

Donations

September 2026

**GREETINGS
FROM
LUDLOW
METHODIST
CHURCH**



Llandaff Cathedral, Cardiff

This is the first in a series of three reflections that Mike Owens has been asked to write, based on a sermon he preached at the beginning of August.

1. Good Enough

Are you one of those people who wants everything to be done properly? I tend to be like that. If I can't work out exactly how to do something, and get it right, then I'm likely to put it off. If you are like me, perhaps we try too hard or set our sights too high? The danger is that, in striving for the impossible, we miss the possible. Perhaps you're not like that and you are content to just get it done ... as long as it's good enough that's OK.

What do we really understand when we hear the words 'good enough'? 'Good enough' can be a negative concept, as in only good enough, or just good enough, or not good enough. However, there are many situations in which 'good enough' is the best solution.

For example, in computer software and systems development the principle of 'good enough' favours quick-and-simple designs above elaborate systems designed by committees. Similarly, Relief and Development agencies ask themselves "What difference are we making?" and "How do we know?" So, a few years ago, Oxfam published 'The Good Enough Guide' to help field workers to prioritise simple, practical solutions that are quick and easy to implement.

In his book about Wisdom and Ministry, Michael Sadgrove, a former Dean of Durham, says that *"if our own faith and hope are a lived experience, our testimony will be 'good enough'."*

But we often behave differently, because we believe ourselves to be not good enough. So we won't volunteer for jobs in the church, and we're not prepared to share the story of our faith with others, because we think it's not good enough.

Often, we forget that Jesus died on the cross to make us good enough. Throughout his earthly ministry Jesus offered everyone that he met the opportunity to be good enough. He never turned anyone away, from a lonely beggar to crowds of thousands, from a troubled demon-possessed man to hated tax-collectors, or misguided religious leaders. He welcomed them all; they were all good enough for him, and he spent time with them, healing the sick and teaching about the Kingdom of God.

To each of us is given gifts that are good enough to serve God in our daily living, so we shouldn't be shy about them because God has a plan for each one of us. Discerning what that plan is may be difficult. We all go chasing after the wrong thing sometimes. When we think we have all the answers it is all too easy to neglect our relationship with God. But when we concentrate on getting this right then we can hear God more clearly and have the confidence to follow him.

It is often in the small things that our faithful service can develop. If we aim too high, we can miss opportunities along the way.

Mike Owens

Next month: More than enough PP You sep26

Those new Royal Mail solar-powered digital post-boxes

Royal Mail has converted about 3,500 of the old trusty red post-boxes into digital affairs, out of the 115,000 post-boxes in the country.

The new solar-powered digital post-boxes feature a solar panel roof, a built-in barcode scanner, and an extra-large drawer that accepts parcels up to shoebox size.

The idea is that the solar panels on top capture sunlight to power the digital scanner and automated drawer mechanism. So, then all you have to do is to scan the 2D barcode on your pre-paid parcel label, using the box's scanner to automatically open the large drawer.

The traditional letter slot remains, for regular stamped mail.

As for proof of posting? You use the Royal Mail app on your phone to track and request confirmation when you drop off an item.

If you don't want to download an app or use a printer, the good news is that you can still send your parcels as before, at a post office counter.

“AI can act for the common good, but only if Governments remain sovereign”

The Bishop of Oxford has backed calls for the right of Governments to set policy and regulate big tech as he warned of the risks posed by rapid technological change.

Making his recent valedictory speech in the House of Lords, Bishop Steven Croft said there were ‘many gains’ from new technology but there were also risks to society in areas such as mental health, social cohesion, truth, and patterns of work and distribution of power.

Speaking of advances in Artificial Intelligence (AI), he said the risks posed were partly a product of its accelerating speed of development.

“The speed of change, and the significant power unleashed, make this revolution distinct from other technical developments in the past, because there is a risk that the speed of change will itself undermine the very benefits that change brings,” he said.

“There is simply no time for public trust and confidence to grow, and you have heard of the growing public awareness of risk and the desire that something be done.”

Bishop Steven said there was an urgent need for a ‘clear standard and statement of intent’ from the Government, asserting sovereignty for Governments over the implementation of new technologies, that was “ethically shaped and in the interests of our whole society”.

He added that there also needed to be moves towards drawing together the “combined and collective power of nation states” to act on this issue for the good of all.

“The most important part of a building is its foundation, the most vital part of a boat in a storm is the keel giving stability in the water,” he said.

“As the world navigates the transition to the age of AI, we will need more than ever before the values and ethics of our common tradition, rooted in centuries of Christian faith and practice. AI can be a tool for the common good, a source of great benefit, but only if Governments remain sovereign.”

Bishop Steven was making his final speech after nearly 13 years in the House of Lords.

Orleton Chapel

On Sunday 9th August Orleton Chapel celebrated its 136th anniversary. We welcomed Rev Dr Richard Clutterbuck and his wife Rev. Diane from Tewksbury, who jointly led the service. Diane spoke about their experiences in Tonga explaining the beginnings of the church there and giving examples of the inspirational people they met during their recent visit. Richard preached on the ‘true vine’ reminding us that Jesus is the vine and us are the branches, bearing fruit if connected to Him. Richard pointed out that we should be prepared to work at God’s plan for us just where we are and be prepared to await His perfect timing.

Afterwards we enjoyed lunch together in the summer sun and we welcomed visitors from both Wyson and Ludlow Methodist Churches too.



Rev Dr Richard & Rev Diane Clutterbuck



Lunch in the garden

THE PRIVILEGE OF EDUCATION



A recent plotline in *The Archers*, Radio 4's 'everyday story of country folk', has concerned the local primary school which recently had a poor Ofsted report. Panic ensued: 'What can we do? Go private or travel further'. How fortunate we are to have such choices, even if it doesn't always feel like that.

Christian Aid started responding to the needs of displaced Syrians over 12 years ago, following local conflicts. With local partners they provide safe spaces where children and young people can improve their skills, increasing social inclusion through remedial education, vocational training, psychosocial support and community involvement.

In February 2023 there were several earthquakes which devastated southern Turkey. 4,500 people were killed and more than 10,000 buildings were destroyed. Christian Aid responded alongside existing and new partners and £14 million was raised through the emergency appeal. The initial response included cash distribution and a focus on child protection, including reuniting children with their parents, where possible. The programme evolved to include work on reducing risks, enhancing preparedness and supporting communities where they had identified particular needs.

Ten-year-old Samir lived with his family and friends in a small town in northern Idlib, about 30 km from the Turkish border and very close to the epicentre, when the earthquake struck in February 2023. He had not been attending school and had fallen behind with reading,

writing and maths. Samir's father had heard that Christian Aid's local partners working in Idlib were offering learning opportunities and could help children like Samir. He was offered special one-to-one help including educational and emotional support at a child-friendly space in a community centre, in their hometown.

'I consider this place is my second home and it is where I feel safe', Samir said. He particularly enjoyed colouring in, craft and writing. 'I love this place very much. I can play with toys and learn from the teacher - I've learnt my numbers and Arabic letters. I come here three times a week and always look forward to it'.

Part of a message from Christian Aid following Christian Aid Week: '...together we've seen an incredible week... your support will help communities around the world to access the tools and resources as well as the opportunities they need in order to thrive.

I hope you have already bought your ticket for the Christian Aid Coffee Morning, generously sponsored by Icon Coffee, in St Laurence's from 10am on Thursday 13 August. If not just come along and buy one at the door.

Claire Wilcox




COFFEE MORNING

Thursday 13 August 10-12.30 pm
at St Laurence's Church
ADMIT ONE – £4.00
Hot drinks from Icon Coffee
Books, cakes, produce.

Religious persecution on the rise worldwide

More countries are persecuting people for their faith.

So reports the Pew Research Center in the USA. Its most recent annual study of religious freedom shows that the number of countries with *high* or *very high* levels of social hostilities involving religion rose sharply in 2023 (the latest year for which data is available).

Among the reasons are increases in the harassment of religious minorities and worldwide reverberations of Hamas' October 7th attack on southern Israel and Israel's military response in Gaza.

In 2023, 55 countries had elevated (high or very high) levels of social hostilities involving religion.

Pew Center monitors a total of 198 countries and territories around the world. After categorising incidents that have been publicly reported by the U.S. State Department, the United Nations and other international organisations, the Pew Center rates each country on two scales, ranging from 0 to 10 points.

The **Government Restrictions Index** (GRI) captures various ways that government officials, laws and policies can impinge on religious freedom. In 2023, 58 countries had high or very high levels of government restrictions on religion. Among them were China, Iran, Afghanistan, Indonesia, Syria and Uzbekistan.

The **Social Hostilities Index** (SHI) captures various kinds of harassment and violence by private individuals and nongovernmental organisations (including terrorist groups) that are motivated by religion or that target religious communities. Among the countries with very high SHI scores in 2023 were Nigeria, India, Israel, Syria, Bangladesh and Pakistan.

Among the religious groups, Christians faced persecution in the most countries: incidents were recorded in 165 nations.

Overall, Pew has estimated that 78 per cent of the world's population were living in countries experiencing high or very high levels of government restrictions on religion, or religion-related social hostilities, or both.

Nigeria retains the world's highest social-hostilities score.

Green Pages

A round-up of environmental
and climate-change news

September 2026

The global energy crisis

What do sunshine, seaweed and soil have in common? The answer is that none of them need to be shipped through the Strait of Hormuz. And that might just be the silver lining to the economic maelstrom that has hit our forecourts and supermarket shelves. It has exposed our dependence on oil and gas, not just to fuel our cars but to feed ourselves, thanks to our reliance on synthetic fertilisers.

For decades, environmentalists have been crying out for a shift to greener technologies as a way of breaking this addiction. But they've struggled to make headway, not least because climate change still isn't seen as an immediate threat in most corridors of power, let alone most households. However, soaring fuel prices and looming food shortages have sparked a sudden surge of excitement in the climate solutions that campaigners have been shouting about for years.

Countries that have invested heavily in renewable energy are now reaping the benefits compared with oil and gas. For example, Pakistan's share of electricity from solar has risen to 32%. The closure of the Strait of Hormuz has squeezed global supply of fossil fuel, but solar energy from the sun is not affected. A significant share of the global trade in nitrogen fertilisers also comes through the Strait of Hormuz – but farmers practising regenerative agriculture, save over 60% of fertiliser costs by using alternative natural fertilisers like seaweed.

The real danger in this latest crisis is not that we can't innovate our way into a greener, more secure alternative. It's that, when oil starts flowing again, we will lapse into complacency.

Martin Wright: Positive News

Positive tipping points

Norway has had a dramatic shift towards electric vehicles, with nearly 80% of new car registrations. The cost of new solar and wind projects are now cheaper than new fossil fuel projects in most of the world. Both are examples of positive tipping points. These range from the adoption of heat pumps, to the use of green ammonia as fuel for shipping, through to the rise of plant-based proteins. For a particular solution or technology to reach its positive tipping point, it needs to be affordable, attractive, and accessible. In the case of Norway, import taxes and car registration duties for EVs have been waived and parking is free.

According to a recent report, positive tipping points could be reached before 2030 in sectors representing 90 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions. There are hundreds of researchers from all over the globe now working to understand how to make that happen.

Professor Tim Lenton, University of Exeter, was one of the scientists sounding the alarm on the climate-crisis decades ago. Today, instead of focusing on what doom might lie ahead, he's pioneering research on positive tipping points that might actually save us. *"This is an idea that's drawing people in because we're all realising the need for plausible grounds for hope"* says Lenton.

Lenton finds himself in a unique place. He splits his time researching climate breakdown as well as what might set us free. *"I think I have an inner optimism, which is part of the reason why I became a scientist in the first place. I'm captivated by the world around in a positive way and I want to understand it."*

Does he think we're going to get ourselves out of this mess? *"I hope so, but I don't want to just be dealing in hope, I'm a practical person. I think it hinges on if we can shift our understanding of the world and how that informs our actions. I can't predict how it will unfold, but I think we're a pretty resourceful species. We have a lot of qualities as well as a lot of flaws. It could go either way – that's why I work on both sides of the coin."*

It's rare to meet an academic who is interested not just in shaping research, but in convening a social movement. He says he watches his audiences' faces to see what's resonating with them.

So how can we support positive tipping points? Lenton recommends using the power of your pension – putting your money towards an ethical pension provider is a powerful way to support industries that are catalysing positive change. Another way, which is relatively easy and cheap, is to eat more plant-based proteins. And simply, participate in democracy. *"We have a voice,"* says Lenton, *"If we think about it, we suddenly realise we've got more levers than we thought we might have as individuals."*

Sarah LaBrecque: Positive News

Ditch your plastic utensils

A new campaign from Breast Cancer UK is urging the public to switch from plastic utensils and sign a pledge for safer regulations. Our plastic utensils could be seasoning our food with potentially harmful endocrine disrupting chemicals (EDCs).

Some of these chemicals can mimic or increase the production of oestrogen in the body and have been linked to increased risk of serious illnesses. Plastic utensils are problematic because they have a low melting point so microplastics or EDCs can leach into your food. The utensils can crack, warp and chip over time, and the melted or sharp jagged edges can damage non-stick coatings, causing them to shed yet more EDCs into your meal.

Breast Cancer UK is suggesting that you switch from plastic utensils to wooden ones. Look out for those made from FSC wood. It is also calling on the UK Government to ban EDCs from our everyday products. You can add your name to the campaign at <https://action.breastcanceruk.org.uk/a/EDCs>

Ethical Consumer

Ethical deodorant ratings

'Ethical Consumer' magazine rates different products in a similar way to Which?. In the latest issue one of the products examined is deodorants. The ratings are listed under eight different headings ranging from environmental, working conditions and Israel/Palestine issues.

'Fit Pit' is a locally made deodorant, produced by 'Green Woman' on the Eco Park in Ludlow. There are 49 products listed and Fit Pit is one of the Best Buys and number two in the list.

If you are interested in seeing how your favourite deodorant scores there is a list on the **Care for Creation notice board** in the cafe area. Several of the Best Buys can be purchased at Myriad Organics in Ludlow.

Cars are getting bigger

Damian Hursey, on the 'Joy in Enough' website, discusses the environmental and safety effects of increasingly bigger cars, especially SUVs. Why is this happening and who benefits? Is it just increasing profits for carmakers?

This article is too long for our Green Pages, but copies of it are available on the **Care for Creation notice board** in the cafe area. It makes interesting and challenging reading. Please help yourself to a copy.

What can I do?

Stretton Climate Care has arranged a topical talk which addresses the adaptation we need to make as a result of the extreme weather that the world has been experiencing.

Dr Chloe Brimicombe of Oxford University's Department of Social Policy and Intervention has agreed to make a presentation. Chloe is a climate scientist whose research focuses on the impacts of extreme heat and other types of extreme weather on society and policy and interventions to reduce these impacts. The key issues are that increasingly extreme weather is impacting our lives in the UK, and climate affects everything from energy, food security, transport and health and social care.

It may feel like there is nothing we can do and things are continuing to heat up, but there are many solutions and actions that communities are using to tackle climate change, which will be highlighted in this talk.

The talk, titled 'What can I do? From Climate Impacts to Solutions and Action' takes place on **Friday 18th September at 7.00pm**, in the Methodist Church Hall, Watling Street South, Church Stretton SY6 7BG. Admission £5, including refreshments.

Also, in Church Stretton Methodist Church Hall, an Open Day on Energy Efficient Buildings on **Saturday 5th September**.

For more details see the poster on the **Care for Creation notice board** in the Ludlow Methodist Church cafe area.

*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.*

Remembering Buddy Holly

Ninety years ago, on 7th September 1936, Buddy Holly, the American rock and roll singer, was born Charles Hardin Holley in Lubbock, Texas. His career was cut short when he was killed in a plane crash in 1959 – an event remembered as “the day the music died”.

Holly was raised by a devout Southern Baptist family and was baptised at the Tabernacle Baptist Church in his hometown. His widely recognised talent as a musician and singer led him into the emerging country rock scene, where performers were often exploited by those working behind the scenes.

His influence has been acknowledged by many top singers and guitarists, including Bob Dylan, the Beatles, the Rolling Stones and Eric Clapton.

The plane crash happened during a poorly organised winter tour of the Mid West where the buses supplied were hopelessly inadequate in terms of reliability and heating. Temperatures well below freezing led Holly to hire a small private plane to take three of them to the next venue. The inexperienced pilot crashed the plane shortly after take-off near Clear Lake, Iowa, killing everyone on board: himself, Holly, J P “The Big Bopper” Richardson, who was given his seat because he was suffering from flu, and Ritchie Valens, who won it on a coin toss.

Holly's pregnant wife Elena heard of his death on the radio, and the shock of it led to a miscarriage. This resulted in the convention of not broadcasting the sudden death of anyone without close relatives being informed.

The disaster was immortalised by singer/songwriter Don McLean, who said he had idolised Holly and felt his death marked a watershed between the innocence of the 1950s and the changes brought about by the Vietnam generation. His song, *The Day the Music Died*, was a long and brilliant solo performance.

Open The Book

Open the Book is dedicated to sharing Bible stories with primary-age school children. There are ten teams visiting schools in and around Ludlow, going to St.Laurence's Primary, Ludlow Primary, Bishop Hooper, Corvedale, Bitterley, Onibury, Clee Hill, Farlow, Lucton, and Moor Park. This involves between 35 and 40 volunteers from across many of the churches.

'Open the Book' is part of the Bible Society. They provide materials and guidelines which have been approved for use in schools. All our volunteers are registered with the Bible Society and receive training as part of the package. The Bible stories come from 'The Storytelling Bible' written by Bob Hartman especially for Open the Book. We also have permission to occasionally edit and adapt some of the material to suit local needs, for example to match stories to a school's 'Values' for that term. No two schools are the same, so the way each team works varies slightly. This flexible approach allows us to prioritise the needs of the children.

We use costumes, props, and songs to help us tell the stories, with the help of the children, sometimes making use of the school's computer to project images and words. Some costumes and props are held centrally in Ludlow, mainly for when something special is required (including a legendary boat!), but many teams also provide their own for regular use.

Most teams go into their school every two weeks during term time. A new team visiting Ludlow Primary, at both its infant and junior schools, is currently visiting both sites twice a term. It is hoped that this may increase in the future.

Wherever possible, particularly in the outlying villages, we try and use volunteers who are local to the school they visit; this helps to foster a better relationship with schools and children. For example, Onibury school is linked with the school in Lydbury North, who would also like to have Open the Book; it would be better to form a team there than send volunteers from Ludlow. Some team members already travel from Ludlow to Corvedale school in Diddlebury, but it would be better if this was more of a local team too.

Please pray for the work of Open the Book, and think about how we can further develop this important work in this area. If you would like to be involved in any way, please contact Mike Owens at owens.redtails@gmail.com

Where in the Bible are the first references to these articles/activities to be found?:

Tennis

Motor cars

Sub Aqua

Pole vaulting

A hatchet

Cricket

Football

Drink

An Irishman

(answers on page 19)

Stephen Dalton

Jerusalem

A Sunday School teacher asked her class why Joseph and Mary took Jesus with them to Jerusalem. A small child replied: "They couldn't get a babysitter."

Fact of life

It takes only 84 days for the average schoolboy to outgrow a pair of shoes.

Give it up

Psychiatrists say it's not good for a person to keep too much to himself. HMRC people say the same thing.

2nd Sept The New Guinea Martyrs of 1942

The Anglican Church in Australia still honours the New Guinea Martyrs of 1942. These brave men and women, 10 Australians and two Papuans, refused to leave their missionary work on the island as the Japanese military forces advanced. As one tribute to them put it: *'They knowing full well the risk, elected to stay with their flock.'*

The missionaries were serving the people of Papua New Guinea as Christian priests, teachers, workers and medical nurses. All twelve were unarmed as they were going about their normal missionary work. They were killed for no reason at all, but to preempt any possibility that they might be a danger to the Japanese in the future. Or perhaps they were killed out of some vague Japanese hatred of Australian Christians, who were poles apart from the then fanatical Emperor-worship that enveloped the whole military strategy of Japan

The martyrs were:

In Gona, on the NE coast of Papua: May Hayman (medical sister), and Mavis Parkinson (teacher): both bayoneted to death.

In villages inland from Gona: Vivian Redlich (priest), Margery Brenchley (medical sister), Lillar Lashmar (teacher), Henry Holland, (priest), John Duffill (carpenter): all beheaded. Also, Lucian Tapiedi, an indigenous Papuan: axed to death. (A statue of Tapiedi now stands as a memorial above the West Door of Westminster Abbey.)

Outer islands: John Barge (priest), Bernard Moore (priest), boat sunk.

In open sea: Henry Mathews (priest), Leslie Gariadi (Papuan assistant): boat sunk and men machine-gunned in water.

Today the Church also remembers the more than 300 church workers of all churches who were killed in 1942, during the Japanese occupation of Papua New Guinea.

Creation

One day a group of scientists got together and decided that man had come a long way and no longer needed God. So, they picked one scientist to go and tell Him so.

The scientist walked up to God and said, "God, we've decided that we no longer need you. We're to the point that we can clone people and do many miraculous things by ourselves."

God listened very patiently and then replied: "Very well, how about this? Let's say we have a man-making contest. We're going to do this just like I did, back in the old days with Adam."

The scientist said, "Sure, no problem" and bent down and grabbed himself a handful of dirt.

God looked at him and said, "No, no, no. You go get your own dirt!"

Police

A young clergyman, fresh out of theological training, thought it would help him better understand the world if he served as a policeman for a while before taking on a congregation.

He studied hard and passed the exams; passed the physical; and then came the all-important final interview. One question was: "What would you do to disperse a frenzied crowd?"

He promptly responded, "I would pass an offering plate." He got the job.

Wedding guest

A little boy at Sunday School learned about the time Jesus went to a wedding and changed the water into wine. "And what did you learn from that story?" asked his father afterward.

The boy thought for a moment and answered, "If you're having a wedding, make sure Jesus is there."

The book of Daniel describes his life in Babylon during the sixth century B.C., when he served both Babylonian and Persian rulers.

As a teenager, Daniel and his three friends were deported in 605 B.C. to Babylon, where he lived for over 70 years. They were trained as officials in King Nebuchadnezzar's court for three years. Their names and diets were changed to reflect Babylonian culture and take away their Jewish identity. However, Daniel and his friends showed the superiority of their Jewish diet and gained the favour of the king.

Chapters 1-6 are largely narrative, with Daniel and his friends (renamed Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego) demonstrating that God is in control. The three friends refused to worship the pagan Babylonian gods and were thrown into a fiery furnace. However, they emerged unharmed because of God's miraculous protection. He also delivered Daniel from a den of lions when he refused to worship the Persian king Darius. Daniel also interpreted several visions and dreams for King Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar. The second half of the book (chaps.7-12) consists of a series of visions, which show that God is in control of history.

The book affirms that God is the sovereign ruler of the world and rewards His faithful servants, as expressed by Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego: *'If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and He will rescue us from your hand, O king. But even if He does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.'* (Daniel 3: 17,18)

Answers:

Tennis:	Joseph was serving in the court of Pharaoh
Motor cars:	He came down the mountain in a Triumph and crossed the river in a Ford
Sub Aqua:	The Apostles spoke with diver's tongues
Pole vaulting:	Jesus cleared the temple
A hatchet:	The axe of the Apostles
Cricket:	Peter stood up and was bold
Football:	Jesus said 'Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees'
Drink:	He who is not with us is a Guinness
An Irishman:	'And Jesus was teaching Daly in the Temple'

Lovely Things

Bread is a lovely thing to eat –
God bless the barley and the wheat!
A lovely thing to breathe is air –
God bless the sunshine everywhere!
The earth's a lovely place to know –
God bless the folks that come and go!
Alive's a lovely thing to be –
Giver of life – we say – bless Thee!

By H M Sarson

Loving Father

Most loving Father, may we who seek to dwell in your house be governed wholly by your laws. In adversity and in prosperity, in life and in death, may you reveal to us your gracious will, and then give us strength in body and in heart to obey your commands. We pray that you will make us perfect, because only that which is perfect truly reflects your glory. And through the Holy Spirit you have shown us the way of perfection.

A prayer of Erasmus (1469 – 1536), the most renowned scholar of his age