

September 2023

50p



life



swcd-churches.org.uk



LIFE MAGAZINE EDITOR

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Articles for the October edition are due **Sunday 17th September**

Editorial Notes

The front cover shows 'New Life', 2 baby hedgehogs (in fact there were 4) feeding from their mother who had been resident in our garden for some time. It had built its nest close to our house and after watching movement within for a week or two, we were privileged to be witnesses of the nest becoming 'roofless', giving us the pleasure of seeing these creatures of God starting their life so close to our home.

There are more of God's animals/birds on the back cover alongside the beauty of the wild areas in Street Parish Churchyard, a resident grey Squirrel and a busy woodpecker.

Our hedgehog friends are hopefully starting their journey of life, and on page 16, Pauline Hatrey shares her 'Faith Journey' with us, whereas page 23 has a Manna feature entitled 'A Lifetime Journey'. Jane's Pilgrimage story on page 20 is hopefully 'A story so far'. I took the liberty of adding one of my pictures of the Skye Bridge Island.

The afternoon teas are proving popular, (page 10) so be wise and attend the next one. In fact, there is plenty going on throughout the Benefice, so lots to fill our time during the early autumn months.

Next month's 'Life' will be Harvest based and have reports of Diana's leaving service, Trinity Handbells Cranmore Station experience and lots more, so remember the copy date, Sunday 17th September. Roger.

Rector's Letter

"One generation commends your works to another; they tell of your mighty acts" Psalm chapter 145 verse 4

Dear Friends,

On 6th August, we needed just about all the chairs in the Parish Church at our Sunday morning communion service as the regular church family were joined by friends and family of Jack, Charles and Evie as they were baptised. It was noisy, a little chaotic and perhaps not what everyone was used to on a Sunday morning, but it was wonderful to worship together from across the generations and a privilege to offer prayer to so many who may not normally have been seen inside of a church on a Sunday morning.

This might be the kind of service the Psalmist was remembering as he wrote the words above. It's interesting that the verse does not suggest that it is the older generation who commend God to the younger generation (as we might often have interpreted it) but that every generation takes responsibility jointly for telling of God's mighty acts. If you are a little older, when did you last experience something new of God from a child?

When preparing for the Baptism above, the older brother of one of those being baptised told us that we could find God in magma – this blew us away. I learnt something new of God's mighty deeds that afternoon as we discussed baptism and some of life's big questions!

Let's be worshippers who listen to one another to hear more of God.

Can anyone top the magma story?

With my love and prayers, Ana

READY FOR HARVEST

In early October, each of our churches will be marking their Harvest Festival. As well as our acts of worship on Sunday, please look out for:

Harvest events in Walton and Compton Dundon. These are open to everyone in the benefice and do join us for some fun and food as we give thanks to God for harvest. Details of what is on offer and how to get tickets will be in Lifeline, on our website and our social media pages.

Harvest collection. Some of our churches collect regularly for Street Foodbank run by our friends at the Street Salvation Army. However, at harvest, we will have a particular focus on this, asking all our congregations to donate non-perishable goods to support those in our communities who are struggling to put food on the table for their families. Demand at the Foodbank is at record levels and your support would be most welcome. During September, as you do your shopping, why not buy an extra item or two specifically for this collection? Apart from pasta, the food bank is short of most things most of the time, particularly items like tinned vegetables, long life milk and toiletries. As many of those who they serve live in smaller accommodation and lack storage, please avoid large packets or bulk items.

Thank you

Ana Lawrence

www.swcd.churches.org.uk

Our church website, <https://swcd-churches.org.uk/>, is a great place to find up to date news and a calendar showing all our services and latest events. If you are online and haven't yet checked it out why not give it a visit now? Kevin Lawrence

Bishops Letter

Learn from the Master

When you hear the word ‘disciple’, what comes into your mind? A learner? A follower? A super Christian? Someone kitted out in Biblical dress complete with robe, sandals, tea towel head covering and beard?

The New Testament’s word for disciple doesn’t quite match any of these descriptions. It’s much closer to the word we’d use in English for ‘apprentice’.

Back in history, and still today, to be an apprentice meant spending time in the presence of a master in order to learn a craft – maybe carpentry, or blacksmithing, baking or butchery. You’d start out doing the simple stuff – sweeping floors or sharpening tools. Then gradually you’d acquire more and more skills until you learnt to work confidently with materials producing beautiful things, products of utility and worth. Apprentices often learnt their craft while living alongside their masters, becoming members of their trade through time spent together at work and rest and play.

Jesus was often called ‘the carpenter’s son’ – apprenticed to his worldly father Joseph, growing in skill at the plane and the lathe. He was also the apprentice of his heavenly father. The Gospels speak of Jesus withdrawing to spend time with God in order to know God’s mind, hear God’s voice, grow in God’s ways.

Apprenticeship was and is a story of growth, development, discovery and change. It’s the journey that Jesus invites us to take with him too – of baby steps and toddler stumbles, of emerging skill and increasing understanding.

Churches near you are offering opportunities to apprentice yourself to Jesus this autumn - from practical action that gets you

involved in Jesus's service to the world, to learning and discussion that comes with courses such as Alpha, Exploring Christianity or Pilgrim.

Why not sign yourself up and learn from the Master?

Every blessing

Bishop Michael

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Sermon Series – Listening & healing.

In the Autumn weeks, on Sunday mornings, we will be running two short sermon series; the first of these is on Christian listening, building on what we covered earlier in the year and also running alongside the midweek listening course which I hope many of us will participate in. It will be good to dig a little deeper into the whole area of Christian listening; being good listeners is something we should all aim to be.

We follow with the theme of healing which in many respects links with and flows from listening. For some, healing may be something new and through the preaching, we will be exploring what the bible says about healing and what we can learn from one another. My hope and prayer is that this might be a springboard for future conversations as to how we can develop some form of healing ministry across our churches.

Ana Lawrence

Walton Matters

You care for the land and water it; you enrich it abundantly. The streams of God are filled with water to provide the people with grain, for so you have ordained it. You drench its furrows and level its ridges; you soften it with showers and bless its crops. You crown the year with your bounty, and your carts overflow with abundance. The grasslands of the wilderness overflow; the hills are clothed with gladness. The meadows are covered with flocks and the valleys are mantled with grain; they shout for joy and sing.

Psalm 65. Vs 9-13. N.I.V.

By the time you receive this magazine, the children will be preparing to go back to school, some to a different school and some on to further education. We hope they and the teaching staff have had a well-deserved rest and we pray for the new year ahead for them all and for their safe keeping.

September 9th will be Walton Funday and as usual, we will have a car boot as the Church presence. This is a great day with lots of entertainment going on into the evening with live music and fireworks. It isn't just for Walton folk so do pop along and join in the fun.

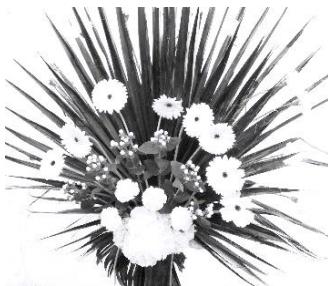
Talking of fun, I hope you have in your diary September 23rd as this will be our barn dance in the village hall. Rough Round the Edges are playing for us with a caller so this evening shouldn't be missed. A hot dog supper will be provided but bring along the drinks of your choice. It is sure to be hot work. The tickets are £10 including supper will be available from our churches, Andy Savage, Liz Selway and Sandra Gristock. There will be a raffle on the evening. We are really looking forward to seeing you there.



Our Harvest festival service will be on the 1st October and, as usual, your generous gifts of food will be donated to the food bank. We welcome you to come and join us for our service at 9.15am as we give thanks for our farmers and all involved in the food chain, for another year of abundance. It's good to be reminded of

The harvest supper will be in the village hall on Friday 6th October and will be a 2-course supper with entertainment and a raffle. Tickets will be available the same way as above and will be £12.00.

A gentle reminder that Christmas is coming. I have ordered the shoe boxes for Samaritans Purse Christmas appeal and will distribute them to our churches after Harvest. The deadline this year is the beginning of November. We have done so well in past years to support children all over the world and to let them know they are loved and cherished. If you are able to fill a box the leaflets will be available alongside. If you would like to donate towards a box or help with the carriage fees, that also would be appreciated. Thank you all in advance.
Sandra.



Flower rota.

9th September. Kath Sully.
23rd September. Hilda Grint

UPDATE – BENEFICE FINANCES

As we promised, we are writing to keep you up to date on the state of our benefice wide finances, based on figures we now have for the first six months of 2023.

The good news is that, across our 3 parishes income is rising, partly because new church members are giving and some existing church members have increased their giving, but also because of increased income from hiring out our buildings (in Street) and receipt of more fees for weddings and funerals

However, costs at our churches are also increasing, as they are for many other individuals and organisations, particularly utilities, insurance and other bills that we must pay to maintain our buildings and ministry. The net result, the figures tell us, is that, across the benefice, we are still in deficit; in other words we are spending more than we are receiving and any reserves we have are being further depleted.

The detailed situation in each parish is a little different and please talk to your own Church Treasurer (details in this magazine) if you want to see the actual figures for your parish.

As we have said before, the reality is, that it is up to us as a church family to ‘pay our way.’ Income from hiring at our building, ‘occasional office’ fees and applications for grants for certain things are useful sources of money, but most of our income will continue to come from the generous giving of individuals.

We have also written previously about various ways you can make your giving go further including standing orders, Gift Aid, EasyFundraising etc, Now, on our church website, you can find all these options in one place for each parish with the forms etc you need for each. If you do not have internet access or you

would prefer to speak to somebody about options to review or increase your giving please talk, in confidence, to your Church Treasurer.

Above all, please continue to pray that we would have the funds we need to not only maintain but also grow the ministry that God is calling us to in this place.

Blessings Kevin Lawrence

On behalf of the Benefice Stewardship group

Celebrate@6

This informal style evening service takes place on the third Sunday of the month. Having taken a break during August, we will be re-starting from September. Each month will have the focus of 'I believe in...' firstly, God, then the church and finally future hope.

In addition to the biblical teaching offered, we also spend time worshipping God more informally and I know that those who come along to celebrate@6 have valued the greater freedom in worship than is always possible on a Sunday morning. There is also the opportunity to receive prayer.

For the September service, we will be meeting in Holy Trinity, Walton and I am delighted that we will be welcoming Rev'd Rich Tweedy, vicar of the Polden Wheel to be our guest speaker. Please check details of future celebrate@6 services in Lifeline. If you haven't been to this service before, why not give it a try.

We look forward to seeing you there!

Ana Lawrence

Afternoon Teas with A Vet

The August Afternoon Teas proved to be very interesting as Kay took us through her years of veterinary practice. Over the years things have changed immensely with technology taking over lots of the hands-on procedures that Kay learned when she began her career. Kay answered questions after the talk. One of the questions was asking Kay how her Christian Faith impacted her work. The reply was that as an employee she would try to be compassionate and understanding, coming alongside clients taking into account their circumstances. Conversation about veterinary practice continued during the refreshment time.

Afternoon Teas
Thursday 21st September
Mission Church Street
Jane Tompsett will be
giving a talk entitled
'Let The Wise Listen'
(Proverbs 1:5)
Followed by
Tea Cake
Chatter Listening
Everyone Welcome!



THANKS
FOR
LISTENING

A busy time at St Andrew's!

The Summer and Autumn months are proving to be busy ones in the life of St Andrew's Church, Compton Dundon. Last month's 'Life' included an article about the work of our wonderful Events Group, while this month we are providing details about the upcoming events themselves.

Our Open Gardens in July was followed the next Sunday by the Benefice welcome and picnic for Rachel, with our Open Afternoon in church the Sunday after that. Thank you to everyone who came to view the exciting plans for the interior of the church that we hope will enhance our worship for future generations. Your interest and comments were much appreciated.

On **Saturday, September 2nd** we are repeating last year's successful **Cream Tea** in the Village Hall. Everyone is welcome to join us between 2 pm and 4 pm for scones and tea in the Meeting Room. No charge for the teas, but we are asking for donations, with a suggestion of £5.

On **Saturday, October 7th** we are looking forward to a **Barn Dance** in the Village Hall, dancing along to the Somerset folk band 'Hobson's Choice.' Tickets at £15, to include table food platters, are available from Pat King (01458 274926) or Julie Gordon (01458 272135.) Hope to see you there.

On **Saturday, November 18th** it's the return of the famed **Big Breakfast**. Served in the Village Hall between 9 and 11.30 am, this is always a popular event. There will be Christmas stalls in the Hall to browse for gifts; if you would like to be a stallholder please contact Pat or Julie (see numbers above.)

Watch this space for our Christmas plans!

We do hope to welcome you to our events and look forward to seeing you there. Pat

NEW WINE IS BACK WHERE IT ‘BELONGS’!

(And we are going in 2024)

In Somerset, we are no strangers to big festivals and therefore it's really exciting to be able to announce that 'New Wine', the major Christian summer festival, is returning to the county in 2024 after a few years away.

Expect vibrant worship, excellent teaching, the proper 'festival vibe' with a Christian emphasis and all on our doorstep at the Bath and West show ground near Shepton Mallet. Running from 25th to 30th of July 2024 we have already booked and would warmly encourage you to join us as part of an SWCD Churches group. Whether you want to camp for the whole week (as we will be) or come for one or more days you would be very welcome. As well as attending as a delegate there is also the option to come and serve on team (a far cheaper option), being on team still gives you plenty of opportunities to experience all that New Wine has to offer as well as the chance to serve Christians from across the country.

Early booking attracts a discount and do consider joining our church group - sharing food and time together during the week is an added bonus! When booking on the New Wine site please indicate you wish to join the 'Street, Walton and Compton Dundon' church group to make sure we all camp together!

Whether you are a festival aficionado, or this might be your first time, we look forward to you joining us. If you want any more information about what to expect please do have a word with us.

Kevin & Ana Lawrence

My Faith Journey

My journey in faith began when I was four years old when our next-door neighbours took me to Sunday School at the Methodist church on Sunday afternoons. We progressed to the Anglican church when my brother became a server and my sister and I joined the choir. We were led by the very enthusiastic vicar's wife and she became an influential part of my faith journey. It was at this age that I first met David aged just 10 years old.

A new vicar brought about a new phase of my faith journey, a younger outlook and so began a very special part of my life. In 1980 David and I married at the church where our faith grew. We started our married life in Bristol. David became a lay reader.

It wasn't really until we moved to Cornwall that my faith really grew and I began a rich rewarding walk with Jesus. Until that time, I would say I was a Christian but realised I did not have that special relationship. We became part of a lively, evangelical Anglican church in our village where my spiritual life changed. I was part of a Lydia group for women, Bible study with other ladies, leading a house group in our own home and to my utmost amazement I became a part of a scared dance group. It was through this that I met the living God, who ministered to me in my busy life as a mum to three small children. To dance in the Spirit was absolutely incredible. We met weekly, praying and dancing very much in the spirit. Even now certain songs bring back those special worship movements.

When David was ordained to the ministry as a worker priest we moved to another benefice although I did keep the dancing going! It was here that I was again involved in children's ministry.

A promotion to a bigger headship for David led us to Somerset and to the Mission church with our extended family, including our two mums. I qualified as a primary school teacher where religious

education was my subject area. I was deeply aware of the importance of Christian teachers in our schools. Children's work is at the heart of what I call my ministry. I lead the local Open the Book Team, am an active member of the Messy Church Team

and was a school governor up until recently with a real heart for the Christian message in our schools. My faith journey continues everyday through praying and sitting in the presence of our Lord as well as being out there amongst the people I meet every day. I believe my life is a witness and encouragement to others. I continue to grow in faith and sometimes even dance!

Pauline Hatrey

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FUNNY?

Funny how we believe what the newspapers say, but question what the Bible says.

Funny how everyone wants to go to heaven provided they do not have to believe, think, say, or do anything the Bible says.

Funny how we are quick to judge but not to be judged.

Funny how you can send a thousand 'jokes' through social media and they spread like wildfire, but when you start sending messages regarding the Lord, people think twice about sharing.

Funny how the lewd, crude, vulgar and obscene pass freely through cyberspace, but the public discussion of God is suppressed in the school, TV and workplace.

Funny how when you go to forward this message, you will not send it to many on your address list because you're not sure what they believe, or what they will think of you for sending it to them.

Funny how I can be more worried about what other people think of me than what God thinks of me.

Are you laughing yet? Author unknown

The Season of Creation

From 1st September to 4th October each year, Christian communities around the world celebrate the Season of Creation. This is an opportunity to unite in praying and responding together to the cry of Creation.

This year's theme Let Justice and Peace Flow is taken from Amos 5:24: 'But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!' We are called to join the river of justice and peace, to embrace climate and ecological justice, and to speak out with and for communities that are most impacted by climate injustice and biodiversity loss.

Our prayers must call for justice not only for human beings, but for all creation. The symbol chosen to go with this year's theme is 'A Mighty River' representing biodiversity at risk. The urgency is growing and we must make peace with the Earth and on the Earth visible, while justice calls us to repentance and a change of attitude and actions. When we join the river of justice and peace with others, it creates hope instead of despair.

We are invited to converge in this movement for justice, just as tributaries come together to form a mighty river.

A mighty river can move mountains

Our individual actions are important, doing what we can and challenging ourselves to think what more we could do.

Celebrating creation, participating in cleanups, planting trees, restoring habitats and reducing our carbon footprint are some of the actions we can take.

We are invited to join the river of justice and peace, to take action and to pray the following:

Creator of All,
From your communion of love,
life sprang forth like a mighty river and the whole cosmos came
into being.
On this Earth of overflowing love, the Word was made flesh

and went forth with the life-giving waters proclaiming peace and justice for all creation.

You called human beings to till and keep your garden.

You placed us into right relationship with each creature, but we failed to listen to the cries of the Earth and the cries of the most vulnerable.

We broke with the flowing communion of love and sinned against you by not safeguarding the conditions for life.

We lament the loss of our fellow species and their habitats, we grieve the loss of human cultures, along with the lives and livelihoods that have been displaced or perished,

And we ache at the sight of an economy of death, war and violence

that we have inflicted on ourselves and on the Earth.

Open our ears to your creative, reconciling and sustaining Word that calls to us through the book of Scripture and the book of creation.

Bless us once again with your life-giving waters so that the Creator Spirit may let justice and peace flow in our hearts and overflow into all creation.

Open our hearts to receive the living waters of God's justice and peace,

and to share it with our suffering brothers and sisters, all creatures around us, and all creation.

Bless us to walk together with all people of good will so that the many streams

of the living waters of God's justice and peace may become a mighty river all over the Earth.

In the name of the One who came to proclaim good news to all creation,
Jesus Christ. Amen.

For further information: <https://seasonofcreation.org/>

Sue Ripley (Street) SWCD Eco Church Group

Pilgrimage, in life we are all on a spiritual journey.

For me the journey to Scotland for this summer did not so much start with a sense of dissatisfaction with life in Street, but the sense that there was a reason for exploration of our lovely British Isles. I had a volunteer opportunity to spend a rent-free August on a small island off Skye, so I grabbed it. I felt though the destination was important I needed to enjoy the journey through the UK and not just go for a driving marathon.

I had recently seen the film 'The unexpected Pilgrimage of Harold Fry' which apart from telling me it was not a good idea to head out from Kingsbridge to post a letter and end up in Berwick on Tweed! The film planted the question of pilgrimage, and what pilgrimage is?

I felt having an end date to return home was important, and looking through my diary I found our listening course is due to start on Tuesday 12 September, I feel very excited by this opportunity to learn some more skills to show people how valued they are to both God and ourselves, and show this respect by truly listening to what they are saying. So, the 11th became my date of return to Street.

So the next challenge, how to plan the route but leave space to catch up with friends and for the joy of the unexpected on the journey. Firstly I booked two 4 day retreats. On the way up (going by Berwick on Tweed) that was on the Holy Isle of Lindesfarne. For some lovely spiritual input by the Rev Sarah, in morning and evening prayer in the church, and sharing with an American Bible collage lecturer at meal times. On the way down it will be at Scargill (a Christian conference centre similar but smaller than Lee Abbey) with the interesting title of 'For your age' about how to age well!

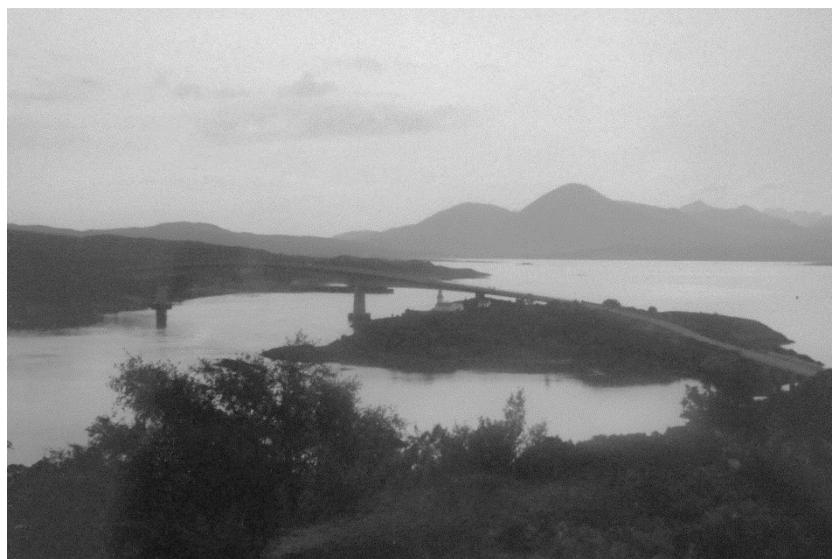
What about reading material for my daily times with God? I have recently come across some bible study books called Copy Bible; I chose 2. The book of Ester (A great story) and 2 Timothy, in these you copy down the bible passage then have a blank page for your own drawings and thoughts, helping me to meditate on its meaning.

I have two reading books with me. One I highly recommend 'Soulful Nature' by Brian Draper and H. Green a botanist and a theologian, where you read one chapter a month and have a list of gentle spiritual exercises to try that month. The forward is by Alan Titchmarsh and Clare Balding so it is a very accessible book. May be in 2024 a few of us could read it together meeting once a month?

The other an older book (1999) lent to be by Vera called, the Journey - a Pilgrim in the lands of the Spirit by Alister Mc Grath.

So the journey began. Two unexpected joys, on a whim following a sign saying 'Wildlife Centre Loch of the Lowes I found I was able to watch a young Osprey, whose brother had already flown, crying for food on its nest and then taking the risk and making a short flight. Then Driving up the A9 near Dalwhinnie, seeing an enormous bird flying up towards me and realising it was a Golden Eagle. This brought to mind that lovely verse from Isaiah 40:31 "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings of eagles..."

As I write this I am on a tiny island off Skye and still very much enjoying the journey and conscious of God's presence with me.
Jane



Manna

A lifelong journey

As Christians we're not called to attend church, we're called to follow Christ, to be His disciples. But how do we respond to that call? And how is your relationship with Christ?

Cheryl Govier, Growing Faith Adviser for Bath and Wells says, "As Christians, we are all on a journey and it is really important that we grow as Christians as we journey with God. As with any journey, and any relationship, sometimes it can feel that things are going really well, while sometimes it can feel static or even as if it's going backwards."

With so many demands on our time, in church and outside church, our discipleship can be a bit neglected, but we can all learn to make time to reflect on our faith as we live out our daily lives. In the last few years people from across Bath and Wells have gathered together at our Everyday Faith events to do just that - and we have also gathered to celebrate with those marking personal landmarks in their journeys with Christ, both lay and ordained. David Ball of the Gold Project, one of the resources we signpost in Bath and Wells to support discipleship, attended the Celebration of Lay Ministries in June, he says, "We want to encourage all Christians, not just those on the path to theological college, to become life-long learners and to encourage people in their discipleship. Discipleship doesn't stop when you become a Christian, it keeps going your whole life. Many people worry that they aren't equipped to engage with the Bible, but we all can. Yes, it may raise difficult questions, but we shouldn't be afraid of addressing them, especially as we aren't doing so alone."

"Most importantly, we should not be afraid of being educated in our faith." Find out more about growing in your faith at: bathandwells.org.uk/lifelong-journey

What you sow, you reap

'LET US NOT BECOME WEARY IN DOING GOOD ... WE WILL REAP A HARVEST IF WE DO NOT GIVE UP.' Galatians 6:9 NIV

The name Corrie ten Boom is widely recognised in Christian circles, but few people know about her nephew Peter who was also instrumental in saving Jews from Nazi persecution. When Dutch patriots heard SS troops were sending Jewish orphans to concentration camps, they smuggled kids out of orphanages and brought them to the ten Boom house until they could be placed for adoption. At sixteen, Peter, a committed Christian, defied the Germans by pulling out all the stops on the church organ and playing the Dutch national anthem while the congregation stood up and sang. He was imprisoned for his defiance.

After World War II he travelled the world with the same message as his aunt; that forgiveness is the only answer to hatred. On tour in Israel Peter had a heart attack and needed surgery. Talking with him the night before his operation the cardiologist asked, 'Are you by any chance related to the ten Booms of Holland?' Peter replied, 'Yes, that's my family.' The doctor responded, 'I'm one of the babies your family saved!' Next day the man whose life had been saved forty years earlier, repaid the debt by saving Peter ten Boom's life.

The Bible says when you, 'Cast your bread upon the waters ... after many days you will find it again' (Ecclesiastes 11:1 NIV). What you sow – good or bad – comes back to you. So, 'Let us not become weary in doing good ... at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.'

Remember, God is no man's debtor, and no matter how long it takes He will honour His Word.

*From the daily readings in 'The Word for Today'. This booklet of devotional readings is published every three months and is available free of charge through the generosity of supporters, from: UCB Operations Centre, Westport Road, Stoke-on-Trent, ST6 4JF.
Tel: 0845 60 40 401. Email: ucb@ucb.co.uk*

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