,

It's been a while!! My personal life rattled along at a rate of knots, and I now have two gorgeous grandchildren that I spend as much time as possible with.

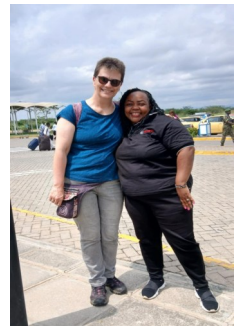


But in May this year, I was lucky enough to be sent to Kenya by Music as Therapy International to set up a skill sharing project in Mombasa, and before I came home I was able to visit Beth and Smart Child Kenya for a week. It was so exciting to meet her at last (see picture above) and see all the children. We quickly travelled around visiting all the sponsor children in their different settings, and were

able to give them small gifts and treats from their sponsors.

We travelled around the Great Rift Valley to visit the Maasai community, and they danced and sang, and gave us examples of their bead and leather work to sell in England. I met people of enormous faith and joy in really challenging circumstances.

There was so much laughter, and playfulness. People genuinely help each other and rejoice. There were times I sat and wept... I couldn't think where to start. But the lovely people who care about the welfare of this community 6,000 miles away responded again.



Another child was living with his little sister in very grim circumstances, and now they have an entirely new house.



People sent money for children like Patience, who ran away to her grandma after being sold into marriage at the age of 12. Her grandma is determined to keep her safe and send her back to school if at all possible.



And when I got back, I held a craft sale at my new church, who gladly bought it all (see right).



I will go again! And now I have seen it all, I am even more determined to set up an official charity and perhaps sell the clothing and crafts at festivals regularly. Thank you so very much for keeping the faith, and continuing to care. **Hazel C (contact via church office)**

A CLOSER LOOK AT.... SHIPRAH & PUAH

two midwives who refused to kill babies

Have you ever worked for an angry, irrational, threatening kind of boss? Shiprah and Puah knew that feeling well.

Pharoah was getting nervous. He had enslaved God's people, but their population was booming. He worried that they would join Egypt's enemies and fight against him. So he took drastic action.

Pharoah commanded Shiprah and Puah to attend the births of the Israelite women and discreetly kill every baby boy that was born. They had a choice to make: disobey the most powerful man in the world, or start a fight with Almighty God! They made the right call! They disobeyed Pharoah's evil command and saved all the babies.

It's never easy to choose to disobey a powerful authority; but sometimes we must. Pharoah's command was immoral; and Shiprah and Puah knew it. They are a shining example of remembering that obeying God is safer and better— even if it means disobeying a king!

Follow the story in Exodus 1: 15-21

NEXT EDITION

Copy Deadline

Publication Date

Sunday 24 August 2025

Thursday 28 August 2025

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

offingtonspotlight@gmail.com

A man moved into a small English village, went to the local pub, and ordered three beers, which he drank quietly at a table, alone. Each night the man followed the same routine, and acquired the nickname “three-beer Billy”. Finally, the bartender could stand it no more, and asked the man, “why do you always order three beers at a time?”

The man replied, "I have two brothers, one in America and the other in Australia. We promised each other that we would always order an extra two beers whenever we drank, to keep the family bond intact."

The bartender passed the man’s response around the village, and soon “three Beer Billy” became quite the local celebrity. Then one day, “Billy” came in and ordered only two beers. The bartender poured them sadly, and offered up a silent prayer for the soul of one of the brothers.

The next day, the bartender said to the man, "I’m sorry for the loss of your brother. You know - the two beers instead of three..." The man laughed and told him, “you’ll be happy to hear that my two brothers are alive and well. It’s just that I have become teetotal."



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