

InTouch

Autumn 2024



The magazine of
Fleet United Reformed Church



FLEET UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

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|----------------------------------|---|
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WEEKLY WORSHIP

Sundays, 10 am: Family Worship

Holy Communion usually on third Sunday of month

An afternoon service is held at 2 pm on the last Tuesday of the month

REGULAR ACTIVITIES

| | |
|--|--|
| <i>'Footsteps' Young People's Group:</i> | Sundays, 10 am (<i>term time only</i>) |
| <i>Pilates</i> | Mondays, 12.15—1.15 pm |
| <i>Coffee Morning:</i> | Wednesdays, 10—11.30 am |
| <i>Toddlers Group:</i> | Fridays, 10 am |
| <i>Bible Study & Prayer Group:</i> | Please contact the Church Secretary for details of current meetings. |

Under the umbrella of the United Reformed Church, *Guide*, *Brownie* and *Rainbow Units* meet each week during school term.

Up to date details of all the above activities are available from the Church Office, from the Church Secretary, or on our website.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR MINISTER



Dear Friends,

September in church life is a time for new beginnings. Many of our activities begin after a break and we start to plan for autumn. Some are taking advantage of the still lovely weather to go away for breaks and others are busy gathering in the harvest in their gardens. We will celebrate our Harvest Festival this year with a parade service on October 6th, when we will be giving thanks to God not only for the harvest of food and the abundance

of nature, but also for other gifts we all use in service to God and to our neighbours, wherever we live. The ways in which we serve each other are also gifts and it is right we should thank God and also recognise the talented and faithful people who do so much to help us all.

I have much to reflect on as I look back over what has been a busy summer for me, with URC General Assembly in July, Summer Fun mornings in August, and Greenbelt festival, where I was on the URC café volunteer team, serving much needed hot drinks and cakes. It is two years this month since I came to Fleet URC, and I am enjoying every moment of my time here; so I thank God for bringing me to minister amongst you, and I look forward to sharing more of what God is doing in Fleet URC and in our community.

Helen



REFORM MAGAZINE

One resolution from General Assembly was that the URC would no longer be able to subsidise *Reform* Magazine. So the team at *Reform* are on a mission to get new subscribers and to try to attract more readers in order, hopefully, get the magazine to break even.

One way of doing this is to give out some free copies so that more people are aware of the magazine, have a chance to read it, and decide if they want to subscribe. There are plenty for everyone in the vestibule, so please take a look and see if you would like to subscribe monthly, either in print or on line.

Helen



APPEAL FROM BABY & TODDLER GROUP

Help with Tea and Cake!

The new team of parents and carers who run this group wonder if anyone would be willing to help out occasionally by serving teas and coffees to those who attend the group. Helen often helps out on **Friday mornings in term time between 9.45 and 11.15 am**, but there are some mornings when she cannot be there. If anyone feels they might be able to give the occasional Friday morning, please see Helen.



The team also wonder if anyone might make a cake for the group. This would not be every week, but if a few of us were willing we could provide a treat for the carers and children. Again, have a word with Helen, or message on the church WhatsApp group.

QUIZ NIGHT

We will be holding another of our popular Quiz Nights, so be sure to put the date in your diary:

Saturday, 5th October at 7 pm.

The cost will be £5 per person. Come with a team of up to six people, or join a team when you arrive.

Bring your own drinks and nibbles.

Tea, coffee and biscuits will be provided.

An evening of fun is promised, with Colin McClune as your quiz master.



SERVICE OF REMEMBERING



A quiet service to remember loved ones who have died in the past 12 months, and longer ago, will be held in the church on **Sunday 27th October, at 2.30 pm.**

The service will be followed by refreshments.



CURRY NIGHT WITH SAJU

Raising Funds for Palani Mission

Saturday, 19th October at 7 pm

Places are limited for this popular fundraising event, so hurry to book your place with John Gibbons (tel: 07900 908990)

Tickets: £15 per person, including drinks



NOTICE BOARD

TUESDAY AFTERNOON SERVICES

Our next afternoon services will be
**24th September, 29th October,
& 26th November at 2 pm.**



HARVEST THANKSGIVING & PARADE SERVICE

Our Harvest Festival and parade service will be held on
Sunday, 6th October.



BIBLE STUDY DATES

Tuesdays, 8th & 22nd October
Tuesdays, 12th & 19th November
All meetings start at **2 pm.**
Everyone welcome!



THE LONGEST YARN

3rd—18th November 2024

An 80 metre 3D depiction of the build up to 6th June 1944 in knitting and crochet will be on display at the Royal Garrison Church, Aldershot.

For more information, visit <https://www.thelongestyarn.com/>

SUMMER ACTIVITY FUN



There was a lot of fun to be had at our summer activity mornings, which were held every Friday morning throughout August. Organised by our minister Helen, with the help of Carol Rayner and others, children aged 0-11 years came along with accompanying adults to enjoy messy play, games, crafts and stories. The theme was Superheroes, with stories about Jesus, Mary and Martha, Joseph

and Esther. Many thanks to everyone who came along to help out and make the mornings a success.



KNITTED CHRISTMAS ANGELS

Just a gentle reminder that we are still going ahead with this Christmas outreach to our community, and hope that we can provide our usual bags of joy from our Church again. If you need a pattern, please ask me.

I am sure you are aware that *Living Stones* has closed as a shop, so unfortunately they cannot supply wool or patterns; also, they will not be able to print the labels.



Local churches have been asked to help, so we will be printing them here. I will need to know how many you require if you wish to attach them yourselves.

The Angel Blessing service has gone full circle with all the churches and this year we are holding it at Fleet Methodist Church on **1st December at 4 pm**. Please add this to your diary as it is such a lovely heart-warming service.

Any questions, request for patterns or wool, please just ask me.

Darrell Henderson

Contributions for the Winter issue of *InTouch* magazine (December 2024—February 2025) should be with the editor, Christine Gibbons, by **10th November**. Thank you.
(christine.gibbons@beech-ride.co.uk)

CELEBRATIONS

Poppy Appeal Honour

Congratulations to Linda Storey, who is celebrating an incredible 30 years as a poppy collector! Linda says:

'In June I attended the annual Royal British Legion buffet lunch for poppy collectors. I was presented with my 30-year award, and am seen here with our former MP, Ranil Jayawardena.

'It was a very enjoyable occasion, and I look forward to collecting for many years to come'.



A Special Anniversary



Our church anniversary service in July this year was also an occasion to celebrate the 60th anniversary of Revd Stephen Thornton's induction to the ministry. Stephen is a good friend of Fleet URC, having served as our minister from 2004 to 2011. Our current minister, Helen, presented Stephen with a book token and a card signed by members of the congregation. Following the service

everyone enjoyed a special anniversary cake, baked and decorated by Maureen Coney.

Since the service Stephen has undertaken a tour of all the churches where he has served as Minister. On page 11 he offers his reflections on this journey.

Congratulations!

Congratulations to all in our church family—young and not so young—who did so well in their examinations this summer. We send our love and warm wishes to them all as they move on to their further studies and future careers.



'THE GATHERING'—WHAT IS IT?

The Gathering is a men's Christian Festival run by *Christian Vision for Men* (CVM).

It is held annually on the third weekend in June, and the praise worship is led by Graham Kendrick and band. There are two campsites, A and B: in Camp A everyone sleeps under canvas, and Camp B is a mixture of canvas, campers and caravans. How comfortable you want to be will decide where you'll camp!



[Above & Below] The white tent is the mess tent, and the big green tents are where we slept (10 men to a tent).

The festival officially starts at 7 pm on the Friday night, but the gates are open from 1 pm to allow you time to set up your camp site. Mostly everyone who attends is part of a church men's group. I attended this year and previous years with the Armed Forces Christian Union (AFCU); you also have the Christian Police Association (CPA).

Over the weekend there are four main sessions that everyone attends, but there are also other activities and talks during the day on the Saturday. It's up to you how involved you want to be, or if you want to just sit back, relax and soak in the atmosphere. Some of the Saturday activities include a 5 km morning run, learning to wrestle with professional wrestlers, axe throwing and walking football.

For me personally it's the opportunity to spend a whole weekend immersed in the Holy Spirit and connecting with other Christian brothers from across the Armed Forces—just having that time of fellowship and friendship. This year I attended two of the talks, which were both very interesting and thought-provoking.

As a member of AFCU we go en masse and set up a small military campsite for the weekend. AFCU provide 18 24-man tents, camp cots and a mess tent, and for a small



fee AFCU will feed and water you all weekend. You just need to bring your pillow, sleeping bag and wash kit. Plus, all food provided by AFCU is cooked on the barbecue—and no fruit or veg are allowed at *The Gathering*!

And for the ladies reading this and thinking they would really like to go to something like this—at *The Gathering* 2023 CVM launched a new venture called *Christian Vision for Women* (CVW).

<https://www.cvm.org.uk/>

<https://cvwomen.org.uk/>

<https://afcu.org.uk/>

Adrian McKeeman

AUTUMN CRAFT & GIFT FAIR 2024

Saturday, 2nd November, 10.30 am—3 pm

The time for our annual Autumn Fair is fast approaching: please note the date in your diaries! To date we have 30 stalls, with space for a further two, and as always, there will be a wide variety of crafts on sale.

I will be looking for volunteers to help with the following:

- Clearing the church, date to be agreed
- Setting up tables on the afternoon of Friday, 1st November
- Manning the admissions table
- Help with serving/clearing tables in the meeting room
- Clearing up and putting the church back together from 3 pm on 2nd November

We will also require cakes to sell. Please remember that they must be accompanied by a list of ALL ingredients, to comply with health and safety regulations.

Bee will be looking for items for her White Elephant stall, and may require help with pricing and displaying her goodies on Friday, 1st November.

John Gibbons will be running a tombola, so any donations will be gratefully received.

Please contact me if you can help in any way, and remember to invite all your friends and neighbours to come along to support us on the day!

Carol Rayner



CHANGE

In a recent morning service the preacher addressed the subject of change. It reminded me that many years ago I prepared some thoughts on this topic for a group at a previous church. I offer them here:

Benjamin Franklin is quoted as saying, *'In this world, nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes.'* In my last job I learned to add **the certainty of change** to those two! I worked in the NHS, but constant change is the companion of all who work in education, the police, central and local government, and most other occupations—even the church.

A phrase from the well-known hymn, *Abide with Me* comes to mind: *'Change and decay in all around I see..'* But is change **all** bad?

I'm misquoting Malvolio when he speaks of greatness in Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, in having him say: *'Some are born to change, some achieve change, and some have change thrust upon them.'* So, what if change is thrust upon you—how do you feel? Maybe fearful, resentful, angry, defeated, depressed, helpless, put upon, taken for granted? We are all aware of the stress and trauma experienced by those who find change too difficult to cope with and who feel there's no one to turn to, sadly often with drastic results.



Imposed change is all around us: big things, like climate change, recession, bereavement, ageing; smaller things, like an interruption to our plans for the day or losing our door key. Some things we have the opportunity to oppose, for example by signing a petition or joining a protest group. Sometimes it's right to do what we feel is important to us, our community, or our world.

The oft-quoted Serenity prayer can help: *'God give us the grace to accept the things that cannot be changed; courage to change the things that should be changed; and the wisdom to know the difference.'*

In my experience the only **person** we can change is ourselves. I've wasted a lot of time and fruitless effort over the years trying to persuade others to my point of view. One day a wise pastor told me that God is the best one to achieve change in others, and had I thought of asking him? It is such a relief to hand it over and know the peace and assurance that, whatever the outcome, it is what was meant to be. Serenity again, I suppose.

Transformation can imply a sudden, wand-waving 'Cinderella from rags to ballgown' experience, but it's rarely like that. Sometimes it's only when someone remarks on it that you realise that change has occurred. Sometimes you look in the mirror and see for yourself!

The Letter to the Hebrews tells us that '*Jesus is the same, yesterday, today and forever*' (Hebrews 13:8). How can that be if He controls our ever-changing universe? The answer must be that He has no need to change. He is the perfection that all change is working towards, when all our strivings will cease and we will be lost in wonder, love and praise.

Margaret Tracey

GIFTS GALORE!

832 miles later, I have just returned from visiting relatives, churches and friends to mark my 60 years as a Minister. I visited cousins and friends, and led worship in the church where I was brought up in Bradford, and in Windermere where I was a minister, meeting people from Nottingham and Newcastle and many other places.

The overall impression has been, what a host of gifted people they all are, with their own fascinating story of joys and sorrows, contributions to society, and a vast variety of interests.



Then, thinking theologically, it seems that there is a great gulf between people's personal lives and the life and work of the church, even though most of them belong to the church. A majority of members don't really know fellow members' stories in depth, and don't make the connection with 'church'.

However, everyone's story is part of God's story, whether acknowledged or not. Each should be known and celebrated in worship, and the church should offer specific guidance and support to everyone in all the struggles of life.

Sadly, often we first hear the special details of a person's life at their funeral, rather than the church actively and creatively sharing the ups and downs with all while they are walking with us.

How much more rewarding church would be if that were the case!

Stephen Thornton

[Image: www.clipart-library.com]



HOW CLEAN IS YOUR HOUSE?

Twenty years or so ago I regularly used to watch Kim Woodburn and Aggie MacKenzie's TV programme, *How Clean is Your House?* Each week they would arrive at a house that was in desperate need of a clean. Armed with fancy rubber gloves, mops, buckets and tips galore, they would wade through the grime and leave a sparkling house at the end of their time there. The idea was that the householder could then keep on top of the chores with all their new know-how. Many of their remedies included natural products such as vinegar and bicarbonate of soda, but they were rather fond of bleach, which is harmful to the environment.

Many household cleaning products, including bleach, have small print on the back of the bottles, including the warning 'Harmful to Aquatic Life'. I challenge you to take a look at the cleaning products you have in your home. You may be surprised to find this warning on products that you are using regularly. While I imagine that most people are not pouring these products directly into ponds, streams or lakes, the chemicals nevertheless disappear down the drain and make their way into waterways and eventually to the sea. Nature is having a hard enough time without adding to it, so what can we do?

Step in Nancy Birtwhistle, a former *Great British Bake Off* winner. Several years ago she began her green journey. She aimed to save both time and money whilst not using ingredients that harm the fishes! Her thinking was that if she could invent baking recipes, why not create cleaning recipes too? She really is a marvel. Her recipes are excellent and effective, and she has an answer for most things. 'Pure Magic' for example is the best limescale remover I have ever used, and is made from citric acid. 'Basic Magic', one of her most recent recipes, was created in response to requests by her followers for a non-acidic spray.

It is made from soda crystals, and is incredibly effective at removing grease, either on fabric or in the kitchen. Rust stains, which are notoriously difficult to remove, are now gone... there really is a solution for everything, without a harmful plastic bottle of chemicals in sight.

Nancy has now published four books, regularly appears on ITV's *This Morning* showcasing her tips, and has a massive following on Facebook and Instagram. She has most certainly put a boost in my green cleaning. Could she do the same for you? Why not look her up online, or if you are interested in having a look at her books do let me know. I can thoroughly recommend them, and will happily bring them to church on a



Sunday for you to take a look at. Fleet Scoop sells copies of her books so you can support a local business if you decide to buy a copy of your own. They also sell soda crystals, bicarbonate of soda, citric acid, cleaning vinegar etc to help get you started on your own green cleaning journey. Let's do all we can to look after our precious world.

Grace Bagshaw

<https://www.nancybirtwhistle.co.uk>



A 'THANK YOU' FROM CARITAS

Please could I say a huge 'thank you' to each of you who have donated valuable packs of toilet rolls to families in need.

Recently one parent said to me, "You know, you really can't adapt anything for loo paper. You can use soap instead of shampoo and replace other products, but you cannot replace toilet paper. Thank you so much."

I just wanted to share this with you. If you are able to ask friends, family, even work places to collect the odd pack for us, that would be wonderful. I struggle to put this need forward. You really do help those in very poor or vulnerable situations—God bless you.

Dropping toilet rolls off at people's doorsteps also encourages a personal chat. It gives me an opportunity to be a listening ear, to make referrals for financial help or basic food through the food banks. I can also try to obtain other items they may need, ie small electrical equipment, laptops for school, clothes, anything really. It is never just about a pack of toilet rolls.

Sometimes I can be over an hour on a doorstep. More often than not I am aware of God's guidance and blessing for his people, and I can honestly say it is a privilege to be a part of God's plan.

I can't do this without you, so I thank you from the bottom of my heart, and am pleased to be able to pass on the gratitude of each one of our parents, as well.

Brita Coleman on behalf of Caritas

[Toilet rolls for Brita can be left on top of the Foodbank bin, or given to Christine Gibbons.]



COMMITMENT FOR LIFE

Committed to supporting our global partners: ZIMBABWE



African Faith Leaders Call for Fresh Debt Forgiveness for Africa

On 19th July 2024 African faith leaders gathered in Kigali, Rwanda, to plan for the upcoming Catholic Year of Jubilee.

25 years ago, leading up to the previous Jubilee Year, faith leaders contributed towards mobilising over £100 billion in debt relief for Africa. However the global financial system is rigged. It heavily favours wealthy creditors. Debt piles up far more quickly than any ability to repay.

This is the infamous debt trap: damned if you do, and damned if you don't. Poor countries are forced to borrow at rates that are completely unsustainable both for people and planet.

Africa pays more in interest than it does on desperately needed social and environmental demands. As the earth becomes increasingly uninhabitable, debt cannot be allowed to be used to enrich the wealthy, as usual.

This must stop. Now!

Commitment for Life work incredibly hard through their partners to deliver for some of the poorest people in Zimbabwe. But their efforts pale into insignificance against this backdrop of a deeply unjust, global financial architecture. Please do all you can to learn more and confront this unjust system. See www.debtjustice.org.uk.

[From C4L Moving Stories: Sept/Oct 2024]

You can also scan the QR code on the C4L noticeboard in the church vestibule for more information. Please also help yourself to the free pockets of seed and the very useful book marks with tabs that are on the table.

Thank you to all those who have helped by donating and by reading the articles.

Darrell Henderson



URC GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2024



I attended this year's General Assembly in Swanwick, Derbyshire, as part of the delegation from our Wessex Synod, and also as chaplain to URC Youth. I went to the pre-Assembly meeting for the youth, entitled *What do You Think?*, where the business of Assembly was discussed so that the young people from every synod were well informed

about what the resolutions coming to Assembly meant. Several of those proposing resolutions came to speak and to answer questions, and I was impressed by the dedication of the young people and the preparation they put in, as well as the care taken by senior members of the URC leadership to ensure that the young people's challenging questions were answered, and that they were encouraged to participate fully.

In fact at Assembly everyone was encouraged to speak in debate, and this year priority was given to first-time speakers, which all seemed to work well. There were difficult issues to discuss, including a URC response to the crisis in Gaza, where Assembly was anxious to be fair to all sides, yet to speak out clearly on the human tragedy we see daily on our TV screens. We heard good news too from the winners of community awards—churches just like ours making a real difference in where they are. The worship we shared was very vibrant with songs, prayers and reflections from our partner churches in the Caribbean. We learnt of the grace with which the URC's apology for the legacies of slavery was received when Revd Dr Tessa Henry Robinson, herself a woman of colour, visited to deliver it earlier this year, and of the exchange of ideas which is coming from this to benefit young people of colour here in Britain.

So all in all a good time, full of plans and hope for our church, where God is working with ordinary church members to make God's love real for everyone.

There is a detailed account of Assembly available online: <https://urc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Assembly-Business-Digest-2024.pdf>

If anyone wants a paper copy I can print one—just ask!

Helen



STAND BY ME—ANNUAL PROGRESS

Stand by Me sends out annual progress reports for each of our three children at the end of the academic year, so we thought in this edition of *In Touch* we would share those summaries and the children's newly-released photos—haven't they all grown up so much again?!

Pau (age 8, living in Myanmar)



Pau did well last year with his school subjects—he needs to keep up all the good work. He just needs to improve in his confidence and his classroom behaviour.

Pau loves spending his free time drawing pictures and playing with building blocks. He can occupy himself very easily, filling his time with those activities he enjoys. He does not care if he is not playing with friends. He can befriend others and does have a few friends, but does not count all his classmates as friends. He is learning to be more caring, but can also be quite bossy at times. Pau likes to help his family by watering the plants and flowers.

Arsema (age 10, living in Ethiopia)



Arsema has shown a real enthusiasm for learning English and has shown exceptional progress in her learning this year. She has a good level of understanding in Maths, and her confidence and skill is growing in the subject. She is around the middle mark for her level of understanding of Science, which is her favourite subject, but with the right determination and focus should be able to make more progress this year.

Arsema has grown in confidence this year, which is a real encouragement. Being active is a key part of development for our children, and we will be encouraging her to develop a greater enjoyment of sports and physical education this year.

Arsema likes to think about how she can help others in school and regularly demonstrates her thoughtfulness. She is not afraid to take on new challenges and opportunities as she is a confident girl. She is confident working with others in her class and takes great enjoyment in participating in groups. Arsema demonstrates lots of enthusiasm in everything that she does. She also is a very active pupil and approaches her learning with lots of energy.

Arsema spends time helping her family after school and at the weekends with chores around the house. She has a love for learning and enjoys spending time doing her homework after school.

Laurith (age 12, living in Colombia)



Laurith is a fun-loving girl, a good friend, creative, and participative in classes: in fact she finds it difficult to be silent!

She attends the Bible Club of the program punctually, showing great interest in biblical teachings and activities. She participates in group discussions, sharing her reflections on the topics discussed, showing enthusiasm and commitment to learning biblical stories and putting Christian values into practice in her daily life.

She feels happy and grateful because this new year brought her many blessings, including the gift that the Care Centre gave her: building materials for her new house. Laurith felt sad because her house was made of sticks and was falling apart. In addition, other children teased her for not having a good house. Now, the Care Centre and *Stand by Me* have made her dream come true.

One of the program activities that Laurith loves is the Talent Contest. This year she enrolled in Performing Arts, preparing a group choreography for her presentation, and they chose a Christian song. Although her group was not chosen among the finalists, she was happy to have stood out in dancing. She expressed that next year she will try again with more enthusiasm. She learned not to give up in the face of obstacles and that she can try again until she succeeds. She also participated in Spelling Bee, Maths Olympics, and Sports Week. In Sports Week her football team came in first place, and she understood that we are all different, good at some areas and not in others; but the important thing is always to have a good attitude and a desire to learn.

It is clear the importance of the support that *Stand by Me* provides to the lives of not just the children, but their wider families and communities too. If you would like to read any of the full reports, please talk to one of the *Footsteps* team. Thank you as always for your ongoing support and prayers.

Helen Bailey

on behalf of Footsteps



GOD'S WONDERFUL WORLD: SNAILS—PEST OR BLESSED?

Hi there, I'm a snail!

I know that sometimes you don't like me because I feed on the plants in your garden, plants that you have lovingly spent your money and time on, so we need to have a chat and get along somehow—but as I am deaf we will have to write it down!



[Krzysztof Niewolny on Unsplash]

I think that every creature has a place in your garden. Yes, we do munch on plants, but we also help to **clean up** plant debris, and can even eat the eggs of pests.

A tip I will give you, as we are trying to be friends, is that if you put coffee grounds around your plants I will stay away, and you will also nourish your soil because coffee grounds are fertilizer. Did you know that if you

visit a National Trust place of interest you can pick up, at no extra charge, used coffee granules, thereby helping the National Trust as well?

Our bodies are soft and delicate and like to stick to smooth surfaces to protect them. I expect you often see me attached to your flower pots and other ornaments in your treasured gardens. Please don't just rip me away from my resting place because the protective wrapper on my foot could break and tear, and unfortunately I would die.

There is no way to tell whether we are male or female because we are both! We are hermaphrodites, which means we can all lay eggs. We like to bury our eggs in soil: they look like little pearls, perfect spheres, like white caviar. Our eggs have considerable 'popability', and I am told they have a delicate autumn flavour, and could make interesting canapes.

After 2-4 weeks the eggs will hatch with a soft shell. So if you see me being followed by little versions me, don't worry, you are not seeing things: it's my young. Being small, they are born without a shell and they are very delicate, but in a very short time nature will endow them with a tiny soft shell (don't touch them please as they are so fragile!) The sad thing is that not many of us survive to adult life, which can be as long as 12 years.

While most of the time we snails are friendly creatures, sometimes we can be too much for you gardeners; but keep in mind that we are pollinators—albeit the world's slowest!—and the pollen from flowers and plants sticks to our shells, to be carried from bloom to bloom.

While a number of us can cause damage to certain plants with our tongues, which contain up to 12,000 teeth, overall we bring many benefits to the garden and contribute to a balanced ecosystem, whether that's by clearing away

rotten vegetation or providing a vital food source for more popular garden visitors.

Sadly, because of our slow pace we have traditionally been seen as a symbol of laziness. In Christian culture we have been used as a symbol of the deadly sin of sloth. Psalm 58:8 even uses snail slime as a metaphorical punishment.

Although I know your gardens are very important to you, I wish we could get along. Please try to look after us. If you put us in your compost bins we can look after you and enrich your garden by making lovely compost.

One thing that worries me is that you are now encouraged to put your compostable material in small bins to be collected, instead of in the garden compost bin. Hopefully we will still find enough to eat to leave your special plants alone!

We are needed, we really are. Please help us to survive. Thank you so much.

Darrell Henderson

HOW CAN WE PRAISE YOU?

How can we praise you
In life's ordinary moments,
bus, car or train,
pedestrian moments,
at home and employment,
with all those distractions.
How can we praise you?

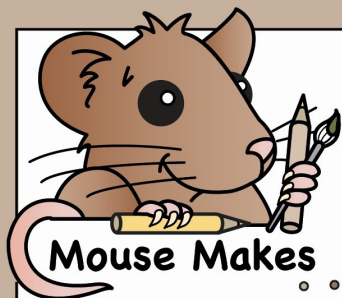
How can we praise you
when time is so precious,
appointments and targets
distracting our focus,
muddying waters,
made clean for your purpose.
How can we praise you?

How can we praise you?
Through all of our actions,
a smile and a greeting,
a shoulder to lean on,
a word in due season,
love and compassion,
in all situations.



© *John Birch*

<https://www.faithandworship.com>



Mouse Makes

HARVEST THANKSGIVING

"May the peoples
 _____ you, O God!
 May all the peoples praise you!
 The land yields its harvest;
 God, our God blesses us."

Psalm 67:5-6 NIV

"God ... has shown kindness by
 giving you rain from heaven
 and crops in their seasons.

He provides you with
 plenty of _____. He fills
 your hearts with joy!"

Acts 14:16-17 NIV

"Honour the Lord with your wealth
 and the first part of your harvest."

Proverbs 3:9 ERV

"Let us fear and respect
 the Lord our God.

He gives us autumn and
 spring _____
 at the right time.

He makes sure that we
 have the harvest at
 just the right time!"

Jeremiah 5:24 ERV

O A G A T H E R A I N S
 S V O G M A U T U M N P
 O G D O P R O D U C E R
 I H J O Y V S H A R E I
 L A N D H E P R A Y D N
 T H A N K S G I V I N G
 Y P F E R T I L E E P S
 B L E S S E D D E L R W
 S E A S O N F O O D A A
 U N R E W K I F R U I T
 N T T E N S C R O P S E
 N Y H D P R O V I D E R

HARVEST • THANKSGIVING • LAND • EARTH • FERTILE • SOIL • SEED • SOWN
 NEED • WATER • SUN • SEASON • AUTUMN • SPRING • YIELD • PRODUCE
 FRUIT • GATHER • CROPS • PLENTY • PRAY • GOD • PROVIDE • JOY
 BLESSED • GOODNESS • SHARE

Find the words from the questions too!