

# Witney Congregational Church

## R CROSS A D S

*Witney Congregational Church is a crossroads where we:*

*meet God in worship*

*meet one another in friendship*

*meet our community and world with the love of Jesus*



# WHAT'S ON GUIDE

Witney Congregational Church offer a whole range of activities through which we seek to Worship, Work and Witness to the Lord Jesus Christ in this community today.

Further information can be obtained from the Church Administrator, Minister, Church Secretary or the leaders of the particular activities who are listed at the back of this magazine.

## WORSHIP

Daily Worship	9.30 am	Mon-Fri	Short time of Prayer and Reading
Saturday Praise	11.00 am	1 <sup>st</sup> Saturday of the month	
Sunday Services	10.30 am		
	6.00 pm	1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month	

Communion is held twice during the month at the first Sunday evening and third Sunday morning services

## PRAYER

The Church is open each morning for Prayer

## STUDY & FELLOWSHIP

Tuesday	12.15pm	Lite Bite piece of the Word (1 <sup>st</sup> Tuesday of each month)
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## YOUTH ACTIVITIES

Sunday	10.30 am	Crèche, Noah's Ark & The K.I.C.K. on Sundays
Monday	10.00 am	Noah's Ark – Infant Group for babies and pre-school children

## OTHER ACTIVITIES

Tuesday	Monthly	Deacon's Meeting
	Bi-Monthly	Church Meeting
Thursday	10.00am	Thursday Coffee Morning
Saturday	10.30 am	Coffee Morning

## SUNDAY LINK

Weekly bulletin for all Christians providing stimulating thought along with news and notices concerning our Church

## WITNEY ECUMENICAL YOUTH TRUST (BASE 33)

4 Welch Way (Entrance – High Street) ☎ 01993 774402

## St ANDREW'S BOOKSHOP

☎ 01993 709429  
Opening Hours: Monday – Saturday 09.00 am – 5.00 pm

## CHURCH WEBSITE

For further information, please visit our website:

[www.witneycongregational.org.uk](http://www.witneycongregational.org.uk)



As the magazine is now produced bi-monthly, this is the first edition of 2017; and I hope that the festive period was not too stressful and that 2017 will be a good year for you.

Isn't it strange, that whenever there is a break in routine it is very hard, and sometimes very stressful, to get back into it. The paradox being that breaks are supposed to make you feel better and refreshed for the new start; when in reality, the reverse is often the case.

Turning now to those who have contributed to this edition; alongside the standard pages, Canon David Winter gives us an article on the Dead Sea Scrolls; there are articles on BBC Radio 4 Desert Island Discs, Asking Questions about Christianity and Fleetwood Mac, which have been extracted from Parish Pump and Christian News Service to which the Church subscribes, to name but a few.

Many thanks for those who have contributed for this edition, but would encourage anyone to consider submitting article(s) for the next edition by either:  
E-mail:

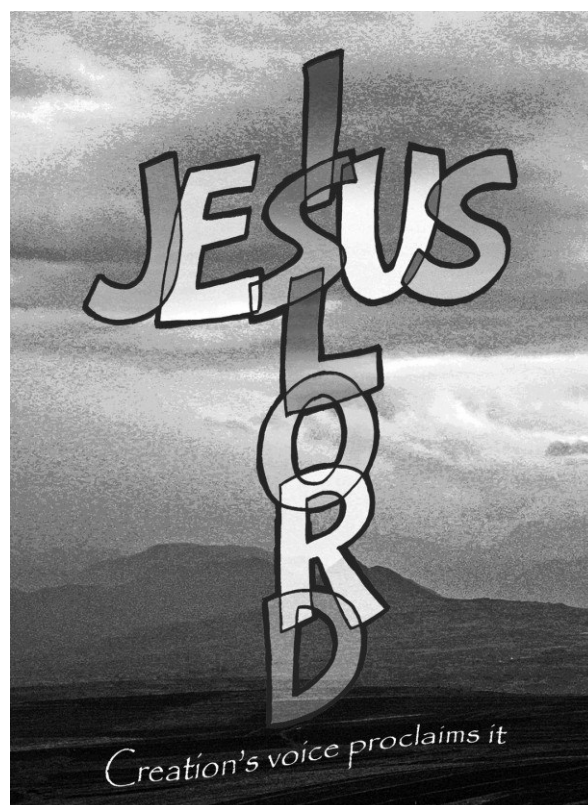
terrypowlesland@uwclub.net

jacquipowlesland@uwclub.net

or, just plainly written on paper, which can be typed up.

The next 2-monthly edition, covering April & May is due on **Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> April**

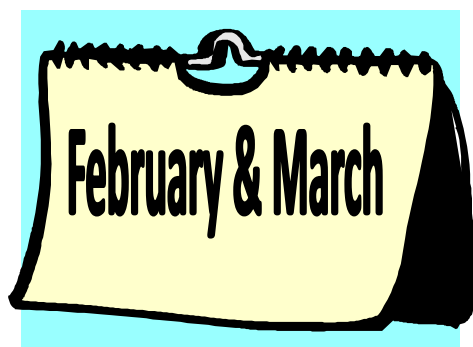
Your Editor



**Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> March**

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### Daily Prayer Time:

Mon-Fri 9.30 am

### Services

10.30 am weekly & 6.00pm on first Sunday of the month and will normally be led by Rev Dr Jason Boyd unless advised below

### Feb

4 <sup>th</sup>		Saturday Praise	11.00am
5 <sup>th</sup>	am	Morning Worship	
	pm	Evening Worship	Communion
12 <sup>th</sup>	am	Morning Worship	
19 <sup>th</sup>	am	Morning Worship	Communion
26 <sup>th</sup>	am	Morning Worship	

### Mar

1 <sup>st</sup>		Ash Wednesday Service	7.00pm
4 <sup>th</sup>		Creative Fun	10.00am
5 <sup>th</sup>	am	Café Church	
	pm	Evening Worship	Communion
12 <sup>th</sup>	am	Morning Worship	
19 <sup>th</sup>	am	Morning Worship	Communion
26 <sup>th</sup>	am	Morning Worship	

### April

1 <sup>st</sup>		Saturday Praise	11.00am
2 <sup>nd</sup>	am	Morning Worship	
	pm	Evening Worship	Communion

The following events are given for your particular attention:

### Feb

7 <sup>th</sup>	Lite Bite piece of the Word	12.15pm	
	Deacon's meeting	7.30pm	
11 <sup>th</sup>	Prayer Chain meeting	9.15am	

### Mar

3 <sup>rd</sup>	Women's World Day of Prayer	10.30am	High St Methodist Church
		7.00pm	Congregational Church
7 <sup>th</sup>	Lite Bite piece of the Word	12.15pm	
	Deacon's meeting	7.30pm	
10 <sup>th</sup>	Lent Soup Lunch & Bible Study	12.30 – 2.15pm	Roman Catholic Church
11 <sup>th</sup>	Prayer Chain meeting	9.15am	
15 <sup>th</sup>	Lent Soup Lunch & Bible Study	12.30 – 2.15pm	St Mary's Church Green
18 <sup>th</sup>	SWMA Assembly	10.00am – 4.00pm	Congregational Church
23 <sup>rd</sup>	Lent Soup Lunch & Bible Study	12.30 – 2.15pm	Congregational Church
31 <sup>st</sup>	Lent Soup Lunch & Bible Study	12.30 – 2.15pm	High St Methodist Church

### Apr

4 <sup>th</sup>	Springfield School Easter Assembly	10.45am	
	Lite Bite piece of the Word	12.15pm	
	Deacon's meeting	7.30pm	
5 <sup>th</sup>	Lent Soup Lunch & Bible Study	12.30 – 2.15pm	Davenport Rd Church
8 <sup>th</sup>	Prayer Chain meeting	9.15am	

# ROTAS

## WELCOMING TEAM

<b>Feb</b>	05	Susan Wass & Lesley Barter
	12	Cecily Lau & Irene St Clair
	19	Cecily Lau & Joan Currie
	26	Graham Beechey
<b>Mar</b>	05	Pip Cartwright & Irene St Clair
	12	Viviane Boyd & Lesley Barter
	19	Viviane Boyd
	26	Cecily Lau & Nanna Blackman
<b>Apr</b>	02	



## COMMUNION

<b>Feb</b>	05 pm	Viviane Boyd	
		Preparation	Viviane Boyd
	19 am	Lesley Barter & Cecily Lau	
		Judi Holloway & Norline Martin	
<b>Mar</b>	05 pm	Beryl Cartwright	
		Preparation	Beryl Cartwright
	19 am	Susan Wass & Viviane Boyd	
		Lesley Barter & Beryl Cartwright	
<b>Apr</b>	02 pm	Lesley Barter	
		Preparation	Lesley Barter



## FLOWERS

<b>Feb</b>	05	Beryl Cartwright
	12	Joan Currie
	19	Rita Hayes
	26	Val Obriain
<b>Mar</b>	05	Sonya Boyd
	12	Jacqui Powlesland
	19	Judi Holloway
	26	Beryl Cartwright
<b>Apr</b>	02	Joan Currie



## SUNDAY COFFEE

<b>Feb</b>	05	Sue Birdseye & Irene St Clair
	12	Susan Wass & Judith Bungey
	19	Viviane Boyd & Hilary Pratley
	26	Clare Woodward & Susan Wass
<b>Mar</b>	05	Café Church
	12	Sue Birdseye & Irene St Clair
	19	Susan Wass & Judith Bungey
	26	Viviane Boyd & Hilary Pratley
<b>Apr</b>	02	Clare Woodward & Susan Wass



## THURSDAY COFFEE

<b>Feb</b>	02	Beryl Cartwright
	09	Hilary Pratley
	16	Jean Stanley, Marina Bowerman & Irene St Clair
	23	Beryl Cartwright



<b>Mar</b>	02	Hilary Pratley
	09	Beryl Cartwright
	16	Jean Stanley, Marina Bowerman & Irene St Clair
	23	Hilary Pratley
	30	Beryl Cartwright
<b>Apr</b>	06	Jean Stanley, Marina Bowerman & Irene St Clair



Every effort has been made to meet individual circumstances. However, please change with someone else if the dates are not convenient for you

<b>Feb</b>	04	Elaine Beechey
	13	Judi Holloway
	16	Leah Cotton
	22	Dave Wesson
	24	Marion Walker
	25	Jean Howell



<b>Mar</b>	08	Joan Currie
	11	Lesley Barter
		Mel Knapton
	16	Ben Smith
	19	Beryl Cartwright
	22	Peter Sellman

## Easter Services

In order to plan your Lent/Easter journey, please sight associated dates in **April** below:

13 <sup>th</sup>	pm	Maundy Thursday Supper	6.30pm for 7.00pm
14 <sup>th</sup>	9.45am	Good Friday Service	
	10.45am	Meet at High Street Methodist Church for Silent Walk of Witness	
	11.00am	United Good Friday Service in the Market Square	

### Easter Sunday

16 <sup>th</sup>	6.00am	Dawn Service
	8.00am	Communion Service
	8.45am	Breakfast
	10.30am	All Age Worship with Communion

## Men go up nearly a stone

If you think those old photographs of you make you look slimmer, you are probably right:

Men today weigh on average 13s 5lb, almost a stone more than those 20 years ago, while women are on average 11st 3lb, or three quarters of a stone heavier

The study by Cancer Research UK warns that soaring obesity levels are risking lives. Yet excess weight is the largest preventable cause of cancer, after smoking

## Pastor's Paper

My best man and his wife visited us this past weekend (20-22 January). We took them to the Weston Building in Oxford. I cannot put into words their thrill at seeing a copy of the Magna Carta affixed with a wax seal. It was fascinating to inspect a Guttenberg Bible, a product of the printing press and the equivalent of the invention of the internet and which had been instrumental in the spread of Martin Luther's 95 theses. There were so many treasures to drink in with our eyes. I particularly enjoyed reading Geoffrey Howe's annotated notes for the speech that led to the end of Margaret Thatcher's premiership. I remember when the news of her demise flashed on our TV screens in Canada!

We had a discussion that could be summed up: "That's not history! I remember that and I'm too young for that to be history." It's a sign of age when our youngsters tell us what they're studying in school and we recall exactly where we were and what we were doing the moment that it happened.

At the moment, Sonya is studying the German Democratic Republic. How many of you can picture the Berlin Wall coming down? We could not believe what we were seeing on the television and reading in the newspapers. Any healing of the division between East and West Germany seemed impossible! Like the insurmountable, impenetrable wall of Jericho, it succumbed to the blows of political change.

I had studied the second war at school but it wasn't until I came to live in Manchester that a distant event became immediate. To visit the Cathedral and to see the restored stained glass window that had been destroyed by a bomb made me appreciate the imminent threat of

violence posed to ordinary Brits. I had always associated the bombings with the London Blitz. Then when I lived in Scotland I heard the older folk tell of watching (over a distance of 35 miles) the Clydebank inferno. My sense of how all-encompassing the war had been deepened further.

My adopted Gran, Nell, told of an occasion when they were moving a mattress from one house to another. This was for a soldier billeted to their house in Northendon, Greater Manchester. As they carried the mattress the air raid sirens screamed and they took cover under the mattress. When they emerged after the all clear, they found shrapnel embedded in it. Without this cover they would certainly have been injured or perhaps worse.

"That's not history. I was there."

When the voices of those who were there on the battle fields of the Great War or the concentration camps; when the voices of those who were there fall silent; then these living events are consigned to print on the pages of history books. We lose the sense of these events having happened – events caused *by* and lived *through* by human beings.

At the time of writing, the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is drawing to a close. We have been commemorating the Reformation sparked by Luther 500 years ago. We have been celebrating the good things that arose out of this movement. We have sorrowed for the division and death that ensued as Christians persecuted Christians. The challenge has been to exercise the ministry of reconciliation which we have been given in Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 5:14-20). At our united service on Sunday we built a wall and then broke it down into the shape of a cross. It was a powerful symbol of the healing that Christ has brought



about through his death and resurrection – a healing we have yet to realise in our lives. “For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us” (Ephesians 2:14).

Friday, 27 January, is Holocaust Memorial Day. Industrial scale mass killing of Jews, homosexuals, those with special needs, and those who resisted the Nazis swept Europe. It is hard to imagine 8 million dead. This evil was perpetrated by a democratically elected government which used emergency powers to become a dictatorship. The vast majority of Christians colluded with the Nazis or simply remained silent. The likes of Dietrich Bonhoeffer and members of the Confessing Church stood against National Socialism.

I am going to be blunt (“What’s new?” you may ask). I do not want to be found standing on the wrong side of history. The election of Donald Trump together with the anti-immigration and populist movements in the UK and across Europe, alarm me. A democratically elected leader spews hate speech against women, Muslims and Mexicans. Trump’s administration now speaks of ‘alternative truth’. I am distressed that the conservative Christian right have been instrumental in ensuring Trump a place in the Oval Office. There is something deeply troubling in all of this.

In my view, it is a deep suspicion of the ‘Other’ which drives this fragmenting, nationalistic politics. Hitler successfully played on the anti-Semitic poison that existed in Germany (and which was rife in other European countries including the UK!). Anti-Semitism was sustained and promoted by many Christians. Today there are political forces that would have us fear ‘immigrants’. ‘They’ steal our jobs and leach off of ‘our’ benefit system. It

does not matter that this is not borne out by the facts of the situation. We now live in a post truth society. We prefer the reality we make up for ourselves to secure our own place.

Pastor Niemoeller who died at the hands of the Nazis wrote:

First they came for the Jews  
and I did not speak out –  
because I was not a Jew.

Then they came for the Communists  
and I did not speak out –  
because I was not a Communist.

Then they came for the trade unionists  
and I did not speak out –  
because I was not a trade unionist.

Then they came for me –  
and there was no one left  
to speak out for me.

One day this era will be in the history books. Will we be found following the crucified Christ? Will we reach out to reconcile? Will we embrace those who are different? Will we welcome all - especially the outsiders – to come in – to be at home?

I will speak out.

I will stand up.

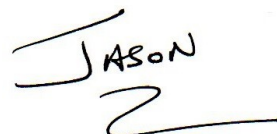
I will act.

Will you?

Here is my prayer for us:

Christ of the cross, as we go with you into the wilderness of your temptations; as we stumble under the weight of your cross; as we learn obedience from you to the point of death; fill us with life – true life – abundant life. Amen.

Shalom

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "JASON" in a stylized, cursive font. The signature is written in a single line with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.



The following article has been extracted from Church News Service, and is entitled:

## Asking questions about Christianity

A 16-year-old boy – let's call him Adam – was given a Bible and was curious about it. But he didn't know how to cope with reading such a huge book so he found [www.Christianity.org.uk](http://www.Christianity.org.uk) and clicked on the button which allows anyone to ask a question

Peter Graystone, is the coordinator for the Christian Enquiry Agency, which runs the website. Peter responds to questions received through the website, and he began an online conversation with Adam last September. Peter writes: 'He and I have been reading Luke's Gospel at the same time, and every time he had a question he emailed me for an answer. Great questions – many have been about praying! At the start of November he discovered one of his school friends is a Christian. So he went to church for the first time ever and enjoyed it. We have finished Luke, and he has asked me what we should read next.'

Every week around 5,000 people visit the Christianity.org.uk website and dozens make contact with a question or comment. Peter responds on behalf of the Christian Enquiry Agency, by giving them what they ask for, and only what they ask for. Typically, people might ask to be sent part of the Bible that tells the story of Jesus (a Gospel). They might request prayer about something, ask a question about Christianity or seek a local church where they can explore issues of faith

Churches or organisations can add the URL Christianity.org.uk to any website or printed literature free of charge and without asking permission. It means your

community and contacts have an easy way to find answers to their questions about the Christian faith from a huge website of information. With thousands of people visiting Christianity.org.uk every week, this is an effortless way for you to do evangelism

You can also join the prayer team who receive weekly emails, passing on the prayer requests from people who visit Christianity.org.uk. Names are disguised for privacy, but we are sure that God knows who we are praying for.

If you would like to join the Christian Enquiry Agency prayer team, please email Peter Graystone:

[peter@christianity.org.uk](mailto:peter@christianity.org.uk)

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## Breath deep

Now here's a trick that you probably haven't tried before: next time you forget something, try taking some deep breaths.

It seems that inhaling stimulates our brain, creating electrical activity where emotions, memory and smells are processed. In a recent American study, individuals were able to identify a face two seconds more quickly if they were breathing in through the nose, rather than breathing out.

The study was carried out at Northwestern University in Chicago, and may also explain why we breath rapidly when afraid. "If you are in a panic state, you spend proportionally more time inhaling. .... Faster breathing could have a positive impact on brain function and result in faster response times."



## PRAYER LETTER

### No 178

## Barriers and Reconciliation

There are all sorts of visual physical barriers, fences, gates, walls, hedges, wire netting, erected for different purposes. However there are invisible barriers which are the ones we put up in our minds for various reasons to stop us engaging or communicating with people or situations.

Famous Walls that have been built by historic dynasties are visited by people from all over the world but the original intention was to keep people out. The Great Wall of China (which Pip and our daughter Penny trekked along in 1990) was constructed of earth and stone and built by an army of conscripts during the Qin Dynasty 221-206 BC. It was intended to protect nomads and barbarians from the north. Most of the present wall was constructed during the Ming Dynasty 1368-1644 AD.

Hadrian's Wall, a Roman fortification, built on the orders of Emperor Hadrian AD 117- 38, stretches from the Solway Firth near Carlisle in the west to Wallsend near the east coast and formed for centuries the frontier of the Roman Empire and the boundary between England and Scotland keeping the Picts out of England.

Many parts of these two famous Walls have fallen into disrepair but there are some stretches which still remain and are accessible to walk along no longer restricting who can come and go!!

Unfortunately In our life time two more walls have been built to keep people out of countries and imprisoned in their own country:

The Berlin Wall built in 1961 and the West Bank Barrier Wall started building in 2002 between Israel and the West Bank and is continuing being built.

After the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War Germany was divided into East Germany, part of the communist bloc countries and West Germany with its new capital Bonn allied to Western Europe. The capital Berlin was divided into East Berlin which was controlled by the Communist Regime and West Berlin which was Democratic but no longer the capital of West Germany. Due to many East Germans fleeing to the affluent West Berlin the Communist East Berlin decided overnight in August 1961 to erect a barbed wire fence dividing the city in two and prohibiting access to West Berlin. A wall was built to replace the fence. After 28 years of this Political Barrier the peoples of East and West Berlin started tearing the wall down in a peaceful revolution. During the years the Wall was standing 171 people had been killed or died attempting escape from East Berlin. We rejoice that eventually Berlin and East Germany were united into one nation, Germany.

The Wall between Israel and The West Bank is described as a 'separation barrier or 'security fence' against terrorism and suicide bombers. The Palestinians call it a 'racial segregation barrier' or 'apartheid wall'. Unfortunately this wall is still being built with dire consequences for the ordinary Palestinian people. The suggestion in this 21<sup>st</sup> century of President Trump promising to build a wall between the U.S.A. and Mexico is abhorrent and will cause many political, economic and personal problems for the people of both these nations. If it does go ahead what will this wall be called?

This last week we (CTIW) have been joining together with the Churches of Great Britain and Ireland in the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. At the Sunday Evening Worship Service at the Methodist Church the Theme was 'Reconciliation' reminding us that God has reconciled us through Jesus Christ whose love compels us to be ministers of reconciliation, not just looking at global issues which we hope and pray our World Leaders will initiate and solve but at our own lives and communities.

During the Service a representation of a wall was built using 12 covered shoe boxes as stones showing aspects of barriers, divisions, prejudice. As each 'stone' was placed a person from different churches offered a prayer seeking forgiveness which was followed by a time of reflection.

Can you think of any time these stones have described your attitudes and what the consequences were ?

- Stone 1      This stone is '**lack of love**'. Gracious God, the love of Christ compels us to seek forgiveness for whenever we have failed to love.
- Stone 2      This stone is '**hate and contempt**' Gracious God, the love of Christ compels us to seek forgiveness for our hate and contempt for each other.'
- Stone 3      This stone is '**false accusation**' Gracious God, the love of Christ compels us to seek forgiveness for denouncing and falsely accusing one another.
- Stone 4      This stone is '**discrimination**' Gracious God, the love of Christ compels us to seek forgiveness for all forms of prejudice and discrimination against one another.
- Stone 5      This stone is '**persecution**' Gracious God, the love of Christ compels us to seek forgiveness for persecuting and torturing one another.
- Stone 6      This stone is '**broken communion**' Gracious God, the love of Christ compels us to seek forgiveness for perpetuating broken communion among our churches.
- Stone 7      This stone is '**intolerance**' Gracious God, the love of Christ compels us to seek forgiveness for acts of religious intolerance in history and today.
- Stone 8      This stone is '**religious wars and conflicts**' Gracious God, the love of Christ compels us to seek forgiveness for all wars and conflicts that we have waged against one another in his name.
- Stone 9      This stone is '**division**' Gracious God, the love of Christ compels us to seek forgiveness for living our Christian lives divided from one another and astray from our common calling for the healing of the nations.
- Stone 10     this stone is '**abuse of power**' Gracious God, the love of Christ compels us to seek forgiveness for our abuse of power.
- Stone 11     This stone is '**isolation**' Gracious God, the love of Christ compels us to seek forgiveness for the times when we have isolated ourselves from our Christian sisters and brothers and from the communities in which we live.
- Stone 12     This stone is 'pride' Gracious God, the love of Christ compels us to seek forgiveness for our pride.

We then joined in the following prayer together.

Lord our God

Look upon this wall that we have built, which separates us from you and one another.

Forgive our sins and heal us.

Help us to overcome all walls of division and make us one in you. Amen

After a moving sermon from Jason on The Prodigal son who was forgiven and reunited with his father, '**The Wall**' was demolished and reshaped into a **cross** reminding us that Jesus gave His life for us that we can be reconciled to God our Father in Heaven.

May God be with you as you deal with such 'barriers' during 2017

Every Blessing

Beryl

The following article, written by Canon David Winter & extracted from Church News Service, considers the major impact of the famous Dead Sea Scrolls and is entitled:

## **A Priceless Find – by accident!**

70 years ago this month a couple of shepherds in the hills above Qumran near the Dead Sea idly threw a stone into what they thought was an empty cave. When they heard the sound of smashing pottery they searched inside, and found the most important biblical discovery of the century

Their stone had led them to what became known as the Dead Sea Scrolls, manuscripts of the entire Hebrew Bible except for the book of Esther, stored in clay vessels. The scrolls were the work of a religious community called the Essenes, who lived near that site before and during the life of Jesus

Most of the scrolls are in Hebrew, but others are in Aramaic, the language spoken by many Jews – including Jesus – between the sixth century BC and the siege of Jerusalem in 70 AD. One of the most intriguing manuscripts from Qumran is the Copper Scroll, a sort of ancient treasure map that lists 64 hidden treasures around Israel. None of these has been uncovered.

As scholars slowly unraveled them – and that task took decades – they discovered that they were handling manuscripts of the Bible which were hundreds of years older than any we had previously possessed. Most of the biblical manuscripts on which our translations had previously been based were copies of copies, carefully crafted in monasteries over the centuries by people dedicated to preserving the sacred text. But inevitably, in the process, there were occasional slips in the copying, and at times it's obvious

that those who were doing it didn't understand the words they were copying

So, in February 1947, the world had access to a much older and therefore more accurate record of the Jewish Scriptures – the Bible of Jesus and the first Christians. The most remarkable thing is actually how few 'mistakes' there were, seeing the centuries of copying – and not one that seriously affects our fundamental understanding of the Bible

Those two shepherds 70 years ago ensured that we today have a Bible text which is as close to the original as one could ever hope to get. I'm glad they threw the stone into the right cave!

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The following article, written by Tim Lenton, has been extracted from Parish Pump, and is entitled:

## **Fleetwood Mac's masterpiece**

Fleetwood Mac, the reinvented rock band that survived a self-destructive, druggy lifestyle, released the album that was arguably their masterpiece 40 years ago, on 4<sup>th</sup> Feb 1977.

*Rumours*, recorded in California, became one of the best-selling albums of all time, selling more than 45 million copies worldwide. It contained, incidentally, *The Chain* – the song that is now best known as the introduction to TV coverage of Formula One.

Yet this was far from the Fleetwood Mac founded by brilliant blues guitarist Peter Green (originally Greenbaum) in the UK in the late 1960s. With fellow guitarist Jeremy Spencer, Green was reported in

1969 to be working on an album telling the life story of Jesus, but this never materialised. Green consistently rejected the materialistic lifestyle, but was eventually diagnosed with schizophrenia.

Meanwhile, Mick Fleetwood and John McVie, drummer and bass guitarist respectively, were looking for a lead guitarist who would stick with them, and eventually Fleetwood heard one, by chance, when he was visiting a sound studio in California. This was Lindsey Buckingham, who agreed to join them on condition that his girlfriend could come too.

This has to rank as one of the happiest “accidents” in rock music, because the girlfriend was Stevie Nicks, who became the charismatic lead singer for the band and writer of some of their most memorable songs. Her friendship with the other female star in the band, Christine McVie (who rejoined Fleetwood Mac in 2014 after a 16-year absence), was also key to the band’s survival.

As to the album, Mick Fleetwood is reported as saying: “*Rumours* became the church that saved us from the hell of our own lives.”



The following article, written by Richard Bewes, has been extracted from Parish Pump, finds that life has always been precarious, and is entitled:

## Staying positive!

Here’s a test! Who said, “I dare not marry; the future is so unsettled.” Was it Olympic multi-medallist Katherine Grainger? *Wrong* - it was William Wilberforce in 1801. Who said, “There is scarcely anything about us but ruin and depression.” Maggie Smith? No – it was William Pitt in 1805. Who said, “In industry, commerce and agriculture there is no hope.” Gordon Brown perhaps? No – it was Benjamin Disraeli in 1844.

Life can always **seem** difficult. But let the Bible help! Deuteronomy 33:25 serves as a golden Bible promise for believers facing the unknown: ‘*As your days,*’ declared Moses, ‘***so shall your strength be.***’ Here’s a promise for New Year: More days - more strength!’

Think now of the *terrain* that would test God’s ancient people, there on the borders of the Promised Land. First, they would face:

### THE ENDURING HIGHWAY

Before the ancient people of God, there lay many scary adventures - but they were to see the way ahead as *God’s* appointed path. For us today, ‘the highway’ is a portrayal of the lifelong discipleship of the Christian believer. Think **prayerfully** about 2017! Then there was also:

### THE ACCOMPANYING ROCK

In Deuteronomy 32, Moses had described the Lord as ‘the Rock of salvation’ - contrasting *Israel’s* faith with the empty rituals of the godless society: ‘For their rock is not as our Rock, as even as our *enemies* concede.’

Against the surrounding rocks of idolatry and superstition stood *Israel's* Rock of Creation, the rock face of the Ten Commandments - and the abiding love by which God was pledged to His people. Later, Paul declared that the Rock *accompanying God's people* - is Christ himself (1 Corinthians 10: 4).

Here's a third piece of terrain awaiting us!

### **THE BECKONING LAND**

Moses could see it from afar – the Land of Promise. For the Christian of today 'The Land' stands for salvation itself – with sins covered, the promise of a new inner power, the presence every day of Jesus - and assurance of life in the hereafter. In the words of hymn-writer, Isaac Watts:

*If we could climb where Moses stood, and  
fear that view no more;  
Nor Jordan's stream nor death's cold flood  
would keep us from that shore.*

Stay with the pace, then; More days, more strength!

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The following article has been extracted from Parish Pump, and is entitled:

## **Desert Island Discs... Britain's longest-running radio show**

The first episode of *Desert Island Discs* was broadcast on BBC radio 75 years ago. It is Britain's longest-running radio show.

It was devised by freelance broadcaster Roy Plomley and introduced to listeners as "a programme in which a well-known person is asked the question, if you were to be cast away alone on a desert island, which eight gramophone records would

you choose to have with you, assuming of course, that you had a gramophone and an inexhaustible supply of needles".

The first castaway was the Viennese comedian, actor and musician, Vic Oliver, and the first piece of music chosen was Chopin's Étude No.12 in C minor, played by pianist Alfred Cortot. During the war years, everything had to be scripted and read out.

Apart from a five-year break between 1946 and 1951, the programme has been on air ever since. Following Plomley himself, the hosts have included Michael Parkinson – who insisted that the selected music was played to the guests during the actual recording – Sue Lawley and Kirsty Young. Well over 3000 people have been cast away over that period.

As well as a choice of music, the guests also receive a copy of Shakespeare and the Bible, another book and a luxury item. Recently the choice of the Bible has unsurprisingly come under attack, with comedian David Walliams one of those who refused to accept it. A poll suggested that only 31% of people in the UK would want it.

Comedian Lee Mack, however, thought it odd that so many people dismissed the Bible without having read it. "I'm glad you get the Bible," he said. "I would read it."

