

Longfleet United Reformed Church

NEWSLETTER



May 2010

www.longfleeturc.org.uk

Longfleet URC :

Minister with Oversight – Reverend Ray Stanyon

Church Secretary & Treasurer – Mrs Jean Hunt

Worship rota for May

May 2 nd -	The Revd Bryan George (Communion Service)
May 9 th -	Mrs Elizabeth Pilbro
May 16 th -	Mrs Lorraine Russell
May 23 rd -	Mrs Carol Arnott
May 30 th -	TBC (check our website for updates)

LECTIONARY READINGS

May 2 nd	Acts 11:1-18, Psalm 148, Revelation 21:1-6, John 13:31-35
May 9 th	Acts 16: 9-15, Psalm 47, Revelation 21: 10, 22-22.5, John 5:1-9
May 13 th Ascension Day	Acts 1:1-11, Daniel 7:9-14, Ephesians 1: 15-23, Luke 24: 44-53
May 16 th	Acts 16: 16-34, Psalm 97, Revelation 22: 12-14, 16-17, 20-21, John 17: 20-26
May 23 rd Pentecost	Genesis 11: 1-9, Psalm 104: 24-34, 35b, Acts 2: 1-21, John 14: 8-17, 125-271
May 30 th Trinity Sunday	Proverbs 8: 1-4, 22-31, Psalm 8, Romans 5: 1-5, John 16: 12-15

Welcome rota for April

Mrs Sue Bryan

May 1st MAY DAY

May is the month when the ancient pagans used to get up to all sorts!! The Romans held their festival to honour the mother goddess Maia, goddess of nature and growth, (May is named after her.) The early Celts celebrated the feast of Beltane, in honour of the sun god, Beli.

For centuries in "Olde England" the people went mad in May. After the hardships of winter, and hunger of early Spring, May was a time of indulgence and unbridled merriment. One Philip Stubbes, writing in 1583 was scandalised: "for what kissing and bussing, what smooching and slobbering one of another, is not practised?"

Henry VIII went "maying" on many occasions. Then folk would stay out all night in the dark rain-warm thickets, and return in the morning for dancing on the green around the May pole, archery, vaulting, and that evening, bonfires.

The Protestant reformers took a strong stand against May Day and in 1644 May Day was abolished altogether. Many May Poles came down- only to go up again at the Restoration, when the first May Day of King Charles's reign was "the happiest Mayday that hath been many a year in England", according to Peyps.

May Day to most people today brings vague folk memories of a young Queen of the May decorated with garlands and streamers and flowers, a May Pole to weave, Morris dancing, and the intricacies of well dressing at Tissington in Derbyshire.

May Day is a medley of natural themes such as sunrise, the advent of summer, growth in nature, and -since 1833- Robert Owen's vision of a millennium in the future, beginning on May Day, when there would be no more poverty, injustice or cruelty, but in harmony and friendship. This is why, in modern times, May Day has become Labour Day, which honours the dignity of workers. And until recently, in communist countries May Day processions were in honour of the achievement of Marxism.

There has never been a Christian content to May Day, but nevertheless there is the well known 6am service on the top of Magdalen Tower at Oxford where a choir sings in the dawn of May Day.

An old May carol includes the lines:

The life of man is but a span,
it flourishes like a flower

We are here today, and gone tomorrow
-we are dead within an hour.

There is something of a sadness about it, both in words and tune, as there is about all purely sensuous joy. For May Day is not Easter, and the joys it represents have always been earth-bound and fleeting.

ROGATION SUNDAY May 9th

Rogation means an asking of God - for blessing on the seed and land for the year ahead. It is appropriate in any emergency, war, plague, drought or foul weather.

The practice began with the Romans, who invoked the help of the gods Terminus and Mamertius. In those days a crowd moved in procession around the cornfields, singing and dancing, sacrificing animals, and driving away Winter with sticks. They wanted to rid the cornfields of evil.

About 465 the Western world was suffering from earthquake, storm and epidemic. So Mamertius, Bishop of Vienne, aware of the popular pagan custom, ordered that prayers should be said in the ruined or neglected fields on the days leading up to Ascension. With his decision, "beating the bounds" became a Christian ceremonial.

Rogation - tide arrived in England early in the eighth century, and became a fixed and perennial asking for the help of the Christian God. On Rogation -tide, a little party would set out to trace the boundaries of the parish. At the head marched the bishop or a priest, with a minor official bearing a Cross, and after them the

people of the parish, with schoolboys and their master trailing along. Most of them held slender wands of willow.

At certain points along the route- at well know landmarks like a bridge or stile or ancient tree, the Cross halted, the party gathered about the priest, and a litany or rogation was said, imploring God to send seasonable weather, keep the corn and roots and boughs in good health, and bring them to an ample harvest. At one point beer and cheese would be waiting. In the days when maps were neither common nor accurate, there was much to be said for "beating the bounds" - still very common as late as the reign of Queen Victoria. Certainly parish boundaries rarely came into dispute, for everyone knew them.

May 13th ASCENSION Day - Forty Days with the Risen Christ

May continues the season of Eastertide, and 40 days after Easter comes Ascension Day.

It may seem crazy to call it Eastertide when Easter is clearly over! but these are the forty days during which the Risen Christ appeared again and again to his disciples, following his death and resurrection.

The Gospels give us little of Christ's teaching and deeds during those forty days. Jesus was seen by numerous disciples: on the road to Emmaus, by the Sea of Galilee, in houses etc. He strengthened and encouraged his disciples, and at last opened their eyes to all that the Scriptures had promised about the Messiah. Jesus also told them that as the Father had sent him, he was now going to send them - to all corners of the earth, as his witnesses.

Surely the most tender, moving "farewell" in history took place on Ascension Day. As Christmas began the story of Jesus' life on earth, so Ascension Day completes it, with his return to his Father in heaven. Jesus' last act on earth was to bless his disciples. He and they had a bond as close as could be: they had just lived through three tumultuous years of public ministry and miracles - persecution and death - and resurrection! Just as we

part from our nearest and dearest by still looking at them with love and memories in our eyes, so exactly did Jesus: "While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven." He was not forsaking them, but merely going on ahead to a kingdom which would also be theirs one day: "I am ascending to my Father and to your Father, to my God and your God..."

No wonder they praised God! They knew they would see Jesus again one day! "I am going to prepare a place for you....I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am...." In the meantime Jesus had work for them to do: to take the Gospel to every nation on earth.

May 23rd PENTECOST

Pentecost was the old Jewish festival of Firstfruits, which took place at the beginning of the wheat harvest. It was exactly 50 days after the Passover, the time of Jesus' crucifixion.

A feast day to celebrate the country's wheat harvest does not sound exactly world-changing, but that year, it became one of the most important days in world history. For Pentecost was the day that Jesus sent the Holy Spirit - the day the Church was born. Jesus had told his apostles that something big was going to happen, and that they were to wait for it in Jerusalem, instead of returning to Galilee. Jesus had plans for his apostles - but he knew they could not do the work themselves - they would need his help.

And so the apostles and disciples waited in Jerusalem, praying together for several days. And then on that fateful morning there was suddenly the sound as of a mighty rushing wind. Tongues of flame flickered on their heads, and they began to praise God in many tongues - to the astonishment of those who heard them. The curse of Babel was dramatically reversed that morning. That morning the Holy Spirit came to indwell the apostles and disciples of Jesus and the Church was born. The Christians were suddenly full of life and power, utterly different from their former fearful selves. The change in them was permanent.

Peter gave the first ever sermon of the Christian Church that morning: proclaiming Jesus was the Messiah. His boldness in the face of possible death was in marked contrast to the man who had denied Jesus 50 days before. And 3,000 people responded, were converted, and were baptised. How's that for fast church growth!

Of course Pentecost was not the first time the Holy Spirit had acted in this world. All through the Old Testament there are accounts of how God's Spirit guided people and strengthened them. But now, because of Christ's death and resurrection, he could INDWELL THEM. From now on, every Christian could have the confidence that Jesus was with them constantly, through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

30TH MAY TRINITY SUNDAY

Trying to explain the doctrine of the Trinity has kept many a theologian busy down the centuries. One helpful picture is to imagine the sun shining in the sky. The sun itself - way out there in space - unapproachable in its fiery majesty - is the Father. The light that flows from it, and which illuminates all our lives, is the Son. The heat that flows from it, and which gives us all the energy to move and grow, is the Holy Spirit. You cannot have the sun without its light and its heat. The light and the heat are from the sun, are of the sun, and yet are also distinct in themselves, with their own roles to play.

The Bible makes clear that God is one God, who is disclosed in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Please check Deuteronomy 6:4, Isaiah 45:22, Genesis 1:1-2, Judges 14:6 and John 1:1-3)

Luke 24:49 actually manages to squeeze the whole Trinity into one sentence. Jesus tells his disciples: "I am going to send you what my Father has promised, but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power (the Holy Spirit) from on high" In other words the sun eternally gives off light and heat, and whenever we stand in its brilliant light, we find the warmth soon follows.

MAY 31ST MARY, THE BLESSED VIRGIN

Mary, the virgin mother of Jesus. For centuries the eastern and western churches have considered her pre-eminent among all the saints.

In the gospels, Mary makes her first appearance as a teenager. Nothing is known of her childhood, and what we do know of her is found mostly in Matthew 1-2 and in Luke 1-2. If you read both accounts, you'll notice that Luke's account seems to give the story from Mary's standpoint, whereas Matthew concentrates more on Joseph's side of things. In both accounts the virginal conception of Christ is clearly stated. Mary's quiet devotion to God and her total acceptance of his will shine forth.

After Jesus is born, Mary fades into the background, and makes few appearances: when the family visits Jerusalem and she loses her son on the way home, when she urges him to help the wedding party in Cana with its wine problem; and when Jesus gives her into the keeping of the beloved disciple when he is dying on the cross. Mary's last appearance is in Acts chapter one, just before Pentecost.

Mary obviously joined the early Church, but her role was never one of teaching and preaching, and indeed she remained so much in the background that nothing more about her is known for certain. Both Ephesus and Jerusalem have claimed to be the place of her death.

Mary, chosen to be the mother of Jesus Christ, one who is both God and Man, holds a unique place in the history of mankind. Down the centuries that have followed the Church has paid special honour to Mary - and well deserved it is. "All generations shall call me blessed...."

The Bible : Facts & Figures

Interesting and fun facts about the Bible. Facts relate to the KJV version of the Bible unless stated.

What language was the Bible originally written in ?

The Old Testament was written mostly in Hebrew, with some Aramaic parts. The New Testament was written in Greek. The Bible has since been translated into about 2,400 different languages including an ongoing effort to translate the Bible into Klingon.

How many books are there in the Bible ?

66 books in the Bible (73 in the Catholic Bible).

How many books are there in the Old Testament ?

39

How many books are there in the New Testament ?

27

What is the longest book in the Bible ?

Psalms

What is the shortest book in the Bible ?

2 John (no. of verses), 3 John (no. of words)

What is the longest book in the Old Testament ?

Psalms

What is the longest book in the New Testament ?

Luke

How many chapters are there in the Bible ?

1,189, with 929 chapters in the Old Testament and 260 in the New Testament.

How many verses are there in the Bible ?

31,102, with 23,145 in the Old Testament and 7,957 in the New Testament.

What is the shortest chapter in the Bible ?

Psalm 117

What is the longest chapter in the Bible ?

Psalm 119

What is the middle chapter in the Bible ?

Psalm 117 (595th chapter)

What is the middle verse in the Bible ?

As the KJV contains an even number of verses the middle verses are Psalm 103:1-2 (not Psalm 118:8 as commonly suggested)

When did the Bible first use chapters and verses ?

The Geneva Bible published in 1560 was the first to use chapters and verses.

What is the longest verse in the Bible ?

Esther 8:9

What is the shortest verse in the Bible ?

John 11:35

Is the Bible the best-selling book of all time ?

Yes. Estimates are that somewhere in the region of at least 2.5 billion have been sold, maybe as high as 6 billion, followed by the *Quotations from Mao Zedong* and the *Quran*, both in the region of 800 million. The best selling fiction is probably Charles Dickens' *Tale of Two Cities* with 200 million copies sold. The latest Harry Potter novel had sold about 44 million copies.

What is the longest word in the Bible ?

Maher-shalal-hash-baz (Isaiah 8:1)

Who was the oldest person in the Bible ?

Methuselah was recorded as living to the age of 969 years (Gen 5:27)

With thanks to our friends at www.biblequizzes.org.uk



**LIGHT HEARTED OBSERVATIONS WITH
THE GENERAL ELECTION IN MIND!!!**

There are two side to every question, and a politician usually takes both.

It's nice to have five years between elections. It takes people that long to regain their faith.

A politician doesn't stand on his record; he jumps on the other fellow's.

It's a good thing that politicians are generally paid by the year. They would starve to death on piecework.

The telephone rang in the church office of the church that the MP attended when visiting his constituency. An eager voice inquired: "Do you expect the MP to be in church on Sunday? If so, I was thinking of coming along."

"That," said the clergymen, "I cannot promise. But we do expect that God will be there, and we fancy that that should be incentive enough for a reasonably large attendance."

SMILE!!!

The main purpose of holding children's parties is to remind yourself that there are children more awful than your own.

The Sunday School Teacher was telling the story of how when Lot's wife looked back at Sodom and Gomorrah, she turned into a pillar of salt. One youngster nodded in a knowing fashion. "My mummy looked back once while she was driving," he confided, "and she turned into a lamp post."

Measuring success!!

After the local Churches Together meetings had concluded, the four ministers were discussing the results with one another.

The Methodist minister said, "The meetings worked out great for us! We gained two new families". The Baptist pastor said, "We did better than that! We gained three new families" The URC minister said: "That's nothing - we gained five new families!". The Anglican vicar smiled in contentment. "Well, we did best of all. We got rid of our ten biggest trouble makers!"

SOME PERKS OF GETTING OLD!

There is nothing left to learn the hard way.

Things you buy now won't wear out.

You can eat supper at 4pm.

You get into heated arguments about pension plans.

You can sing along with lift music.

Your eyes won't get much worse.

Your secrets are safe with your friends - because they can't remember them either.

POVERTY - LET'S END IT CHRISTIAN AID WEEK 2010

That is the message for this year's Christian Aid Week - 9 -15 May. What began as the churches' response to the horrors of the refugee crisis in Europe after the Second World War has become the country's biggest house to house collection - with 300,000 volunteers delivering envelopes and picking them back up from householders in the week .In all, it raises more than £ 9 million a year.



Longfleet URC on the Internet

The Church has its own website which can be found at :

www.longfleeturc.org.uk

We also have a link to Broadstone URC and they have “linked” back to us which should mean that both websites will get more visitors.

The Church can now also be found on the popular where you can view contact details and photos.



... and finally

A big “thank you” to those at www.biblequizzes.org.uk for allowing us to continue to reproduce their quizzes on the website and here in the Newsletter.

There now follows the answer to last month’s Crossword and the Quizzes plus some more to keep you amused !



Bible Crossword – The Sermon on the Mount

SOLUTION



Bible Maths Quiz 1 – ANSWERS !

1. (Sons of Jacob) multiplied by (number of Jesus' disciples)

$$(Genesis\ 35:12) \times (Matthew\ 10:2) = (12) \times (12) = 144$$

2. (Books of the Bible) minus (days of rain on Noah in his ark)

$$(Genesis\ \dots\ Revelation) - (Genesis\ 7:12) = (66) - (40) = 26$$

3. (Number of fish caught by Simon Peter in miraculous catch) plus (days of creation)

$$John\ 21:11) + (Gen\ 1:31\ \dots\ Gen\ 2:1) = (153) + (6) = 159$$

4. (Times that the priests walked round Jericho) multiplied by (plagues upon Egypt)

$$(Joshua\ 6:11-15) \times (Exodus\ 7-12) = (13) \times (10) = 130$$

5. (Days that Jesus fasted in the wilderness) divided by (number of gospel writers)

$$(Matthew\ 4:2) / (Matthew\ \dots\ John) = (40) / (4) = 10$$

6. ((Number of Psalms) plus (tribes of Israel)) all divided by (number of gifts brought to Jesus by the wise men)

$$(Psalms\ +\ Genesis\ 49:28) / (Matt\ 2:11) = (150\ +\ 12) / (3) = 54$$

7. (Number of people saved from the flood) multiplied by (number of others crucified with Christ)

$$(1\ Peter\ 3:20) \times (John\ 19:18) = (8) \times (2) = 16$$

8. (Age of David when he became King of Israel) plus (number of years that David reigned)

$$(2\ Samuel\ 5:4) + (2\ Samuel\ 5:4) = (30) + (40) = 70$$

9. ((Number of times Naaman dipped himself in the River Jordan) minus (number of true Gods)) all multiplied by (pieces of silver that Jesus was betrayed for)

(2 Kings 5:14 - 1 Timothy 2:5) x (Matthew 26:15) = (7 - 1) x (30) = 180

10. (Talents given out by the master in the parable) plus (virgins who had enough oil for their lamps) minus (number of gates of New Jerusalem)

(Matthew 25:15) + (Matthew 25:2) - (Rev 21:21) = (8) + (5) - (12) = 1

Bible Ditloids (part 1)

Let's see how many you got right !

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| 1. 7 D of C | 7 Days of Creation |
| 2. 150 P in the B | 150 Psalms in the Bible |
| 3. 27 B in the NT | 27 Books in the New Testament |
| 4. 12 D of J | 12 Disciples of Jesus |
| 5. 13 P at the LS | 13 People (or Persons) at the Last Supper |
| 6. 4 G in the B | 4 Gospels in the Bible |
| 7. 12 T of I | 12 Tribes of Israel |
| 8. 10 P of E | 10 Plagues of Egypt |
| 9. 40 Y in the W | 40 Years in the Wilderness |
| 10. 5 S S | 5 Smooth Stones |

Thanks, as always, to our friends at www.biblequizzes.org.uk

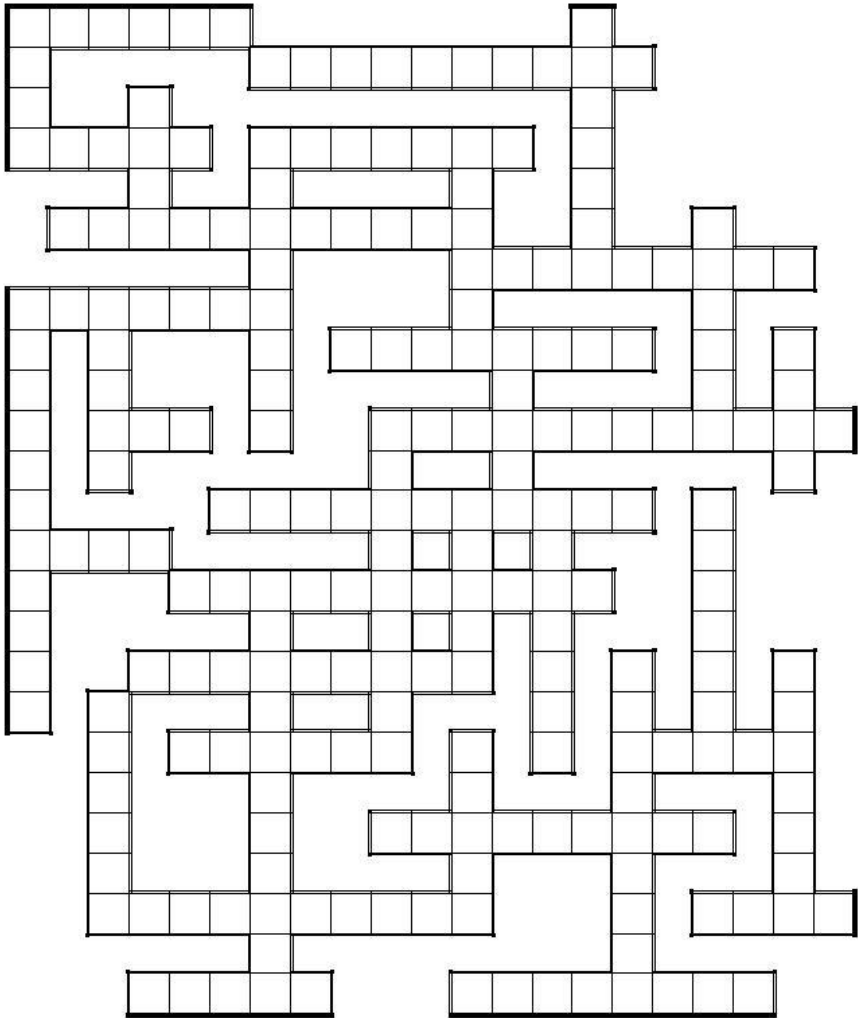
Quizzes and Puzzles for May

David and the Ark

by *Philologus*

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Fit the words into the grid to complete the puzzle



Try to fit in these words !

3 letter word

Ark

4 letter words

Cart

Dead

Find

Oxen

Wife

5 letter words

Anger

Bread

Build

Cedar

David

House

Uzzah

6 letter words

Danced

Israel

Michal

Nathan

Window

7 letter words

Blessed

Carried

Enemies

Forever

Servant

Trumpet

8 letter words

Abinadab

Obed-Edom

Shouting

9 letter words

Cherubims

Footstool

Handmaids

Household

Sacrifice

10 letter words

Linen ephod

Tabernacle

11 letter words

Cake of bread

Instruments

Philistines

Piece of meat

Three months

12 letter word

Flagon of wine

Noah's Ark Quiz

How well do you know the Ark ?!

1: What was the ark made out of ?

- A. Oak wood
- B. Pine wood
- C. Gopher wood
- D. Plastic

2: Who was Noah's father?

- A. Lamech
- B. Seth
- C. Methuselah
- D. Ham



3: How many people were saved in the ark?

- A. 5
- B. 6
- C. 7
- D. 8

4: How old was Noah when the floods came?

- A. 87
- B. 120
- C. 345
- D. 600

5: On which mountain did the ark come to rest?

- A. Sinai
- B. Horeb
- C. Carmel
- D. Ararat

6: Who closed the ark door?

- A. Noah
- B. God
- C. Shem
- D. Japheth

7: How many days and nights did it rain for?

- A. 24
- B. 40
- C. 48
- D. 50



8: What did the dove bring back to Noah?

- A. Olive leaf
- B. Fig leaf
- C. Twig
- D. Flower

9: How many times did Noah send out the dove?

- A. 1
- B. 2
- C. 3
- D. 4

10: What was the first thing Noah built when he came out of the ark?

- A. House
- B. Stable
- C. Tabernacle
- D. Altar



Anagrams - Food in the Bible

Ah! Wet
Bleary
Cube scrum
Soon in
Sleek

Tell sin
So evil!
Paggers
Debra
In grave

Anagrams - Animals of the Bible

Roman wreck

Arctic coke

Search hole

Raises fog

Hey, dog! Run!

The Mob, eh?

Wig plan

Old pear

Clouts

Iron cops

Is torch

Warm MP role

Great drip

See awl

Tie torso

Coin run

Moron cart

April claret

Clean home

Zeal gel

Hags prosper

