



REDDITCH BAPTIST CHURCH

JUNE 2026

Dear friends,

So, June is upon us, we've had several days of summer heat, and my sabbatical is about to start... I hope you've had a look at the letter I wrote earlier this year, explaining what a sabbatical is all about!

I'm personally looking forward to stepping back from active ministry for a few weeks, taking a deep breath and refocusing – I realised back in February, when I went to the pastors' refreshment retreat in the Lake District, that I do need it!

But obviously it's not a holiday, and I'm also looking forward to the opportunity to spend some time digging deeper into my chosen sabbatical subject, pastoral care.

I'm going to look at some particular topics, as well as the big idea of what it is and how it might be organised. I'm planning to meet with a few ministers from other churches to find out what they do. And hopefully some of all this will translate into action of one kind or another later on!

Please feel free to suggest books / websites / YouTube videos / TED talks that you think would be helpful or interesting as regards this big subject matter!

In the meantime, the church – that's all of you! – has an excellent opportunity to pull together, to get to know each other better, and to love and serve each other more than ever. That should of course always be happening, and I'm not in any way suggesting it isn't – but the temporary absence of the pastor is a great opportunity to exercise what Baptists call "the priesthood of all believers".

Not sure what that means? It simply means that in the power of the Holy Spirit, every believer is a minister: every believer is called to serve the church and the world. You don't have to rely on a pastor to preach the gospel; you don't need a pastor to do baptisms or child dedications; and you don't need a pastor to do pastoral care. We can all care for each other, and in an ideal world, the pastor definitely doesn't do it all on his/her own!

So am I trying to make myself superfluous? Well, not really – most churches nowadays are used to there being a main figurehead, someone who leads and oversees the life of the church. I'm happy to be in that position (even if I often feel somewhat inadequate!); but that means that my main job description is "to equip his people for works of service" (Eph 4:12) – not to do everything myself but to make sure the rest of you are equipped to do it!

This involves preaching the Word of God, organising suitable courses and solving practical problems (or at least make sure they get solved!), as well as discipleship, pastoral care and answering questions as to why I do things the way I do...

But the church doesn't stand or fall with the pastor – which is a good job; you should depend on the power of the Holy Spirit, not on the strengths and weaknesses of a fellow human!

So keep up the good work, and I look forward to reconnect with everything and everyone in August!

David

Dates and notices

Tuesday 10.00 a.m. Little Fishes

Wednesday 8.00 p.m. Zoom Prayer Meeting ID: 619 679 7453 Passcode: Jesus

Thursday 11.00 a.m. – 2.00 p.m. Harm Reduction

Sunday 11.00 a.m. Worship Service

Redditch Mission Week 15-21 June: Organised by Oasis Church, but it's for all of us:

Programme: Street Evangelism: Mon-Fri 10.0am – 1.00 pm (meet at Oasis)

Prayer & worship evenings: Tuesday 7.30pm @ Assemblies of God

Wednesday 7.30pm @ Oasis

Youth & Children's evening: Friday 6.15pm Arrow Valley Park

Redditch Christian Festival: Saturday 10am-7pm

Volunteers are needed to help out, and don't forget to pray for these events!

DAVID'S SABBATICAL IN THE SUMMER:

Tuesday 16 June to Sunday 16th August (inclusive)

Redditch Christian Festival – 20 June 2026 10.00am-7.00pm – Arrow Valley Park

Live Music

Food Trucks

Bouncy Castle

Kid's Activities

Gospel Message

Lus loads more throughout the week!

Pick up a flier in church for more details



Canon Paul Hardingham considers Father's Day

Celebrating Fathers

'If you want to know how well a person understands Christianity, find out how much they make of the thought of being God's child and having God as their Father.' (J I Packer, *Knowing God*)

This month we celebrate the importance of fathers on Father's Day. Unlike Mothering Sunday, this doesn't have a distinctly Christian origin. However, it does provide an opportunity to celebrate God's Fatherhood and what it means for us.

At His baptism, when Jesus came out of the water: *'heaven was opened, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on Him. And a voice from heaven said, 'This is my Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased.'* (Matthew 3:16,17). What do we learn about Jesus' relationship with His Father, our relationship with God and the role of fathers?

The Father's presence

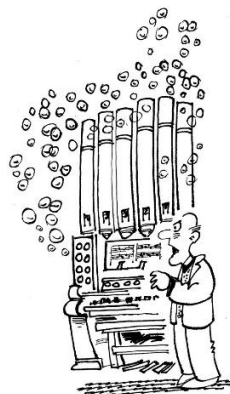
When Jesus was baptised, the Father was present in the Holy Spirit. It's the Spirit who enables us to address God as daddy (*'abba'*, Galatians 4:6) in an intimate way. God is present with us and understands our joys and sorrows, fears and trials. Dads should relate to their children like this.

The Father's love

The Father described His Son as *'beloved'*; like us, Jesus was the subject of God's unconditional love. Dads should assure their children of their constant, undeserved love.

The Father's pleasure

The Father tells Jesus that He is *'well pleased'* with Him, as He embarked on His public ministry. We need to hear this as well, especially when we feel that we are disappointing God or letting Him down. We should also be aware of the effect of our words spoken to our children. Dads should be using every opportunity to demonstrate their pleasure in their children, especially when things go wrong.



For the last time! - Which member of the Junior Choir put bubble mixture in the organ-blower?!

Well-dressing in Derbyshire – May to September

Derbyshire is known for its wells and well-dressing. The annual tradition followed in many villages of decorating the village wells, or 'well dressing', attracts sightseers from miles away.

By ancient, centuries-old tradition, five wells are decorated. Boards are set up around each one which is then covered in clay. The clay is then impressed with thousands of colourful flower petals to create pictures and tableaux. Often the stories illustrated are from the Bible.

It is thought the practice may date back to the 14th century, and it may have started as an act of thanksgiving when the community escaped the devastation of the Black Death. Over the years, and before piped water became available, it also became an act of thanksgiving for the village's supply of clean, clear water.

Today more than 80 Derbyshire villages still follow the tradition, and the season extends through the summer. Many wells have a biblical theme, or are inspired by royal occasions or sporting events.

Generally, the Derbyshire wells are *not* considered holy or named after saints. Most were just the original village water tap. However, Buxton does have a celebrated holy well, where people regularly line up to collect its special waters.

Buxton mineral water is bottled and available in supermarkets, but in the town itself, at St Anne's well, it is free. Through medieval times there was a chapel on the spot, and pilgrims came seeking cures and to leave offerings.

Henry VIII put an end to the practice, but later the town became a spa and patients heard of the therapeutic reputation of the waters and came to bathe and drink, much as the ancient Romans had done in pre-Christian times. Today the free Buxton water emerges from a pipe set in a modern plinth containing a statuette of St Anne, the mother of Mary and Jesus's grandmother.



Remembering G K Chesterton - by Tim Lenton

Ninety years ago, on 14th June 1936, G K Chesterton died at his home in Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire. Novelist, short story writer, journalist, essayist, poet, social/literary critic and theologian, he is remembered for his stories about the priest-detective Father Brown.

Gilbert Keith Chesterton was born in Kensington, London, to an estate agent father and a Swiss-French mother. He was educated at St Paul's School before studying art at the Slade School and literature at University College, London. He did not get a degree, and his earliest ambition was to be an artist.

A conspicuous figure in both height and girth, he eventually took to writing, producing in all about 80 books, several hundred poems, 200 short stories, 4000 essays (mostly newspaper columns), and several plays. His literary preoccupations were initially journalism and social commentary, then literary criticism and lastly religion.

He was an apologist who spoke out for orthodox Christianity, initially from an Anglican standpoint, but after 1922 as a Roman Catholic. Using paradox, a sense of wonder and imaginative wit, he described the Christian faith as the one logical answer to life's mysteries. His seminal book, *Orthodoxy*, written when he was an Anglican, was a key factor in the conversion of C S Lewis.

Chesterton married Frances Blogg in 1901, but the couple were unable to have children. A writer herself, Frances encouraged her husband and acted as his personal assistant. He survived a life-threatening illness in 1914 affecting his heart and kidneys and was unconscious for a long period before recovering, though he never regained full vitality.

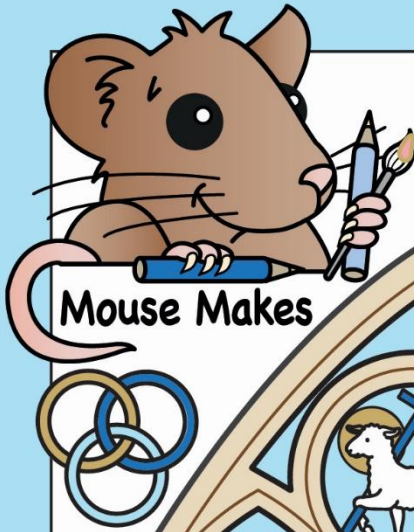
His most widely known invented character was Father Brown, kindly protagonist of a series of detective novels later televised and recently rerun. Father Brown is an unprepossessing figure with a sharp mind who understands the intricacies of evil through hearing many confessions.

Be the Power of All Things Within us

O God the Holy Ghost who art Light unto Thine elect,
Evermore enlighten us.
Thou who are Fire of Love,
Evermore enkindle us.

Thou who art Lord and Giver of life,
Evermore live in us.
Thou who bestowest sevenfold grace,
Evermore replenish us.

By Christina Rossetti (1830-94)






Mouse Makes

"May the grace of the Lord
JESUS CHRIST and the
love of **GOD** and the
fellowship of the
HOLY SPIRIT be
with you all."

2 Corinthians
13:14



		
V	O	V
HIW	ISD	UDE
VENLR	JYIAM	TRUTH
SLAEP LG	ACGOD JM	THAHSRI
HALDOOR	LROCKUA	OSPOWER
EMEWORD	MELORDJ	ULFLIFE
PBREADW	IABBAGE	POWYNDR
HLALPHA	GTDEBES	AWISDOM
EEMCGJY	HOYRFET	DBEPBVC
RMEHOEK	TRAHATY	VWTIREO
DMIRSST	YGHOIEF	OIEREFM
SAVIOUR	VSWLARA	CTRI AIF
PNE SNSU	OHEYENT	ANNTTRO
OUNTLOT	JEHOVAH	TEACHER
MESSIAH	IKINGLE	ESLGIFT
RLGBFIS	SHIELDR	DSGUIDE
KEOMEGA	SAVIOUR	THELPER

JESUS • CHRIST
SON • SAVIOUR • LORD
EMMANUEL • MESSIAH
SHEPHERD • LAMB • WAY
TRUTH • LIFE • DOOR
BREAD • WORD • HEALER
VINE • ALPHA • OMEGA

GOD • FATHER
ABBA • LORD • JEHOVAH
YAHWEH • ALMIGHTY
HOLY ONE • SAVIOUR
ETERNAL • CREATOR
KING • MAJESTY • JUDGE
SHIELD • ROCK • I AM

HOLY SPIRIT
GIFT • HELPER • WITNESS
COMFORTER • GUIDE
ADVOCATE • WISDOM
POWER • TRUTH • BREATH
LIFE • ETERNAL • DOVE
WIND • FIRE • TEACHER



Crossword Clues

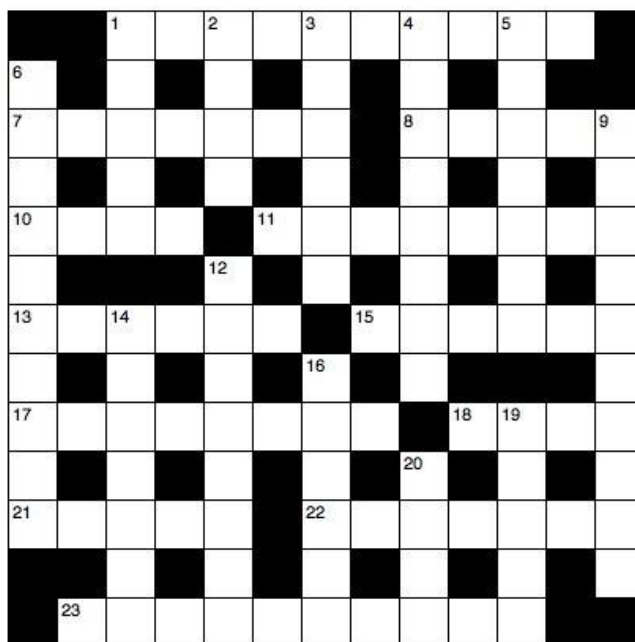
Across

- 1 Evil (Genesis 6:5) (10)
- 7 Musician called for by Elisha when he met the kings of Israel, Judah and Edom (2 Kings 3:15) (7)
- 8 The request that led to the institution of the Lord's Prayer: 'Lord, — us to pray' (Luke 11:1) (5)
- 10 'We are hard pressed on every—' (2Corinthians4:8)(4)
- 11 Fraud (2Corinthians6:8)(8)
- 13 'His troops advance in force; they build a siege ramp against me and — around my tent' (Job 19:12) (6)
- 15 Where Rachel hid Laban's household gods when he searched his daughter's tent (Genesis 31:34) (6)
- 17 'Now about spiritual gifts, brothers,I do not want you to be—' (1 Corinthians 12:1) (8)
- 18 Nomadic dwelling(Genesis26:25)(4)
- 21 'As for man, his days are like—,he flourishes like a flower of the field' (Psalm 103:15) (5)

- 22 Or I live (anag.)(7)
- 23 Those guilty of 1 Across(Romans13:4)(10)

Down

- 1 'God so loved the — that he gave his one and only Son' (John 3:16) (5)
- 2 'Away in a manger, no — for a bed' (4)
- 3 Mob ten (anag.) (6)
- 4 'Each — group made its own gods in several towns where they settled' (2 Kings 17:29) (8)
- 5 Began (Luke 9:46) (7)
- 6 Speaking very softly (John 7:32) (10)
- 9 Workers Ruth joined when she arrived in Bethlehem with her mother-in-law Naomi (Ruth 2:3) (10) 12 Put in jail(Acts22:19)(8)
- 14 Aceturn (anag.)(7)
- 16 Discharge(Acts21:3)(6)
- 19 'All these—come from inside and make a man "unclean"' (Mark 7:23) (5)
- 20 'Let us rejoice and be glad and — him glory!'(Revelation19:7)(4)



Gospel witness in Lebanon

In the midst of warfare, a Release International partner in the Middle East is seeing the gospel of Christ bearing fruit.

The partner in Lebanon provides a haven for Christians and other minorities fleeing violence elsewhere in the region. While they provide food, clothing and bedding for those with nothing, they are also telling people about Jesus Christ.

Only recently nine Alawites (a minority group that supported the former Assad regime in Syria) came to faith in Christ and were baptised. An Easter service, attended by more than 500 people, was led by a group of youngsters who our partner has been nurturing, and who have been sharing the gospel with thousands over social media.

Release says: "Our partner is a beacon of light shining in a dark place and attracting many. Our partner told us, 'All Christians are being persecuted throughout the Middle East, and, in many places, Christianity has been all but driven out. We are pushing back against the tide as we send people back into some of those countries, with former church members now working as missionaries in Jordan, Syria and other parts of the region.'

More info at: <https://releaseinternational.org>

Prayer for June 2026

Father,

Here we are in June – a beautiful month and a month when we remember a beautiful follower of Yours, Barnabas. He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith and he encouraged Your people to remain true to You in what must have been dangerous times.

Lord, in these dangerous days, when so much seems alien and out of control, how we all need to be encouraged to be steadfast in our faith and in our lives.

How we need to remember that You are our faithful, sovereign Lord; that You never change; that in Jesus You have won the victory over sin and death. If we put our trust in Jesus, we are secure for all eternity.

Thank You for the example of Barnabas. Help us to be encouraged and to encourage others. May we enjoy June in all its beauty, knowing that nothing can separate us from You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

By Daphne Kitching

Crossword Solution

ACROSS: 1, Wickedness. 7, Harpist. 8, Teach. 10, Side. 11, Impostor. 13, Encamp. 15, Saddle. 17, Ignorant. 18, Tent. 21, Grass. 22, Olivier. 23, Wrongdoers.

DOWN: 1, World. 2, Crib. 3, Entomb. 4, National. 5, Started. 6, Whispering. 9, Harvesters. 12, Imprison. 14, Centaur. 16, Unload. 19, Evils, 20, Give.

Feed the birds – but thoughtfully

If you enjoy feeding the birds, you are not alone. Up to 60% of all households in the UK regularly feed their wild birds, according to surveys from UK Pet Food. It all adds up to an estimated £250 million in sales annually, with roughly 150,000 tonnes of seed being sold.

When feeding wild birds, here are four mistakes to avoid:

Not keeping the feeders clean. This can spread disease. The RSPB advises cleaning bird feeders once a week with a mild soap such as washing-up liquid. Do it outside, using brushes that you keep for this job alone.

Leaving too much food out. It attracts rodents. Instead, the RSPB advises that little and often is best. But keep an eye on those feeders and keep them topped up. When birds are nest-building and raising broods, they need a lot of energy. **(In the current situation, however, we are advised not to feed seed or nuts to the birds. This is due to a nasty infection being passed on. We can, however, in fact we are asked to feed them with suet and meal worms.)**

Forgetting to provide water. Birds need to drink and bathe daily, especially in hot weather. Change the water every day and keep the basin clean.

Putting feeders in the wrong place. Place your feeders near to shrubs, trees and bushes, to provide cover. Blackbirds and robins are ground feeders, whereas tits and sparrows prefer to feed from hanging stations. Using an array of feeders will attract a wide range of birds.

Here is a peaceful prayer for anyone leading a too-busy, stressed-out life.

God, the Port of Peace

Now come all, you who have been brought
In bondage full of busy bitterness,
Earthly desire abiding in your thought!
Here is the rest from all your busyness,
Here is the port of peace and restfulness
To those who stand in storms and in dis-ease,
Open refuge to wretches in distress,
And all comfort from trouble and mis-ease.

Adopted from John Walton, about 1410