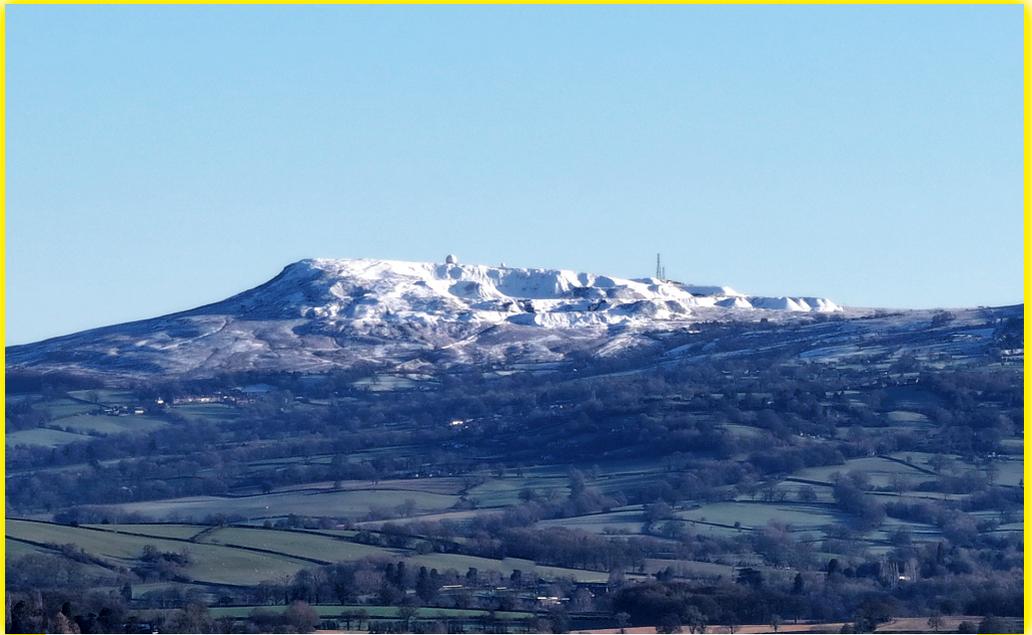


Donations

March 2026

**GREETINGS
FROM
LUDLOW
METHODIST
CHURCH**



After a very wet and miserable few weeks, the Sun came out on Valentine's Day

St Joseph the Carpenter: gracious descendant of King David

Many people know that Joseph was the father of the most famous man who ever lived, but beyond that, we know very little about him. The Gospels name him as the 'father' of Jesus, while also asserting that the child was born of a virgin. Even if he wasn't what we call the 'biological' father, it was important to them that he was a distant descendant of the great King David - a necessary qualification for the Messiah.

It's obvious that Joseph (usually described as a 'carpenter') was not wealthy, because he was allowed to offer the poor man's sacrifice of two pigeons or turtle doves at the presentation of his infant son. No one expected eloquence or wisdom from this man's son. Jesus was born into an unremarkable family, with a doubtless hard-working artisan as His father. There would have been few luxuries in that little home at Nazareth.

Matthew begins his birth narrative with the bald statement that Mary was engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together she became pregnant 'with child from the Holy Spirit'. Joseph was not apparently privy to the divine intervention in her life, and drew the obvious conclusion: it was another man's child. However, he was not the sort of man who wished to disgrace her publicly, so he resolved to 'dismiss her quietly' - end their engagement without fuss, we might say.

However, at that point Joseph had a dream in which he was told by 'an angel of the Lord' not to hesitate to take Mary as his wife, because the child conceived in her was 'from the Holy Spirit', and that the baby was to be named 'Jesus' ('saviour') because He will 'save His people from their sins'. On waking, Joseph did as he had been instructed and took Mary as his wife.

So far as Joseph himself is concerned, we can be pretty sure of a few things. In human, legal terms he was the father of Jesus, he was a carpenter and he had probably died before Jesus began his public ministry. The little we are told suggests a devout, decent and sensitive man, one who shared Mary's anxiety when the 12 year-old Jesus went missing in Jerusalem, and who presumably taught his son the trade of a carpenter.

Joseph has become an icon of the working man - there are many churches nowadays dedicated to 'Joseph the Worker'. He can stand in the calendar of saints for the 'ordinary' person, a straight-forward craftsman who never expected or chose to be in the spotlight of history.

He did what he could, and he was obedient to everything that he believed God required of him. To do the 'ordinary' thing well, to be kind, caring and open to guidance: these are great gifts, and Joseph seems to have had them in abundance.

Prayer for March 2026

(based on Jn3:21, Jn 14:6, Jn 8:12, Jn 16:33, Heb 13:5)

Lord,

In these weeks leading up to Easter, many of us spend time reflecting on what Jesus has done for us and how he can help us live our lives.

But we live in a harsh, confusing world, where traditional values are upended and we can hardly believe some of the things we hear from powerful world leaders. Truth seems to be lost in the darkness.

Lord, your word tells us that, whoever lives by the truth comes into the light.

Jesus says He is the Truth. He also says He is the Light of the world. Help us to hold fast to these facts. Help us to remember that Jesus said that in this world we will have trouble – so we shouldn't be surprised – but that He has overcome the world – so we should be encouraged.

Whatever is going on in the troubled world around us – we can live by the real Truth – and in the real Light – Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour, who will never leave us or forsake us. Thank you so much.

In Jesus name. Amen.

by Daphne Kitching

Abide with me!

Abide with me! fast falls the eventide;
The darkness deepens; Lord with me abide;
When other helpers fail, and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, O abide with me!

Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;
Earth's joys grow dim; its glories pass away;
Change and decay in all around I see;
O thou who changest not, abide with me!

I need Thy presence every passing hour;
What but Thy grace can foil the tempter's power?
Who like Thyself my guide and stay can be?
Through cloud and sunshine, O abide with me!

I fear no foe with Thee at hand to bless;
Ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness;
Where is death's sting? Where grave thy victory?
I triumph still if Thou abide with me.

Hold Thou Thy cross before my closing eyes!
Shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies!
Heaven's morning breaks; and earth's vain shadows flee!
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me!

HF Lyte

I Will abide!

I will abide, though night is drawing nigh;
Tho' clouds and darkness now obscure the sky,
I know thy sorrows, see thy falling tear,
Give Me thy hand, for I am ever near.

Tho' earthly joys are fleeing fast away;
Lean upon Me and I will be thy stay;
My grace is all sufficing, rich and free,
Have perfect faith, I will abide by thee!

My eye is watching o'er thee, troubled child,
My arm shall guide thee though the path be wild;
Midst storms and tempests to My bosom flee,
Be not afraid, I will abide with thee!

A little while and then it will be light,
Thy faith shall be exchanged for perfect sight;
No fears to vex thee, nothing to molest,
For thou shalt be with me in perfect rest.

When friends forsake thee I will be thy friend;
My love shall keep thee until life shall end;
And when heaven's golden gate thine eye shall see,
I will, eternally, abide with thee!

William G Honey

Supplied by Sylvia Treacy

Ask children about angels – and this is what you get!

Angels talk all the way while they're flying you up to heaven. The main subject is where you went wrong before you got dead. – Daniel, age 9

When an angel gets mad, he takes a deep breath and counts to ten. And when he lets out his breath again, somewhere there's a tornado. – Reagan, age 10

Angels have a lot to do and they keep very busy. If you lose a tooth, an angel comes in through your window and leaves money under your pillow. Then when it gets cold, angels go south for the winter. – Sara, age 6

Adam and Eve's true nationality

A Brit, a Frenchman and a Russian were viewing a painting of Adam and Eve frolicking in the Garden of Eden. "Look at that garden they are maintaining so well," mused the Brit. "They must be British."

"Nonsense," the Frenchman disagreed. "They're naked, and so beautiful. Clearly, they are French."

"Ah, but no clothes, no shoes, no shelter," the Russian pointed out, "they have only an apple to eat, and they're being told this is Paradise. They are Russian."



THE HEREFORD PASSION

Friday 6 & Saturday 7 March | 7.30 pm

Tickets: Adult £10, Children £6

Save 10% when you buy tickets for The Hereford Passion & The Hereford Mysteries at the same time

PHOTOGRAPHY: CAROLINE POTTER

www.herefordcathedral.org/event/hereford-passion-2026

This production has been kindly sponsored by The Passion Trust and the Hereford Cathedral Theatre Angels



herefordcathedral.org

This is an epic and dramatic re-telling of the Easter story. The cast is made up of people from across the Herefordshire community and with a stunning soundtrack, powerful lighting and all amidst the beautiful architecture of the cathedral, this is a performance not to be missed!

Tickets are £10 for adult, £6 children and are available from the Cathedral website: The Hereford Passion | Hereford Cathedral



Christian Resilience in Dark Times

Lenten Reflections

followed by discussion

every Tuesday

February 24th to March 24th

2-30pm to 3-45pm

in the Zion Room
at Ludlow Methodist Church

Led by Rev Dr Neil Richardson

A warm invitation is extended to all churches in and around Ludlow

Ludlow **Methodist Church** 

CTaL
Churches Together around Ludlow

One recent Sunday afternoon Elizabeth and I attended a service in Bettisfield Chapel (northwest of Wem, but just across the Welsh border), in the north of our circuit, to mark the chapel's closure. The normal congregation had dwindled to a few, but for the occasion the little chapel was full, with more than 60 people – the rows of chairs were so closely packed that it was difficult to stand up for the hymns! And although it was for some a sad occasion, the mood was upbeat. Many of the congregation had come from Wem, where the church has offered a warm welcome to the Bettisfield folk.

Elizabeth wanted to go as it was the home chapel of one of her school friends and she had fond memories of the Hughes family and going to 'specials' there, in the days when we used to support other chapels for Harvest and Anniversary services. Her friend, Enid, is now in a care home but her two older sisters were there and it was so good to see them again.

The service included reminiscences by some long-standing members, recalling Sunday School anniversaries and other events of years ago, bringing smiles to many faces. Before the service closed, after which we were treated to delicious scones, cakes and biscuits, tea and coffee, Rev. Julia and Deacon Carys led us in a responsive reading which I thought was very moving and worth bringing to a wider readership. Although it directly relates to the occasion of a church closure, I think it can also bring comfort in other circumstances – people move around quite a lot these days, for education, for work, for retirement, after bereavement, or to be nearer family.

It reads like a modern Psalm - not an accident, I'm sure:

God remains with us: Though we let go of this cherished place

God remains with us: Though we will feel sadness and loss

God remains with us: Though we will serve in different ways and pursue different causes

God remains with us: Though we will worship in new places

God's love remains with us: God's justice inspires us

God's spirit will call us to action: God is eternally for us and with us

Thanks be to God!

Geoff Wright

Green Pages

A round-up of environmental
and climate-change news

March 2026

Communion

I have developed a new love and appreciation for the word '**communion**' in both a faith and non-faith context. It is a combination of 'comm' meaning with or together, and 'union' or oneness; so basically: people coming together. Our path to a safe, liveable and just future on this beautiful planet hinges on communion.

As Christians, we are called into communion by encouraging each other in our public witness and work towards a better world. Communion must be both among us and transcend our faith to be with everyone we encounter, whether they be Christians, people of other faiths, or none, and even those with whom we disagree.

As a sustainability professional I constantly engage with others on environmental issues. In conversations, presentations or workshops, I sometimes refer to 'the endless pursuit of better': making a series of small changes as part of a longer journey, and not letting perfection be the barrier to action. 'Communion' emphasises how that change is best done together: in communion with others.

The Christian climate scientist Katharine Hayhoe talks about how our response to climate change and ecological damage can feel like we are trying to push a huge boulder up a steep hill. By ourselves that seems impossible, but as a team, in communion with people who share our concerns, with many hands on that 'boulder', we can and will do it.

Finally, a quote from Bill McKibben, another Christian activist and author, who said "the most important thing an individual can do right now, is not to be such an individual".

Neil Clark, Green Christian

Growing food on landfill

In Wiltshire, a waste company plans to grow food in greenhouses sitting on top of a landfill. If approved, this would be the first project of its kind in the world. The company behind the plan, already captures methane from its landfill to generate power. Now it's proposing to use the heat and carbon dioxide (CO₂) created to boost plant growth in on-site greenhouses.

The project director said, "What comes out of the gas-engine is quite clean CO₂, which is already used in greenhouses in Europe. There won't be any contact with the landfill soil. Instead they'll use hydroponic systems, where plants are grown in nutrient-rich water.

The landfill will be reshaped to flatten parts of the site and build lined pits called 'cells'. Waste will be placed into these cells to create gas. The greenhouses above the cells will be designed to move, so that once a cell is used up, the greenhouse can shift, and new waste added below. This system makes the site reusable and avoids long-term contamination risks." The plan also includes adding grass and trees to improve the site's appearance and reduce its environmental footprint.

The project could help tackle several major challenges:

Food security: By producing up to 80% of the fruit and vegetables for nearby towns, it reduces reliance on imported food.

Lower emissions: Using waste gas for energy and CO₂ reduces the release of harmful greenhouse gases into the atmosphere.

Fewer food miles: Since the food is grown locally, it doesn't need to be transported long distances, reducing emissions and costs.

Efficient use of waste: The project reuses landfill gases and organic matter to create something valuable.

While the science behind the project seems solid, getting approval may be a hurdle; the biggest challenge isn't technical, it's getting people to accept a new way of growing food. The team insists it will be safe, clean, and nutritious as the plants are grown without touching the landfill soil.

Happy Eco News

Temperate rainforests in the UK

Scientists are discovering that temperate rainforest restoration in the UK could play a crucial role in fighting climate change worldwide. These misty woodlands, primarily found in western Scotland, represent some of the oldest forests in the British Isles. The ancient hazelwoods on Scotland's Hebridean islands have been growing for nearly ten thousand years, making them older than any pine forest or oak woodland in Britain. Yet most people have never heard of them, and fewer than one percent of Britain's original temperate rainforests remain today.

Walking through these ancient woods feels like a journey to another world. Thick canopies block most sunlight, creating what researchers refer to as "fairytale darkness." Moss and lichen cover every surface, while peculiar fungi with names like 'hazel glove' and 'glue crust fungus' grow directly from tree branches. These unusual organisms play a vital role in forest health. Some fungi literally glue branches together for support, while others form partnerships with roots that can increase tree growth by more than half when conditions are right.

Healthy temperate rainforests capture massive amounts of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, with mature forests storing up to four times more carbon per hectare than typical woodlands. If Britain were to restore just half of its original rainforest cover, these ecosystems could absorb millions of tons of carbon annually.

Herefordshire, Gloucestershire and Worcestershire Wildlife Trusts are working together to create a 60-mile corridor connecting semi-natural pockets of ancient woodland to create a climate resilient landscape, all within 30 miles of the homes of around 8 million people.

If Britain can crack the code of temperate rainforest restoration, these methods could help save similar ecosystems worldwide. It will require long-term thinking and sustained investment, but with climate change accelerating and biodiversity loss reaching crisis levels, these ancient woodlands offer hope.

Happy Eco News

Seed Saving

Seed saving is not just a practical gardening skill, it is something much deeper. At a time when our food systems feel increasingly fragile, saving seeds is a quiet act that carries hope, resistance, and care across generations, to shape a better future.

Seed saving is an act of **optimism**. To save a seed is to believe there *will* be a next season. It assumes that someone will be here to plant, tend, harvest, and save again. In a world shaped by uncertainty, it is a refusal to believe that the future is closed. It is faith in land, in people, and in the possibility of renewal.

Seeds embody **patience**; to think beyond the immediate and convenient, not just something we consume, but something we steward. You save seeds because you believe something still can grow.

Seed saving is also a form of **activism**. It quietly challenges a system increasingly dominated by uniformity, patents, and profit. By saving and sharing seeds, growers and communities protect biodiversity, and reduce reliance on industrial inputs.

Crucially, seed saving builds **resilience**. In the face of climate change, disrupted supply chains, and rising food insecurity, locally sourced seeds matter more than ever.

Seed saving is also an act of **solidarity**. Across the world, seed libraries and community seed banks are being destroyed by conflict, climate disasters and restrictive legislation. When seeds disappear, so does cultural memory of crops adapted to specific places, and generations of shared knowledge. Saving seeds where we are becomes a way of standing alongside those who are losing the ability to do so.

So seed saving is both deeply local and profoundly global, linking everyday gardening actions to movements, and to systemic change.

Shropshire Good Food Partnership

The Green Pages of the Ludlow Methodist Church monthly magazine are brought to you by the Care for Creation Group. For more information please contact Elizabeth Wright.

We are glad you are here

Welcome, whether you are joining us today in our building or online. Our cameras focus on those leading our service, but if you would like to ensure that you are not caught on camera, please sit outside the pillars on the south of the church.

Welcome if you are disabled, unwell, have experiences of dementia, physical, sensory or mental health issues, or are neurodivergent. The order of service can also be found online, and large print copies are also available. The hearing loop works best on the south side of the church. Step-free access to the church is via a ramp on the north side, and to the Crypt and Hall via lifts in the porch.

Welcome to babies, children and young people. We understand that young children make noise. If your baby becomes upset during the service, you are welcome to go to the back of the church, if needed, to settle them. We support breastfeeding in services; we also have a room allocated if you prefer.

Welcome to anyone in need of safeguarding. If you would like to reach our safeguarding team please email ... (details).

Welcome to all heritages and experiences of race, culture and language. You are also very welcome if you are LGBTQIA+.

Welcome if you are agnostic, or from a faith tradition other than Christianity.

Welcome if you are wary of faith.

Welcome if you are exploring.

Welcome if you are here to support someone else.

If you would like to explore what you believe in a friendly and non-judgemental group ... (details of 'Being With' course).

This church believes that all have the right to the basics of life, dignity and respect, especially those who find themselves on the margins of society.

This was found in a printed order of service from St Martin-in-the-Fields, Trafalgar Square, London

Supplied by Mike Owens

Country's most deprived parishes receive over £22m investment across three dioceses

Three Church of England dioceses are receiving over £22 million to support parishes in some of the country's most deprived areas, with programmes focused on revitalising churches, nurturing young disciples, and equipping leaders for mission.

The Diocese of Exeter has agreed investment of £10m with the Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment Board (SMMIB) in a programme across Devon to energise clergy for mission, empower lay leaders and resource outreach to children and young people. It includes a specific plan to reshape the Church in Plymouth, the largest city in Devon and with one of the highest levels of deprivation.

£9.9m has also been agreed with Manchester Diocese, to support a programme to provide practical support to parishes, expand ministry with children and young people, revitalise and plant new churches, and develop missional leaders.

Meanwhile, £2.3m has been invested in a programme to help the Diocese of St Albans grow younger and more diverse by nurturing new missionary disciples and leaders, revitalising and planting churches and increasing mission to multi-faith and multi-ethnic communities.

How God works

A grandmother was taking her young grandson for a walk in the park. The daffodils were in bloom, and it was a beautiful Spring day. Wanting to encourage her grandson's spiritual understanding of the world, she said: "Doesn't it look like an artist painted this scenery? Did you know God did all this?"

Her grandson replied: "Oh yes, and God did it left-handed, too." In astonishment, the grandmother asked what he meant. "Well, He must have done," said her grandson, "because we learned at church last week that Jesus sits on God's right hand."

Mothering Sunday - March 26th

Mothering Sunday - the fourth Sunday of Lent- offers families an opportunity to honour the women who have nurtured them. Lots of different streams and traditions have come together to make today's Mothering Sunday the special day that it is.

In the Middle Ages it was an occasion for everyone to visit their 'mother' church - the place where they had been baptised. Later, an opportunity for those who worked away from home to visit their mothers became added to the mix of reasons to make it a special day.

Today we honour all women who have in one way or another been special to us, and in church this is usually signalled by small bunches of flowers for every woman present.

Treating mums and grans to Sunday lunch, chocolates and flowers is also part of the present mix. And will there be a simnel cake to be seen - a tradition from ages past - with its rich layers of marzipan, and eleven balls of marzipan on top, reminders of the 11 disciples who remained faithful to Jesus?

Not everyone has enjoyed a wonderful or enduring relationship with their mum, so lest we get carried away on a wave of love and sentimentality, there is usually space in the Mothering Sunday church service to reflect on and pray for those whose relationships with their mother were not all they might have been.

Also, there are the families blighted by the lack of, or death of a child; families remembering a mum who died tragically young; women who never had a child but would have dearly loved the opportunity; all these and more are a recognition of the imperfections of human love, human life.

These imperfections can be brought in prayer to the God who mothers us. In the Old Testament, Isaiah speaks of God comforting His people like a mother hen. In the New Testament, both Matthew and Luke bear witness to Jesus expressing His desire to gather His people as a mother hen gathers her chicks under her wings. Yes, God has strong maternal qualities which He invites us to discover and enjoy!

Have you discovered the mothering, nurturing, maternal qualities which God offers to all people? It's lovelier than flowers, more long-lasting than simnel cake, better than a visit from family, and it's free to everyone who wants it - it could be yours!

Did you know...?

From the start of 2026 some significant changes have been, or are about to be made, to driving rules and regulations in the UK. The following list is by no means extensive but, hopefully, will cover most of the changes that will affect you.

The Highway Code

Many ask the question; “is the highway code the law?”. Not necessarily, but the rules in the Highway Code are backed by legal requirements, so failing to adhere to these rules can result in fines, penalty points, or prosecution. Thus, while the Highway Code itself isn't law, many of its rules are enforceable by law.

When was the last time that you read the Highway Code? I was a driving instructor 20 years ago and the Highway Code was then my constant companion! But I haven't touched it since. It gets updated every few years, but the problem here is that those updates are not generally made public. It's easy to fall foul of those guides and commit an offence without even realising that you've done so. But ignorance of the law is no excuse, so I'm told.

The last highway code update was in 2024 and introduced several important updates aimed at enhancing road safety. One major change is the new hierarchy of road users, prioritising the safety of pedestrians and cyclists. This requires drivers to yield to these vulnerable groups at crossings and junctions, encouraging more considerate driving practices. Another key update involves stricter rules on mobile device usage, making it illegal to use hand-held devices for any purpose while driving, including payments at drive-throughs. Many of the changes proposed for introduction this year will constitute another update.

Parking on Pavements

It has been illegal to park on pavements in London for many years, and in Scotland since 2024. This year local authorities will be given new and improved powers to crack down on drivers doing just that. Pavement parking may still be acceptable in some areas and local authorities may permit it when they deem it safe to do so. Parking in front of dropped kerbs and driveways creates an obstruction and is already illegal nationwide.

Engine idling

Leaving your engine running unnecessarily on public roads is already an offence. The standard fine is £20 rising to £40 if unpaid. If taken to court fines can be as high as £1000. Leaving your car unattended with the engine running on public roads is technically a criminal offence rather than a civil one. It's likely that local authorities will be given greater powers to deal with engine idling. This is aimed at reducing pollution. For example, a diesel engine emits nine times more pollutants at idle than driving on the motorway at 70mph.

MOT changes

Changes to the MOT will see far stricter control of the testers rather than the test itself. They can now be banned from testing for a period of two or five years. This could result in having to wait longer for a test due to the shortage of testers. Book your test early. Contrary to popular belief there is no period of grace, driving even one day over the test date is an offence.

Vehicle Excise Duty (Road Tax)

There are several changes scheduled for this year. The standard rate is £195 but is likely to increase in line with inflation. All cars pay VED at the moment. Plans are in motion for electric cars, and hybrids, to pay 'per mile' from 2028. If your car was valued at over £40,000 when new, even if you buy it second hand at a price lower than that, you will pay the 'luxury car tax' on top of the VED for the next five years after the first annual renewal. This is currently £425 per annum. Electric cars have been given a concession in that their value before paying this extra tax will be £50,000, back dated to 1st April 2025. The treasury makes around £5 billion each year from VED.

Fuel Duty

The Government is scrapping the freeze on fuel duty from September this year. The freeze has been in place for 16 years and has apparently cost the Government £120 billion in lost revenue. The price of petrol at the pump will go up by 1p a litre on September 1, 2026, another 2p per litre on December 1, 2026 and a final 2p per litre on March 1, 2027. That will mean filling up a 60-litre tank will then cost you an extra £3. After that, fuel duty rates will continue to increase in line with inflation.

Older Drivers

The Government has issued a White Paper on the likelihood of implementing compulsory eye tests for drivers over 70, with the possibility of introducing it for younger drivers also. The paper gives various options, but nothing has yet been decided. You can imagine that this will be a huge strain on opticians and the paper talks about setting up specialist centres just to conduct this test. They also speculate that eye tests may be given free under the NHS, or that the Government will pay half and the driver will pay half. There appears to be much still to do before this becomes legislation.

Learner Drivers

Although we have the strictest driving test standards in Europe, possibly the world, the highest statistics for road traffic deaths and casualties is amongst the age group 17 to 29 (50%) while the deaths and casualties of those aged 70 and older is 30% (2024 figures). New measures to improve driving standards and reduce casualties are being considered for learner drivers, these include:

- a minimum time learning period, which outlines a minimum number of months that learners must be in the learner stage
- a minimum number of supervised hours, which outlines a minimum number of required supervised practical driving hours
- a logbook to record learning
- a structured learning syllabus, which mandates requirements for learners to have practical experience learning to drive in a range of different circumstances

In 2024, very few casualties were recorded on motorways, despite motorways accounting for a fifth of all road traffic in Great Britain, indicating that a person is less likely to be involved in a collision when travelling on a motorway compared to urban or rural roads.

So, do we need more motorways to keep the accident rates down? Or simply better driving standards for all.

Sources: Various Government information sites

Ron Gittings

REVELATION WINDOW

You may have wondered what has happened to the stained-glass window panel that was displayed at the front of the church. It now has a permanent home in the back porch where natural light now illuminates it. Look out for it next time you come in that way or perhaps go that way intentionally to have a look.



It now has a permanent home in the back porch where natural light now illuminates it. Look out for it next time you come in that way or perhaps go that way intentionally to have a look.

The Revelation window was made by Rev Kim and Stella Stilwell with help from David Harlington, as part of Kim's sabbatical project in 2023, and was given to this church when he retired.

The inspiration behind the window was to help us ponder our understanding of the world, as seen through the book of Revelation, and to think about our response to the need to find wisdom for God's world today.

- The animals (beasts) represent earthly empires, past and present.
- The trees and their leaves signify the presence of God, permeating all things.
- At the centre of the picture is the Lamb (Christ) who leads us on the path to the mysterious heavenly kingdom, if we are willing to follow.

Mike Owens