



# Link Up!

**The LORD is my light and my salvation - whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life - of whom shall I be afraid? Psalm 27 v 1**

## Coming up in June:

**On Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> June** we will be looking at the story of Ananias & Saphira in Acts 4: 31 – 5: 11.

**On Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> June** we will continue our series in Acts with Acts 5: 12 – 42 The Apostles are Persecuted.

**On Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> June** we will be looking at Acts 6 and the subject of Servant Leadership. \*

**To complete the month of June, on Sunday 30<sup>th</sup>** we will be holding one of our Combined Services with Parkstone Baptist Church. This will be held at Parkstone Baptist Church, Loch Road, Parkstone. If anyone needs transport to get to Loch Road, then please do talk to one of the deacons.

## Church Members' Meeting

**\*After the service on Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> June** we will be holding our regular Church Members' Meeting. Bring lunch with you and we will provide drinks. The agenda for the meeting will be sent out in advance of the meeting along with any relevant paperwork.

There's only been one occasion where I've genuinely been afraid for my life. I'd been an army chaplain for less than a year. It was about 5 o'clock in the morning, and I was sitting in a shack on a beach waiting for the ferry which would take me from Lunghi to Freetown, the capital of Sierra Leone, where I would be joining A-Squadron, Queen's Dragoon Guards, who were delivering training to the Sierra Leonean Army. It was pitch dark, already nearly 30 degrees and the locals were eyeing me suspiciously.

My journey hadn't started well, my flight from Heathrow being delayed meant I arrived at Lunghi airport at stupid o'clock in the morning. There didn't appear to be anyone there to meet me and the only phone number I had was for the Duty Officer back home in Norfolk. I'm not sure how much he appreciated me waking him, but he gave me the number of one of the young officers from A-Squadron. 'Padre, you need to get a ferry to Freetown and one of our blokes will collect you.' Simple.

A friendly English speaking taxi driver drove me to the ferry; however you could only buy a ferry ticket from the airport, so back we went. The ferry people insisted on taking my luggage separately. As we drove back down to the ferry, through dark villages, on a rough dirt track I began to wonder if placing my trust in this driver had been the right thing to do. Here I was in the middle of nowhere, separated from all my kit and with a complete stranger.

I sat there on the beach, absolutely shattered, feeling somewhat sorry for myself. It was all very well when I was a fit young soldier, but here I was, a tubby pastor, with a wife and children back home, and no back up. I thought to myself 'If I get out of this alive, I'm going to write to the Chaplain General and say "thanks, but no thanks"'

#### Preparing for the General Election

It can't have escaped your notice that we have a General Election approaching on 4<sup>th</sup> July and I'm sure that, like me, you want to use your vote wisely as a Christian. It's not always easy to find out what our local candidates or even the national parties are standing for and to line those things up alongside our Christian values.

I've been looking for some Christian organisations who might be engaging with this and have found the following: -

**The Joint Public Issues Team.** The Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT) is a partnership between the Baptist Union of Great Britain, the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church. The purpose of JPIT is to help the Churches to work together for peace and justice through listening, learning, praying, speaking and acting on public policy issues.

For the election they have produced various resources on their website. One is an Election briefing available on <https://jpit.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/202405-Election-issues-briefing.pdf>

I've downloaded that and can send it to anyone who would like a copy by email or on paper.

The second resource is a set of podcasts looking at six key issues which you can listen to one of the team being interviewed about. It's called Hopes for Manifestos and can be accessed on <https://jpit.uk/hopesformanifestos>

The other source of information is **The Christian Institute**. They are also producing an Election Briefing which will be available from their website. You can find them on <https://www.christian.org.uk/general-election-2024/>

I've signed up to receive that when it's available. They also have a page where you can see your current MP's voting record on key moral issues which I found very interesting. If anyone wants me to send them that briefing, again either on email or paper, then let me know.

I then began to think about the Apostle Paul. If you've ever read the Book of Acts, you'll know that Paul had many journeys which saw him shipwrecked, imprisoned, starved and beaten. According to Acts 16, the first time Paul went to Philippi the authorities had him beaten, flogged and imprisoned. In his letter to the Christians in Philippi, Paul writes about 'pressing on'. He encourages us to forget the past, counting it as rubbish, and press on to what the future holds. As the sun rose above that beach, and Paul's ancient words spoke to me, I pulled myself together and resolved to press on.

The fun and games didn't end there, after a particularly choppy ride across the bay, it turns out there were two ferries from Lunghi to Freetown; I'd chosen the wrong one and was in completely the wrong part of the City! I was eventually picked up by an RAF officer, who climbed out of his Land Rover, looked me up and down and said 'Padre, what on earth are you doing here?!' (or words to that effect!)

In our recent June prayer service we thought about Courage and Boldness – especially those things that make us Bold. Knowing the Bible, those nearly 2000 year old words of Luke and Paul, inspired me that morning in Sierra Leone to have courage, to be bold and do what God had called and gifted me to do.

What gives you courage? What area of your life do you need to be a little bolder?

*Rev Ken Adolphe*

**New Church Directory.** Copies of the newest edition of the Church Directory, which gives up to date contact details for Church Members and Regular Congregation, are now available. These are on the coffee table in the church. Old copies of the directory need to be disposed of by shredding because they contain personal information. If you do not have a paper shredder at home, then please bring them along to church and hand them to one of the deacons for us to dispose of.