



# ECHO

MARCH 2024 EDITION



## THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE ECUMENICAL CHURCH OF OCCITANIE

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### CHURCH OF ENGLAND TOLD THEIR SAFEGUARDING OF CHILDREN AND ADULTS IS “FLAWED”



**The former Chair of a major UK inquiry into the Safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults in churches has told the Church of England that their Safeguarding arrangements are ‘flawed’ and ‘cannot be sufficiently improved while they remain within Church oversight.’**

Professor Alexis Jay CBE, who is an acknowledged expert in child and adult safeguarding, was appointed by the UK Government in 2016 to chair the wide-ranging Inquiry Into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) in different denominations of church has, in a new report published a fortnight ago, heavily criticised the Church of England for its poor, subjective and inconsistent safeguarding arrangements.

Following the controversial closure of the Church of England’s Independent Safeguarding Board at less than an hour’s notice in June 2023, Professor Jay was asked by the Church to conduct an independent review to recommend how to make Safeguarding of children and adults within the Church fully independent.

Professor Jay conducted an online survey, visited churches across the England and Wales and also conducted in-person interviews.

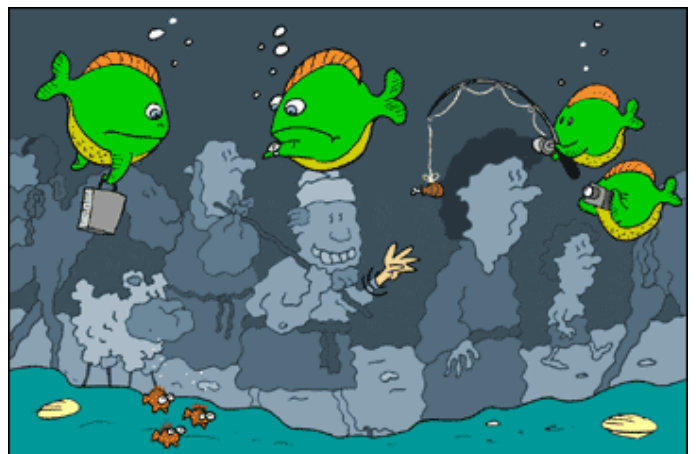
Her conclusions were that the Church of England has lost the confidence of victims of abuse as well of the wider public. She identified the problem of the “weaponizing” of safeguarding to remove people who were seen as a ‘nuisance’ and also to bully parishioners. This had led in some cases to people losing their homes and their livelihood.

Professor Jay recommended that responsibility for the oversight of safeguarding arrangements should be handed over to two new independent charities which would operate at arm’s length from the Church of England.

Controversy erupted at a recent meeting of the General Synod of the Church of England, however, when the Church’s Bishops voted en masse not to proceed with Professor Jay’s recommendations but instead to pass her report to a selected group of Church ‘insiders’ to consider what to do about this report.

Many Bishops also voted not to offer an apology to the members of the Independent Safeguarding Board for the way in which they were treated and dismissed, which has given to widespread criticism by both abuse survivors and also in the media.

*continued overleaf.....*



**THERE WERE MIXED FEELINGS ABOUT THE ISRAELITES’ CROSSING AMONGST THE RESIDENTS OF THE RED SEA**



Over the next 2 years, Canon Paul Hardingham, Vicar of St Peter's, Bolton and a regular contributor to ECHO, is going to write a series of monthly articles about the books of the Bible, continuing this month with Exodus

This month we are looking at Exodus, the second book of the Old Testament. Its name means departure, reminding us that Israel's flight out of slavery in Egypt is the major focus of the book.

Exodus is a book of two halves! The first part (chapters 1-19 & 32-34) is the story of an oppressed people who are delivered from slavery into a life of freedom. The second half (chapters 20-31 & 35-40) consists of detailed instructions about the life and worship of God's people. The book introduces us to their salvation or deliverance, as story. God's promises to Abraham are fulfilled as the people journey to the Promised Land. He also renews His covenant with them at Sinai, expressed in the Ten Commandments (20: 1-17).

At the heart of Exodus is the person of God Himself. In chapter 3 God reveals His name as YHWH or 'I am who I am' (3:14) to Moses. This is the name by which God is known throughout the Old Testament, expressed in the title 'the LORD'.

To know God's name is to know Him, as well as His character ie His justice, truthfulness, mercy, faithfulness and holiness. He is the God who controls history, delivering the people out of Egypt, while the death of the Passover lamb points us to Jesus' death on the cross (1 Corinthians 5:7).

God's promises of help remain true for us today:

'Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the LORD will bring you today' Exodus 14:13.

'This Exodus story continues to be a major means that God uses to draw men and women in trouble out of the mess of history into the kingdom of salvation.' (Eugene Peterson).

Next month Paul will consider the Books of Leviticus and Numbers.

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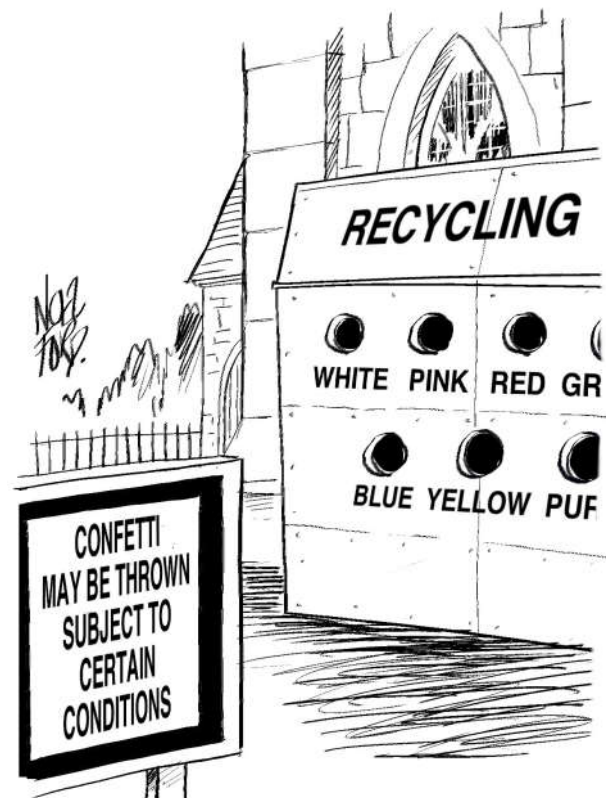
Following on from this debate, General Synod members voted overwhelmingly to approve two items of legislation to create a legally binding Code of Conduct for members of Parochial Church Councils (PCC's) who are responsible for the running of churches to address inappropriate or aggressive behaviour and to expel lay officers who are found to have bullied clergy.

Under UK Charity Law, members of a PCC are classed as "trustees" and can be removed from office if they are found to have breached an approved Code of Conduct. Synod voted to begin the journey to make this possible in cases where members of the PCC behaved in a psychologically damaging or threatening way.

At the same time, Synod also approved a proposal to create church legislation (which would require approval by the UK Houses of Parliament to bring into force) whereby lay officers of churches could be removed from office where they were found to have been bullying members of clergy.

At present, this is not possible within the Church of England, and has led to some extremely distressing cases occurring across the Church of England, including in Europe, where priests have been forced to quit their posts because of constant harassment by one or more parishioners.

While both these proposals will take a little time to become law, both received overwhelming support from Synod members and so are likely to come into force some time during 2025.



## Lot House Group - FEBRUARY 2023

[lot.group@ourchurch.fr](mailto:lot.group@ourchurch.fr)

Janet Varty

Our group met in Castelfranc at the end of February and shared a Celtic Liturgy for Lent. We welcomed a guest from a French Evangelical Church in Cahors.

We enjoyed an eclectic range of activities, Linda Trew (our very own Waverley Chaplain) introduced us to 'Breath' prayers. That is the practice of combining deep breathing with prayers of meditation on God's word to help calm your body while focusing your mind on truth. Nils shared his late mother's Swedish daily reflection pocket book with us.

Moira challenged us to discuss the poem by TS Elliot called Ash Wednesday.

Shared refreshments ended an uplifting afternoon.

**We will gather again on the afternoon of Maundy Thursday (28th March) when we will record a Communion Service to celebrate Easter which will then be broadcast on Easter morning.**

**If you would like to join us, please contact us for more details.**



### Why we should be like donkeys

Are you a pet-lover? Many people own a dog, a cat or a budgie, but most of us don't own a donkey! Yet in Bible times, donkeys were essential to daily life. They did everything from helping to grind corn, to ploughing, to carrying people, to transporting their belongings. Despite their small frame, donkeys are surprisingly tough. They can survive on poor fodder, can travel an average of 20 miles a day.

There are two occasions in the Christian calendar where donkeys walk into the picture. At Christmas, Mary travelled the 100 miles from Nazareth to Bethlehem on a donkey. And although a donkey doesn't get a specific mention in the manger story, that same one that transported her was probably there; where else would it have been?

On Palm Sunday Jesus entered Jerusalem riding on a donkey. Jesus deliberately chose this animal rather than a horse. Why? In Bible times, the horse was associated with war, conquest and worldly might. But the donkey was a symbol of peace and humility. So, Jesus used this animal to show that He had come with the dignity of the king of peace. His entry into the Holy City also fulfilled Zechariah's prophecy concerning the Messiah.

Donkeys are hardworking and undemanding. They wait for their master to put them to the work He has chosen for them. And, remarkably, each one bears the mark of the Cross on their backs!

Perhaps that is something we should learn—to wait for Jesus our Master, to be always obedient to Him, to serve Him with all our hearts, and to bear the mark of His grace in our lives.



## Rediscovering My Catholicism.

Peter Newsham

*Our friend Peter Newsham has kindly shared with us his journey back to Catholicism.*

*This month and next, he will tell us in his own words how the faith of his childhood flourished in adult life.*

Being brought up a Catholic in 1950's Lancashire was not a very comfortable or a particularly English experience. For a start, even though Emancipation for Catholics in England had been achieved in 1829, there was still in our part of the World a residual suspicion of us 'Holy Romans'. And we had been tainted with the Irish tarbrush because a significant number of Irish Catholics had migrated to this relatively 'Catholic' part of England after the Great Famine of 1847-50, and they were considered either actively or potentially unpatriotic – or even treacherous.

Then there was the utter foreignness of a religion which claimed to be universal, had its HQ in Rome and had been vilified in Protestant England after the Reformation. Of course, it wasn't as aggressive an environment as it had been in Elizabethan times but, even as a child I could feel the waves of hostility and sometimes downright aggression directed at my own co-religionists, who were treated as an untrustworthy and misguided minority who should be excluded from the few glittering prizes that were on offer in those straightened post-war days. To be disinherited for marrying a Catholic, as my English great grandfather had been, was not an isolated event, and to be called a Papist by the dominant 'Prodydogs' was a regular part of the lexicon of public bar insults.

It was undeniable that the schism of the Reformation's seismic rift, dividing the more forgiving Old Faith of the South from the uncompromising regimen of the new northern Reformed Faith, still ran East – West across Europe. But in my childhood it also cut through Lancashire like an Iron Curtain.

Plus ça change, you may well say, though our contemporary 'wars of religion' amongst Christians are conducted with more politesse. But in those formative years the knowledge that I belonged to an ostracised minority, with no ecumenism to soften the blow, made me aware of the laager mentality which had grown up around Catholicism in a very class-conscious Britain.

All that is to say that my childhood experience of Catholicism was of a defensive creed which responded to its hostile environment by creating the impression of an arrogant superiority which it then tried to instil in its acolytes. The result for me and my contemporaries was that we were formed by obedience to rules which

seemed to pay only lip-service to the message of the New Testament - the importance of us humans loving each other. We were too busy fighting off attacks from hostile rival Christians to pay much attention to the message that Jesus had come to give us and so my own religious education didn't have a lot of Love in it.

There was doctrine certainly, and there were the formal 'mysteries' of the parts of our religion which were inexplicable, even to Saint Augustine of Hippo and Saint Thomas Aquinas, and we were assured that if even those great minds couldn't work it out, yet still believed, then we humbler mortals should obediently follow in their footsteps. And there were the ceremonies, the liturgy, the prayers, the processions – we even had the exotic and mysterious, but unifying, universal language of Latin, which, the indulgence of old men, I love more and more as I become older. These were the outward signs which demonstrated to the World what Catholicism wanted to display; but it was all a bit cerebral – there wasn't much humanity in it, much Love.

And then, in the 1960's, Life took over. Career, marriage, mortgage, children, carving my way through the jungle of existence – the whole messy business of living; until I began to properly grow up, lose the surety of youth and to realise that there really were more things in Heaven and Earth than were dreamt of - certainly in my philosophy. A three-year African sojourn was a memorable kick-start to that process, and it continued during the years when I became more acquainted with the Mediterranean and the Hispanic and Latin American Worlds, which were indeed planets other than the one that I had so far inhabited.

So, the mystical, mysterious, and sometimes magical 'South' began to populate my religious consciousness, my reading, my conversations and my geographical location, and in 1977 there came my Epiphany - in Malta on the evening of the tenth of August.

*To be continued in the next edition.....*



## Looking for the Resurrection



A couple are driving down the motorway when the wife gets a call from their daughter.

‘Mum, there's a car driving the wrong way down the motorway!’ The wife warns her husband that there is a lunatic on the motorway. Her husband, clutching the wheel in terror, replies: ‘One lunatic? There are dozens of them, all headed straight for us!’ What we see is determined by our perspective on life.

In the Nicene Creed we say: ‘We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.’

In the gospel accounts of the Resurrection, there is a lot of looking and seeing. Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Salome went early to the tomb. They saw the stone rolled aside and inside the tomb a young man dressed in white said to them: ‘Don’t be alarmed. You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid Him...He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see Him’ (Mark 16: 6,7).

Like the women we would probably have been left ‘trembling and bewildered’ by what we saw that morning. Had the body been taken? Was the young man an angel or deceiver? Was Jesus raised to life again, or was this an elaborate hoax?

Easter gives us a choice. We can approach life looking for disappointment, fear and despair. Or we can look for resurrection and find not just an empty tomb, but encounter the living Christ. He continues to meet us in our daily lives bringing new hope, forgiveness of sin, healing and wholeness and the assurance of His presence through the darkest of times. God invites us to see our lives differently and look for Christ’s resurrection life at work in our lives and the people around us.

## Reflecting Faith: Lychgates

Revd Dr Jo White

On the moors near to where I used to live in West Yorkshire, there were a couple of large stones with crosses marked on them. Many people thought that they were boundary or marker stones, and in so far as they marked the way towards the oldest church in that area they were. To be more exact, they were on the route towards the oldest churchyard.

In ages past bodies were carried by hand, sometimes over long distances, and there were restrictions placed on where they could be laid to allow the bearers to rest. These two stones were ‘resting’ stones.



When a body arrived at the church for burial, it would again be put down while the administrative formalities were carried out, and again the bearers could rest. So, a resting stone was placed at the edge or start of the consecrated land around the church.

The priest conducting the funeral would meet the cortege here, not originally out of respect, but rather to receive the required legal certificate for burial before he allowed them to enter the church grounds.

Because of typical English weather - rain and wind - it was usually sheltered, and benches were built for the bearers. There would also be a cross within the construction to signify the start of holy land. This is what today we call the ‘lych-gate’; lych coming from the anglo-saxon word lich or lic, related to the modern German word *leiche*, all meaning corpse.



Few old lychgates remain today, as many were destroyed or damaged after the Reformation, and most of those that survived were constructed of timber and have since decayed.

In the eighteenth century, when the use for the resting stones and thus lychgates declined, many were removed and replaced with gates, often retaining the shelter as it continues to be a meeting place for the priest to receive funeral parties.

## 30 Years Since The Ordination Of Women In The Church Of England



It was 30 years ago this month, on 12th March 1994, that the first 32 women were ordained as priests in the Church of England. The service was officiated by Bishop Barry Rogerson at Bristol Cathedral.

Bishop Rogerson ordained the women in alphabetical order, so Angela Berners-Wilson was the very first woman to be ordained. She was a university chaplain.

The youngest woman to be ordained that day was aged 30. The oldest was 69. By 2004, ten years on, one of the women priests had died, and 14 had retired.

Bishop Rogerson reckoned it would take 10 years before the first woman would be ordained as a bishop. In the end, it took 21 years.

Then Libby Lane was ordained the first female bishop in the Church of England. She became Bishop of Stockport, a suffragan bishop in the Diocese of Chester.

The first woman to be ordained a diocesan bishop was the Rt Revd Rachel Treweek, Bishop of Gloucester, appointed on 26 March 2015

There are currently 25 women bishops in the Church of England.

## A reflection on The Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:1-18)



Our Father in heaven, please help us. We, Your children, learn slowly.

So often we say nothing when Your name is mis-used.

Often our lives do not reflect Your ways,

Mostly we do what we want on earth, And this can make heaven unimaginable.

We expect so much more than we actually need each day.

Sometimes we think we don't need forgiveness, Sometimes we think we are unforgivable, And we forget that other people make these same errors of thinking.

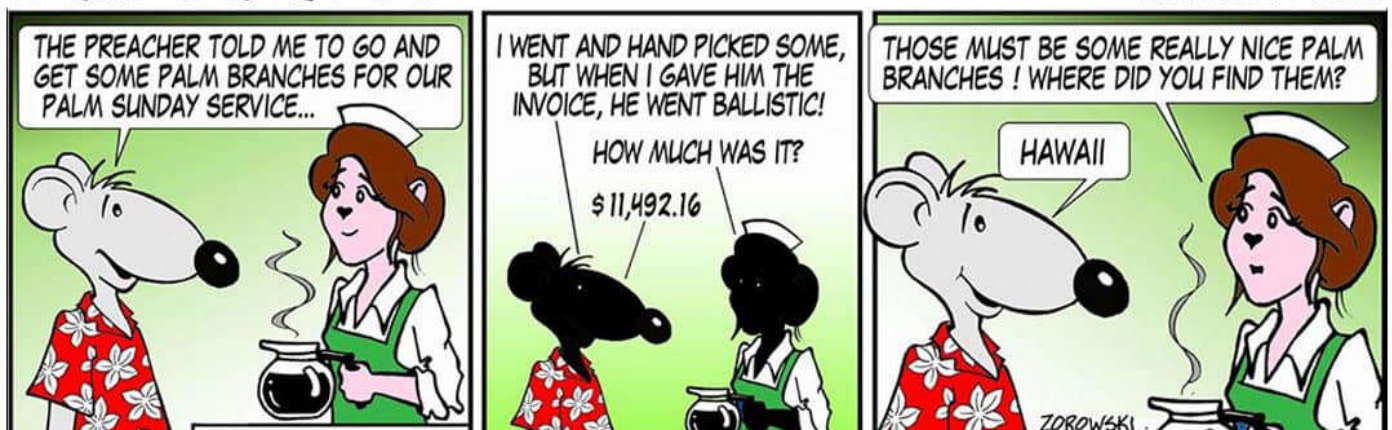
When it comes to temptation, we find our own ways,

We are confused about what is and is not evil, We are confused about deliverance, We are confused.....

And here is the wonder, the grace and the mystery, That You know us completely, Our failings, our secrets, And love us forever and ever, Amen.

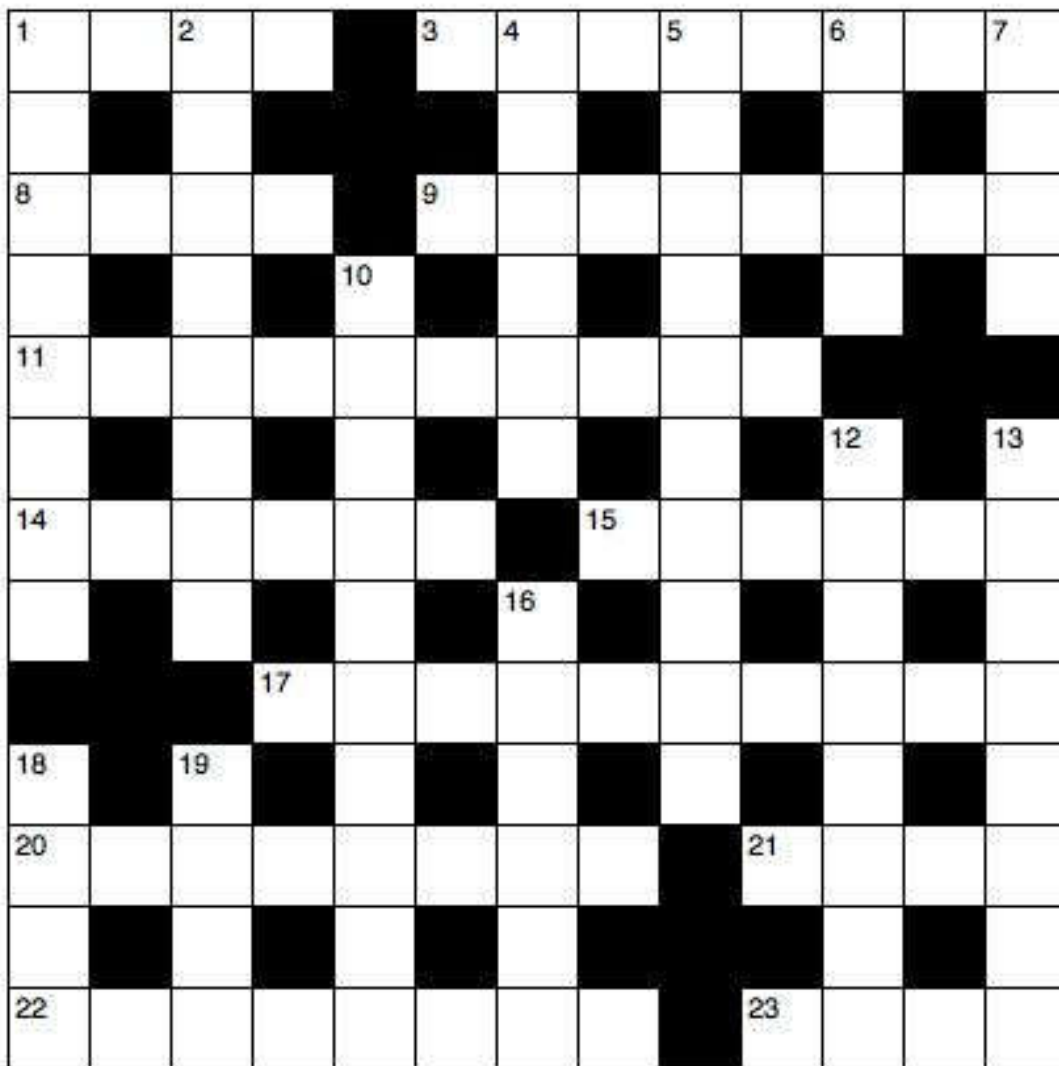
## Church Mice

Karl Zorowski



# The ECHO Church and Bible Crossword

Can you solve this crossword ? Answers are at the bottom if you get stuck  
with thanks to our crossword compiler John Capon



## Across

- 1 Made from the fruit of the vine, symbol of the blood of Christ (4)  
 3 'You are to set an ambush behind the city. Don't go very far from it. All of you be on — — ' (Joshua 8:4) (3,5)  
 8 Seep (4)  
 9 Celebrated by Jesus on the night of his betrayal (Luke 22:15) (8)  
 11 One of the supposed sites of Christ's burial place in Jerusalem (6,4)  
 14 'A city on a hill — be hidden' (Matthew 5:14) (6)  
 15 He inherited Elijah's mantle (2 Kings 2:12-13) (6)  
 17 Where Jesus prayed 'Not as I will, but as you will' (Matthew 26:36, 39) (10)  
 20 'Only in his home town and in his — — is a prophet without honour' (Matthew 13:57) (3,5)  
 21 Sail (anag.) (4)  
 22 How Jesus was punished before his crucifixion (Matthew 27:26) (8)

## Down

- 1 Can't grow (anag.) (5,3)  
 2 A servant girl to Peter, 'You also were with that — , Jesus' (Mark 14:67) (8)  
 4 Well-being (Proverbs 3:8) (6)  
 5 Pentecostal denomination, — of God (10)  
 6 One of the 'obvious' acts of the sinful nature (Galatians 5:19, 21) (4)  
 7 'I preached that they should repent and — to God' (Acts 26:20) (4)  
 10 ' — — , the world will not see me any more, but you will see me' (John 14:19) (6,4)  
 12 He betrayed Jesus: Judas — (Luke 6:16) (8)  
 13 Jesus to Peter: ' — — of my sheep' (John 21:16) (4,4)  
 16 The centurion said, 'Surely this man was — — of God' (Mark 15:39) (3,3)  
 18 Baked bread (Mark 8:14) (4)  
 19 'Blessing and honour, glory and power, be — Him' (Handel's Messiah) (4)

ACROSS: 1, Wine. 3, The alert. 8, Ooze. 9, Passover. 11, Garden Tomb. 14, Cannot. 15, Elisha. 17, Gethsemane. 20, Own house. 21, Lisa. 22, Flogging. 23, Stye.  
 DOWN: 1, Wrong act. 2, Nazarene. 4, Health. 5, Assemblies. 6, Envy. 7, Turn. 10, Before long. 12, Iscariot. 13, Take care. 16, The Son. 18, Loaf. 19, Unto.



## Happy Birthday Barbie!

It was 65 years ago, on 9th March 1959 that the Barbie doll was first launched at the International Toy Fair in New York City. So, 9th March is Barbie's official birthday.

Here are some things you may not know about the doll:

Barbie is arguably the world's most popular doll. In fact, more than 100 are sold every minute.

Barbie is 11-inches (29cm) tall and made of plastic. She has dubious origins, for she was modelled on a curvaceous doll in Germany called Lilli, who had originated as a highly risqué cartoon character in the West German newspaper Bild Zeitung.

Barbie was designed by Jack Ryan, an engineer who worked on guided missile systems used by the US military. He developed her iconic twisting waist and bendable knee joints that clicked.

In 1959 Barbie was 'born' in Southern California, the brainchild of Ruth Handler, who had co-founded the Mattel toy company with her husband in 1945. She wanted an adult doll that would inspire girls in the same way action figures of firefighters and soldiers encourage boys.



In 1961 Mattel launched Barbie's boyfriend, Ken. (The Handler's children were named Barbara and Ken.) In 1980, Barbie was given an African American incarnation and a Latino incarnation.

The original Barbie had impossible body proportions. If she had been human, she would have been 5 feet 9 inches tall and weigh 110 pounds. Her bust, waist, and hip measurements would be 36, 18, and 38 inches respectively. Her neck wouldn't be able to support her head, and her tiny ankles and feet would make walking impossible.

Barbie's first 'job' was as a fashion model. Since then, the doll has had more than 250 careers. These include being a surgeon, serving in the military, and even being an astronaut.

Barbie has been positioned as the 'ultimate American girl', but she has never been manufactured in the United States, to avoid higher labour costs. More than a billion Barbie dolls have been sold since 1959.

To celebrate, the Design Museum in London is holding an exhibition this summer, to tell the story of "one of the most recognisable brands on the planet."

## Moses and Climate Change



When Moses went up the mountain one day to meet with God, the Lord said he had both good news and bad news for him. Moses asked, "What's the good news?"

God replies, "Moses, I shall visit plagues upon the Egyptians. I shall cause their rivers to run red with blood. I shall cause frogs to infest their houses, and lice to infest their bodies. I shall cause flies to swarm upon them. Their cattle shall die; boils will infect both man and beast. I shall cause hail to destroy their crops; and locusts shall devour anything green that is left in their land. Darkness will cover their land for three days and nights. I shall then lead you through the wilderness as a pillar of cloud by day, and pillar of fire by night. I shall split the waters of the sea. I shall feed you with Manna that forms upon the ground until the children of Israel reach the Land flowing with milk and honey."

Moses replied, "That's WONDERFUL, Lord! What could possibly be the bad news?"

"You, Moses, shall write the Environmental Impact Statement."



"The new vicar is really cool, Dad. Did you know that God emailed the Ten Commandments to Moses' Tablet PC?"

