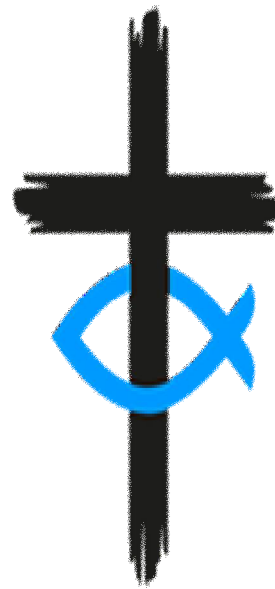


CH URC NEWS

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The
United
Reformed
Church

Partnership Ministers: Rev Kurauone Mutimwii
Rev Stephanie Atkins

JANUARY 2025

Friends,

Reflections on Mark 6: 33-36

33 But many who saw them leaving recognized them and ran on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. 34 When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So, he began teaching them many things. 35 By this time it was late in the day, so his disciples came to him. "This is a remote place," they said, "and it's already very late. 36 Send the people away so that they can go to the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat."

Part 1: The Crisis of Compassion

As we look forward to the coming year 2025 and try imagining how our world will be like, or should look like, may the story of Jesus Christ feeding 5000 plus people disturb us. This miracle is crazy because it portrays God who is willing to use us and our tiny resources to address the needs of wider communities. Have we ever thought that people coming to our churches or calling to us as disciples of Jesus Christ, are probably seeing Jesus Christ?

We pray for God to intervene in our world and we want it happening on a global scale. When we begin to think that our only solution to the many voices calling for help, is by sending it away and when silencing or dismissing those voices crying for help becomes our top prayer request to our Lord Jesus Christ, then compassion is dying. Because compassion is not taking away people from Christ but acknowledging the gravity of our situation and taking people with such situations into the presence of Christ.

Most people in different countries live in situations where they are marginalised, rejected and perceived as not deserving of the resources of the earth. Outside their countries, as asylum seekers or migrants, some face xenophobia, exploitation, ridicule, cruel policies and deportations. In some countries, they are victims of hostile political environments, war and violence, intolerant religious situations, corrupt political leadership, economic hardships, zero delivery on social amenities and intentional exclusion from national resources by the few privileged powerful.

Their fate is sealed when they are confronted by Christ's disciples or a church that is no longer generous, compassionate and caring anymore, but that is equally pushing them away from spaces of privilege and hope. The church that simply say, go away, each man must go and see for self. We cannot help you maybe because it is too dark, you are too many and too hungry. The Church, in some cases, by taking the side of the elements of oppression is burrowing an easy way out to secure its comfort within world systems, protect its favorable reputation, salve its conscience of lack of empathy, and camouflage its crisis of compassion. Christ's disciples, at times pray that Christ send away those politically persecuted, economically desperate and socially marginalized because they no longer have the empathy to be in solidarity, standing alongside those in need of opportunities to be human, justice, humanitarian assistance, presence and empowerment.

Perceiving that these desperate people flocking and hovering around us are unbearable burdens which we are not able to address could be worsened much more by suggesting to Christ that He must as well, send them away. Will we be solving our world crisis by silencing the voice crying for help and sending away the people coming for help? Did Christ not invite all those who labour and are carrying heavy loads to come to him? As we wish ourselves a happy 2025, let us challenge ourselves to be agencies through which God intervenes and impact in the wider world.

A happy New Year to all,
Rev Kurauone Mutimwii

NEWS AROUND THE FELLOWSHIP

We would like to thank all those who sent Christmas and New Year best wishes to Swann Lane. We hope in turn that you have had joyful festive celebrations and that the New Year brings peace and happiness.

Thank you to everyone who either made donations for Christmas messages in the magazine or in lieu of postage or who bought gifts from the Christmas stall at the Coffee Morning and afterwards, all of which have raised in the region of £400 for the Church charities.

On 18 December, 20 members and friends were treated to a wonderful Christmas Lunch, once again prepared by Morag and Sandy for which we are always most grateful. This has become an annual event which began in 2015 and, after expenses this year, £140 was raised for the Chelwood Foodbank Plus.

Many thanks go to all our members who were involved with worship at a number of services in December, either leading or reading, and we can't forget Eric Ward and Alex Moore who support us throughout the year on the organ and piano. In addition to in-house leaders, Sandy, Bernie, Alison and Glyn, we welcomed Rev Steph Atkins (Christingle), Christopher Whitehead, and Margaret Dexter-Brown (Bereavement Service of Light). Thank you all for your continued support.

We send best wishes to all those who will be celebrating a birthday or special anniversary in January. We hope you have a very happy time.

The News Team

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Sun 12 Jan - CHURCH MEETING

Fri 7 Mar - World Day of Prayer ~Grove La Baptist

Fri 4-Sun 6 JUL - Thornleigh Weekend Away

CHURCHES TOGETHER CHEADLE HULME

On 14 December, we joined with other churches at Oak Meadow for the Churches Together Carols in the Park with the Salvation Army Band. Unlike other years, we had a dry morning which possibly attributed, together with flyers in the precinct, to having 230 people participating: the hot drinks and mince pies were still very welcome (the hot chocolate was really good!)

**Week of Christian Unity
(18-25 Jan): Prayer**

We bless you, O Lord, Father of lights: from you descends every good thing and every perfect gift.

You have made the world and all that it contains, you are the Lord of heaven and earth.

You created all the peoples that dwell on the earth.

For them you established the order of time and the boundaries of their space.

In the heart of human beings, you have placed the depth of eternity.

Rebirth in us that unity that our selfishness has fractured in your Church and in the one world around us.

God of all consolation, call us to follow you and make firm for us the work of our hands.

We praise you through Jesus Christ, your only-begotten Son, in the communion of the Holy Spirit.

Amen

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SOUP, SWEET & MEET
WED 15 JAN
Noon ~ 1.30pm
=====

PARTNERSHIP PRAYER

Loving God, we thank you for the many people and communities that make up our Missional Partnership, for our churches connected not only by our faith but by a deep care and concern for one another and our world.

Lord we ask your blessing on our mission in this place and pray that you will keep our eyes, ears, hearts and minds open to the leading of your Spirit in all things. In Jesus' name, **Amen.**



CHURCH MEETING ~ Sun 12 JAN

Please do what you can to attend this meeting, which is effectively the church's AGM, where annual business is conducted and which will be followed by a **simple Lunch**.

Minutes of the last church meeting are enclosed for members in the magazine.

Alison Stevens

CHURCH LEADERS' STATEMENT ON COP29

Our Churches are committed to caring for creation and to tackling climate change. We lament the increasing frequency and severity of devastating hurricanes, flooding and droughts, and the impact they are having on people.

Record temperatures and low rainfall have impaired food security, livelihoods, and energy production in many regions of the world. In July 2024, global temperatures reached unprecedented levels.

COP29 is an opportunity for governments to coordinate action to tackle greenhouse gas emissions. They must make pledges with purpose and integrity to avert climate-related suffering for this and future generations.

Members, friends & neighbours

FILM MATINEE

Sat 25 JANUARY

Developing nations will need resources for adaptation and to gain equitable access to the technology for low-carbon development. This will require new sources of finance. We support the call for debt relief for low-income countries being made by Christian Aid and other agencies.

We join with faith communities across the world in calling for substantial additional funding for the Loss and Damage Fund. We support the principle that polluters should pay for loss and damage. We want to see progress at Baku on new taxes and other sources of revenue to resource global action.

In all this, UK leadership is vital. In 2021, COP26 in Glasgow was a significant moment even though the summit failed to gain consensus in some important respects. We urge our government to show leadership again through a renewed

commitment to the framework established in Paris in 2015 on reducing emissions.

As church communities in the UK and across the globe we are committed to prayerful action. We need COP29 to deliver concrete actions to support the pledges that have been made already and to secure new commitments for the good of all people and the planet.

Revd Philip Brooks

Deputy General Secretary (Mission), URC

Revd Helen Cameron

President of Conference of Methodist Church

Carolyn Godfrey

Vice-Pres of Conference of Methodist Church

Revd Lynn Green

*General Secretary, The Baptist Union
of Great Britain*

The 'Millennium Bug'

25 years ago, on 1 Jan 2000, the calendar switched over to the year 2000, with no major computer problems from the Y2K Bug".

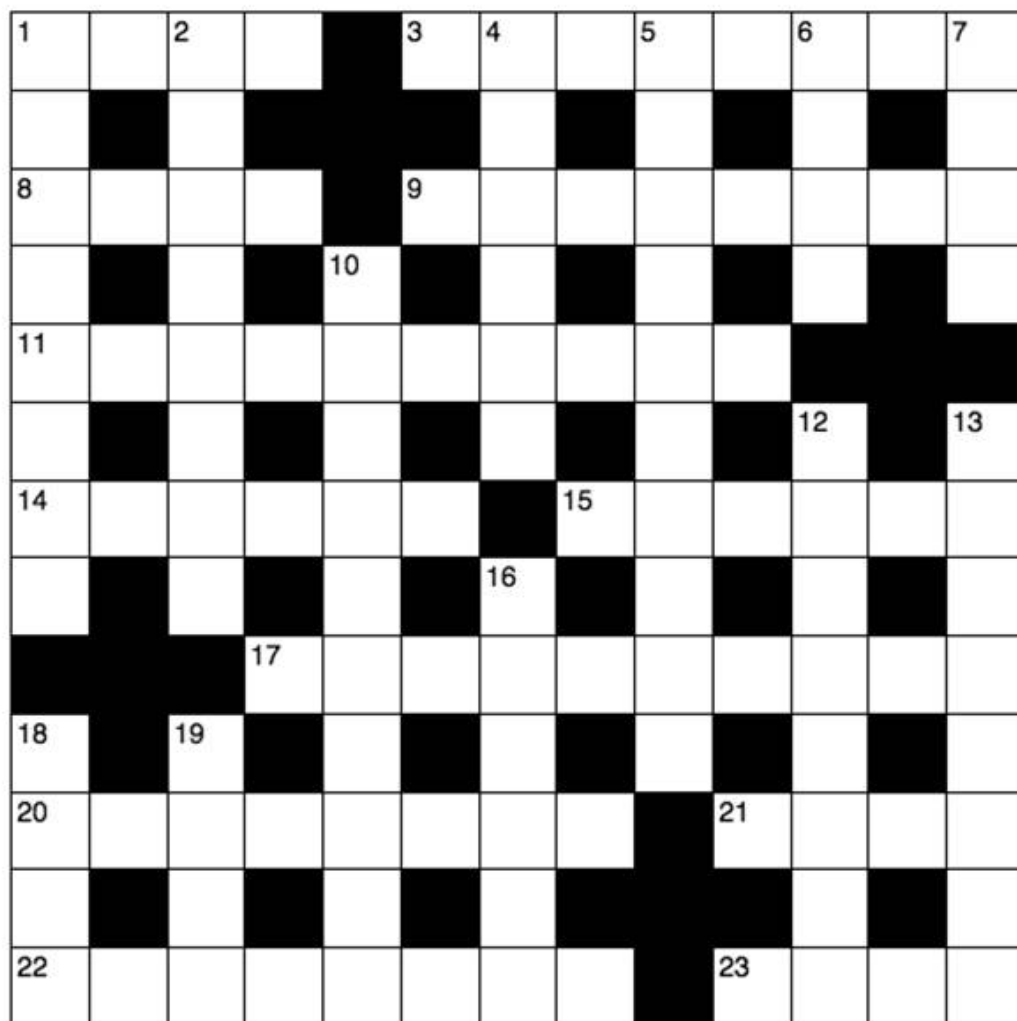
The Y2K bug was a computer flaw involving software and hardware that might have caused problems when dealing with dates beyond 31 Dec, 1999. This was because, for storage reasons, there had been a practice of using two figures for dates – for instance 78 instead of 1978. It was therefore feared that 00 for 2000 might be interpreted by automated equipment as 1900, with resulting chaos in the power industry, transportation or elsewhere that computers were critical.

When this potential problem was recognised, surprisingly late, in the mid-1990s, a great deal of time and money was poured into new computers, particularly by countries like the USA and Australia, as well as the UK.

Other countries, such as Russia, South Korea and Italy, spent very little and yet ironically, suffered no more in the end than those who invested many millions, because there were very few difficulties. A nuclear energy facility in Japan experienced failure in its radiation equipment, but backup facilities ensured there was no danger. Missile launches were detected in Russia and attributed to the Y2K bug, but the launches had been planned as part of Russia's conflict in Chechnya. A damp squib? Well No, awareness was everything for most people.

Parish Pump

CROSSWORD



Across

- 1 'Again Peter denied it, and at that moment a — began to crow' (John 18:27) (4)
 3 Fetters (Job 33:11) (8)
 8 Perform on a musical instrument (1 Samuel 16:23) (4)
 9 Paul describes it as 'the third heaven' (2 Corinthians 12:2–4) (8)
 11 Loyally (Deuteronomy 11:13) (10)
 14 Hens? Me? (anag.) (6)
 15 Not visible (Matthew 6:6) (6)
 17 Predicted site of the final great battle (Revelation 16:16) (10)
 20 Jacob's youngest son (Genesis 35:18) (8)
 21 One of Zophar's eleven sons (1 Chronicles 7:36) (4)
 22 For example,

London, Paris, Rome (8)

23 United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (1,1,1,1)

Down

- 1 Favourite church activity: Fellowship round a — — — (3,2,3)
 2 Divinely bestowed powers or talents (8)
 4 Pile together (1 Thessalonians 2:16) (4,2)
 5 Commanded to justify (John 8:13) (10)
 6 Timothy's grandmother (2 Timothy 1:5) (4)
 7 Killed (Psalm 78:34) (4)
 10 One of Graham Kendrick's best-known songs, — — King (3,7)
 12 Indecency (Mark 7:22) (8)
 13 Unceasing (Jeremiah 15:18) (8)
 16 He prophesied 'the abomination that causes desolation' (Matthew 24:15) (6)
 18 British Board of Film Classification (1,1,1,1)
 19 Pans (anag.) (4)



LABELS

I have my own system for labelling homemade freezer meals. I no longer bother with labels like 'chicken casserole' or 'lasagne' or 'steak and ale pie'. Instead, I use 'Whatever', 'Anything', or 'I Don't Know.' That way when I ask my family what they want for dinner, I always have it right!

Parish Pump

SERVICES

Elders' wish to keep everyone safe, so please stay home if you are unwell. You may wear masks (perhaps for singing). Also, understand our plans may change with little notice. We may sometimes have a speaker and sometimes a simple in-house led service. Video conferencing continues and Leaders or readers may Zoom in or speak in church.

Duties are performed by a small team on a rota. Please check the board for changes.

Date	5 JAN	12 JAN	19 JAN	26 JAN
Service	Morning Worship	Morning Worship	Morning Worship	Morning Communion
Time	10.30 am	10.30 am	10.00 am	10.30am
Leader	Sandy Smith	Elley Noden	Rev Kurauone Mutimwii	Bernie Stevens
Elder Duty	D Philips	P Oliver	JOINT SERVICE AT BRAMHALL	S Smith/D Phillips
Door	M Smith	M Hardie		H Elsdon
Reader				D Green
Flowers	Silk	E Ward		A Stevens
Coffee	H Elsdon	S Smith		
Notes	Epiphany	Baptism of the Lord	CHEADLE HULME CLOSED	Holy Communion

LECTIONARY for JANUARY 2025

JAN 5: John 1:(1-9),10-18, Jeremiah 31:7-14, Psalm 147:12-20, Ephesians 1:3-14

JAN 12: Luke 3:15-17,21-22, Isaiah 43:1-7, Psalm 29, Acts 8:14-17

JAN 19: John 2:1-11, Isaiah 62:1-5, Psalm 36:5-10, 1 Corinthians 12:1-11

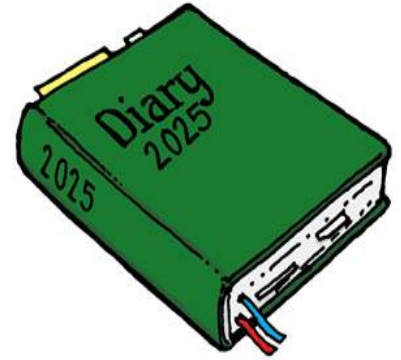
JAN 26: Luke 4:14-21, Nehemiah 8:1-3,5-6,8-10, Psalm 19, 1 Corinthians 12:12-31a



CROSSWORD Answers

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CALENDAR



To the best of the Editor's knowledge, unless you know better...

JANUARY 2025 ...a quiet start to the new year...

Wed 01
Thu 02
Fri 03

2pm Choir Rehearsal

Mon 06
Tues 07
Wed 08
Thu 09
Fri 10

7pm Elders' meeting - Church

7.30pm MP Steering Group - Zoom

2pm Choir rehearsal

Sun 12
Mon 13
Tues 14
Wed 15
Thu 16
Fri 17
Sat 18

11.45 am **CHURCH MEETING** followed by lunch

12 ~ 2pm Soup, Sweet & Meet

2 pm Choir rehearsal

WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY begins

Mon 20
Tues 21
Wed 22
Thu 23
Fri 24
Sat 25

10 am Management meeting - Church

2 pm Choir rehearsal

2.30pm FILM MATINEE

Mon 27
Tues 28
Wed 29
Thu 30
Fri 31

2 pm Choir rehearsal

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