

A comfort blanket



Caroline Hodgson *reflects on* Psalm 23

Psalm 23 is one of the best-known passages of the Bible. How wonderful, in time of trial and tribulation, to read and hear this confirmation that God cares for and protects us. The words of the psalm are also familiar as the hymn, "The King of Love My Shepherd Is", written in 1868 by Henry Baker. The tune that most people will know is *Dominus Regit Me*, composed by John Bacchus Dykes (1823-1876). Together, these familiar words and beautiful music have reassured generations of Christians and, indeed, people of other faiths and none.

But for all its familiarity the psalm is no comfort blanket, although it can provide great solace when we need it to. But there's a challenge here, too – namely to learn to depend utterly on God – something that many of us find surprisingly difficult. We want to be self-reliant, and we rebel against being made to "lie down in green pastures", being led "beside still waters" and "in right paths". We want to find those pastures, waters and paths for ourselves.

Yet another Victorian Christian, Hudson Taylor, wrote these amazing words when he was gravely ill: "I am so weak that I can hardly write, I cannot read my Bible, I cannot even pray, I can only lie still in God's arms like a little child, and trust." This, perhaps, is one of the great lessons of Psalm 23. 🐾

Good Shepherd, you lead me, feed me and restore my soul. Help me to know deep in my heart that "you are with me", and to learn to relax into your love and care, in the sure knowledge that I am held by you, for ever. Amen.

Christian Aid Week (11-17 May)

by Caroline Hodgson

Poverty pushed Aline to the brink of survival. But she was determined to push back against the inhumanity of poverty, driven by hope, faith and the love of her children. Aline transformed her life with a little help from Christian Aid.

Christian Aid reported that during Christian Aid Week last year people "walked, ran, cycled, danced, prayed, quizzed, and so much more". Many churches organise house-to-house collections each year. Volunteers usually take a

couple of local roads, delivering the envelopes and returning a few days later to collect them.

Just five pounds could enable someone to set up the small business that takes them out of poverty, while a hundred pounds could provide ten people with the training that supports their families to set up small businesses, such as selling home-grown vegetables.

It's not too late to think up some ideas: www.christianaid.org.uk/appeals/key-appeals/christian-aid-week 🐾

“**God never tires of forgiving us; we are the ones who tire of seeking his mercy.**”

Pope Francis

LGBTQ+ Church

Part 1 – the opportunity

by Jayne Ozanne

Jayne Ozanne recalls an encounter that would change the course of LGBTQ+ history.

What would you say to one of the most influential people in the world if you had just thirty seconds? That was the dilemma I was faced with in November 2019 when I was invited to meet Pope Francis at the Vatican. I contemplated long and hard about what to say and decided to appeal to his pastoral heart.

"Your Grace, I am a gay evangelical Anglican from England," I opened – at which his eyebrows shot right up (whether it was the "gay", "evangelical" or

"Anglican" I remain unsure). I continued, "I grew up being told I would never be a mother, a grandmother or a wife because I was gay – and it nearly killed me."

Grabbing both my hands, he asked me to pray for him. The next day I was invited to hear him give a speech where he rebuked leaders who condemned LGBTQ+ people.

Jayne is a well-known gay evangelical who is a writer, academic and human rights campaigner. She lives in Guernsey with her cat, Leo, where she enjoys sea swimming, kayaking and cliff walks. 🐾

Blandford Methodist Church: Sunday 11th May

Good morning and welcome to our Morning Worship which is being led by Deacon Glenda Sidding. The stewards today are Joyce Wild and Jean Peck. Thank you to Angela for playing for us and for the flowers. After the service, please join us in the hall for refreshments.

Dates for your diary:

Sunday 18 th May	10.45 am	Morning Worship with Holy Communion led by Reverend Dr Mark Kimber
Sunday 25 th May	10.45 am	Morning Worship led by Mr Barrie Knight
Sunday 1 st June	10.45 am	Mission in Britain: Morning Worship led by Reverend Carl Stokes
Sunday 8 th June	10.45 am	Morning Worship led by Mrs Diana Middleditch
Sunday 15 th June	10.45 am	Morning Worship led by Mr Colin Besant

Colehill Methodist: Every Monday, 11.00 am to 12.00 noon(ish), Bible Study, coffee, prayers and plenty of chat. All welcome.

Bible in a year: 11th – 17th May: 2 Kings 13 – 1 Chronicles 3 and John 2 - 5

Meet Reverend Dr Mark Kimber: Most Fridays Mark will be available in the Okeford Room from 10.00 am to 11.00 am for anyone who wishes to have a chat with him. However, on the third Friday of each month there will be a session entitled '**Meeting with Mark**' to which you are cordially invited.

Local Arrangement Service: We will be holding a Local Arrangement service on 22nd June. John and I are organising a service, but we will be asking you for any favourite hymns, readings, thoughts etc., so please be thinking about this now. *Margaret Cornish*

Sunday 18th May: There will be a service to dedicate the Easter offering at 4.00 pm at Highcliffe Methodist Church.

Sunday 18th May: Woodlands Methodist Church's 146th Anniversary Celebration tea, 4.30 pm and Wellow Wood Worship Group will lead a service at 6.00 pm. Everyone welcome.

Christian Aid week begins this week and the Christian Aid envelopes will be given out this Sunday, 11th May.

Jean Jeffreys: Sadly, Jean Jeffreys recently passed away and should anyone wish to attend her funeral it is on Monday 19th May at 3.00 pm at Tarrant Keynston Church.

Funeral for Pauline Sunderland: The funeral and thanksgiving service for the life of Pauline Sunderland has been arranged for 11.00 am on Wednesday 14th May, at Trinity United Church, to be followed by a reception in the hall. The family invite all friends to join them in remembering, celebrating and giving thanks for the life of Pauline.

Pauline served for several years as Safeguarding Officer for the Christchurch and Wimborne Circuit. Her role was to ensure the Connexional Safeguarding policy, Government Legislation guidance and safe practices was implemented in the Circuit and its Churches. *John Cornish*

Church Anniversary: How quickly the years go by! On Sunday 4th May Reverend Pauline Crispin and her husband, Richard, joined us for our Anniversary Service and we were reminded that it was almost two years since they left Blandford for the sunny climes of Fareham. We were blessed by Pauline's preaching and by visitors from Colehill and Wimborne churches, Angela's daughter, Rachel, a lady whose daughter was filming the Teddy Rocks Concert and who normally worships at the Methodist Church in Portsmouth and a couple who have just moved to the area. Angela played the organ for the first time since having her pacemaker fitted and as Pauline commented the singing was truly excellent. After the service 25 of us sat down to a delicious homecooked Sunday Roast consisting of chicken with all the trimmings followed by apple crumble and custard courtesy of Mark Lilley and a family friend Tessa. We had a VE Day quiz won by Jean, Pauline and Richard and after tea/coffee we sang a collection of familiar war-time songs. The atmosphere throughout the meal was light-hearted with a hubbub of chatter and laughter that resonated around the hall. We did not charge for the meal, but donations received afterwards amounted to £164 which will be divided between the church's two charities: Zane and the Louis Ross Foundation. *Joyce Wild*

"Can you trust the Bible?" On Saturday 7th June, the Christians Together Group in Sturminster Newton have created a study day with the theme – Can you trust the bible? If you plan to attend please let Reverend Lin Francis, or me, know for catering purposes. Contact : Reverend Lin Francis (Superintendent Yeovil & Blackmore Vale Methodist Circuit) on Tel: 01747 823777 or Mobile: 07377 632560. *John Cornish*

Blandford Foodbank is urgently in need of (updated 11.4.25) – Coffee, Squash, Cereal, Tinned Sweetcorn, Toothpaste. Any other donations of food or household goods are also welcomed. For those able to support the Foodbank with items, a box has been placed in the Narthex as a collection point. *John Cornish*

Prayer: Please can we remember to uphold in prayer those members of our congregation we know are ill or suffering in some way.

If you know of anyone who would like prayer and be mentioned by name in The Link, please let me know (having obtained their permission first to mention them by name).

Minister: Reverend Dr Mark Kimber
Enquiries via Lead Steward, John Cornish, on 07799 516 735

Pastoral Support: Joyce Wild: Tel: 01258 454091