



From fear to boldness

# Letter from the Vicar Reverend Fabian Wuyts Vicar of St James



This is the first editorial since the lockdown and an opportunity to express my gratitude to you for all you have been doing in the recent weeks in witnessing the love of God to one another and to your community. Thank you!

On the 23rd March, in a televised address to the nation, the Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, announced unparalleled limits on where and how people can meet and gather. The lockdown officially started the next day.

Looking back on the Bible stories of this past Easter season, I was struck by the many references to locked rooms. It was in a locked room that Jesus had his last supper with his friends. It was in a locked room that the disciples gathered on that first day of the week after Jesus' crucifixion. It was in a locked room that Jesus stood for the first time in the presence of his disciples saying, "Peace be with you." It was in a locked room that Jesus breathed on them the Holy Spirit and commissioned them to be his Gospel agents for the whole world. A week after that, the doors were still locked when Jesus appeared a second time to the disciples, including Thomas.

After the Ascension experience the disciples were back, meeting in a room waiting for the promised gift of God's Spirit. The Holy Spirit



came as the disciples were gathered in a room behind closed doors.

Honesty requires we acknowledge that the last two months have been difficult for us all. We all have experienced greater levels of anxiety and worries, not always sleeping very well at night and wondering what the future holds. We have all had to face new responsibilities, whether the responsibility is to educate our children; or that of ensuring the wellbeing of our relatives and neighbours, or

that of putting ourselves at risk in order to provide essential services to the community.

At Pentecost, the disciples were faced with a new chapter in God's plan. They needed God's special presence to enable them to move from fear to boldness. It happened behind closed doors! The coming of the Holy Spirit gave them direction, boldness, clarity of mind and fruitful witnessing. The same is needed for us today. Guided by the Holy Spirit, the Church behind closed doors can once again face a new chapter in God's plan. Therefore, I invite you all to pray for a greater reliance on the guidance, wisdom and power of God's Holy Spirit in our homes and in his Church.

God of power,
may the boldness of your Spirit transform us,
may the gentleness of your Spirit lead us,
may the gifts of your Spirit equip us to serve and worship you
now and always.

Amen

Fabian

**Stop Press:** St James Players present a 10 minute radio play called **'Lockdown'**, written by Jenny Wakefield. It explores the feelings of fear and frustration during lockdown in the days between the ascension and Pentecost. Catch it on the new St James Website: **www.stjamestaunton.org** 

#### Contents

Page 2 Letter from the Vicar

Page 5 These are the hands

Page 6 Bishop Ruth's letter

Page 8 Nicki's News

Page 9 Wander and Ponder

Page 10 Eco Church: What if...

Page 12 Focus on Mission

Page 14 Tearfund update

Page 15 World Fair Trade Day

Page 16 A Medal for the Soul

Page 18 how to pray: book review

Page 19 Poetry and Psalms

Page 20 Obituaries

Page 21 Thursday Fellowship

Page 22 School News

Page 28 Every Day Church

Page 31 It's a boy...!

Page 32 PCC Roundup

Page 34 New Curate

The Crossword and Children's pages will return in later, print editions of the magazine. Sorry if you feel you've missed out this time...!

Thank you to all the contributors to this edition of the Magazine. If you have something to share for the September-November edition, do contact the Editor either directly or through the Church Office - details on page 36 - deadline for copy is Wednesday 19 August 2020.

The poem opposite touched me greatly. My wife, Sue, retired on 29 May after 41 years working in the NHS. She trained as a children's nurse at Great Ormond Street Hospital and worked on the cardio-thoracic ward there. Before she moved to Glasgow, her church in London prayed for her and, as she was about to undertake midwifery training, specifically for her hands. When she read the poem she said, "My hands have done all those things." (Maybe not replaced a hip or designed a lab...but just about everything else!)

I dedicate it to all the staff working, or who have worked, in the NHS. See, too, John Wilson's poem on page 19 which also celebrates the wonderful work of the NHS. Thank you, all of you.

Also in this edition there are several references to prayer; the prayer that supports and encourages us, that buoys us up in times of trouble and anxiety. During these difficult and uncertain times, as Fabian has said in his letter, let us pray for and rely on the guidance, wisdom and power of God's Holy Spirit.

Because of the current situation, this edition of the magazine is published online. We have printed a few 'hard copies' to be sent out to those unable to access the internet. Please let friends and neighbours know how they can access this edition through the new St James' website: <a href="https://www.stjamestaunton.org">www.stjamestaunton.org</a>

Chris Doyle - St James' Parish Magazine Editor

The cover picture for this edition of the magazine is by Chris Doyle. It shows a statue of Christ the King on the Sagrada Familia in Barcelona.

See how he cups his hands, as if in protection of his world...

#### These are the hands

These are the hands
That touch us first
Feel your head
Find the pulse
And make your bed.

These are the hands
That tap your back
Test the skin
Hold your arm
Wheel the bin
Change the bulb
Fix the drip
Pour the jug
Replace your hip.

These are the hands
That fill the bath
Mop the floor
Flick the switch
Soothe the sore
Burn the swabs

Give us a jab Throw out sharps Design the lab.

And these are the hands
That stop the leaks
Empty the pan
Wipe the pipes
Carry the can
Clamp the veins
Make the cast
Log the dose

And touch us last.

This poem is reproduced with permission. "These are the Hands" by Michael Rosen ©

The poem is published in "These Are the Hands: Poems from the Heart of the NHS" edited by Deborah Alma and Dr Katie Amiel

All proceeds from this book will go to NHS Charities Covid-19 Urgent Appeal.



# Living the story. Telling the story.



Letter from the Right Reverend Ruth Worsley, Bishop of Taunton

# Recognise the one who stands beside you

'Stay alert' is the message as we 'ease out of lockdown'. We know that for some there is little ease as we begin to

re-engage with a world that is still fearful of Covid-19 and uncertain about its future. The requirement to 'stay alert' is to encourage us to watch out for signs of the virus and protect ourselves and others as necessary.

We've just celebrated Pentecost, often recognised as the birthday of the Church. Jesus' message to his followers as he left them to return to his Father was that they were to 'stay alert', not to guard against something fearful to come but rather to be watchful for the Spirit that would free them from fear. It didn't mean that there weren't still physical dangers to face but rather that their spiritual lives should grow in boldness.

We have seen much courage exhibited throughout this crisis to date. Key workers who have continued to serve us day by day even whilst most of us have remained at home. The NHS has quite rightly been applauded and appreciated at this time and there are so many more.

I've been especially impressed by our schools and their teams who have largely been open throughout this period to provide care for key worker families and vulnerable children. Even at weekends and during this past half term holiday, they have been tirelessly supporting their local communities. Staying alert to the needs of our young, they have shown their commitment and care. I want to express my huge gratitude to them!

As we move into June we may be seeing more children returning to schools having been home-schooled for a time. This will not be without fear for some and a need to be especially alert to physical dangers. Whatever the situation we find ourselves to be in at this point, we are reminded that we have a Comforter, an Advocate, the Holy Spirit, who strengthens and encourages our faith even at times of doubt and anxiety.

Whether still at home and isolated or beginning a return to wider community life, may you find yourself being alert for and recognising the one who stands alongside you, the Spirit, who is friend, guardian and comforter.

With every good wish

Bishop Ruth

The Right Revd Ruth Worsley

Bishop of Taunton



# Nicki's News

Nicki Bradford is part-way through her theological training. This update gives an insight into what she's studying and how she is progressing!

I am now well into the second of my three-year ordination training period and the word for this year has been 'formation'.

'It's formation,' we said at Summer School when we spent a full day of lectures on theories of salvation and then images of salvation in religious art. (Our tutor the next day reassured the first years that they did not need to worry if they hadn't understood it all as neither had their fellow students or even some of the lecturers!) We also said it more happily the next day when we visited a local art garden and enjoyed the sunshine.

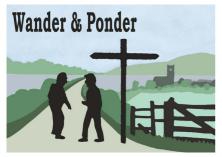
'It's formation,' we said as we grappled online with modules on Mission and Evangelism; liturgy, sacrament and the completeness or otherwise of Baptism, and studied Isaiah and Romans as we considered 'the Bible in Context'. To be fair, I always enjoy these modules for the first eight weeks but then we have assignments which always dampens the experience.

'It's formation,' we said as we visited two very different churches in Bristol to think about ministry in urban contexts. St Mary Redcliffe church is a well-known, tourist-attracting building which is looking at how to capitalise on this role to provide an income to increase their ability to meet the needs of those who live in the parish. St Nicholas Tolentino is a catholic church which ministers to immigrants and refugees.

'It's formation,' we said as we grappled with issues of death and dying, through email forums and on our own when our weekend residential was cancelled due to Covid-19.

'It's formation,' we said when our placements (mine to Exeter Cathedral) were cancelled and we now have to do them virtually in our own church context.

The purpose of this formation is, of course, to be ordained next year. The process of being placed in a curacy has already begun so I would value your prayers as Steve and I look both within Bath and Wells, and possibly further afield, for the church where God wishes to place me.



On Friday 13th March 2020, seven folk from St James embarked on a short walk to both wander and ponder on scripture, somewhat in the manner of a pilgrimage.

Starting at the Trull Memorial Hall car park we walked about 4 miles, finishing at All Saints Church, Trull for a short reflection. Some of the group then enjoyed a light

lunch at 'The Hive' in the Trull Church Community Centre.

Although rain threatened, it remained mostly dry and we enjoyed both observing nature and some insightful discussion on John chapter 4.

The idea arose on Christmas morning when Fabian encouraged us to wonder and ponder about the incarnation, just as Mary "treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart" (Luke 2:19). He also suggested that we commit time to reflect on the scriptures, commending St John's Gospel as something to ponder on throughout the year. Having followed a resurgence of interest in pilgrimage, and feeling the need to engage in some more regular walking, Fabian's comments inspired me to combine pondering with walking, hence 'Wander and Ponder'.

Based on pilgrimage principles, we aim to encounter God through our journeying together with a common purpose. Walks will be no longer than 5 miles, allowing time to ponder and share thoughts on a passage from St John's gospel, ending with a short reflection, usually in a church.

It was intended to have a walk every few weeks. We only had one before the lockdown but look out for an announcement of the next 'Wander and Ponder' once we are permitted to do so. Walks may encounter varied conditions such as muddy paths, and will require a reasonable level of fitness to complete the walk within about 2 hours. So if you wish to join us, please come prepared with suitable walking shoes and clothes appropriate for the season. No set day of the week or time has been decided so if you are interested it would be good to know what day/time would best suit you.

If you wish to investigate pilgrimage principles and opportunities, see: https://britishpilgrimage.org/

**Edward Hosken** 

# What if...



It may not be easy to penetrate the layers of pandemic news and find out if anything else is happening in the world, so I was struck by a headline I saw just a few weeks ago posing the question, "What if Covid-19 isn't our biggest threat?"

The climate emergency hasn't gone away... As we return, or try to return, to what we used to think of as normal, what changes do we need to make in the way we use the resources of our planet?

Beyond our own impact, what can we do to help the community around us – be that our street, or Taunton or the whole country – to live more responsibly? How might the current crisis be the trigger for a better tomorrow?

It's clear that we cannot continue as we were doing – it has, after all, been estimated that if everyone in the world lived like an average European, we would need three planets to live on.



Reading Genesis 1 recently, I was struck at how the description of mankind having stewardship of earth follows immediately on from our being described as made in God's likeness. It is as like God that we are to live on our planet, with his love for all things at the centre of our thinking. Later on we read that God's covenant with Noah isn't just with humanity but includes every living creature. All too frequently, exploitation of the earth is associated with exploitation of people – usually the poor or defenceless. And the bible is clear about God's support for them and anger with those exploiting them.

It was only on 7 March (how long ago that feels) that our diocesan synod, following on from the CofE nationally, passed a motion declaring a diocesan-wide climate and ecological emergency. As one element of its decision, General Synod has set new targets for all parts of the church to work to become carbon 'net zero' by 2030.

So, in April the Church of England published guidance aiming to summarise how churches can reduce their energy use and associated carbon emissions, describing it as a 'practical path' to this target.

While this guidance only considers the energy use of our buildings and how we use them, the vast majority of the energy use of the church is what we, as individual members, do in our everyday lives. A simple way to look at this is to measure what is known as our 'carbon footprint' – it can be enlightening to see what ours is.

A quick search online for 'carbon footprint calculator' will give you lots of options – for one with a distinctively Christian slant, look at the Climate Stewards website (www.climatestewards.org). Typically, our energy use falls into one of two elements:

- The easy-to-spot items such as the petrol we put in our car or the gas for our central heating
- The less-direct ones such as the energy needed to transport food to our local shops or the costs of extracting the oil used to make the plastic that wraps our purchase



To calculate your own footprint, you'll need to think through aspects of your life such as your travel, how you heat your house or what you eat – for example, a high meat-eater will be responsible for over two and half times the carbon dioxide produced to support a vegan diet.

And once you have an answer, the next thing is, of course, to see what steps you could explore to lower it and so reduce the impact your life has on the overall health of our planet...

Richard Carpenter

#### The "Be Attitudes"

Blessed are those who use low energy light bulbs, for theirs is the light of God's wisdom.

Blessed are those who travel by train, for their lives are on God's track.

Blessed are those who choose a car with low fuel consumption, for they are in God's fast lane.

Blessed are those who insulate their homes, for theirs is the warmth of God's love.

Blessed are those when you put yourselves out to use energy from renewable resources, for you have kindled the flame of the future.

(Thank you, Joycey, for sending this in - Ed.)



During the Covid Emergency period we have been able to provide monthly information about the Missions we support, both in the Bulletin and online on the St James' Facebook page. We shall continue doing this during the pandemic period.



## **World Evangelisation for Christ**

Loving Jesus, heart and soul in deed and word

You can find information about our WEC link contacts, David and Margie Whitehorn, on the Church Facebook Page:

https://www.facebook.com/stjamestaunton/videos/3432175543509922/

WEC is a worldwide organisation covering over 90 countries where the aim is to support, resource, train and encourage the local churches in their mission to reach those who have not yet heard the Good News of God's love. Dave and Margie are Area Directors for Africa and, with two other colleagues, their 'patch' includes Central,



West, East and South Africa. Under normal circumstances they would be travelling frequently to the African continent to support the work of planting and growing churches and training leaders. Their daughter, Ruth, and her husband, Mark, work for Betel, which is an allied ministry in the UK working with people suffering from addiction. During the current lockdown period they continue their work from home in Sheffield, using Zoom and other technologies, as well as participating in the work of their local church.

Dave and Margie send us regular updates in the newsletter which is posted on our website pages:

http://www.stjamestaunton.co.uk/Text/MissionaryLinks.htm#Overseas Partners





**Taunton Area Debt Advice** will be our Mission Focus for June and we hope to be able to have an interview with Graham Reid who founded the debt counselling service over 7 years ago. Graham

will be able to update us on the impact of the Coronavirus crisis on his work.

Taunton Area Debt Advice is a community initiative of St James Church in Taunton but has extended its scope with volunteers from other local churches. It offers a free and totally confidential service to anybody in the Taunton area with money worries or debt issues. The organisaton is affiliated to Community Money Advice (CMA) and it aims to offer solutions to help people free themselves from the burden of debt. Its services are offered to all, regardless of background, circumstances or belief.





**Barnabas Fund** is an aid agency for the persecuted Church, which works in over 60 countries around the world. The main ministry of the fund is to send financial support to projects which help

Christians where they suffer discrimination, oppression and persecution as a consequence of their faith. The project's aim is to strengthen Christian individuals, churches and their communities by providing material and spiritual support in response to needs identified by local Christian leaders.

Barnabas also aims to raise awareness of the persecution that exists and thereby to inform the prayer of its partner churches, and also to work to contest injustice by appropriate means.

Barnabas will be our Mission focus in July. For more information about Barnabas there is a very informative website: https://barnabasfund.org/

Jenny Wakefield

# Tearfund What is Tearfund doing now? In lots of rural villages in Africa there is no electricity

so people use trees for firewood; and candles, charcoal or kerosene for lamps – all a fire risk in their wood and thatched homes. No light means they cannot see to cook when it gets dark, can't make things to sell, and that the children cannot read or do their homework. In the darkness, thieves steal livestock and dangerous animals come near.

Tearfund partners, working as part of the Church and Community Transformation process, help local churches by teaching about transformation, then identifying needs in the community and coming up with innovative solutions. Small groups within the church start saving then use the money to start business projects or buy equipment. A scheme was introduced where groups pay for half the cost of a solar light system, enabling the community to enjoy the benefits of light at night and electricity all day, and then pay back the rest as their income and opportunities increase. They are then able to buy more solar light systems to benefit others within the community. For more information on this see: www.Tearfund.org/light

Tearfund are also stepping up their hygiene and handwashing training worldwide in response to Coronavirus. Public health messages inform people how to protect themselves from Covid-19 by promoting good hygiene and using very basic taps (often a container of water that can be tilted to provide a drizzle of water to rinse soapy hands). We are able to 'Twin our taps' for £60 (similar to Toilet Twinning) to help vulnerable children and families who need most support during this pandemic. (Have you ever counted how many taps you have in your house?) To find out more about the schemes to twin toilet or taps, see: www.Toilettwinning.org

Have you ever thought about going abroad with Tearfund, to work with them? Tearfund Go gives you the opportunity to visit and be part of Tearfund's transformative work across the world. A placement will bring a fresh perspective and reveal God's love in action. These are available in eight countries across 2 continents, ranging from 2 weeks to 6 months, including gap years, and they are for individuals, groups and families. To find out if a placement is what you're looking for, visit: www.Tearfund.org/go

Sue Doyle

## **WORLD FAIR TRADE DAY 9th May 2020**

To celebrate this day, I have picked three items to bring to your attention.

- 1) 50% of all our food and drink comes from around the world and this won't change unless we can produce more in the U K.
- 2) Palm Oil, which is included in a number of our food stuffs, is good BUT only if it is grown organically under clear Fair Trade standards. Palm Oil is grown under these conditions in Ghana and Ecuador. The yield is 3.8 tonnes of oil per nectare! Sunflower oil only yields 0.7 tonnes per hectare. Tradecraft's products labelled 'Fair Palm' have this very ingredient and it is seen in soap, washing liquid and laundry liquid.
- 3) Tradecraft Exchange is the sister charity with Traidcraft. I was sent a report about how they are making sure small producers in Bangladesh are being supported with lessons on how they can stay safe during this Coronavirus pandemic; these include information about PPE kits, masks, disinfectants and explaining why physical distancing is so important.

So EVERY time you purchase, for example, food, drinks, cleaning products, ornaments and candles, that have the Fairtrade logo, you can be sure your money is being well spent.

I am still ordering most weeks and can arrange to deliver so please feel able to contact me or leave a message.

With very many thanks

Freda Davis

Email: fredadavis@hotmail.co.uk Landline: 01823 278347

A message from the management at Traidcraft:

"We have postponed Traidcraft Week until September and will look to combine it with the Harvest Big Brew from our friends at Traidcraft Exchange."

Look out for this when we are (hopefully!) all back together at St James, as I'm sure Freda and her team will be celebrating it.

Freda Davis and Michael Hayes and their helpers run the Traidcraft stall. They are happy to sell 'from the cupboard' or take orders for specialist items from the catalogue. When we come out of 'lockdown', you can visit the stall which is open usually on the third Sunday of the month.

#### A MEDAL FOR THE SOUL

It is said that the world of work is a place where we can give glory to God. But what does that mean exactly? I have found some inspiring stories about Christians in the workplace recently which might give some examples. Work as we know it now will no doubt change as a result of the coronavirus, but work will endure. Genesis reassures us of that!

During the coronavirus outbreak our headlines have reported on heroes in the NHS and other essential jobs that we may have taken for granted in the past. I have heard it said that the virus brings out the best and the worst in people. For me, the good news stories linger longer in my memory. You may agree with me that when you hear key workers speak in the media, their humility is often very striking.

In the 'Everyday Faith' reflections series on our website, there's the story about Adrian, a schoolteacher. He is in the habit of praying for his pupils as he walks between their desks as they do their work and take their exams. Adrian knows that he will never know the outcomes of most of his prayers for his pupils' future lives. He will never be able to rejoice or commiserate, or feel satisfaction or reflected glory from their achievements. But he prays for them nevertheless. It is often the same when we pray for our grandchildren's futures too.

From a different era, the Italian cyclist, Gino Bartali (1914-2000), was a caring person like Adrian. He said, "I want to be remembered for my sporting achievements. Real heroes are others, those who have suffered in their soul, in their heart, in their spirit, in their mind, for their loved ones."



Bartali (nicknamed 'Gino the Pious') was the most renowned professional cyclist in Italy before WWII. His story is remarkable. He was born in Florence into a religious family of smallholders and he became a devout Christian himself. He won the Tour of Italy (Giro d'Italia) three times and the Tour de France twice, his last

win in the Tour being in 1948. His career was curtailed by the war years. For technically minded readers, he pioneered use of Derailleur gears. In his first Giro win in 1938, he had only 4 gears on his bike. They were very different from today's hi-tech lightweight machines with 22 gears, shifted electronically.

Bartali's great Italian contemporary was Fausto Coppi, who also won major titles. Their rivalry was fierce, but they were both capable of magnanimity. On stage 16 of the 1940 Giro, Bartali found Coppi by the side of the road, cramped up with stomach pains. He coaxed Coppi back onto his bike and persuaded him to continue. Coppi went on to win the race.

During the war when Italy was ruled by the fascist Mussolini, Bartali continued his training rides around northern Italy. He used them to deliver documents and messages to the Italian Resistance, sometimes hiding papers in the hollow handlebars and frame of his bike. The secret police dared not challenge such a well-known celebrity as Bartali. He also hid Jewish refugees in his house and led them to the Swiss border hidden in a concealed compartment within a trailer pulled along by his bike. He explained to the police patrols that the trailer was part of his training. He is credited with helping to save the lives of 800 people.

After the war, he never boasted about his achievements as a Good Samaritan. They came out in later life when he mentioned them to his son, but he didn't want them widely known. He said, "The good is done, but it is not said. And certain medals hang on the soul, not the jacket."

As Bartali said, his job was a cyclist. He gave glory to God through his work.

On the Bath and Wells website there are 'video diaries' from Christians in our area who are working on the front line during the coronavirus epidemic. You can see and hear Freddie, a GP in Weston Super Mare; Clare, a Head Teacher in Bath; Anita, a farmer on the Somerset Levels, and Jason a supermarket worker from Taunton. (Jason is also a Taunton Team chaplain). Other diaries may be added over time, and they can be seen at:

https://www.bathandwells.org.uk/2020/05/faith-on-the-front-line-video-diaries-from-key-workers/

In Mark Knopfler's great song, 'Sailing to Philadelphia', the 'Geordie Boy' Jeremiah Dixon leaves England for America singing these lines:

'It was my fate from birth
To make my mark upon the earth.'

And so, for all of us, we are able to make a mark in our own unique way, using the good gifts that God has given us, however big, however small. None needs to be wasted; we are all key workers.

Andy Hall

### "how to pray - a simple guide for normal people" by Pete Greig (pub. Hodder and Stoughton) ISBN 978-1-529-37492-6

Firstly, may I say this is not a book review but instead an encouragement if, like me, you find prayer a bit of an enigma.

I would love to be able to say I find praying easy - I don't. I shy away from extemporary prayer worried I will get tongue tied; knowing in my head what I want to share but fearing it will come out as a babble. Some folk seem to be able to pray everything I've been thinking so simply and sincerely. This paranoia could, if I let it, make me feel frustrated in my prayer life. Asking the question, "Am I doing it right?" (do you feel like that sometimes?) I've read many books on the subject but have come away none the wiser...until I read this 'page turner.'

Pete Greig was a new name to me until I plugged into 'Spring Harvest Home' at the beginning of lockdown. He is a co-founder of 24-7prayer. As soon as he began speaking I knew I had found someone who would be able to help me in my quest.

The book is written in a style I found engaging from the first to the last page. It's based around praying The Lord's Prayer and is divided into 4 steps covering the many forms of prayer under the acronym P.R.A.Y (Pause:Rejoice: Ask: Yield). There are 8 video sessions running alongside with Pete in conversation with Poppy Williams expanding on the individual chapters as small studies, all freely available on *www.prayercourse.org* (why not take a look?). Then there is a 'Toolshed' of supporting material, reinforcing in more detail the words on the page. He has the gift of unpacking his subject in bite size chunks. Pete doesn't shy away from addressing tough questions from 'Unanswered Prayer' to 'Spiritual Warfare' either.

For me the book unlocked the mystery and wonders of prayer with authenticity, leaving me with a freedom and confidence in the pattern I find fits me; that is contemplative (quiet) prayer, standing as an equal to the spoken. Which ever way you find best, our God hears us when we speak as well as listen to Him!

Lyn Jones

(Lyn has been a member of St James since October 2018 and also attends our 7pm Contemporary service)

#### **Tomorrow**

Look beyond your troubles, It will be a brand new day. Seek God in his wisdom, He will show you the way.

> Pray beyond your trouble, For that brand new day. You will rejoice that God was with you, With you all the way.

Look back on your troubles, It is a brand new day.
Go on your way rejoicing It is God's new day.

John L Wilson 7 Jan 2020 John explained, "I wrote this whilst I was in hospital and it was posted in the staff room, where one young nurse had changed to go home.

"She read the poem and then came back into the ward to thank me."

"John," she said, "thank you so much for that poem. It was so reassuring, thank you."

All of us need reassurance and a reminder to seek God, all the time but especially during times of trouble. David wrote this in Psalm 26 vs1-6 (New Living Translation)

1 The Lord is my light and my salvation so why should I be afraid? The Lord is my fortress, protecting me from danger. so why should I tremble? 2 When evil people come to devour me, when my enemies and foes attack me, they will stumble and fall. 3 Though a mighty army surrounds me, my heart will not be afraid. Even if I am attacked. I will remain confident. 4 The one thing I ask of the Lord the thing I seek most is to live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life. delighting in the Lord's perfections and meditating in his Temple. 5 For he will conceal me there when troubles come: he will hide me in his sanctuary. He will place me out of reach on a high rock. 6 Then I will hold my head high above my enemies who surround me. At his sanctuary I will offer sacrifices with shouts of joy, singing and praising the Lord with music.

#### **Obituaries**

We don't often place obituaries in this magazine but during the current 'lockdown' people haven't been able to attend funerals, so it seemed fitting to remember some recent St James' members in these pages. Thank you to the contributors.



#### Mollie Smith 7 January 1929 - 23 April 2020

Those of us who knew Mollie will remember a very quiet, friendly, self-effacing lady. She was generous in a private way that most people would not have

known about. When Tim, our previous vicar, mentioned the need for new bibles in the pews, Mollie immediately offered to help and subsequently paid for them all as well as the lectern bible. She was always the first to offer money in response to an appeal within the church and regularly gave her home-grown flowers to decorate it. Mollie was an unsung Christian lady, who was living most recently in a nursing home in Ilminster. She will be sincerely missed by those who knew her.

Vicky Dykes



#### Kay Seed 29 April 1926 - 15 May 2020

Kay, who came from a nursing background, arrived at St James in the early 90s with her friend Barbara Carey. She soon became involved in church life and was always looking for opportunities to share her love of the Lord. She was a keen Home Group Leader, spending a serious amount of time in preparation. Her memory and knowledge of the Bible were both remarkable. She was also part of the

praying team during and after the Sunday service as well as handling the church prayer chain, having mastered the computer aged 90. Her interests included her dogs, Scrabble and politics, both national and local. She was involved in a number of local committees. She enjoyed food – going out for meals and church events that involved food. And she was very competitive; Tim and Margaret Jones have fond memories of Kay and Madge (Tim's mum) competing on Christmas day with cracker games.

Kay leaves a big hole in the life of St James' Church where she was well loved and appreciated. We miss her.

Sue Collard

#### George Victor Osborne Earl 1938 - 2020



Many of us will remember George coming into church with his cheerful smile, Irish lilt, eyes twinkling, wheeling in his wife Hazel, who he devotedly cared for following her stroke. He had moved to a nursing home in Plymouth to be closer to his family, but died just as the Covid lockdown was starting, so the funeral was a family affair only.

George's was a varied career, first in market gardening and then the police. On retirement from the police he worked for the YMCA and was involved in a host of voluntary organisations including Scouts, Civic Society, Probus, School Governorship and REMAP. His charity and fundraising work was recognised with an invitation to tea at Buckingham Palace.

A fuller account of George's life has been written by his family and is available from the office. In it his children, Colleen and Tony, write: "Our memories of Dad are of a fun-loving, considerate and caring man who was always helping others, as well as being a family man.... he was a wonderful, loving and incredible Dad who will be greatly missed and never forgotten".

Jenny Wakefield



# Weekly Letter

When it became clear Thursday Fellowship would not meet for many months, the Committee spoke about how to keep the link with everyone. So, with members' permission, Pam Anderson set up a group email link and we started a weekly letter received by thirty members.

Our aim is to link people, give information and some general chat, as well as asking for contributions from the group. Marilyn Gibson recently shared her feelings of being in 'lockdown'. On that occasion she also wrote the closing prayer - a regular feature. That letter also had Dennis Morrell's thoughts on VE Day in Taunton. We have a section for members' prayer requests and thanksgivings. Those not online can receive the letter by post if they wish.

In addition, Pam and I keep in touch with members by telephone, especially those not online, but our Committee members are also well involved with this and wonderfully we find most of the group make contacts too.

It is a privilege to be involved.

Vicky Dykes

## St James Church School News







The last three months have been momentous ones for schools across the country and in our own town and parish. It is hard to believe that in March the children were in school proparing for all the parmal Faster.

the children were in school preparing for all the normal Easter excitement and activities. Indeed on March 16th we were



getting ready to welcome most of the classes for the Easter Experience - three classes came on the Monday but by the Tuesday it became evident that the situation had changed, so we packed away the costumes, although the displays remained until the church had to close its doors.



However, as for church (albeit differently), at school it has continued to be business as usual. Homes have been turned into classrooms, parents into classroom assistants, and teachers have been teaching over the internet and through the school website. This has been a really difficult time for

families as their normal routines have been upended and at very short notice they have had to adjust to learning and working in a different way, seeking to maintain a balance that enables them to have positive family time and remain happy. Nigel Johnson, the head teacher at St James was very clear in his message to the children...



'Learning should be fun, read as much you can, do something to make you smile each day, collect lots of memories to share and stay safe!'

Just taking a look at the school's Chatterbox newsletter pages, it is clear that there has been a lot of interaction and the children have responded well to the challenges and work they have been set. There are suggestions including virtual visits to the zoo, keep fit activities, writing to a care home, art exhibitions and lots more.





Mr. Johnson sets a weekly challenge and one these was for the pupils to send in 'thank you' posters that could be used to decorate the Covid Testing Centre in Taunton. Some of the work sent in is displayed here.















#### Online Activities

Nigel Johnson and Rev Fabian have been collaborating in doing Online Collective Worship and as a result the Specifically Suspicious Show has a place on the school website.

Go, Sarah – hope you are enjoying school life!





In addition to encouraging the children's learning journey, on the web pages and class dojos (not quite sure what that is!) staff have posted lots of encouragement and humour – including Mrs. Ray's video of her colleagues doing their daily exercise routines.

### Fare Share Project

Although our Xplore Team and TLG teams have not been able to go into the school, we are still praying hard for all involved. There has been a wonderful opportunity to support the school with their Fare Share project.





As we know from press reports, many families struggle on tight budgets and the school has a partnership with Fare Share to distribute additional food to families. During the lockdown a small team, headed by Nic Tall and Susie Peeler, has been using our hall as a distribution centre to deliver to a number of families.

They never know from week to week what will come in - potatoes or pasta, baked beans or beetroot, cheese or cornflakes. What is certain is that there's always a smile when it is placed on the doorstep.



#### What Next...?

By the time you read this, the big decisions around returning to school will be in process. For all concerned this will be a time of mixed emotions. Some children will have been in school throughout the lockdown, mainly those whose parents are key workers, and schools all over the town will have been putting structures in place to care for those children as safely as possible.

These pictures show some socially distanced play happening. The return of other children following half term will have been planned

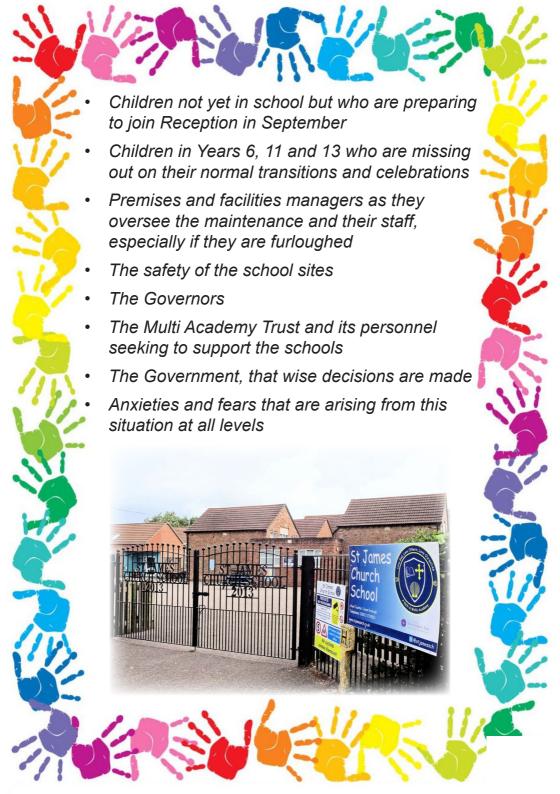
carefully and wisely. Please pray for school staff at St James, and all the schools in Taunton, as they deal with anxieties of parents and children, manage their learning, reconnect with children, re-establish boundaries and school values, and keep hope and positivity for the months ahead.

Jenny Wakefield



On the next two pages there are some pointers on how to focus your prayers. It's so important that we continue to support the school and its staff and pupils during this unusual time.





## **Every Day Church**

The church furnishings shine brightly. I stand back and gaze in admiration at the results of all my hard work. I enjoy the routine of my week which is always the same. Mondays I give the window sills, the font and stone work a good rub down. Tuesdays I tidy the book stall, clean the vestry and the porch. Wednesdays I give the floors a good clean right through. Thursdays is the turn for the brass. On Fridays I polish the choir stalls and pulpit and mop up after the flower arrangers have been in.

My job as the church caretaker is one I am very proud of. Even so, it hasn't been easy for us as a family, settling into the little Exmoor village. In church, people are friendly and polite enough but outside in the street I often meet with blank stares in response to my greetings.

Denzil, my husband has set up his own carpentry business, fitting doors, making decking and fitted cupboards. He is slowly gaining a reputation for the professional standard of his craftsmanship, a trade he learnt back home in Jamaica. The church has recently commissioned him to carve a sculpture of their patron saint. He sees it as an honour to be asked and has worked at it for several months. Though it has been undeniably hard going to become accepted in the village, I do have an ace up my sleeve. My teenage children, Mary and Joseph, are star badminton players. Both have inherited their father's genes for sportsmanship and have the added benefit of being well above average height. On Friday night we always have badminton, and tonight is the night of the big match.

Our church, St. Frisby- on- the -Moor is hosting the inter- church badminton finals. Our vicar, the Reverend Trevor Morgan or the Rev Trev as he is fondly known had not been long in his post before he managed to persuade the PCC to remove the pews. It has been a long, uphill struggle to convince the diehards amongst the congregation and some members have sadly drifted away from the church as a result. But the upshot is that the church now has a very versatile space that can be utilised well by the whole community until the fundraising for a village hall reaches its target. There are activities on every day of the week. My only concern for tonight is for the flowers!

Tomorrow is to be the wedding of the Honourable Alice Whittaker, daughter of Lady Whittaker and the late Colonel. She will be marrying the Lord

Lieutenant Algernon Ormerod Digby- Smith. They attended a pre-wedding practice earlier this afternoon and are delighted with the arrangements of white flowers and trailing ivy that festoon the pillars and windowsills. The altar flowers and main stand by the pulpit are a flummery of white perfection; lilies, roses, carnations and stephanotis combining to make a sweet, heady perfume that's filling the whole church.

I have issued warnings to both the teams to be careful of the flowers as they set up the net, which is attached to the pillars on either side of the nave. They assure me that they will hit the shuttlecocks with care!

The game is fierce and frenzied as both sides serve and defend their honour. The final game clinches a win for St. Frisbys and after a round of orange squash and biscuits, both teams leave to continue their celebrations in the Royal Oak, with a jubilant Joseph carrying the trophy.

My dear Mary stays behind to help me clear up the biscuit crumbs and realign some of the flowers on the pillars that have been knocked askew. I am relieved that my words have been heeded and the displays on the whole are left untrammelled. Turning to go and fetch the keys from the vicarage for locking up, the light in the side chapel catches my eye, stopping me in my tracks.

I stare in abject horror at the hugest, most horrific looking cobweb I have ever seen. Why had I never spotted it before? There, illuminated in the middle of it, looking like a ghastly white moth caught in a sticky cocoon, is a shuttlecock.

The enormous cobweb is held in position on the cross beams by three, long, thick silken strands and has obviously been there for years, if not centuries. I am mortified. It is positioned right above the table where the Honourable Alice will be signing the register. The web is swinging dangerously in the draught created by the departing revellers. What if it was to come down on the bride's head in the middle of the ceremony, I think with mounting anxiety.



Mary follows my gaze and utters loudly,

'MUM, WHAT IS THAT?'

'Never you mind what is that, child, we've got to get it down before the wedding.'

'But, Mum it's so high up we'll never do it.'

'Get a chair girl and hit at it with your racquet,' I shout at her.

'Mum, I can't reach it,' gasps Mary as she flails wildly, jumping as high as she dare off the chair.

'Then we'll have to make something to get it down.'

Dashing off to the vestry I find the broom and a long window pole. The only thing I can find to lash them together is a microphone lead. The church has long since stopped leaving a step ladder inside after the spate of thefts of lead from the roof. How I could have done with it now though? I stagger through with the elongated pole into the chancel, just missing the flowers next to the pulpit. Mary helps me jump and prod with it, but it isn't long enough. I have to gain some extra length. Back to the vestry, fighting the growing panic, I dart into all the dark corners looking for anything I can use. My hand connects with the life size wooden sculpture of St. Frisby that Denzil has shunted away in the vestry. The Reverend plans to have it wall mounted and blessed next month by the Bishop. Dragging the sculpture into the side chapel I make a heartfelt plea to St. Frisby for a miracle.

'I really need your help now,' I moan as Mary ties the end of the window pole to the back of St.Frisby's head. The irreverence of the moment passes me by completely as we manage to hoist the entire ensemble as high up into the air as possible. Mary is just mounting the chair as we hear the voice of Reverend Trevor through the door. In that same moment Mary twists her head round toward his voice, losing her balance. The unholy looking edifice rockets forward, brushing the edge of the cobweb, bringing down the shuttlecock and flattening the flowers on the side altar. The Reverend kindly helps us clear up the mess, fluffs up the flowers and dismisses my profuse apologies as only a man of the cloth could.

The next day the Honourable Alice looks radiant as she walks down the aisle on the arm of her Lord Lieutenant. As the Reverend passes the end of my pew he whispers, 'I have a little present I'll give you tomorrow.' Sure enough, after Sunday communion he drops half a dozen shuttlecocks into my lap.

'I found these masquerading as lilies amongst the high altar flowers,' he smiles and winks conspiratorially. 'Lady Whittaker remarked what an inspired and unusual display it was.'

**Bridget Hall** 



Many of you will remember Michelle Durnell and Mark Johnson, former members of St James and who were married here. They now live in Cambridge and we were delighted to hear their wonderful news. If you'd like to contact the family, see Alex in the Church Office.

This is William Samuel Durnell Johnson (William Johnson normally).



I have not changed my name so Durnell will be one of William's middle names.

William was born on Monday 27th April at 8.29pm in The Rosie hospital, Cambridge. He weighed 9lb 60z, and he was induced as he was nearly 2 weeks over his due date and showed no signs of coming along!

Mark will be working from home when his paternity leave finishes which will be great. It was so nice having him working from home during my maternity leave too. We send our love, and look forward to bringing William to meet you some time.

Michelle x x



# What has the PCC been discussing recently ...?

Here's a summary of the main things the Parochial Church Council looked at in March and (via Zoom videoconferencing) in May

#### Coronavirus crisis review

#### **Annual Meeting**

The diocese has extended the period within which we are required to hold the annual meeting to 31 October. The terms of existing office holders are extended accordingly.

#### **Grants**

Grants have been made to The Besom in Taunton towards the provision of providing crisis food boxes, and to Open Door towards their current meal provision work and projects that need to be completed so that they can continue to provide support after the immediate crisis is over.

#### Impact on vision thinking

Fabian explained that throughout the lockdown, his focus has been the three elements of our church vision statement: how can we continue to encounter God, how can we grow as His disciples, and how can we participate in the life of His Spirit.

We are challenged to continue to serve in God's kingdom. We are seeing this across the church in a number of ways, as people serve others within the church, also the wider community, friends and neighbours.

#### Current arrangements

Initially the church reacted to the immediate need and provided Sunday services. As gaps were identified, this work has expanded to include Sunday Club at Home, The Specifically Suspicious Shows, as well as the Everyday Faith series. There has been a really positive response to the services, with a variety of material available. The young people are now meeting weekly on Zoom.

We are finding that folk are joining the online services who may not have been to church before. This has opened up an opportunity for people to explore faith and church before attending a physical service.

In addition to mailing out the Bulletin, the church is also producing DVDs of the services to be distributed to those without internet.

#### Safeguarding

Safer Recruitment processes continue as usual, but with some aspects being done online. The CofE National Safeguarding Team has issued specific Covid-19 guidance about safely helping those in our congregation and wider community. Training courses are available online.

#### Personnel

David Wilkie, our new Curate is still on track to join us at the end of June – the exact date will be confirmed in due course. He will not be able to start with us as a Deacon, as it will be not possible to hold the necessary service. However, he will join us as a licenced Lay Reader.

The recruitment of a Families Worker is deferred until we are able to proceed with applications. The appeal is still open, and the form will be uploaded to the website as soon as possible.

#### **Finances**

The PCC reviewed the draft annual report and the pre-audited accounts for 2019. In general, the outturn was as expected, with a deficit of £4,454 being due to the increase in the Parish Share.

The finance report as at the end of April shows that all is looking healthy with the church accounts, even taking into consideration the drop off in revenue from the hall bookings and the plate collection. A donation facility will be added to the website as soon as possible.

#### **Miscellaneous Matters**

Susie Peeler briefed the PCC on the activities of the local Extinction Rebellion (XR) group, which holds some meetings in one of the church rooms. The PCC noted that XR is very much aligned with the Anglican Communion's 5th Mark of Mission - "To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth" - and that General Synod and our own Diocesan Synod have both declared climate emergencies.

The PCC is carefully reviewing the renewal of our membership of the Evangelical Alliance, due to concerns over its approach to inclusivity. A final decision has been deferred until the PCC is able to meet in person.

Martin Wakefield



The host has muted all participants...

...the vicar has found a new way to manage his PCC

#### **New Curate**

We anticipate very soon welcoming our new curate, David Wilkie, to St James, together with his wife, Rev Donna Wilkie, and their three children – Joy, Edith and Dora.

David is finishing a Diploma in Theology, Ministry and Mission at Trinity College, Bristol. He also holds a Post Grad Dip Theol, a BA Youth Work and Applied Theology and an MPhys in Astrophysics from Cardiff University (watch out Brian Cox...).



David has years of experience working in churches. He loves to see young people thrive and to have a voice and space to be empowered. He has set up a thriving charity for detached youth work on a deprived estate. He enjoys football, playing guitar and leading worship. He writes song, reads, runs, gardens, spends time with his girls in the park, watches good films with his wife and loves being outdoors. I don't know how we'll keep up with him (!) but I'm sure we shall all give him and his family a warm 'St James welcome'.

### **Current PCC Members**

A reminder of the current members of the Parochial Church Council If you'd like to raise any issues with the PCC or find out more about what the Council does, do talk to any of these people



Rev Fabian Wuyts



Church Wardens Steve Bradford and Ruth Stevens



Associate Warden
Joyce Kirk



Richard Carpenter



Ruth Dunn



Roger Fenton



Jamie Fox



Jamie Haddell



Lizzie Haddell



Sue Lucas



Sheila Marlow



Ruth Praeter-Gillard



Chris Rickard



Richard Sainsbury



Liz Sykes



Nic Tall



Jenny Wakefield



Martin Wakefield

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Children & Young People's Co-ordinators: Vashti Wuyts 01823 33194 e-mail: vashti.wuyts@gmail.com Hilary Hayes 01823 444766 e-mail: mhhayes@outlook.com

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