

SEPTEMBER 2025 - NOVEMBER 2025

DENHAM PARISH NEWS

NEW ASSOCIATE
MINISTER

MY FAVOURITE
RAILWAY JOURNEY



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Cover: Front cover photo by Brian Johnson

Ghoom (Ghum) station siding museum. Showing the first loco at the highest station in India, 7407 feet above sea level. Narrow gauge line built in 1839 now known as the Toy train (p.23).

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FROM THE EDITOR

Travel. When we asked for memories around the theme of 'My favourite railway journey' (p.20) I didn't realise what a popular topic it would be and with so many submissions, I had to increase the page allocation! I hope you enjoy reading the stories, I certainly have.

Travel. This theme is picked up again by Joyce Frewin (p.6) as she recounts an amazing 'Stop the bus', moment on VE Day 1945. Perhaps you have a special travel memory? Why not capture that in words and pictures in your own homemade concertina book (p.24).

Jenny Tebboth (p.19) hasn't travelled far to join St Mary's, but we look forward to welcoming her as our new Associate Minister. Her Licensing service will be held at St Mary's, 7.30pm Monday 29 September.

Continuing our Life and Faith series (p.10), this Issue we hear from Sarah Bennett, our Church Administrator, and her husband Richard as they recall their faith journey and how they too are now living and working in Denham.

It seems a long time since the word 'Lockdown' or 'COVID-19' were common words on our lips, but Gerald and his daughters Debbie and Vicki, have been busy completing the final cushion in a set of four that was commissioned in remembrance of those residents of Denham who suffered from, or succumbed to, COVID-19 (p.7). We will hold our traditional Remembrance Day service on Sunday 9 November, with a more intimate 'Remembering Loved Ones' service on 23 November (p.32) and all are welcome.

Finally, I'd like to suggest that one of the greatest 'journeys' ever made has been that of the Bible (p.15), published in more than 750 languages and with the most popular Bible app installed on over 720 million unique devices across the world – that is a lot of travelling! If you'd like to find out more about this amazing book, do join us this Autumn www.denhamparish.church/biblecourse/



Blessings,

Cathy Macqueen

magazine@denhamparish.church

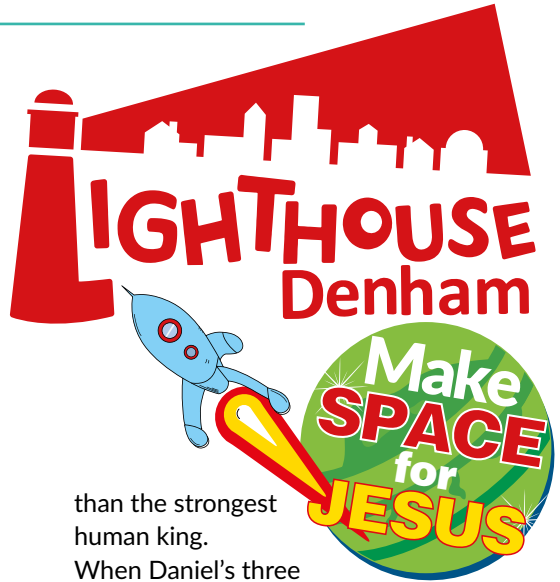
MAKE SPACE FOR JESUS

MESSAGE FROM CHRISTOPH LINDNER, RECTOR

Dear friends,

Yesterday was the last day of our holiday club for children. It's been the second year we've been running "Lighthouse Denham", which is part of a family of summer holiday clubs ranging in size from just under 40 children (Denham) to over 400 children (Great Missenden and Princes Risborough). It's been a great three days, made possible by a fantastic team of about 30, made up of *Lighthouse Keepers* (adults) and *Lamp Lighters* (teenagers). Take a look at the photos on page 13!

This year our theme was "Make Space for Jesus". We explored stories from the Book of Daniel, all framed by a space theme. The children enjoyed the adventures of *Captain Dan* and *the Astronauties* and found out how young Daniel and his friends Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego survived and thrived in exile, far away from their home, because they stood firm and did not compromise their faith in God. While they were 'only' about 800 miles away from their home in Jerusalem, it might as well have been a different planet, because the culture, the rules, the religion were so different. But they did not bow to the pressure to fit in or to compromise their deepest beliefs. Why? Because they knew a God who loves them and who is more powerful



than the strongest human king.

When Daniel's three friends were about to be thrown into a fiery furnace unless they bow down and worship a golden statue representing the King, they said: "King Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us from Your Majesty's hand. But even if he does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up." (Read this story in Daniel, chapter 3).

Those of us who have been around the block a few times have witnessed how our world has changed. Some of us might feel as if we are living on a different planet! Some changes

have been good (for example medical progress), others less so (for example rampant individualism and consumerism). We may feel as bewildered as Daniel and his friends. But God is still the true King of this world, even when we are 'in exile'. Many times over the last 2,000 years, people have predicted the death of the church and the Christian faith. But, like its founder Jesus, it has a habit of coming back to life!

Twenty-five years ago, the New Atheists predicted that Christian churches would become irrelevant within one or two generations. Some of them quoted Matthew Arnold's poem *Dover Beach*, published in 1867. Here is part of it:

The Sea of Faith

**Was once, too, at the full,
and round earth's shore**

**Lay like the folds of a bright
girdle furled.**

But now I only hear

**Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,
Retreating, to the breath**

**Of the night-wind, down the
vast edges drear**

And naked shingles of the world.

In a talk given three years ago, Bishop Graham Tomlin said that there is one crucial flaw in this metaphor of the receding tide: If you stay on the beach

for long enough... the tide will come back in!

Over the last year a study by YouGov and the Bible Society, called "The Quiet Revival", has shown how young people have a renewed interest in faith, church and the Bible. The changes between 2018 and 2025 are remarkable. Who would have expected this even a few years ago?

(Find out more here: www.biblesociety.org.uk/research/quiet-revival)

Of course, we don't know whether these findings are just a blip or the beginning of a significant shift. But, like Daniel, Christians take a stand on this central truth: that God is still King and Jesus' promise to give us abundant life is as true today as it was 2000 years ago.

On the centre pages of this magazine you can find some facts about the Bible as well as some findings from "The Quiet Revival" study. You can also find details about an invitation to read the Bible for yourself and together with others by taking part in The Bible Course – whether you've been a believer for many years or whether you are pretty sure that there is no God.

What will happen if we all make space for Jesus?

Christoph



Remembering 1945 VE Day



Memory captured by Julie Laughland

Born on 11 August 1924, Joyce Frewin celebrated her 100th birthday at Denham Manor care home last summer. She is one of the few who are old enough to remember living through the wartime years, and VE Day (8th May 1945), holds special memories for her.

Joyce had married Ernest in London on 1st July 1944, just before her 20th birthday. Both of them had a brother who was not at the wedding: Ernie's brother Percy had been killed in action in Tunisia, and her brother Bill was serving in India. She counts herself lucky as a wartime bride to have had a wedding dress, made for her by an uncle who worked in a curtain shop. Ernie was with the RAF in Lincolnshire, so Joyce was still living with her parents in 1945.

She recalls that 7th May was an ordinary day. She came home from work not knowing - until they heard Churchill's announcement on the radio in the evening - that the following day would be a public holiday, to celebrate the end of the war in Europe.

Joyce and her sister Ruth went to church in the morning, and then decided to go and join the huge crowds gathering at Buckingham Palace. They were on the bus when - to her complete amazement - Joyce spotted her husband out of the window. "I yelled 'Stop the bus,'" she says, 'I've just seen my husband!', and it stopped for us to get off!" Ernie had been walking towards her parents' house to see her, having been given a couple of days' leave. They turned around and walked together to his own family home, where his parents were equally surprised and delighted to see him.

Joyce has lost her sight, and can't hear well these days, but she can clearly recall the sense of relief on VE Day: "The end of six years of war, no more fear of bombs, people were in the streets celebrating". When asked if it was one of the best days of her life, Joyce replies "Too right it was!"

COMMEMORATIVE CUSHIONS: REMEMBERING COVID-19 BY GERALD MILLER

This cushion was commissioned by the congregation of St. Mary's in remembrance of those residents of Denham who suffered from, or succumbed to, COVID-19.

The last in a set of four, it was stitched by Gerald, Debbie and Vicki Miller during the Autumn of 2024 and can be found in the chancel area of St Mary's.

The design named 'Breamore' was selected from a catalogue in 2019 many months before Coronavirus became a part of our lives. Strangely, it bears an uncanny resemblance to the 'image' of the virus displayed on our televisions daily throughout this period i.e. from spring of 2020.

These cushions and all the other kneelers in St Mary's were supplied by Jacksons of Hebden Bridge. This old 'family' business ceased to trade in the Spring of 2020. As a consequence, our original order for 4 cushion sets could not be completed. Only 3 kits were available and the company was not placing orders for new stock.

The original three cushions were stitched during the period of 'lock down' in 2020. In due course they were introduced to the church.



In the late spring of 2024, we were contacted by Hayes & Finch a business based in Liverpool. They advised that having taken over the catalogues, designs and customer base from Jackson's they were now able to supply a fourth cushion kit to complete our original order.

We are pleased to find that by 2025 although coronavirus disease is still in the community, the free access of vaccines has significantly reduced the numbers of deaths attributed to the disease.



ST MARY'S CHURCH CHARITABLE GIVING

BY MIKE STEWART, PCC TREASURER

Not everyone has read through every last detail of the PCC Accounts for 2024 as presented and approved at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting in May and it is therefore easy to overlook that last year the St Mary's Church family gave an amazing £23,378 to local, national and international Charities and Good Causes.

Give and Share, the St Mary's charity set up specifically to support local families in need, this year distributed a mixture of supermarket vouchers, food and household essentials costing £11,718, an increase of over 22% compared to the previous year.

Much of this was done in co-operation with our two wonderful local primary schools who are so closely aware of the pastoral needs of their families.

Give and Share was set up and is driven by Craig and Caroline and everyone in the Church family is in awe of their passionate commitment to this charity.

In addition, every year St Mary's Church gives 5% of its total income to our 5 Mission Partners. These are reviewed each year by the PCC but we value the long-term relationships which enable us to better understand the work they do. The five Mission Partners for this year which each received £1,300 were:

Tearfund

www.tearfund.org

A UK based Christian charity with over 50 years' experience in international development. They work alongside local partners and churches to tackle complex poverty. We have supported them for many years as our main international charitable partner.



Wycliffe Bible

Translators

wycliffe.org.uk

Specialise in translating the Bible into local languages. For a number of years, we have been supporting Samuel Kpagheri in Togo and were so pleased that he was able to visit England this year and came to preach at St Mary's and spend time with us as a Church family.



BRF Ministries

www.brf.org.uk

Focuses on 4 main areas, including a network of Anna Chaplains offering spiritual care in later life, and the production of a wide range of Bible reading notes, books and blogs



Ministries

Care for the Family

www.careforthefamily.org.uk

Seeks to promote strong family life and help those facing family difficulties. They concentrate primarily on marriage,



parenting and bereavement. The courses they run seek to help families and individuals experiencing trouble and whilst not overtly Christian are typically run through church organisations such as ourselves so that the caring ethos of the modern Christian church can be understood and appreciated.



SHOC/Trinity

www.sloughhomeless.org.uk

www.wearetrinity.org.uk

SHOC stands for Slough Homeless Our Concern which just about reflects what they do and where they do it. They provide day centre care, support and advice for vulnerable adults helping them to manage through the difficulties of their everyday lives. Trinity are based in Hillingdon and provide shared supported housing and a bed for the night for rough sleepers. St Mary's Denham are so pleased to be able to support such effective local charities.

In recent years the PCC has chosen to share all the Christmas collections between a local and an international charity and we did so again this year with £750 being given to each of Tearfund and SHOC/Trinity and £300 to the Children's Society from the Christingle service.

These collections started early in December and included the Carol Services, the regular Sunday services in December, the midnight Holy Communion on Christmas Eve and the Christmas Day Services.

The congregation gave generously knowing their donations would go to help the less fortunate at Christmas.

2024 saw the return of the Denham Village May Fayre which has traditionally been sponsored by the Church with all proceeds going to Church Funds to support the maintenance of the Church and the Churchyards. It was agreed by the PCC and the Fayre Committee that 20% of the proceeds should go to local Charities and Good Causes nominated by the local organisations who had helped with the Fayre.

As a result, a total of £4,000 was given to local charities that included, in 2024, Lighthouse Children's Summer Club, the Madelene Paton Lunch Club, the two local Primary schools, Hillingdon Food Bank and Harefield Hospital Healing Garden (see the March issue of Denham Parish News for more details www.denhamparish.church/denham-parish-news-spring-easter-2025/)

So much for how the money was spent – but where did it come from?

The answer to that is from the generous people of this Parish through their donations at Church, the hard work of the Fayre Committee, the fund raising by Give and Share and the continuing determination of the PCC that payments to Charities should be an essential part of our Parish life and work.

Thank you all so very much.

LIFE AND FAITH: GOD IN THE LIFE OF SARAH AND RICHARD BENNETT AS SHARED AT CAFÉ CHURCH MARCH 2025

Philippians 4:9 'Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me - put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.'

Sarah: A few years ago, a friend wrote this passage down on a bit of paper and put it in my glasses case. Recently I was having a bit of a panic about my new job, and when I opened my glasses cases, that bit of paper fell out. It reminded me to bring everything to God in prayer - don't try and do everything in my own strength.

Did God play any role early on in your life story?

Richard: Oh, definitely. I grew up in Boxmoor Hemel Hempstead and was in the church choir from the age of about 7 to 15. All 50 members used to practice on a Thursday and Friday night. With singing at weddings on a Saturday, and three services on a Sunday, it was quite a full-on church experience! I went away from the church in my teenage years, but 'the seeds were already sown' and it was something that I came back to later in life.

Sarah: My grandparents were very involved in a small Methodist church and I used to go to their Sunday school. I was made a fuss of by the older people and one in particular used to press a 50p piece into my hand every Sunday to



get sweets with afterwards. I was in the Girls Brigade until I was about 15.

How did the two of you meet?

Richard: We met at Bucks College where we were both studying art and 3D design. I was the year ahead of Sarah and I specialised in interior design, whilst Sarah specialised in silver and design in metal. We went through a few rowdy wild years, as you can imagine, being at art college in the 90s! After graduating, we stayed on in High Wycombe and were married 28th August, 1994 at Hughenden Valley Church. It's an absolutely beautiful church. We lived a 20-minute walk away outside the parish boundary, so we attended the church for 6 months to qualify to get married there, but I did feel a little bit of a fraud because this was actually before I'd committed to being a Christian again.

Tell us about your family

Sarah: We have two sons, Ollie and Toby, and one grandson. I look after Roman on a Wednesday so it's been really nice bringing him to Little Lions.



Richard: Although I had lots of questions about God and how could He possibly exist in a world the way it is, I felt I'd benefited so much in my own childhood by my church upbringing, that I wanted my boys to experience it too. Sarah was still a Christian, she still had a faith, she still had a belief. Whereas I was much more distant and not engaging with it.

What made the difference for you?

Richard: We were taking our kids along to church every Sunday when we got noticed by the vicar who asked to come round to see us. He wanted to start roping me into doing all these different things at church. I was like, whoa, whoa, hold on a minute, I don't actually believe in any of this. You want me to start doing all this stuff at church? And he said, 'Oh, you don't believe? Oh, you have to do an Alpha course.'

So, I went on the Alpha course and some really amazing things happened. I parked those disbeliefs I had to one side, and I looked at the light that I saw in the amazing lady who ran the course. She had two disabled children in wheelchairs and she always smiled, she just radiated the Holy Spirit. I could tell there was something different about the people that I was meeting. I wanted to experience that. I started to pray and my life began to change.

'Isn't that beautiful that you saw the light of Christ first in other people. Never underestimate that the light of Christ can radiate through you to other people.'

We were finding life tough financially and I couldn't see a way out of our debt, so I started praying about it when I was on Alpha. The church helped me look at our finances in a very practical way. Since then, I've supported a charity called Christians Against Poverty who are one of the main debt counselling services in this country and offer vital support to people in that situation.

How did you get involved with Lighthouse?

Sarah: There were some very inspirational people at our church who got on board with 'Lighthouse', a holiday club for children aged 4 to 11. It's quite wild, fun, and noisy! The children are split up into age groups for different activities and I was a group leader. Richard was involved with craft and came up with fun ideas for making things like kites and hot air balloons.

Where do you go to Church now?

Richard: It's an independent church that meets in the school hall at Beaconsfield School three Sundays of the month, and then the fourth Sunday we have church in each other's homes.

Tell us about your jobs

Richard: I left Bucks College with my degree in interior design and got a job as a postman! I thought I'll just do this for six months until I find something else, and ended up spending 20 years with Royal Mail. It's mainly a morning job, so I used the afternoons to make furniture or pottery and then I started gardening and now I'm a full-time gardener in Denham. We moved here three years ago.

I just happened to see the advert. At that stage, I was commuting to High Wycombe to work as the Administrator at the church there. I liked the job, but I didn't like the commute. I'd been looking for something more local, and I just thought, I don't know what I can do. I never dreamed that the same type of job would come up locally!

What difference does your faith make in your daily life?

Richard: As a gardener, most of the time I am just working on my own. Some people would probably struggle with that, but I think being in a relationship with God helps and being in his creation, you get a chance to appreciate all that God's made.

Sarah: I also work quite a lot on my own. I don't think I'd be able to cope with life, without my faith and knowing that God's there and having that hope for the future. I'm sure we all have times of doubt. We did, around the time of COVID. I think that was a difficult time for lots of people, and we got out of the habit of going to church on a Sunday morning. For a year or so, we weren't really engaging with church and were almost at the point of completely just giving up but then we turned a corner, and yeah, I'm so glad we did because life is so much better with Jesus in it.



Sarah: I continue to be creative with my jewellery. I first spotted the advert for Administrator at St Mary's on Facebook. I'll never forget the day as it was the day my father died and as I was unwell with COVID, I was spending a lot of time laying on the sofa, scrolling through my phone, and

For free help getting out of debt, budgeting, making your money go further, or help finding a job, contact Christians Against Poverty www.capuk.org

LIGHTHOUSE 2025 Denham



Make
SPACE
for
JESUS

We had a great time with 36 children
and a team of 30 leaders and helpers.

Here is what two parents wrote:

Mum Clare with children Melissa and Joey:

Melissa. "Oooohhhh, what do you mean it isn't on next week?"

Joey. "I hope they do an Easter Lighthouse and Christmas Lighthouse"

Clare. "Thank you and your team for a fantastic event. My two thoroughly enjoyed it and were very sad that it had finished! Looking forward to next year!"

Dad Robert with Sienna:

"Daddy, I am not looking forward to going to Lighthouse tomorrow, because it's the last day!"



Look out for the 2026 date!

FAMILY REGISTER OF DENHAM PARISH CHURCH

FUNERALS

22.05.2025 Anthony Lewis 87 (Memorial)
06.06.2025 Charles Fitzgerald 87
16.07.2025 Christopher Pearson 93 (Memorial)
22.07.2025 Gwen Horney 88



Gwen Horney

WEDDINGS

14.06.2025 Charlie Hobhouse & Ailsa Bate
19.07.2025 Jack Delnevo & Jourdan Nuthall



Jack & Jourdan

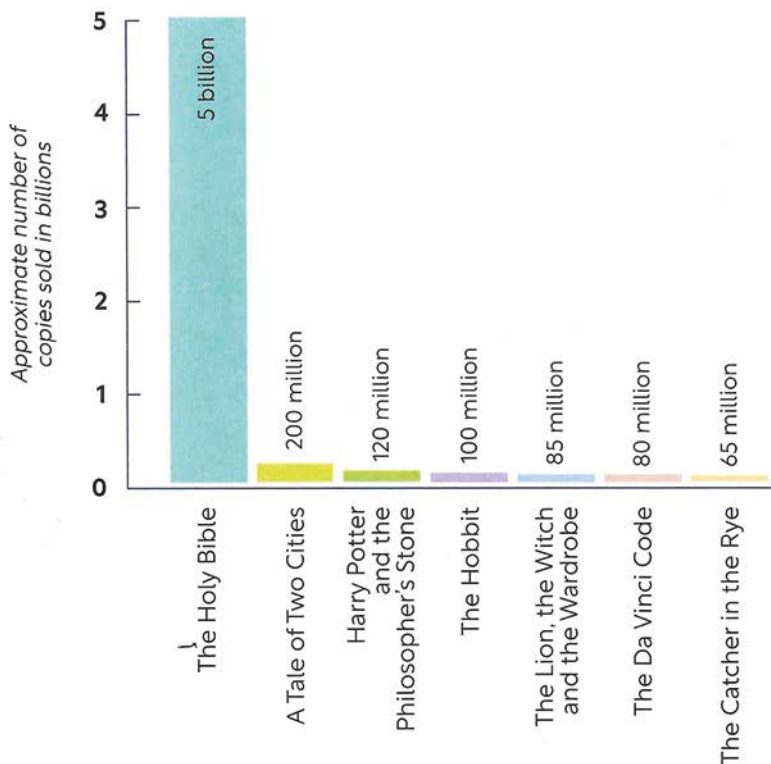
BAPTISMS

28.06.2025 Mackenzie, Tommy-Lee,
Dolly-Rae Moffit
20.07.2025 Honey Calam



Honey Calam

The Bible is the world's bestseller

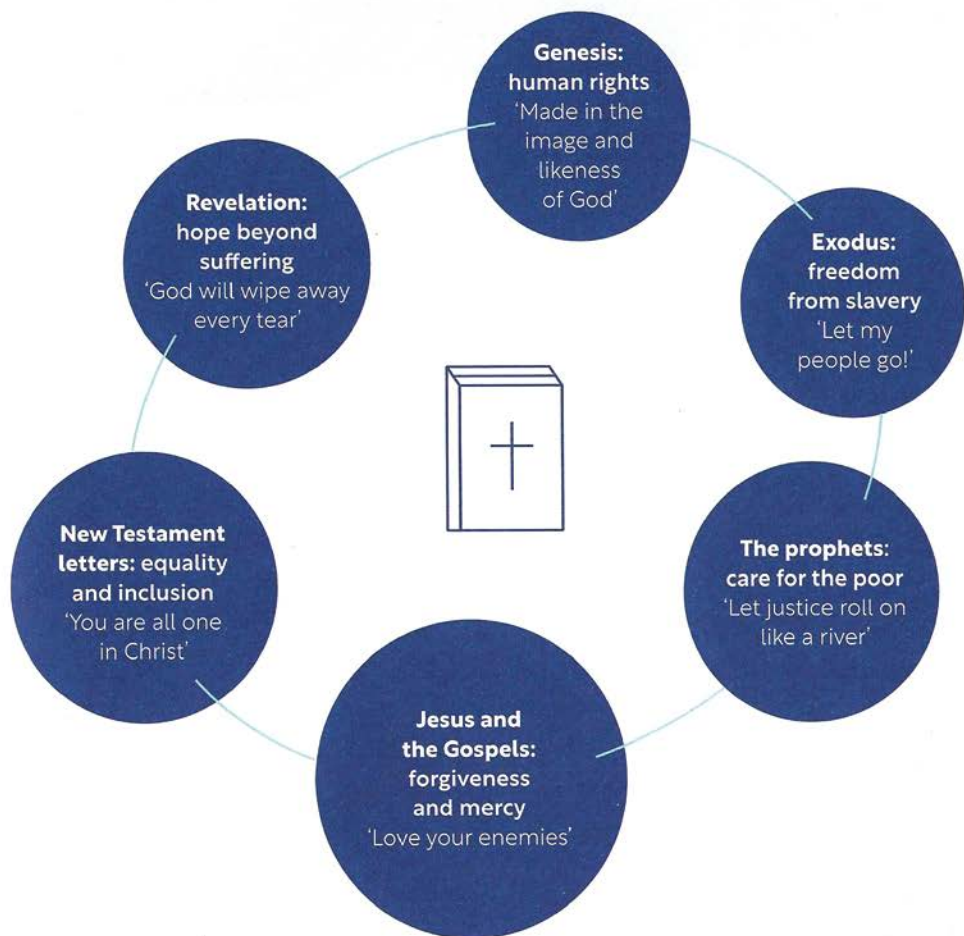


Of the world's approximately 7,000 spoken languages ...

- The whole Bible is published in over 750 languages. In addition the New Testament is translated into a further 1,700 languages
- Around 6.5 billion copies of the Bible have been printed
- The most popular Bible app has been installed on over 720 million unique devices across the world

(Source: *The Bible Course - New Edition*, Bible Society)

The Bible has inspired many values we cherish today



(Source: *The Bible Course - New Edition*, Bible Society)

More young adults are believing in God

Percentage of whole population who agree there is 'probably' or 'definitely' a God/ gods or some 'higher power', by age group

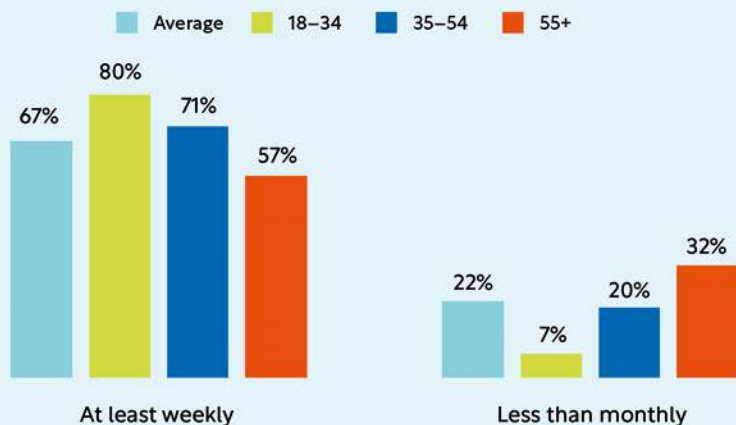


Question: Which of the following best describes your belief?

Base: Whole population

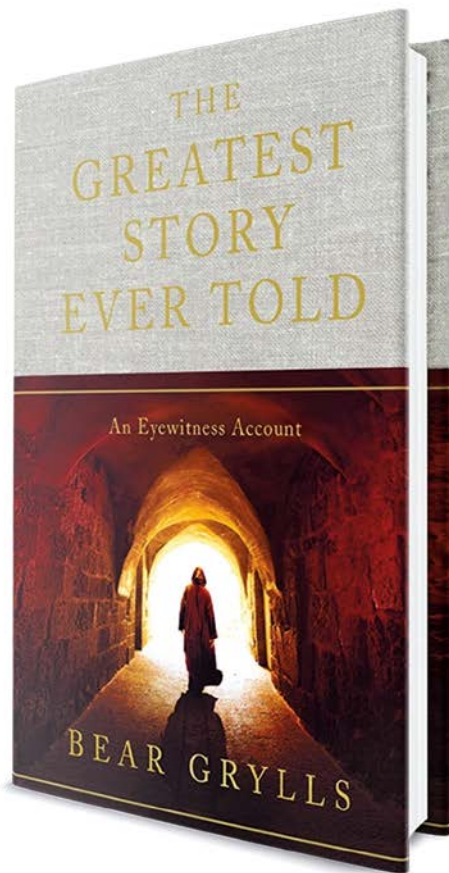
Younger churchgoers read the Bible more often than older churchgoers

How often churchgoers read or listen to the Bible outside of a church service, by age group



Question: How often do you normally read or listen to/hear the Bible outside of a church service (e.g. at home or elsewhere)?

Base: Churchgoing Christians



THE GREATEST STORY EVER TOLD

'The story you are about to read has been handed down for generations.' Bear Grylls

This is the incredible true story of a Galilean stonemason who changed the course of the world forever. He lived and died over 2,000 years ago, fulfilling expectations that existed long before his birth.

How we each respond to this story dictates the course of our lives. And it all rests on the great mystery that occurred at the end of his life – a supernatural event that he had predicted with utter clarity.

Did this humble man tell the truth? Could one man really be the focal point of the universe?

Bear Grylls' No. 1 bestseller shares this story of Jesus. Bear Grylls is a British adventurer, writer, television presenter and former SAS trooper. He is a follower of Jesus and contributor to the Alpha Course. This book would make a great Christmas present!

We would like to give you a Bible as a gift.

The best way to get to know the Bible is to read it. Start with *Luke's Gospel*, then the *Acts of the Apostles*. This is an NRSV Bible, an excellent modern translation, from our stock at St Mary's, only lightly used.

To claim it, please email or call our church office:
office@denhamparish.church, 01895 832771.

Explore the Bible together with others.

This autumn we are running *The Bible Course* - a great introduction to the Bible, which has helped thousands of people to understand and apply it. This brand new edition is an eight-session course, expertly led by Andrew Ollerton, with videos, personal stories, expert contributions and group discussions, accompanied by a brilliant guide book.

Find out more and sign up:
www.denhamparish.church/biblecourse/

WELCOME TO OUR NEW ASSOCIATE MINISTER

Hello! To those of you who have not met me, my name is Jenny. I am married to Lawrence and we have lived in Gerrards Cross now for over 30 years. We have two sons; both now married and living fairly close by; and three splendid grandchildren. My background is a childhood in East Africa with my three brothers with our missionary parents living in fairly remote places and attending boarding school both in Kenya and later in England.



I came to ministry later in life after many years of informal church volunteer work, and moved from St James Gerrards Cross in 2015 to serve my curacy in Chalfont St Giles with Seer Green and Jordans, which turned out to be a very happy time getting to know the villages and the people who live in them, piecing together history and family networks and developing some competence in ministry. By the end of the curacy, I felt I had barely got to know them, so there I stayed for the next seven years (through a double vacancy in the benefice); growing in my knowledge of village institutions, church workings and of course, the marvellous and extraordinary people.

However, when I spotted the advertisement for an associate minister at St Mary's in Denham, I felt that one more change and challenge should be explored. I have known Christoph and Edda from the time that we were at St James in Gerrards Cross. I also knew

that a number of familiar faces from those days were with you at St Marys and a creative team was already at work ministering faithfully and imaginatively in the parish.

It was exciting to read the parish profile prayerfully, survive the interview process, discover that the door was open and decide to make the move feeling encouraged that the Lord is leading both process and timing and will prepare the way. With Him there is always something new.

I look forward to joining another wonderful church family and serving as best I can among you all.

Jenny Tebbot

*Editor: Jenny will be Licensed
as our Associate Minister on
Monday 29 September, 7.30pm
Please contact the Church Office
for further details.*

'My Favourite Railway Journey'

a medley of memories

Puffing steam traction, blurred soot in eyes, stale oil diesel fumes and electrical and mechanical signal stopover breakdowns. The clickety-clack rail iterations, fog horn, toot-toot whistle blasts passing through towns and country, track-clattering level crossings. Sudden unexpected tunnel darkness, rain drops patter, crossing bridges high above rivers and final destination reaching with brakes slowing, sweeping airbrakes exuding, each indelibly etching vivid pictures from the past.

Brian Johnson

September 2025 marks an important milestone in British and indeed world history as we celebrate the 200th anniversary of the opening of the Stockton and Darlington Railway to passengers in 1825. This was an important invention that revolutionised transport not only in Great Britain but ultimately in the whole world. Before this, transport around the country had been a tediously slow affair on unreliable roads with carts pulled by horses. The canals helped from the late 18th Century to transport bulky materials but these were also painfully slow.

As an ardent railway enthusiast for as long as I can remember, it is important that we celebrate this wonderful invention. It has even had religious

connotations - the Great Western Railway was referred to as "God's Wonderful railway". So maybe God had a hand in man's invention.

Robert Brooks



'Puffing Billy'

In the autumn of 1955, I arrived at Ealing Grammar School and one of the pleasures of my first year there was a weekly journey to Greenford to play sport. After lunch we were lined up to walk from Ealing Green to Ealing Broadway railway station where intercity diesels thundered through and red electric underground trains came to a halt. These were not for us. Ours was an old tank engine hissing oily steam and puffs of black smoke with just two wooden carriages. The Hogwarts express it was not, if the engine had been blue not black it could have been called Thomas. We set off on the single-track Branch line to South Greenford Station. A heritage line before heritage lines had been thought of.

The playing fields were extensive, along one side raised on an embankment

was the mainline railway with diesel electrics rushing by. At three o'clock two large, black steam locomotives would appear, coupled together as a double header pulling an unbelievably long assortment of trucks. This slowly made its way along the crest leaving a long trail of smoke. It distracted play and a drop kick could be missed or a catch dropped. How can such a dirty piece of industry be so beautiful?

Returning to school after the long summer holiday of '56 again we were walked to the station but Puffing Billy had gone and been replaced by a bland diesel with equally bland carriages. Alas at three o'clock no longer did our double header appear, that too had been scrapped. My glimpse of the old world of steam was now just a memory.

Tony Drane

The Flying Scotsman

When I boarded the Flying Scotsman, to be drawn by a steam loco, regrettably not the iconic 60103, at Kings Cross bound for Newcastle Central on December 23rd 1966, I had no idea that it would be the start of my last journey on British Railways for at least 59 years.



Together with my Father, Mum had gone on ahead of us a week before, we were setting off for our annual Christmas Holiday with

family and friends to our home town of Blyth located on its river estuary some 15 miles north of Newcastle. Just two weeks before two, momentous events had happened to me. I had met on a 'Blind Date' the girl who would become my wife for some 50 years and I had taken my Final accountancy examinations success at which would complete my professional qualification.

I had travelled to Newcastle two or three times a year from March 1944 through the last 15 months of WW2, through my school days and during the first two years of my working life. This time I was unusually anxious to return home in order to see Beverley again and enjoy the New Year's Eve celebrations at the Windsor Castle Hotel to which we and 12 other friends were bound.

Looking back. I see from my diary that I have flown and driven to Newcastle and on to Blyth as well as to Manchester, Glasgow, Edinburgh and Aberdeen more than 100 times since 1966 but never again have I travelled by train.

Gerald Miller

Staying with Aunt Joan: King's Cross to Aberdeen

My Dad was a signal design engineer with London Transport and through his job, we got discounted travel on the main line. We started travelling on the sleeper train in the early 1970s. Mum and Dad would put us to bed, then go and have dinner. In the mid-seventies, Dad was diagnosed with chronic MS.

With a wheelchair, it was hard to get on the sleeper train, but we had great help from British Rail staff.

We had two first-class cabins. Dad was in one. My brother Rob and I in the other side with Mum, the most amazing person, sitting up all night on a folding chair. We lost Dad in 1978, and our train journey to Scotland changed to an 8-hour daytime trip. We still had our discounted travel, so we went first class. This was the time of the Intercity 125 service, space-age trains with orange covers on the seats. The trip was great fun with games, toasted bacon sandwiches and tea in British Rail plastic cups. I was scared of heights, so when we went over the Fourth and Tay bridges, I would hide under the table. No journey was complete without a drunken Scotsman asking, 'Laddie, is this the train to Glasgow?'

These journeys were part of our holidays in Scotland with our Auntie Joan and Uncle Al, and a clan of relatives. Now I rush about without any time, so I fly up in 1 hour, losing the magic of the journey.

Peter Wager

Shinkansen, Japan

In September 2024, Paul and I set off on a holiday of a lifetime to Japan. A must-do was to travel on the Shinkansen or better known as the 'Bullet train'.



Renowned for its speed, averaging 240-320 km/h (149-200mph), efficiency and reliability, it didn't disappoint (not sure that HS2 will match this speed!) The interior was more like an airplane, with all the seats facing the same direction, but surprisingly there was very little noise; and as the Conductor passed through the carriage, they bowed to us. As the Japanese countryside whizzed past us, we never did see the famous Mount Fuji.

Brenda and Paul Davis

Slow train to Bilbao, Spain

Our first visit to 'green' Spain in September 2022. So different from the south, with its searing heat, Irish pubs and droves of tourists. We drove to Plymouth, catching the overnight ferry late afternoon. Arriving in Santander just before lunch the following day, we drove to our apartment overlooking a river estuary.

There for a week, we decided one day to travel by the 'slow train' (FEVE) to the seaside town of Llanes. It was great to discover the nearest station a short drive away in the small town of Infiesto.

There was only one train which it was practical to catch, allowing sufficient time at our destination and mindful of wanting to return the same day. So, we left our apartment early, and parked in one of the last spaces at the station. Who knew such a small town would have two stations and we were at the wrong one! Concerned there might not be parking at the other station, we legged it down the road. It had not been possible to pre-order our tickets on-line and the station was unstaffed. Used to multi-lingual ticket machines, we felt unfazed. Everything was in Spanish. Great! This was definitely not Barcelona. Anyway, after a lot of guessing we bought some tickets which seemed to satisfy an on-board ticket collector.



through Cantabria and Asturias to Bilbao. With more than 100 stops, it would take 19 hours from end to end on a continuous journey. The reality is a complex pattern of short routes - often running next to the sea, through delightful rural communities, farms and quaint stations; with the mighty Picos de Europa mountain range as the backdrop.

The FEVE, established in 1965, is a narrow-gauge railway on 1000mm track. It runs from Ferrol in Galicia region,

Gillian Verrel



The Toy train, India

Leaving from a bustling Kolkata on a sleeper via Siliguri to Darjeeling, the powerful wide gauge mainliner is clean and safe with a distinct West Bengalian charm. On alighting at the tea capital of India a must is to catch the Toy train, an 1839 narrow gauge World Heritage engineering steam passenger commute between villages around the Basatra loop on Tiger Hill to Gzoom 7407 feet above sea level terminating at Siliguri. From Tiger Hill overlooking into Nepal, Mount Everest is clearly visible. K2 in Pakistan spectacularly showcases the distant Himalayan mountains of Nepal and Pakistan.

This World Heritage tourist Toy train captures the history of train travel - a marvel of English innovation and engineering with a blending of past and current adaptations to daily toils, smells of steam, sweat, foods, and fresh mountain air, wafting layer by layer through the rickety passenger carriages and then stepping out from dreamland onto a summit and inhaling a new found joy among the passing clouds and warm Indian hospitality and the sun rays radiating dancing rays of hope.

Brian Johnson

Concertina Books

by Kath Sole

Step 1

Cover the pieces of card with either fabric, sticky back plastic or soft paper. I chose sticky back plastic. Stick to one side of the card leaving a generous boarder.



Step 2

Cut diagonally across the corners and stick down so that the cardboard edges are neatly covered.



You will need:

- 2 pieces of cardboard 15cm each
- Strip of paper 14cm x 56cm (This could be cut from A2)
- Fabric, sticky back plastic or soft paper
- Glue stick
- 2 lengths of 20cm ribbon
- Embellishments



Step 3

Decorate using embellishments.
I used washy tape and sticky jewels.



Step 4

Use some double-sided tape on the outer edges of both pieces of cardboard. Make sure that you have the front and back in the correct position. Stick the lengths of ribbon to the tape.



Step 5

Take the strip of paper and fold it in half, then fold each edge back on itself to meet the middle fold.



Step 6

Glue the paper to the inside of the cardboard, square on square.



Step 7

To tie the book, cross over the strips of ribbon and wrap around the book tying in a bow.



Now all you need to do is decide what to use your book for. It could be a sketchbook, a prayer diary or autograph book.





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