



FOCUS

February 2025



London Street United Reformed Church

Basingstoke, Hants, RG21 7NU

Tadley (Old Meeting) United Reformed Church

Malthouse Ln, Hants, RG26 3NY

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

This month Alison Jamieson discusses 'Journeys of Life'.



These days, it seems to me that, we think of journeys as being linear, A to B to C to D, the shortest and quickest distance between where we are and the destination, probably according to Satnav? But, if we were on holiday we might take the scenic route, such as the 'Root 500' round the north coast of Scotland; very beautiful and with many twists and turns, not to mention single track roads.

Life can also be considered a journey; growing up physically to adulthood, learning how to manage life, meeting all sorts of challenges and excitements. Certainly, the Christian life is like that. Whether we were brought up in the church, used to its stories, its teaching, and customs, or have had no contact with the Christian Community. At some point we, who are now members of the church, have made a decision to follow Christ. We go from being 'Seekers' to being 'Disciples', having accepted the basic truths of who He is and what He has done.

As Disciples, we now need to learn what that means in everyday life, getting to grips with the spiritual aspects of life, applying His teaching in our everyday life; what does that look like? How does our life change; new habits; worshipping in community and learning every Sunday in church; praying daily and developing our relationship with Jesus and getting used to bringing ourselves, and our concerns for others and the world, to Him. To grow through reading and understanding the Bible. It could be on our own but maybe with others. Through every moment we grow, learn, and, ultimately, see things as Jesus sees them, to grow in faith trusting Him.

I don't think that the Christian life is ever a straight journey from A to B, well not often. There are times when life is distracting, or there are pressures in the family, or at work, and even successes can lead us away. Then we need to get ourselves back on track, and so at times, the journey feels like a revolving door instead!

In our 'Discipleship', we will find that we will gradually be asked to

help alongside other Christians. We shouldn't be surprised at this; after all, Jesus himself came as a servant, willing to do what his Father asked him to do, understanding that it was needed. We all have gifts that we can use for the benefit of the Christian community and its 'mission'. So, we follow Jesus and become 'Servants', learning through doing along with our fellow Christians. Using the gifts we have and the gifts that He gives, along with his love and peace we learn to look at the world around us with His eyes and see where we can help people, whether it is our neighbours, the person on the bus, or a friend who needs a listening ear.

I wonder where you are on your journey?

Who knows where our journey will lead but it is purposeful, to a good end, and we are not alone, ever!



Resources that might be useful:

-URC Daily Devotions [Pulpit Supply Material | URC Daily Devotions](#),

-‘The Ffald-y-Brenin’ - ‘Rhythm of Daily Pray’ booklet in conjunction with the printed Bible readings in Focus each month.

- Bible Reading Fellowship notes.

- ‘Lectio 365’ App.

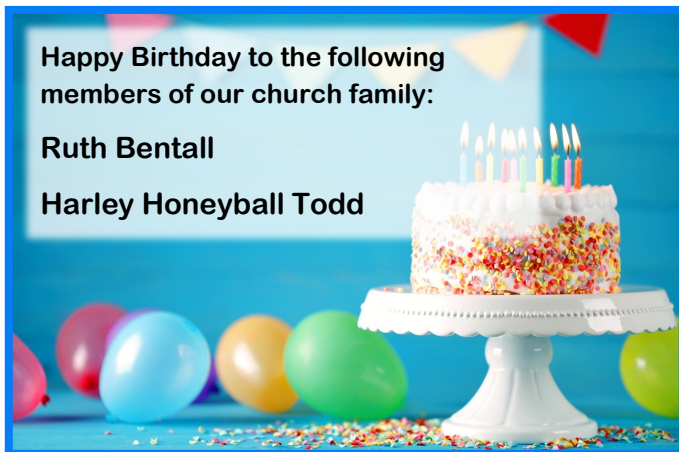
- Bible Society ‘Rooted Devotional Journal’ <https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/resources/rooted>

- The Bible Society and the URC run study courses on line.

- ‘Everyman’ Commentary of the New Testament books of the Bible, by Tom Wright – the 21st century answer to William Barclay!

THE NOTICEBOARD

Information, updates, tips, and more.



Happy Birthday to the following members of our church family:

Ruth Bentall

Harley Honeyball Todd

FOCUS: Next Issue

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this edition of Focus magazine. If you would like to contribute to the March magazine, please contact the editor by **19th of February**.



Church Flowers

The Flower Committee would like to thank Joyce Cook for donating and arranging the February Church Flowers.

Vase of Flowers

For 2025 we have decided to have a vase of flowers on Communion Sunday or another date (other than the first Sunday) for a specific anniversary or remembrance. Please let Liz Lindsay know of your request. Thank you.

Congratulations!

Congratulations to Louise and David on the move to their new home. We hope you'll make many wonderful new memories in your new house.



Craft Group

I hope you all enjoyed the unusual Christmas Tree we had at the Church this year.

The Craft group started this over a year ago, Isabell Martin and myself thought it sounded like a good idea.

The finished tree had over 620 green squares, but we have a lot more in reserve for next year as there is another section to put on! So watch out for a return of the tree next year! This will take the tree to over 15 ft! And of course the objects were also knitted or crocheted.

It has been a fun project.

Everyone is welcome to our Monday morning get together, if you like just to chat that's fine, there is no pressure to do any craft. Tea and coffee and chat is the most important thing.

We meet in the concourse at 10am on Monday morning.

See you there.

Carol Scott



Can you help to make sure that no one in our local community goes hungry?



Items **urgently** needed: Household Cleaning and Washing Up Liquid, Pet Food, Powdered Milk, Shampoo and Conditioner, Tinned Fruit, Tinned Soup.

Items needed: UHT Milk, Coffee, Cooking Sauces, Custard, Deodorant, Hot/Cold Desserts (e.g. Jelly, Sponge Pudding, Angel Delight), Rice Pudding, Squash, Sweet Spreads (Jam, Marmalade etc.), Tinned Meat (e.g. Chilli, Stewing Steak, Ham), Tinned Spaghetti/Ravioli, Tinned Tomatoes, Tinned Veg.

Please **do not** give Baby Food, Hot/Cold Cereal, Nappies, Non-Dairy Milk, Pasta, Pulses, Rice, Sanitary Pads, Tinned Beans, as these are already in surplus.

Donations can be left at London Street URC in the container provided. For up to date lists, or to find other donation points, go to:

<https://basingstoke.foodbank.org.uk/givehelp/food/>

Or download the BankTheFood app from the Apple App/Google Play store and select Basingstoke Foodbank.



Eco Tip

God's Gift -- Our World

The Environment -- Our Responsibility



Now is the time to plan your garden planting for the coming year. Seed catalogues are out. Runner beans are one of the most easy and useful vegetables to grow, especially if you haven't much space.

Don't forget, you can recycle the following items at London Street:

Empty Printer Cartridges, Aluminium Containers and Foil, Batteries, and Plastic Milk Bottle Tops.

Lent Study Group

Would you be interested in a Lent Study Group?

This would be held on the Thursdays during Lent at church. We would start with a light meal (soup/ bread/cheese). More details about the material will be available via church notices and the noticeboard nearer the time.



Please let Jenny McCloy know if you are interested.

Church Fellowship Lunch

I would like to set up a fellowship lunch to meet monthly after Sunday Service.

This would not be cooked by me as I have a few other things to occupy me now!

I propose we meet at Gabardines Bar at 12:15pm.

They offer a very good traditional roast dinner, with (usually) a choice of two meats and a vegetarian option.

The regular portion is £14.95

Smaller portion is £11.95

It is in very pleasant surroundings and would be a way of supporting an independent business.

I propose we initially meet on Sunday 16th February and Sunday 16th March.

If you are interested, please let me know. Numbers will be limited so please only book with me if you are sure you can come.

Thank you

Gill Miller



My Family Is Nature by Molly Payne

The following poem has been written by Molly Payne and has won an award that will see it published in the Young Writers' Anthology. We have been given permission to share it here:

My family is nature,
Beautiful and wild,
Even a little trialed.

Each thriving in shadow and sun,
Always having fun.

A tree rooting us to its place,
Though that isn't always the case.

Day to day,
We travel from bay to bay,
Like leaves in the wind, Never to end.



MAY I INTRODUCE...

Our new Church Secretary, Gill Miller, shares with us a little information on her background.

As I commence my role as Church Secretary, I feel it is appropriate to give a little information about how I got to today!

My Christian journey began as a five-year-old, when my neighbour in Shirley Southampton would call for me and take me to Sunday School at our local Methodist Church. I joined the Girls Life Brigade, and I have fond memories of marching around the neighbourhood on a Sunday, accompanied by the Boys Brigade Band.

Youth Club followed and, aged 19, I married Keith at the same Methodist Church. My attendance at church became less regular as I spent three years training to be a State Registered Nurse and then working as a Staff Nurse on a high care surgical ward. Following this I undertook further training and qualified as a midwife.

We moved to Hedge End, Southampton and I became the local District Nurse /Midwife. My husband was an ambulanceman and we occasionally joined forces on emergency calls!

My first son Russell was born in 1978.

In 1980 we embarked on a new adventure and moved back to Shirley and purchased our first care home for seven residents. I ran this single handed, along with a two-year-old for the first six months, until Keith left the ambulance service and joined me in running the home.

We welcomed our second son, James, in 1983 and then purchased a second seven bedded home. I ran one home and Keith ran the other. Logistics made this difficult and in 1986 we sold both and purchased two joined semi-detached houses which were in derelict condition.

After some months renovating these properties (I have fond memories of my dear Dad endlessly painting woodwork for weeks on end) including installing fire protection, warden call, and a commercial kitchen, we were ready to open.

In 1988 we welcomed our third son Oliver.

This was followed by another addition. An extension to the home

adding extra rooms to complete our plans for 20 beds. We cared for older people, many with mental health issues, dementia, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, and in later years alcoholism. It was a challenging but rewarding time.

Many happy years followed raising our children whilst running the business and all the challenges that offered.

During this time I joined Freemantle URC, becoming an elder and also a member of the very active choir. Many happy memories remain of my time at Freemantle. I was one of several 'young mums' and we were blessed to call several young ministers to their first pastorate. One being Revd. George Watt who is now Moderator of Thames North Synod.

Sadly in 1999 I felt I could no longer cope with the demands of the care home and after much agonizing I left and completed a Social Work degree at Southampton University.

We were having difficult times, and Keith and I divorced in 2000, and I returned to run the care home along with my eldest son.

My time at Freemantle came to an end when I, in some ways, felt ostracized by the church due to my decision to divorce.

Then followed somewhat turbulent times. I married again in 2003 only for it to end in a very acrimonious divorce 'in 2008. A year of paying for legal fees, barrister costs, and court cases proved to be my downfall. Eventually everything I had spent 30 years building was lost.

I had no business and eventually no home.

There are times in life when plans don't work out and it is easy to despair and give up hope.

Luckily, I was able to find suitable rented accommodation and after moving to Hedge End I took a position as a post office clerk. This was not a very stimulating job but my co-workers were very kind and supportive.

I visited the Methodist church and Parish church, but I never felt truly settled.

Then in what I still feel was divine intervention I was one day scrolling

through posts on my computer when a job vacancy appeared for an Estate Manager with Anchor. The job description sounded interesting but most importantly the job came with accommodation. It was in a place called Hook. I had no idea where this was but it was a lifeline for me so I was prepared to move away and leave family and friends behind and so I moved to Berry Court, Hook.

I was so happy. I loved the job, and my flat soon became home. It was not too far from Southampton so my family could visit.

Now it was time to find a welcoming church and give thanks for the blessings I had found.

After visiting two or three churches it was Easter Day 2018 when I found myself in the car park at 'Top of Town' totally lost and looking for London Street URC.

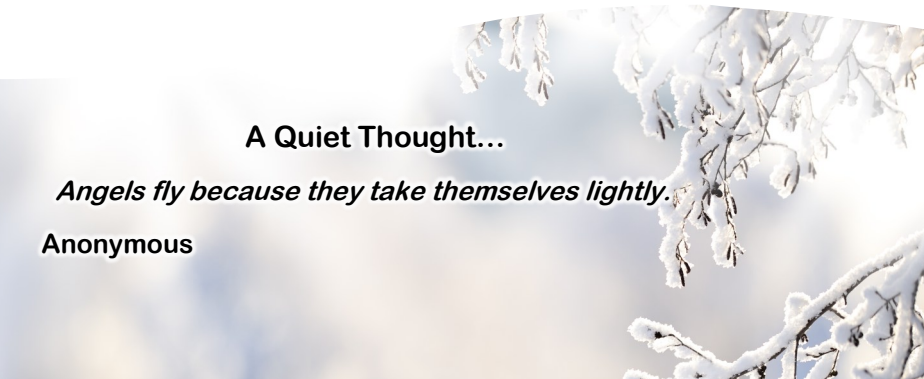
Suddenly a voice called "Are you lost?"

It was Joyce Cook on her way to church. I was taken under her wing and soon introduced to the church family at London St.

So began my journey in faith through transfer of membership, election as Elder and now Church Secretary.

I have also been blessed to now have a home that is warm, comfortable, and secure, and a job I continue to do and enjoy.

Sometimes you have to let go of the picture of what you thought life would be like and learn to find joy in the story you are living.



A Quiet Thought...

Angels fly because they take themselves lightly.

Anonymous

THE PRAYER CIRCLE

Please remember the following people in your prayers...

Nicola Hamilton

Beryl Wootton

Revd. Josh, Hannah, Isla, and Joel Thomas

Liz Lindsay and family

Maggie & Richard Morgans

Louise & David Waller

Joan Musselwhite

Mrs Noorie Khatkur

Dick & Anne Davey

Christine & Eric Clucas

Carys Haywood

Barbara Banbury and David Corfield

Marguerite Hurford and her son Michael

Alison and David

Bev Harris and Dom

Claire Macro

Stan & Sandra Marut

Hyacinth Ridguard

Betty Shipway's family

Owen Collins and family

The Patterson family

Chris Jones' grandson, Archie

Ruth Bentall

Maxine Perkins

Gill Vickery

Zoe and family

Seb & Dorcas in Uganda

David Bennett



DAILY BIBLE READINGS



This month's assigned readings.

	Psalm	New Testament		Psalm	New Testament
1st	18: 16-19	Matt 22: 41 - 23: 12	15th	22: 22-26	Matt 28
2nd	18: 20-24	Matt 23: 13-39	16th	22: 27-31	Mark 1: 1-20
3rd	18: 25-29	Matt 24: 1-14	17th	23	Mark 1: 21-45
4th	18: 30-36	Matt 24: 15-35	18th	24	Mark 2: 1-22
5th	18: 37-42	Matt 24: 36-51	19th	25: 1-7	Mark 2: 23 - Mark 3: 6
6th	18: 43-50	Matt 25: 1-30	20th	25: 8-11	Mark 3: 7-35
7th	19: 1-6	Matt 25: 31-46	21st	25: 12-15	Mark 4: 1-20
8th	19: 7-14	Matt 26: 1-30	22nd	25: 16-22	Mark 4: 21-41
9th	23	Matt 26: 31-46	23rd	26	Mark 5: 1-20
10th	21: 1-7	Matt 26: 47-68	24th	27: 1-6	Mark 5: 21-43
11th	21: 8-13	Matt 26: 69 - Matt 27: 10	25th	27: 7-14	Mark 6: 1-29
12th	22: 1-5	Matt 27: 11-26	26th	28	Mark 6: 30-56
13th	22: 6-11	Matt 27: 27-44	27th	29: 1-6	Mark 7: 1-23
14th	22: 12-21	Matt 27: 45-66	28th	29: 7-11	Mark 7: 24-37

EVENT DIARIES



What's on this month at London St. & Old Meeting URCs.

At London Street URC (unless otherwise specified):

Regular Events

Sunday Worship 10:30am			
Mondays	10:15am	Craft Group	
Tuesdays	2:30pm	Take Time Meditation (Exploring Luke's Gospel)	On Zoom. Contact Church Secretary for password.
	5:45-6:45pm	Beavers	In Term Time.
	7-8:30pm	Cubs	All in the Den except Scouts who meet in the Wessex Hall.
	7-9pm	Scouts	
Wednesdays	10:15am	Memory Tree Social Club	
	12:15pm	Lunchtime Prayers	
Thursdays	7:15-9:15pm	Explorers	In Term Time. In the Den.

February Worship Diary

2nd	Led by Revd. Josh Thomas; Musician: Alex Macro.
9th	Led by The Worship Group; Musician: Revd. Denis Smith.
16th	Led by Peter Bentall; Musician: Mark Best; Duty Elder: Margaret Carrick Smith.
23rd	Led by Julian Macro; Musician: Peter Dixon.

Duty Elder for the month: Ian McCloy (except the 16th)

**Next Church Meeting (Annual Church Meeting):
6th April (Sunday) at 1:15pm**

At Tadley (Old Meeting) URC (unless otherwise specified):

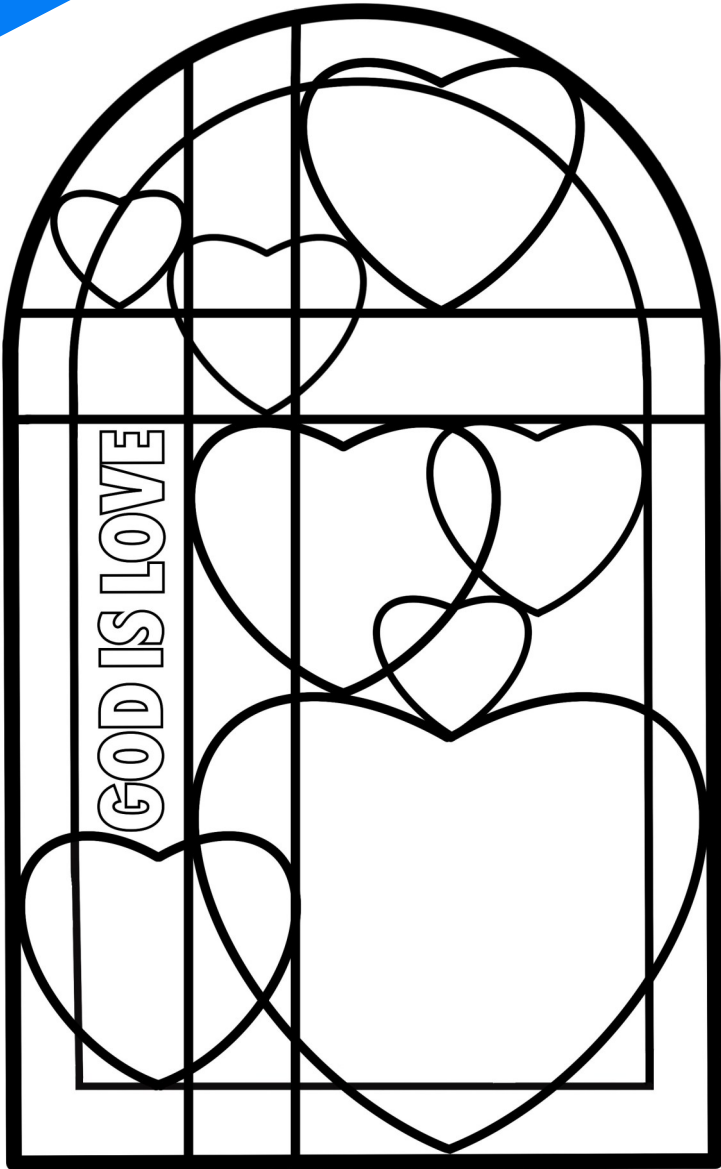
Regular Events

Sunday Worship 10:30am		
Monday Afternoons	Ladies' Cell Group	Contact Penny O'Bee.
Monday Evenings	Cell Group	Contact Mark Ward or Paul Gross.
Tuesday Evenings	Joint Prayer Time with St Paul's	Contact Penny O'Bee.
Wednesday Evenings	Prayer via Zoom	Contact Mark Ward.
Friday Afternoon	Men's Shed	2pm, once a fortnight. Contact Paul Gross.

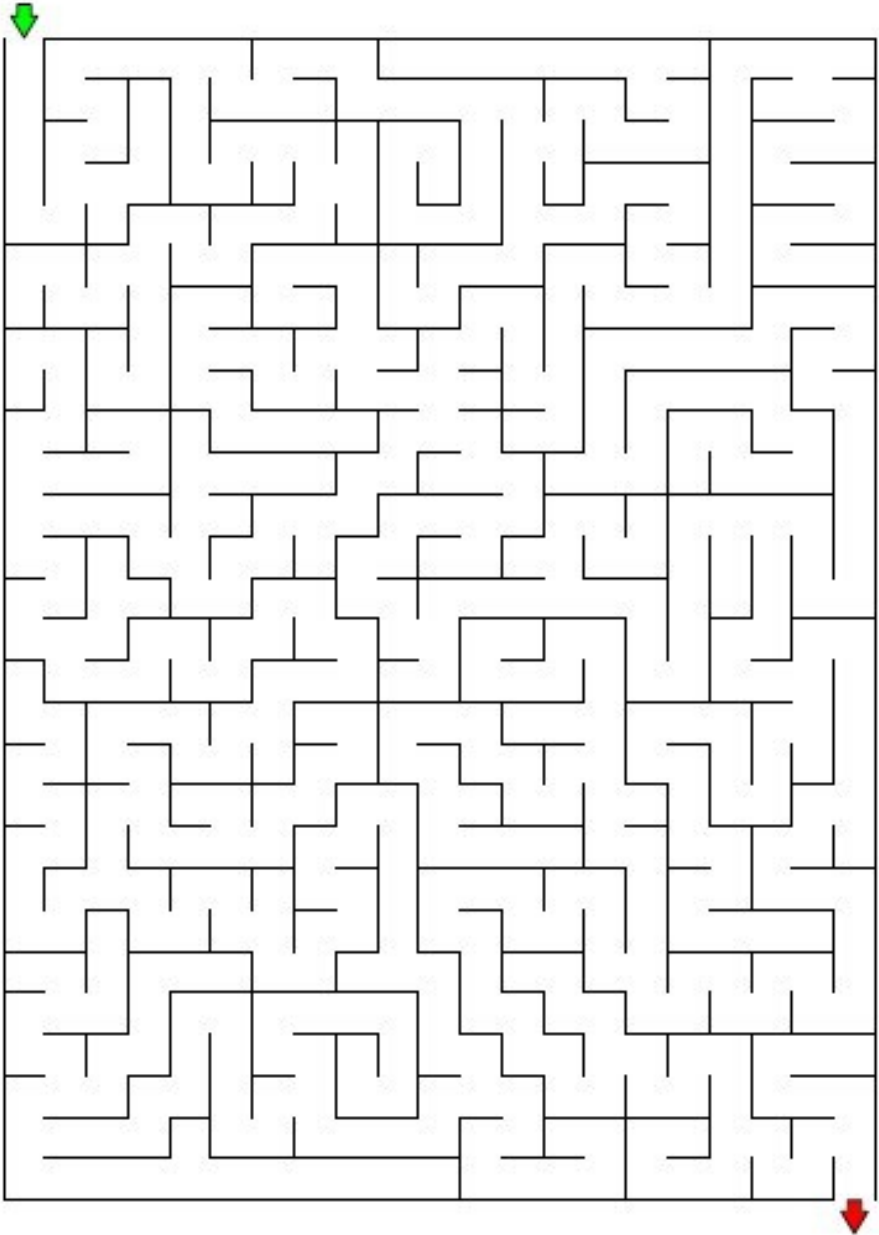
February Worship Diary

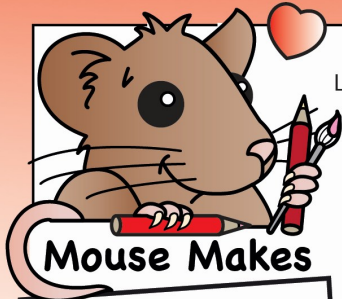
2nd	Led by Mark Ward.
9th	Led by Mel Euerby.
16th	TBC.
23rd	TBC.

Colour In!



Can you reach the end of the maze?





Mouse Makes

"Love is _____,
love is _____.
 It does not, _____,
 it does not _____
 it is not _____.
 it does not _____
 others, it is not self- _____
 it is not easily _____
 it keeps no record of _____.
Love delights in _____
 it always _____
 _____,
 _____,
 _____,
 _____,
 _____,

 from 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

The steadfast **love** of the Lord never _____;
 His _____
 never come to an end;
 they are new every _____.
Lamentations 3:20-23

I pray... you will understand...
 the greatness of Christ's **love**,
 how _____
 and how _____
 and how _____
 that **love** is.
Ephesians 3:18-19

God is **love**.
 whoever _____
 in **love** _____
 in God, and God _____
 in them.
1 John 4:16

Give _____
 to the Lord, for He is _____
 his steadfast **love**
 endures _____
Psalms 136:1

HOW DOES GOD LOVE ME?
God sent me a saviour:
 He sent His one and only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through Him.
1 John 4:9
God gave me His spirit:
 He has given you the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with His **love**.
Romans 5:5
God called me His child:
 See what great **love** the Father has for us that He would call us His children.
1 John 1:3

DID YOU KNOW?
 Jesus told us to:
LOVE the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul and with all your mind.
Matthew 22:37
LOVE your neighbour the same as you love yourself.
Matthew 22:39

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

GOD • **LOVE**
 PATIENT • KIND
 GRACIOUS • PEACE
 JUST • TRUTHFUL
 TRUSTING • LOYAL
 HOPEFUL
 PERSEVERES
 ENDURES
 HUMBLE
 SELFLESS
 PROTECTS • DEFENDS



London Street United Reformed Church

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