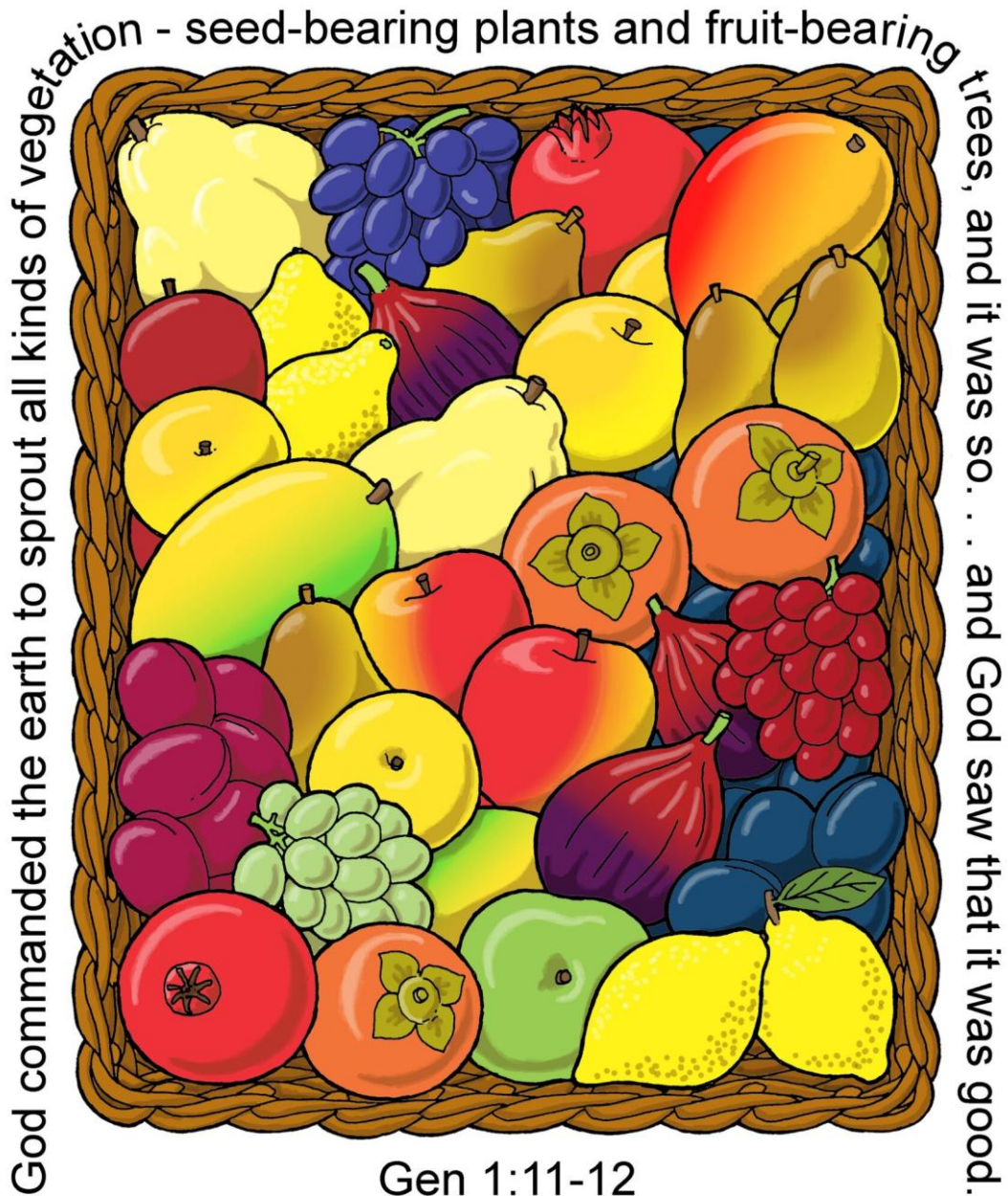




October
2026



REDDITCH BAPTIST CHURCH

What kind of month is October, really? A kind of in-between month, when life is settling back to normal after the holidays and (despite what retailers may want you to believe) the Christmas rush hasn't started yet...

Well, it's not quite as laid back as it might seem. For one thing – even though it may seem irrelevant to many UK Baptists 😊 – every year millions of people visit the *Oktoberfest* in Munich (or one of its international clones).

Some years the Jewish *Yom Kippur* – the Day of Atonement, instituted in Lev 16 and 23 – falls in October (unfortunately for the purposes of this letter, this year it happened in September...).

And then there's *Halloween*, which has Christians arguing every year about whether it's satanic or just a bit of harmless dressing up. I might address this issue in a sermon nearer the time... but it's perhaps worth pointing out that as usual, things are never as simple as that. There are several traditions behind Halloween, and what we have today bears little resemblance to either the pagan or the Christian origins of the festival.

"Christian", you ask? Yes, absolutely! For many centuries Christians have celebrated All Saints' Day on the 1st November; in Sweden, this is marked by people lighting candles on the graves of their loved ones. Like so many other festivals, the evening before got included in the celebrations; and so *All Hallows' Day* was preceded by *All Hallows' Even* on the 31st October ("Hallow" is of course related to "holy" and simply means "saint" in old English, and "even" = "evening".)

As for the spookier aspects of the festival (which were unknown in Sweden when I was young), well – humans have always enjoyed being scared, and I don't think Satan is particularly interested in children dressing up as ghosts. Yes, I'm aware that there are sinister groups that take it much more seriously than that, and obviously if people deliberately reach out to the devil, he will happily respond – I just don't think that's what most people are doing in October. And just remember who created the skeleton in the first place...!

What else happens in October?

Here in the UK it's *Black History Month* – I have to confess that I wasn't aware of this, as it seems to be a fairly low-key celebration, but let me take the opportunity to express my gratitude for the fact that our church is a multi-ethnic and multi-racial community, as the church is supposed to be!

Linking to that, our Hong Kong members may be aware of 重陽節 or the *Double Ninth festival*, which takes place on the ninth day of the ninth month according to the Chinese calendar. This year this falls on the 18th October, and apparently it's customary to climb a mountain on this day – church outing to Yr Wyddfa, anyone?¹

And let me just remind our church community that we have designated October as our Gift Month, to help our ailing finances so that we can continue to serve the Lord here in Redditch!

And finally: in Welsh, October is called *Hydref*, which also means "autumn" – a timely reminder (if you needed one) that we have now definitely left the summer heat far behind! And if you don't quite know what to do while you wait for the excitement of the Christmas season, you could always start an argument about we should take a (yellow) leaf out of the Americans' book and start calling autumn *Fall*...

¹ Yr Wyddfa = Mt Snowdon, the highest mountain in Wales and England

Dates, notices etc.

October		
Monday 12 th	In Person Prayer	
Wednesday 14 th	Deacons' Meeting	
Wednesday 21 st	Zoom Prayer	8.00pm
Wednesday 28 th ^t	In Person Prayer	8.00 pm
November		
Sunday 1 st	Church Anniversary	
Sunday 8 th	Remembrance Sunday	11.00 am (Be Early!)
Monday 9 th	In Person Prayer	11.00am
Saturday 14 th	Tear Fund Quiz	
Wednesday 25 th	Members' Meeting – Budget	
December		
Sunday 13 th	Pop Up Nativity Play	11.00 am
Monday 14 th	In Person Prayer	11.00 am
Saturday 19 th	Christian Panto at St Stephens	11.30am
Saturday 19 th	Carol Singing	11.00 – 12.00
Saturday 19 th	Carol Cafe	
Sunday 20 th	Carols by Candlelight	
Friday 25 th	Christmas Day	
Sunday 27 th	David on Holiday	
Saturday 20 th March 2027	Louie and Lacey's Wedding	

New location of Christian Word Shop in St. Stephens Church Redditch

Dear All, We are not sure if you are aware, but St. Stephens Church Redditch is currently undergoing some internal re-ordering to support its role in a regional strategy for renewal in the Anglican church. As part of this change, the Christian Word Shop has been slightly re-located within the church building, and is now on the opposite side of the corridor from its previous location.

So, we warmly invite you to re- discover a haven of faith and inspiration within the shop, a registered charity bookstore at St. Stephen's. The shop has a dedicated number of volunteers who are passionate about providing a wide selection of Christian books, Bibles for all ages, thoughtful gifts, and greeting cards to uplift and encourage.

We would love to welcome some new volunteers – please contact, Vikki Holt (contact details - 07440 377095 or christianwordbookshop@gmail.com) As one of the few remaining Christian bookstores in the area, we invite you to browse the carefully curated collection and find the perfect treasures for yourself or loved ones.

The shop is open from Monday to Friday and on the 1st and 4th Saturdays of the month. from 10am to 2pm You can get in touch with the shop via the contact details above, alternatively, just turn up and take some time to browse through the contents of the shop. We hope you enjoy your perusal.

Dear friends,

You may already have picked up that we're planning another Gift Month this year. Here's some more information about what that means.

You may be aware that Baptist churches are financially self-supporting. Here at Redditch Baptist Church we have two main sources of income: hall & car park rental, and members' personal giving (plus Gift Aid which is based on personal giving).

Currently the church spends more money than we collect; in the long run this obviously isn't a very good situation... We have savings, but don't want to eat into them too much (they may be needed for emergency repairs etc), so we have decided to make the month of October a special Gift Month, to culminate at our Church Anniversary Service on the 1st November.

What does this mean? Basically, we invite every member of the fellowship – everyone who considers this church their spiritual home – to pray about making a one-off donation to the church, in addition to any regular giving.

Once you've decided how much to give, there are several ways of actually getting it into the church account:

- # Put cash / cheques in the boxes at the back of the church;

- # Use the card reader in church (unfortunately this involves finding Tom, since he has to tell the machine how much money to take);

- # Send money directly to the church bank account: Sort code 30-96-97 Account number 00244953

- # Give online: <https://www.justgiving.com/redditchbaptist> Please note that the only way to be 100% anonymous is by using cash... but whichever way you give, only a few people (normally only the treasurer) will know about it.

Thank you for being a part of our fellowship, and for praying seriously about your contributions to keep our ministry going!

Blessings, David

Phone: 07386 902964

Email: pastordavid.rbc@gmail.com



By the Revd Peter Crumpler, a Church of England priest in St Albans. Herts

Why AI is far from divine...

I wrote an email to my local councillor – and within three minutes received back a detailed reply summarising my concerns and promising action. A stunningly quick response. I was impressed, and grateful for the speedy reaction.

But then a thought came to me. Had this helpful, swift, reply perhaps been written, not by my councillor, but by Artificial Intelligence (AI)?

And, if so, did it really matter?

It's hard to say, but it flagged up to me how AI is becoming such a key part of our lives, and often in ways that we take for granted. Like the algorithms that choose what we might like to watch next on TV or read on holiday.

Churches aren't immune to AI's increasing popularity. Pope Leo has advised his priests not to use it to write their sermons.

He told them, "Like all the muscles in the body, if we do not use them, if we do not move them, they die. The brain needs to be used, so our intelligence must also be exercised a little so as not to lose capacity."

To give a true sermon, the Pope explained, "is to share faith," something AI would never be able to do.

He advised preachers, "people want to see your faith, your experience of having known and loved Jesus Christ."

That is so true. A sermon should be preached for that congregation, in that place, at that specific point in time, and be delivered by a preacher who has opened themselves to hear from God as they prepared their message

AI is not human. It's been designed to trick users into thinking it has a personality and maybe opinions of its own. It will never know pain, hunger, disappointment or grief, or a whole range of other human emotions.

And these are the emotions God experienced, living on earth as Jesus Christ. God with us, living and dying as we do. The Almighty came to live among us as human flesh, and not as computer code. Fully God, fully man.

Christ lived, and died, in frail human flesh, and rose from death, underlining the sacred value of every human being.

AI falls far short of that value, no matter how closely it can mimic human personality.

By Canon Paul Hardingham

What's the Big Idea? - an Introduction to the Minor Prophets

The Minor Prophets are '*minor*' not because they lack importance, but due to their length. The 12 prophets, Hosea through Malachi, make up the last books of the Old Testament, and were written from around 770 BC (Jonah) until 433 BC (Malachi).

The prophets fall into 3 time-periods:

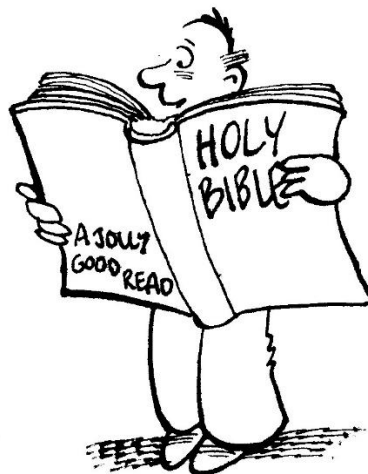
Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah and Nahum = Assyrian period

Habakkuk and Zephaniah = Babylonian period

Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi = Post-exilic period.

Hosea and Amos spoke to Israel (Northern Kingdom), calling the people to acknowledge their sin and return to God. Joel and Micah addressed Judah (Southern Kingdom), including prophesies about the coming of the Messiah and the church. Habakkuk and Zephaniah spoke to Judah shortly before they were taken into exile into Babylon. Obadiah spoke God's judgment against the Edomites, while Jonah and Nahum both spoke against Assyria and their capital city of Ninevah. Following the people's return from exile, Haggai exhorted the people not to neglect rebuilding the Temple. Zechariah encouraged them with the promise of the future glory of Zion and of its shepherd king, while Malachi reminded them that if he is rejected, God would judge His people.

The minor prophets remind us that God cared not just for the Jews, but also for the Edomites, Assyrians, Egyptians and all of His creation. For Christians today the challenge remains to take the message of God's grace to all nations in the power of the Holy Spirit: *'I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days.'* (Joel 2:28, 29)



Be nice to your knees

Osteoarthritis is the main cause of knee pain in people over 50. Here are some tips that may help:

Be aware of the several major groups of muscles that support your knees. They include the quadriceps at the side and front of your thighs, the hamstrings at the back, and your calf muscles. If you can give these muscles regular exercise that keeps them strong, they will help protect your knees.

Be aware that your knees *like and need* to move. Using them less is one of the worst things you can do, because it only weakens them. If you have bad osteoarthritis, then ask your doctor for alternative ways of exercising them, instead of walking.

Be aware that knees do better when you lose weight. Just losing one kg of body weight will bring down the compressive force on your knees by as much as 4kg with each step. That will help preserve your knee cartilage.

It seems that doctors disagree over the value of taking supplements such as glucosamine or turmeric, but they say that if you find they work for you, then certainly keep taking them.

Mayor of Alcester's charity
ALCESTER
MALE VOICE CHOIR
CONCERT

Saturday 3rd October 2026 at
St. Peter, St. Paul & St. Elizabeth Church at
Coughton Court
In aid of Alcester Day Care

Tickets
£12.50

Includes a
glass of
Prosecco

Reception at 6:15pm
Concert starts
at 6:30pm
Raffle on the night

Tickets available from office@alcester-tc.gov.uk
or by calling 01789 766084

Across

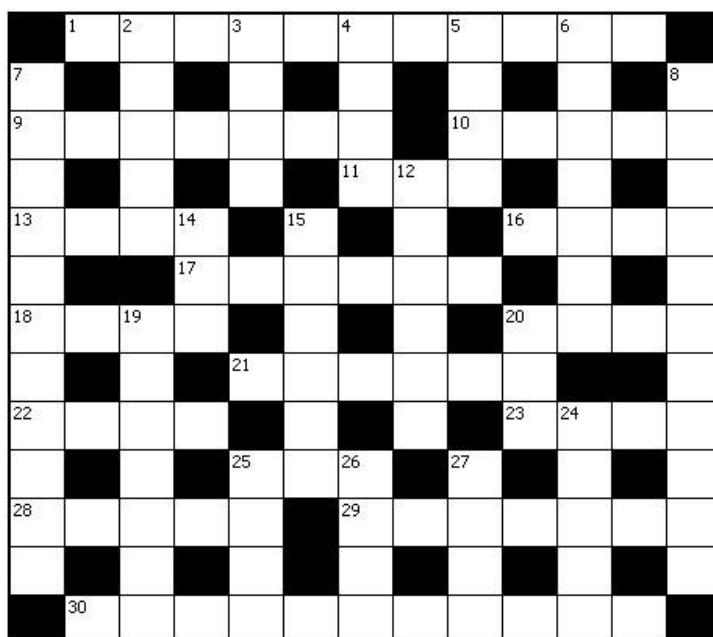
- 1 and 20 Down 'Lord of all __, Lord of all __, whose trust, ever child-like, no cares could destroy'(11,3)
 9 Moses' question to a fighting Hebrew labourer: 'Why are you __ your fellow Hebrew?' (Exodus 2:13) (7)
 10 Acclaimed cellist who contracted multiple sclerosis at the height of her fame, Jacqueline __ (2,3)
 11 'At even __ the sun was set, the sick, O Lord, around thee lay'(3)
 13 A descendant of Gad (xNumbers 26:16) (4)
 16 'Do not leave Jerusalem, but __ for the gift my Father promised' (Acts 1:4) (4)
 17 Clambers (Jeremiah 48:44) (6)
 18 Peter's response to questioning by the Sanhedrin: 'We must __ God rather than men!'(Acts 5:29) (4)
 20 Christian paraplegic author, artist and campaigner, __ Eareckson Tada (4)
 21 Bird partial to the nests of other birds (6)
 22 'Such large crowds gathered round him that he got into a boat and sat __ '(Matthew 13:2) (2,2)
 23 Infectious tropical disease (4)
 25 Tree (3)
 28 'No fear of me should __ you, nor should my hand be heavy upon you'(Job 33:7) (5)

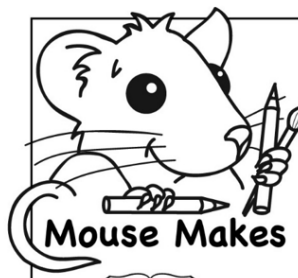
29 For example, to Titus, Timothy or Philemon (7)

30 Week beginning with Pentecost Sunday, according to the Church's calendar (11)

Down

- 2 'O Jerusalem __ how __ I have longed to gather your children together' Matthew 23:37) (5)
 3 Way out (4)
 4 Exhort (Romans 12:1) (4)
 5 Done (anag.) (4)
 6 Highest of the four voice-parts in a choir (7)
 7 Concerning the study of God (11)
 8 Uniquely, it has Abbey, Cathedral and Chapel (11)
 12 Admonish (Matthew 16:22) (6)
 14 Frozen (3)
 15 Established form of religious ceremony (6)
 19 Inscription often found on gravestones (7)
 20 See 1 Across
 24 Behaved (Joshua 7:1) (5)
 25 Time (anag.) (4)
 26 Lists choice of meals (4)
 27 'For the wages of sin is death, but the __ of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord'(Romans 6:23) (4)





Mouse Makes

The **Bible** is a collection of books, written by many different people who were helped and inspired by God. The **Bible** includes books of history, law, poetry and songs, wisdom, testimony, letters and prophecy.

The **Bible** encourages us, corrects us and teaches us about God and how we can be friends with Him.



2. Which book of the Bible has the shortest title?

4. He was an Old Testament prophet that has a book named after him.

9. The Old Testament book of poetry and songs.

11. The last book in the Old Testament.

12. Which book tells the story of the spread of Christianity?

1. How many books are there in the New Testament?

3. The Word of God is sharper than a two edged sword.

5. The first book of the Bible.

8. The last book in the Bible.

10. Who wrote the third book of the New Testament?

13. The Bible is also known as the _____ of God.

6. God's word is like? A _____ and a _____

7. What are the first four books of the New Testament known as?

14. A book of the Bible named after a woman

BIBLESUNDAY

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Crossword Answers

ACROSS: 1, Hopefulness. 9, Hitting. 10, du Pre. 11, Ere. 13, Ozni. 16, Wait. 17, Climbs. 18, Obey. 20, Joni. 21, Cuckoo. 22, In it. 23, Yaws. 25, Elm. 28, Alarm. 29, Epistle. 30, Whitsuntide.

DOWN: 2, Often. 3, Exit. 4, Urge. 5, Node. 6, Soprano. 7, Theological. 8, Westminster. 12, Rebuke. 14, Icy. 15, Ritual. 19, Epitaph. 20, Joy. 24, Acted. 25, Emit. 26, Menu. 27, Gift.

Editor: By the Revd Peter Crumpler, a Church of England priest in St Albans, Herts, and a former communications director for the C of E.

Premier League footballer says: 'faith helped me through injury.'

A Premier League footballer has revealed how finding faith helped him cope with a series of injuries that kept him off the pitch for periods totalling more than three years.

Josh Dasilva, who plays for west London-based Brentford FC, suffered a hip injury in February 2021 that kept him out of the team for a year, and then a hamstring injury followed between August 2023 and January 2024.

Then, in February 2024, Dasilva suffered a serious knee injury while in training, and did not return to the team until the dying minutes of Brentford's 3-0 victory over West Ham in May 2026. The crowd gave Dasilva a standing ovation and cheered his every touch of the ball. Dasilva's way back to fitness has been long and painful. He now says, "When you seek God honestly and diligently, you'll find true peace. When I was in dark places, that's what pulled me out."

It was four months into rehabilitation, following his knee injury, that Dasilva made a choice that transformed his outlook and his life.

He recalls, "One of my closest friends invited me to church. I'd grown up in church but lost my way. My parents are strong believers. Whenever I went home and visited my parents, my mum would say, 'Let's pray quickly' and sometimes it wasn't so quickly!"

Returning to church made a major impact on Dasilva. He explains, "Since taking it seriously, my whole life has changed. Faith has become a big part of my life and how I want to live my life. If it wasn't for Christ, if it wasn't for Jesus, I wouldn't be here right now.

"What were the biggest things that helped me? Obviously, my family and friends and the club, but my faith has been number one."

Dasilva was baptised in May 2025, and prayer and worship became part of his daily routine. He explains, "I always dedicate the first hour of the day to God. I pray and I read. It directs my day.

"God is faithful. Regardless of my situation, whether I was able to play another game of football or not. I knew that God loved me regardless. I knew I would be fine."

