

Donations

June 2025

**GREETINGS FROM
LUDLOW
METHODIST
CHURCH**



All in the month of June

It was:

500 years ago, on 13th June 1525, that German Protestant Reformer Martin Luther married Katharina von Bora, a nun whom he had helped to escape from a convent.

250 years ago, on 14th June 1775, that the Second Continental Congress established the Continental Army. Later it became the United States Army. On 15th June, George Washington, who would become first President of the USA, became the Army's Commander-in-Chief. This army would defeat the British army, and America would declare independence the following year, on 4th July 1776.

Also 250 years ago, on 23rd June 1775, that the first Thames Regatta was held in London.

175 years ago, on 24th June 1850, that Herbert Kitchener, the 1st Earl Kitchener, was born. This Irish-born British Army officer and politician became Secretary of War during WW1, when he appeared on an iconic poster asking people to join the army. He was killed in 1916 when his ship was hit by a German mine.

150 years ago, on 3rd June 1875, that George Bizet, French Romantic composer, died of a heart attack at 36. Best known for his opera *Carmen*.

125 years ago, on 25th June 1900, that Louis Mountbatten, 1st Earl Mountbatten of Burma, was born. He became Governor-General of India (1947-48), First Sea Lord (1955-59), and Chief of the Defence Staff (1959-65). Assassinated in 1979 by an IRA bomb planted on his fishing boat.

90 years ago, on 1st June 1935, that driving tests became compulsory for all new drivers in Britain.

80 years ago, on 22nd June 1945, that the Battle of Okinawa in Japan ended (after 82 days). This battle saw the highest number of casualties in the Pacific Theatre of the war, with more than 12,000 forces, 110,000 Japanese forces, and 140,000 civilians killed.

75 years ago, on 3rd June 1950, that the first successful ascent of Annapurna in the Himalayas was made. It was a French expedition and the first successful ascent of a mountain over 8,000 metres. Annapurna is the tenth highest mountain in the world.

70 years ago, on 11th June 1955 that the Le Mans disaster took place. A car spun off the track during the Le Mans 24 Hour race in France, and the driver, Pierre Levegh, and 83 spectators were killed, with 100 more injured. It was the greatest loss of life in the history of motorsport, but bizarrely, the race was not stopped. The survivors carried on for the full 24 hours, while the dead and the injured were removed from the site.

65 years ago, on 28th June 1960, that the Six Bells Colliery disaster took place in Monmouthshire Wales. 45 coal miners were killed by a gas explosion.

50 years ago, on 7th June 1975, that the first Cricket World Cup to be held in England began.

Also 50 years ago, on 18th June 1975, that the first North Sea oil was pumped ashore to Britain.

40 years ago, on 2nd June 1985 that UEFA banned all English football clubs from playing in European competitions following the Heysel Stadium disaster of 28th May. The ban was lifted after five years.

30 years ago, on 25th June 1995 that Ernest Walton, Irish physicist died. He was the first person to split an atom.

25 years ago, on 10th June 2000, that the Millenium Bridge opened in London. It closed for a while two days later, when it was found to sway uncomfortably when people walked in step.

15 yeas ago, on 28th June 2010, that the US Supreme Court ruled that American citizens have the right to own a gun, regardless of which state they live in. The right is protected by the Second and the Fourteenth Amendments. There are an estimated 393 million privately owned guns in the USA, and about 340 million people.

Pilgrims on the Shropshire

Way: A Devotional Poem for the April Pilgrimage

We gather first at Ludlow's door,
Where saints have sung and prayed
before.

Through streets of stone, we start in
grace,
God's Spirit welcomes us to this
place.

A table waits, warm food, warm
heart—

And strangers bonded ere we start.
The morning breaks on wooded hill,
We tread where earth and peace are
still.

From Ludlow's charm to Craven's
rest,
We walk with silence, laugh and jest.
Ten miles of fields, of sky and lane—
Our burdens light, our souls made
plain.

Then on to Clun, or Purslow near,
With kindness ferrying those held
dear.
The road bends down through gate
and stile,
Each step a prayer, each pause
worthwhile.

In rolling green, we sense God's
hand—
His voice in lark, His breath on land.
To Bishop's Castle next we roam,
A shorter path, yet heading home.

The way may flatten, but not our
praise, We thank our God for gentle
days.

Through fallen trees we clamber and
crawl,
And Christ walks with us, e'en when
we fall.

Then choose we shall, the crag or
road,
Each stone or curve a sacred ode.
Through jagged rock or softer bend,
We walk as pilgrims, friend with
friend.

The Stiperstones may stretch our
pace,
But joy is found in every place.
At last, the Mynd, both wide and high,
We climb beneath the open sky.

Though legs may ache, our hearts
ascend,
To Church Stretton, where journeys
end.
But not the end of grace or call—
God meets us in the rise and fall.

So bless this band, O Lord of Way,
Who walk in worship, rest and play.
May every mile be lined with prayer,
And every breath know You are
there.

In rain or sun, through hill and plain,
Christ walks our path, again, again.

Adrian Williams

Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in
Mt 2:1-12, Mk 9:1-8, Lk 5:17-26

The Pharisees had come to Jesus' home in
Capernaum to make sure he wasn't
breaking any of their religious rules...

So many came to hear
Jesus speak that they
filled his house...



and the streets outside.

Four men brought their
paralysed friend to
Jesus for healing

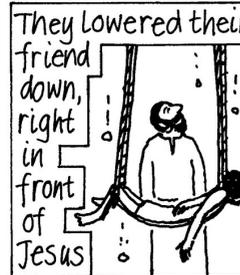


But the crowd wouldn't
let them get close

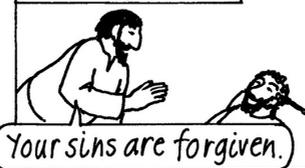


so they
climbed up to the roof
and took off some tiles.

They lowered their
friend
down,
right
in
front
of
Jesus



Jesus was so impressed
by their faith, he said to
the paralysed man



Your sins are forgiven.

The Pharisees were
shocked!



Only God can forgive sins...so
this fellow is insulting God!

But Jesus knew what
they were thinking.



Why are you thinking
such wrong thoughts?

Is it easier to say 'Your sins
are forgiven' or 'Get up,
take your mat, and walk'?



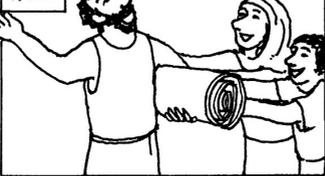
But I want you to
know that I do have the
authority to forgive sins...



Get up, take your
mat and go home!



He got up, picked up his mat
and walked home, praising
God



The crowd was amazed...



We have never
seen anything like this!

The Raid on Zeebrugge

Part 1: War

Nelson's glorious victory at Trafalgar, in 1805, made the Royal Navy, the world's largest and most powerful maritime force, undisputed masters of the seas well into the next century. However, at the start of the 20th century a time was approaching that would present the Royal Navy, and indeed the country, with their greatest threat since Napoleon, but this time the threat would not come from upon the waves, but from below them.

Consecutive Admiralty's since Nelson's day had seen the supremacy of their fleet as an opportunity to placate the accountant's constant demands to save money. At the time of Trafalgar, Britain's fleet had numbered more than 100 ships capable of engaging any enemy that had the audacity to challenge them. Their crews, officers and men alike, following some 20 years of war, were highly skilled. Ship's Captains were expected to work on their own initiative when required, and were given the latitude to do so. What better example of this than Nelson himself.

The subsequent 75 years were to see a great change. Technology, steam and iron would overtake wood and sail, individual initiative would be frowned on. Captains were expected to obey orders at almost any price, and the navy was strongly controlled from the centre.

The great fleet that once ruled the sea was now reduced to just 27 steam driven iron-clad vessels, less than those possessed by their potential enemies at the time, France and Russia. Moreover, the Admiralty had not been bothered to conceive war plans, and the tactics of the new weapons, for that is what they were after so many centuries of wood, sail and broadsides, were virtually non-existent. It seemed that spit and polish, rather than combat effectiveness, were more important.

If the Admiralty was living in the past, others, thankfully, were not. Parliament was persuaded, in 1889, to pass the Naval Defence Act, which would see over 50 first class battleships built within the next two decades. France and Russia together built only half of this number. But Britain's 'traditional' enemies, in the form of France and Russia, were soon to be displaced by a new foe.

Wilhelm II succeeded to the German throne in 1888, the grandson of Queen Victoria, he was both power-hungry and impulsive, and determined to follow an aggressive foreign policy. He soon gained personal control of the German Fleet, even though it only comprised of four battleships. He saw in a significant fleet 'A certain measure of naval power as a political factor against Britain'. Rear-Admiral Alfred Tirpitz, by hook or by crook, had persuaded the Reichstag to provide the funds to build more ships, 19 battleships, in fact. Furthermore, following the British search of German merchant ships for arms destined for the Boers, the wily Tirpitz persuaded a furious Reichstag to double the size of the planned fleet. The reason for their construction was also made perfectly clear: *'Germany must have a battle fleet so strong that, even for the strongest sea power (Britain), war against it would invite such dangers as to imperil its position in the world'*.

By July 1914 Germany had completed 20 battleships or battlecruisers, with seven still under construction. Britain had built 29 and had a further 20 on the stocks.

The catalyst for the start of the 'War to end all wars' was the assassination in Sarajevo of the heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne on June 28th, 1914. At 2300hrs on August 4th the British Fleet was ordered to 'Commence hostilities against Germany'. But it was Germany's intention to win the war on land, and not the sea, and to do so within a matter of weeks.

The plan involved 53 divisions using Belgium as a springboard from which to invade France, surround Paris, and bring defeat to their old enemy. This lightning strike very nearly succeeded, but the Belgians resisted better than had been expected and the Russian Army began its invasion of East Prussia unexpectedly. The momentum was stemmed by the Battles of Marne, Aisne and Ypres, thus dashing any hopes the Germans may have had of a quick victory. Instead, the conflict would now develop into one of stagnant trench warfare that would bring with it death to millions. The other consequence of the ensuing stalemate was to allow the war at sea to evolve, and to play a decisive role in the final outcome.

Next month: Part 2 - U-Boats

Source: Geoffrey Bennett *'Naval Battles of the First World War'*

Ron Gittings

The ground-breaking marriage of Martin Luther

Five hundred years ago, on 13th June 1525, German Protestant Reformer Martin Luther married Katharina von Bora, a nun whom he had helped to escape from a convent.

Little is normally written about this phase of his life, but a great deal about him as a theologian and world-changing reformer in the Christian world, which he came to after studying law – a career encouraged by his father Hans, who had done well in copper-refining and was a town councillor.

Luther, however, was prompted by a frightening thunderstorm experience to enter the monastery in Erfurt of the Order of the Hermits of St. Augustine: he changed course and never looked back. The conflicts in which he became involved resulted from what he felt was a lack of spirituality stemming from Rome. His studies and conclusions about salvation as a work of divine grace, and his opposition in particular to indulgences, resulted eventually in the split of the Western church into Catholics and Protestants – of various kinds.

His marriage to Katharina came after he had helped her and several other nuns escape from her convent, hiding among fish barrels on a cart. The other nuns were taken in by their families or friends, but Katharina was left stranded. She refused other offers but was happy to marry Luther; he in turn was happy to marry her because he felt that marriage was honourable, and any insistence on clerical celibacy indefensible.

The marriage was warm and successful, and the couple had six children. Luther's wife proved to be a competent household manager and could hold her own theologically. But her husband's death in 1546, together with legal difficulties with his Will, left her in poverty, and she died six years later at the age of 53, after a fall.

Pope Francis wrote this in hospital.

“The walls of hospitals have heard more honest prayers than churches...

They have witnessed far more sincere kisses than those in airports...

It is in hospitals that you see a homophobe being saved by a gay doctor.

A privileged doctor saving the life of a beggar...

In intensive care, you see a Jew taking care of a racist...

A police officer and a prisoner in the same room receiving the same care...

A wealthy patient waiting for a liver transplant, ready to receive the organ from a poor donor...

It is in these moments, when the hospital touches the wounds of people, that different worlds intersect according to a divine design. And in this communion of destinies, we realize that alone, we are nothing.

The absolute truth of people, most of the time, only reveals itself in moments of pain or in the real threat of an irreversible loss.

A hospital is a place where human beings remove their masks and show themselves as they truly are, in their purest essence.

This life will pass quickly, so do not waste it fighting with people.

Do not criticize your body too much.

Do not complain excessively.

Do not lose sleep over bills.

Make sure to hug your loved ones.

Do not worry too much about keeping the house spotless.

Material goods must be earned by each person—do not dedicate yourself to accumulating an inheritance.

You are waiting for too much: Christmas, Friday, next year, when you have money, when love arrives, when everything is perfect...

Listen, perfection does not exist.

A human being cannot attain it because we are simply not made to be fulfilled here.

Here, we are given an opportunity to learn.

So, make the most of this trial of life—and do it now.

Respect yourself, respect others. Walk your own path, and let go of the path others have chosen for you.

Contd...

Respect: do not comment, do not judge, do not interfere.
Love more, forgive more, embrace more, live more intensely!
And leave the rest in the hands of the Creator.”

Pope Francis
John Eadie

What does it mean to love God

Susannah Wesley wrote:

“For my part, after many years search and inquiry, I still continue to pay my devotions to an unknown God. I dare not say I love him – only this, I have chosen him for my happiness, my all, my only God. If to reverence you, O God, be to love you, I love you. If to desire you be to love you, I love you. If to rejoice in your glory be to love you, then I love you.”

Mike Owens

Life in the Circus

A couple who worked at the circus wanted to adopt a child. Social workers had doubts about their suitability, but the couple produced photos of their large motorhome, which was equipped with a beautiful nursery. As for education, not only was there a nanny, but also a full-time tutor to teach the child all the usual subjects along with French, Mandarin and computer skills. Finally, the social workers were satisfied and had only one last question. “What age child are you hoping to adopt?”

“Oh, we don’t mind at all,” the couple assured them. “As long as he or she fits in the cannon.”

Green Pages

A round-up of environmental
and climate-change news

June 2025

Recycling as God intended

God is eternal – so is plastic! In creation God makes life, but life also dies and changes its form to feed other organisms.

Plastic does not die; it is flooding the earth with inert matter, and it feeds nothing. It flows down our rivers, covers our beaches and ends up in the oceans, where it sinks, apparently out of sight. It is difficult to imagine a material more malign for our planet than plastic. It cannot be broken down by God’s natural processes in nature.

As occurs so often, humankind proudly attempts to out-perform God as we continue to make a material that will not rot. We are inventive in making things but we do not consider the end result of the permanent existence of a product that never completely breaks down.

If we don’t drown as sea levels rise, we most certainly will drown in plastic. Plastic is colourful and attractive to birds and animals searching for food. When ingested it can destroy and obstruct digestion, and many creatures will die as a result.

The problem is that plastic, at the point of sale, is cheap – initially cheaper than wood and far cheaper than metal. However, if one takes a ‘whole life’ view, it is far more expensive than natural materials. Plastic is normally made of oil with high CO² emissions. If the oil companies’ products will be used less for propelling transport, they see plastic production as a way to keep pumping oil. This diverts us from the desperate need for less fossil fuel to be produced.

So where is God in all this?

cont. overleaf

God is at the heart of creation, but plastics are a direct challenge to the bountiful and beautiful recycling and reuse of nature's processes. God's creation absorbs and reuses its own waste. We have not; we depend on bins being emptied and vehicles burning fossil fuels to take them away. Nature internalises waste disposal; in fact, God made no such thing as waste – only resources to be reused. Human kind has externalised waste, so we now bewail the mess we have made and the cost of trying to remedy the problem.

What, then, can Christians do? Ideally we should not, as individuals and as churches, purchase items made of plastic, but this is difficult to do at present. Nature cannot digest plastic, so it should have no lasting place on God's earth.

Extracted from an article published in the Methodist Recorder newspaper, written by John D Anderson of Baildon Methodist Church.

Our Garden

We enjoy eating in our conservatory and watching the wildlife in our garden: a pair of blue tits busily feeding their young; a wren very active with her nest in the ivy; goldfinches feed on the nyjer seeds; and a robin is answering the demands of a young one to be fed. There are often blackbird wars and contortions as they try to attack a swinging fat-ball and then enjoy a good bath in a choice of pools. Sadly we found a blackbird's egg in one of our bird baths. A 'greasy pole' seems to have stopped the squirrel from getting at nuts and seeds, but it also defeated a tiny mouse, which was not the intention. Recently the chaffinches have been visiting and there are always some pigeons pottering about.

We have seen more butterflies this year: peacocks, orange tips, small whites, commas and common blues – some dragonflies, and a lot more insects too. The blue tits seem to be finding plenty of grubs for their babies.

We are hoping to have more pom-pom poppies, grown from seeds from last year's plant which "just grewed, like Topsy", and more hollyhocks. We enjoy our more exotic echiums which have to be grown in pots as it is too cold for them to survive the winter in the ground. A lot of you grow more edibles than we do, we have some fruit, but not in great quantities.

Please share with us the joys of your garden.

Elizabeth Wriaht

Solar-power offers warmth for the homeless

Rebecca Young, a 12 year-old student from Kelvinside Academy in Scotland, has designed a groundbreaking solution to help her homeless neighbours stay warm: a solar-powered blanket. Her invention, which integrates a heated blanket into a backpack powered by solar energy, recently earned her a UK-wide contest that challenges students to solve real-world problems through engineering.

The inspiration for Young's design came from her observations of people sleeping rough on the streets of Glasgow. Determined to make a difference, she created a practical and sustainable solution to help those in need. The solar-powered blanket is designed to address the limitations of traditional heated blankets, which require access to electrical outlets—a luxury unavailable to those experiencing homelessness. Young's invention uses solar panels to charge a battery, ensuring the blanket can function independently and provide warmth for up to eight hours, the average human sleep time.

The blanket is designed like a sleeping bag to retain heat and keep users warm even when moving. Additionally, the backpack frame provides extra storage space, making it a versatile and practical solution for those living on the streets. This thoughtful design addresses the immediate needs of homeless individuals and has potential applications in camping, hiking, and travel.

The solar-powered blanket is more than just an innovative technical achievement; it is a testament to Young's empathy and creativity. As the world struggles with challenges like homelessness and climate change, Young's story offers hope and inspiration, proving that even the youngest minds can make a meaningful impact.

Age is no barrier to making a difference. Young's solar-powered blanket not only addresses a pressing social issue but also inspires others to think creatively and act compassionately. Her invention serves as a call to action for individuals, organizations, and governments to address homelessness and climate change with urgency and creativity.

Happy Eco News

Coca-Cola and the environment

The amount of plastic waste, generated by Coca-Cola, in the world's oceans and waterways is expected to reach 602 million kg a year by 2030. That's enough plastic to fill the stomachs of 18 million whales! A report from non-profit group Oceana arrives amid mounting concerns over the human health risks posed by the spread of microplastics, which scientists increasingly link to cancer, infertility and heart disease.

The report says that *"Coca-Cola is by far the largest manufacturer and seller of beverages in the world. It ranks as the world's top branded plastic polluter, followed by PepsiCo, Nestlé and Danone."* Coca-Cola owns hundreds of brands including Fanta, Sprite, Costa Coffee, Innocent and Schweppes. As a result the company's plastic use is projected to exceed 4.13m tonnes annually by 2030.

One solution to reduce this staggering figure lies in bringing back reusable packaging; whether in the form of returnable glass bottles, which can be reused 50 times, or thicker PET plastic containers, which are designed for 25 uses. In 2022 Coca-Cola itself acknowledged that reusable packaging was *"among the most effective ways to reduce waste"* and committed to a goal of reaching 25% packaging by 2030. But that pledge was quietly dropped in December 2024.

Still, there is reason for hope: Coca-Cola already operates large-scale refillable systems in several countries, including Brazil, Germany, Nigeria and even parts of the United States. They have the largest reusable infrastructure of any beverage company and they have the ability to grow that and show the way for the rest of the industry.

Coca-Cola says it will also change some of its labelling practices to remove misleading recycling claims following complaints about 'greenwashing'. In future they will ensure that product labels do not mislead consumers about the environmental benefits of the packaging.

The Green Pages of the Ludlow Methodist Church monthly magazine are brought to you by the Care for Creation Group.

For more information please contact Elizabeth Wright.

New patio

My husband was attempting to build a patio for the first time. He bought 100 cement blocks. Laying them out in a pattern, he discovered the chosen area was too small.

He stacked the blocks against the house and cleared more space. The next day he put the cement blocks back down, only to find that the ground was too hard to keep the patio level.

He ordered a truckload of sand to be delivered the following morning. Again, he stacked the 100 blocks against the house.

Observing all this, our next-door neighbour asked, "Are you going to put your patio away every night?"

Sweets

I gave my four-year-old grand-daughter money for sweets and the church collection plate. Later, seeing her enormous pile of sweets, I got suspicious and asked if she hadn't also given some money to God in church that morning. "No," she replied sweetly, "He wasn't there."

Get a grip

It was said that Archbishop Tench of Dublin, in his later years, had a fear of sudden crippling paralysis. One night at a formal dinner he sat looking more and more forlorn. Finally, he confided to the guests around him: "Well, it's come at last – total lack of feeling in my right leg." Whereupon the lady sitting next to him said soothingly: "Not at all, your Grace. It will comfort you to know that during the whole of this meal it has been my leg that you have been pinching!"

I Understand

Sometimes I think I understand everything – but then I regain consciousness.

What does it mean to be a Christian?

When I was growing up there seemed to be three ways of reacting to God: believers, atheists and agnostics. Agnosticism left space to be unsure or enquiring, but this changed with 'New Atheism'. Most people who would previously have called themselves agnostic began to claim that they are atheist. It seemed to be striking a death knell to the church.

Professor Richard Dawkins championed this movement with the 2006 publication of his book 'The God Delusion', which was acclaimed and criticised in equal measure. But New Atheism now seems to be on the decline; Dawkins has recently declared himself to be a 'Cultural Christian'. He now recognises that we live in a country whose moral foundations have been shaped by Christian teachings, and he claims to like the atmosphere found in churches, and enjoys the choral singing. That sounds to me a lot more like an agnostic than an atheist!

New Atheism arose from the polarised thinking that seems to define so much of modern life. There is pressure to take sides and have little sympathy for the other's point of view. We see it in politics, in sports like football, in racial attitudes, in reactions to sex and gender, and in the use of Social Media ... even between religions and different Christian denominations.

What does it mean to be a cultural Christian? Writing in the Methodist Recorder, J John describes those who claim to be cultural Christians as identifying with Christianity and its values, without being true followers of Jesus Christ. They appreciate Christian culture, talk-up the values of faith, and even attend church from time to time. But they hold back from a genuine, authentic belief, or any personal trust in our risen saviour. They are not hostile, but likely to be curious, providing we don't demand a commitment from them. Perhaps this is a first step towards genuine faith – don't write them off!

John Wesley described people like this as "Almost Christian". It's worth reading Wesley's sermon on this; it is surprisingly contemporary. Wesley describes them as honest, truthful, sincere and charitable; they may be outwardly religious and even go to church.

In the Sunday Times newspaper on Easter Sunday, Stephen Bleach headed his column "Despite my doubts, I feel the church's pull at this time of year." He described how he will go to

church on Easter Sunday and recite the Nicene Creed, which he describes as a list of things we're supposed to sign up to, but "most of us" don't really believe any more.

Bleach goes on to say that, even though he doesn't believe in big swathes of church doctrine, he believes in atheism even less! He talks about a nagging feeling that there is more to existence than material things and rational thinking – because they don't answer the question 'why?' and they say nothing about goodness or meaning or love.

He also briefly talks about other faiths. He describes how he was raised as a Catholic in the south London suburbs, so Christianity is culturally where he is from. If he'd been born in Cairo or Whitechapel he'd probably be a Muslim; Tel Aviv or Golders Green, probably a Jew; Mumbai or Southall, a Hindu. But he says that he is glad that he was born Christian, because Christianity has the best story!

Despite despair about declining church attendance, the Sunday Times noted that every week in the UK 685,000 people go to a CofE church, 650,000 to Catholic mass and hundreds of thousands more attend services held by Methodists, Baptists, Pentecostals etc. Compare that with Premier League football, which gets a lot more media attention than Jesus, but only pulls in 400,000 a week (during the season).

God has not given up on us yet! New Atheism seems to be on the decline ... the tide is turning.

Mike Owens (with thanks to J John and Stephen Bleach)

Economy

The vicar asked a member of his congregation, a banker, why he seemed a bit down. The banker replied: "I'm a walking economy! My hairline is in recession, my stomach is a victim of inflation, and both of these together are putting me into a deep depression."

Wesley's – Past and Present

Snippets from the Methodist Recorder of 2nd November 2006 –

'News from the Wolverhampton and Shrewsbury District'.

"When the congregations of Zion and Broad Street churches in Ludlow agreed to join together they committed themselves to a major building scheme at the Broad Street site. The scheme involved the complete reordering of the worship area, the refurbishment of meeting rooms and the building of 'Wesley's', a state of the art cafe on the front of the premises next to a busy street. . . . Worship and mission are visually linked at all times, with those using the cafe able to see the cross and other symbols of faith. Whenever the cafe is open visitors are welcome to come into the sanctuary.

". . . The cafe is staffed by volunteers from the different denominations of Ludlow and the team spirit is very impressive. . . . After a visit to Broad Street, District mission enabler Rev Andrew Roberts said, 'I was hugely impressed with the whole initiative. I love the way worship and mission are so integrated in the design. The commitment and fellowship among the staff is exemplary – and the cake is great too!'"

This is a reminder, as Rev Denise pointed out in her report to the Annual Church meeting, that Wesley's has been in existence for 19 years – and many thanks to the kind person who anonymously left a 19th anniversary card in the cafe addressed to all our volunteers.

The cake is still great (and all the other food too), as are all our volunteers, and the team spirit is still impressive. However we now have 33 volunteers on the roll as against 74 in 2014. Out of the 33, 20 work regularly on our teams (Monday to Friday, and each team takes it in turn to staff Saturdays), 6 are 'standby', some of whom work as often as our regular team members, and 7 are bakers and soup makers. Some of our food providers are also regular team members.

So we have well-functioning, committed teams who enjoy working together, welcoming our customers and providing an outreach and service to our regular customers and visitors, but we are becoming stretched when anyone is on holiday, sick or

just not available. We are all 19 years older than we were in 2006, even though very few of us (three, I believe) were in at the beginning.

How long can we continue without more people joining us? We don't know, but if you, or anyone you know, would like to find out more about volunteering please ask any of the team leaders (Edith Blair, Stephen Dalton, Doris Wood, Eileen Precious, Elizabeth Wright) who will be happy to answer your queries.

"The harvest field is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field." (Luke 10.2)

Elizabeth Wright

LADIES' NIGHT OUT

What are you ladies doing on Wednesday evening, 2nd July, at 7pm? Meeting up for a meal out, of course!

The venue is to be arranged depending on numbers.

Book your place with Barbara – 01568 780733,

barbi_gittings@yahoo.com



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People who can't see should not drive!

So says a coroner, following a spate of four deaths caused by drivers who, in one case, could barely see his own steering wheel.

Dr James Adeley, the senior coroner for Lancashire, has said that letting motorists self-certify their fitness to drive is the 'laxest system in Europe', and is highly ineffective. And, until it is changed, road deaths will continue to be caused by drivers with failing eyesight.

Dr Adeley has sent a report to Heidi Alexander, the Transport Secretary, calling for action. He points out that the UK is one of only a handful of countries to use 'self-reporting' of any visual conditions that affect one's ability to drive.

Dr Adeley said: "The current system for 'ensuring drivers meet the visual legal standards is ineffective, unsafe and unfit to meet the needs of society."

The Department for Transport has responded: "The NHS recommends adults should have their eyes tested every two years and drivers are legally required to inform the DVLA if they have a condition which affects their eyesight."

Our polluted water systems

Raw sewage continues to pour into our rivers and lakes. Water pollution is up by a third, with some 2,487 incidents recorded in the last year alone.

Last year, although firms were given an Environment Agency (EA) target of 40 per cent *reduction* in pollution incidents, instead such incidents rose by 30 per cent *more*. (Figures obtained under freedom of information laws.)

EA figures released in March showed that storm overflows spilled sewage into England's rivers, lakes and coasts for a new high of more than 3.61 *million* hours in 2024.

Meanwhile, water bills are going up by about £86 this year, and water companies face accusations of having let their critical infrastructure crumble over many years.

Geoff's Quiz:

1. Kazakhstan is the largest landlocked country. What is the second largest landlocked country?
2. What U.S. State is this SSSSSSSSSSE ?
3. Which very notable year in English history is represented by the seven Roman numerals listed in descending order?
4. The capital cities of which two EU countries start with the same two letters and end with the same three letters?
5. With which item of furniture would you associate Peter, Susan, Edmund and Lucy?
6. How many planets are represented by pieces of music in Gustav Holst's Planets suite?
7. Which first name has been shared by two of the first six main hosts of Countdown?
8. If all of the countries in the world were listed alphabetically, which five would come last? (we're talking their normal English name, and as it happens they are all one-word names?)
9. Name three of the four acts who to have had a UK Number 1 with 'Unchained Melody'?
10. In the United Kingdom what is the longest month of the year?

Answers next month!

O Christ, the Master Carpenter, who at the last through wood and nails purchased our whole salvation; wield well your tools in the workshop of your world, so that we who come rough-hewn to your bench may here be fashioned into a truer beauty of your hand.

We ask this for your name's sake. Amen

Stephen Dalton