



Letter from the Vicar Reverend Fabian Wuyts Vicar of St James

One year on...

It is hard to believe that, by the time you read this post, already a year will have passed since the first restrictions were imposed in response to the Covid 19 outbreak. Word of a pandemic was already in the newspapers, but it was not until 12th of March 2020 that scores of major sporting and cultural events were suspended along with local elections. In the days that followed, further restrictions were announced and on 23rd of March the first national lockdown was declared by the Prime Minister.

While I am writing this article from the comfort of my office at home just before half-term, I suspect that as you read this, restrictions of some kind will still be in place. The vaccination program is making good progress and we can hope for more chance to meet one another again during spring and summer. We are, however, not out of the woods yet and there are still many questions about the future of our social interactions for months and maybe years to come.

We will soon celebrate Easter in a new mix economy, with some services hopefully taking place in church and some most certainly over the internet. The story of the resurrection offers us a moment to reflect on the role of suffering and the possibility of radical transformation look at the painting called *The Transformation* of Suffering (right).



© William G. Congdon Foundation, Milan

Sufferings should not be anathema to us Christians. Jesus died a painful, humiliating, lonely, bloody and public death. The dream of victory and success seemed far gone. All that remained was a lifeless body and an unfulfilled teaching. At least, that is how it seemed for a couple of nights.

On Sunday, words that Jesus was alive were heard from a small group of women. It is quite extraordinary that the first to be entrusted with the message of the resurrection were women since, at the time, they were not considered valid witnesses in court. After a short moment of doubts and confusion, the disciples themselves experienced the risen Lord. The apostle Paul would later say that as well as the disciples, more than five hundred people saw Jesus alive, many of those witnesses being still alive at the time he wrote the letter (1 Corinthians 15: 3-8). Jesus' resurrection is an historical event based on solid historical evidence. It is not a symbol or wishful thinking. Jesus defeated death and showed himself with a new body as the first fruit of what is to come. Death and burial are not the end. In Christ, you too will be raised from the dead.

Through all life's sorrows and despairs, I will not be moved.

When facing death, I need not fear,

I have this hope secured. Because Christ died at Calvary,

sin has on me no claim. Because He overcame the grave,

with Him I will be raised.

Where, O grave, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?

Eternity is won for me by heaven's eternal King



Extract from 'Where, O Grave, is Your Victory?' - Co-Mission

Fabian

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Thank you to all the contributors to this edition of the Magazine. If you have something to share for the June - August 2021 edition, do contact the Editor either directly or through the Church Office - details on page 32 - deadline for copy is Thursday 20 May 2021.

The facing page lists plans for services leading up to Easter - but also note that, because of Covid, these are provisional. For the most up-to-date information, visit our website - **www.stjamestaunton.org**.

In this edition Vashti tells us what's been happening with 'TLG Makes Lunch' and Jenny updates us on St James Church School. We also focus on some of the Missions we support. Once you've read Richard Carpenter's article about Eco Church, take a look at Jenny's review of David Attenborough's latest book and tv series - indeed, a prophet for our times. And while we're talking authors, James Haddell tells us about his new book and there is exciting news about Passioneaster2018...

Sadly, long standing member of St James, Peter Jeanes passed away in February. Several people have sent in tributes and memories of him that paint a lovely picture of a 'gentle man'.

Chris Doyle - St James Parish Magazine Editor

Once you've read the magazine, do feel free to give it to someone who otherwise might not get to see it. The magazine is also published online. Please let friends and neighbours know how they can access this and previous editions through the St James website: www.stjamestaunton.org

Easter Services at St James

At the time of preparing this magazine, we don't know what 'lockdown' regulations will allow us to do in the lead up to and over Easter. Fabian and the team have planned a provisional list of online services...but this may change in the light of possible easing of restrictions - see below.

Sunday 28th March

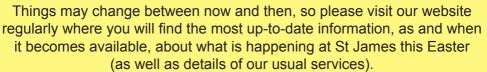
Palm Sunday @ 10:30am Special Palm Sunday Lego Church @ 4pm

Friday 2nd April

Good Friday Service @ 10.30 am be ready with coffee and hot-cross buns! The last hour @ 2pm A quiet service as we 'wait with Christ'

Sunday 4th April

Communion Service @ 10:30am He's Alive: Easter Sunday celebration!



Go online and follow the links at:

www.stjamestaunton.org

2021 Parish Ramble(s)...

Covid restrictions mean that we shan't be able to hold the usual Easter Monday ramble again this year, but we should be able to meet in groups of up to 30 after 17 May. So, pencil in the 31 May holiday and watch the bulletin for further details.





Living the story. Telling the story.



Letter from the Right Reverend Nigel Stock, Assistant Bishop of Bath and Wells

With the Lenten Season well underway, I wonder how it is going for you? I always anticipate Lent with a slight feeling of having to brace myself. Come on make an effort in something! If I am going to give something up don't just make it an exercise in

self-improvement, how is it going to help others? If I am going to do something positive, what will be its long-term effect? It is all too easy to 'over think' the whole exercise.

Once the season is underway I begin to appreciate it. But in the end it should be about paying attention to God. I am always struck by the end of the story of the temptations in the wilderness. Jesus refuses to be a cheap miracle worker to benefit himself, and refuses to follow the route to worldly power and status. He faced temptation by stripping away all the necessities of life and knew deep hunger. At the end of this exhausting wrestle with his vocation the Gospel tells us "... suddenly angels came and waited on him." (Matthew 4:10)

Whatever Lenten discipline you are following, perhaps the #Live Lent course, or a local study group, a focussed effort to support others or a form of self-denial (or all of them!), may it bring a greater focus on God. There were those who ministered to Jesus in the Gospel stories.

The angels in the wilderness, the woman who anointed him, Simon who carried his cross, for example. We might not be able to do those things for him, but we can pay loving attention.

When we emerge from the austerity and effort of Lent, which has had an even more austere aspect in Lockdown, we come to the bright hope of Easter. We know in the Risen Christ the same relief that Jesus knew from the Angels. As we offer our love to Him, His love for us is always returned.

May the blessing of the Risen Christ be with you.

Nigel Stock

The Right Reval Nigel Stock
Assistant Bishop of Bath and Wells



Assistant Bishop NIgel's letter also appears in the March edition of 'Manna', the Diocesan publication giving news of events and activity around the Bath and Wells Diocese. Last year this changed to a new format. It is published monthly, along with the Diocesan Prayer Diary and a copy will be sent out each month with the St James' Bulletin.

Action this day



It's just got to be done. So how do you make sure? During the second world war, Winston Churchill would attach red stickers carrying the words 'Action this day' to documents of particular urgency.

ACTION THIS DAY

As we enter 2021 it is becoming clear that - COVID notwithstanding - something has to be done about climate change and its impacts across the planet and its people. And such action has to start very soon. Genesis presents us with the image of humanity being placed in creation to take care of it - sometimes described as being its stewards. How can we play our part in that big story?

Bishop Peter puts this responsibility very clearly on the Diocesan website:

"Our care for the environment and for all that God has created is an obligation for us as Christians and part of our response to the gospel. What we now know about climate change and the impact we humans make on the world we live in, means that it is imperative that we take this responsibility seriously. The Earth is our home. It is beautiful beyond words. It is God's gift to us and so we must take care of it."

It's not often that an opportunity appears that may – if taken – yield tangible improvements for our world and its inhabitants. The United Nations Climate Change Conferences (UNCCC) do represent such opportunities. Some have descended into pointless verbiage but, when they have been successful, they have been able to frame decision-making for years to come. The Kyoto conference in 1997 led to agreements to reduce outputs of greenhouse gases and the agreements at Paris in 2016 require that each country must determine, plan, and regularly report on the contribution it undertakes to lessen the impact of global warming.

I'd be surprised if you've not already seen some reference to COP26 in the news. This is the latest in the series of UNCCC and is being hosted by the UK in November. If you're wondering, the COP part stands for *Conference of the Parties* and refers to all the signatories

party to the UN's convention on climate change. This will be the 26th such meeting.

"last best chance the world has"

John Kerry, who is President Joe Biden's climate envoy, has described the event as representing the "last best chance the world has...to do what science is telling us we need to do".

COP26 has been described as the largest summit the UK has ever hosted and the government minister responsible (Alok Sharma) has said that it represents, "an exciting opportunity for all of society to be involved."





And just as I write this, two important studies - from respected charities and research bodies - have been published highlighting current dangers.

One describes how thousands of lives lost to air pollution, inactivity and unhealthy diets could be saved each year if our country takes the action needed to tackle climate change; the other how six million older people in England are at high risk of asthma and lung damage because of air pollution.

COP26 may - if you feel able - provide an opportunity to contact our MP or other relevant politicians and, hopefully, help to ensure the UK Government goes into the process with a 'creation care' mindset.



As a well-known retailer put in an advertising campaign some years ago, "There is no Plan B". After all, there is no Planet B: if we mess this one up...that's it.

Richard Carpenter

See also Jenny Wakefield's article about David Attenborough on page 16

TLG Make Lunch...!

It's been another half-term of opportunity to serve in our community!

God's gracious provision meant that the TLG team was once again able to give food to 28 families across 5 different schools. Some much needed food to bridge the hunger gap. God is Good!

Thanks must go to the Food Bank and the wonderful relationship we have established with them over the past year; it has been a huge blessing in so many ways. Relationships with the families and their children are really beginning to grow and I am so thankful to God every time we serve them that He has made this possible.

The scripture verse that went out to the families with the most recent delivery was Philippians 1:2 – 'May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.'





Let this be a prayer across our church for these families and for ourselves. Our God is a gracious God who blesses us in so many ways. We, in return, can transform those blessings into gifts to glorify His name!

A very BIG thank you to everyone who supports us with prayer (most important) and donations. This ministry wouldn't be possible without your valuable support.

And a huge 'Thank you' to the TLG team and the A Team for freely giving your time and energy. May God bless you all abundantly!

Many Blessings Vashti and the Team



The two weeks of Fairtrade Fortnight every year (22nd February - 7th March in 2021) are meant to highlight the work of the charities Traidcraft Exchange and Traidcraft. They are 'sister' charities and both benefit from every purchase you make! This is because at the end of every year, whatever money is left in the St James A/C for purchases of your chocolate, tea, coffee, cards, toilet paper, kitchen rolls and rice (to name but a few!), Richard Sainsbury sends the amount to Traidcraft Exchange.

The charity was founded in 1979 - on the right is a photograph of my mother sitting at her stall about the same time!

100% Traidcraft Exchange have progressed to transparency and their Mission Statement:

'We welcome anyone to join our endeavour of making trade fair. We work with supporters of all faiths and none, working with farmers and artisans whatever their creed, ethnicity or religion. We believe that justice transcends ideology and individual beliefs.'

Orders are easy to do and often delivered within a couple of days. Looking forward to hearing from you as Easter is fast approaching!

email: fredadavis@hotmail.co.uk

or:

landline with answerphone: 01823 278347

Peter Jeanes - A gentle man

It is with deep sadness we mention the death of Peter Jeanes, one of our longest standing church members and organist at St James. He passed away peacefully following a recent diagnosis of lung cancer. As a church we grieve his loss and extend our heartfelt sympathy to Sue and all the family.

Below are just a few memories and tributes to a rare and special person, from some who have had the privilege of knowing him over the years.

"A lovely, gentle, friendly man who has given much to St James through his organ playing, praying and showing love and care for others." (John & Vicky)

"A lovely, unassuming, gentle man who was totally committed to St James . I especially remember a farm visit he organised years ago and also enjoyed the talk he gave about our church organ of which he was so proud." (Sue Collard)

"Our family have known Pete since 1962 when involved with the church choir, bell ringing and various youth clubs. Pete fully embraced these church activities and encouraged me and others to be involved...

Pete was a member of the robed choir for many years, singing either alto or tenor alongside Sue's Dad, Howard... Pete enjoyed playing (the organ) at any opportunity... and leased business premises in town which included an internal door giving access to a full size church pipe organ in the Mary Street Unitarian Chapel...

He will be remembered as a real 'gentleman' who always showed a genuine concern and interest in people – being generous with his time, helping and showing God's love to others." The Harewood family) "Peter was always a real encouragement to me at times when I needed it most. For example, while enthusiastic about playing the organ he would never stand in the way of change... This self-giving is a rare Christian quality and one which I tried to learn from Peter. I thank God for having known him." (Tim J)

"We have known Peter...a very long time from our bellringing days. A true friend and always a gentleman." (Alan and Betty Partridge)

"We have fond memories of the early 1970s when 'Pete', as we knew him then, was part of the young people's group and was an enthusiastic member of the church choir. Peter had a wonderful strong alto voice at that time. He loved to join Rob at the organ, choosing the registration for various pieces of music, discussing specifications and occasionally clambering into the organ to make an adjustment! His knowledge and love of church organs and the organ music repertoire was second to none. We will miss him very much." (Liz and Rob Rawle)

"Pete was an important member of the missionary committee for a long time. He was a man of few words when you spoke to him but what he had to say was always worth listening to...one of the saints, never one for the limelight, just happy to work away in the background." (Richard and Jacqui)

Such a kind and helpful person, Peter was so kind when Jack died. Nothing was too much trouble, helping me with practical things that were beyond my abilities. (Jenny Edmonds)

"Peter had many interests and gifts which he used generously for others. He always retained a love for the children of St James (Archbishop Cranmer) School, where he served as a dedicated school governor for many years... Peter was one of those foundation stones at St James – quietly sitting there minding his own business, dependably getting on with the job in hand and avoiding the limelight. His keen sense of mission was an example and challenge to us all; we will do well to build on his ethos."

(Jenny & Martin W)

St James Church School News

At the time of writing (just before half term), schools are still in lockdown but they are far from being closed. When we met for the bi-termly St James School prayer meeting in November, all the staff were on site together with about a guarter of the



children (around 100, with more expected the following week). A significant number of parents are key workers so their children need to be in school. With the other children learning at home this presents a challenge for the staff as they are preparing lessons to be taught both in the classroom and online. Having had the opportunity to take a quick look at what is being delivered, it is really quite mind-blowing.

The head and leadership team are responding to the overall management, learning requirements, safeguarding and almost daily changes of guidance as the pandemic progresses, and the site management team are also busy keeping the school clean and safe on a daily basis. There are opportunities for amazing creativity when exploring the possibilities of technology-based learning. Children at home need to be equipped with resources and parents supported in their role as home educators.

Collective worship has been delivered electronically and Fabian is taking his turn with presenting this twice a month. Mr. Johnson is still able to hold his celebration assemblies to congratulate positive work done and children are able to send in their work to their teachers using their class "dojo" (online classroom!). This enables pupils to interact and communicate what they are doing and receive positive feedback. Fabian told me that his children were very excited before half term by a live lesson when they were able to 'Zoom' into their class and catch up with their friends who were in school.

So please continue to pray for the children, staff, parents and families, governors, and head teacher of St James school and all the schools in Taunton. On your ambles around the area in which you live, or on the virtual prayer walks, there will be schools and families who need our prayers and support during this difficult time.

Jenny Wakefield





CARISTMAN Trail

The Christmas Trail hosted 50 families, 140 people, exploring the nativity story with social distancing at St James Church, Saturday 19th December. It was a joyful time. The star of the show was the Wuyts's family guinea pig, creating a modern take on the stable scene...! A massive 'Thank you' to all the volunteers that made it possible and a great event, from the very young, to teenagers and young adults all the way through to those blessed with more years - all ages!

Families booked a 15-minute time slot to attend, entering through the west door to be greeted by Christmas festive decoration. The fairy lights and candles led visitors through the side chapel to meet 'Mary'. Next was the graffiti prayer wall in the sanctuary, then an 'angel' appeared to 'Joseph' in the outer vestry.





The main body of the church displayed the nativity scene, with a wonderful festive display from the flower arrangers and, of course, the guinea pig.

There were conversations with a 'Magi' about refugees, with a collection for Refugee Aid from Taunton (Raft), and hot chocolate and mince pies were on offer together with goodie bags for children. The atmosphere was relaxed and friendly.



The afternoon was quieter so I went onto the High Street to advertise what was happening at St James Church. "Roll up, roll up!" An extra eight families came to enjoy the event. This lead to wonderful conversations with people whom we may have never met. Ho ho ho!

Dave Wilkie

A PROPHET FOR OUR TIMES

When we talk of prophets in Christian circles, perhaps our immediate thought is of the biblical characters like Isaiah, Jonah, Amos and the like, whose prophetic words and themes for the Israelite nation still resonate with our own times in many ways. Their God-given purpose was to warn of the consequences of the nation's failure to adhere to God's standards and purposes.

In our time there is still prophecy within the church, for sure, but it occurs to me that certain people have become prophets in a global sense and their message has an urgency that needs listening to.

One such is Sir David Attenborough whose passion for the world is legendary, expressed in the documentaries that he has produced and overseen over the years. These have enabled viewers to travel to rainforests, deserts, island archipelagos, frozen wastes,



volcanic craters, to dive deep into the oceans and be awed by the extraordinary variety of life that our world holds. His narration as a nonagenarian still holds that sense of boyish wonder of discovery as he moves from one breath-taking scene to another.

In the recent *A Perfect Planet* documentary, he shows how life as we know it is an extraordinary balance of natural forces that allow for 'abundance' and the ability to 'thrive'. He also warns, and this is where his similarity to prophets of old comes in for me, of the consequences of mankind's actions on the planet over the last relatively few decades, the dire consequences of failing to address them and the threat of extinction.

In his book, *Life on Our Planet – My Witness Statement and a Vision for the Future*, he sets out in stark but intelligible language how the population of our world has increased exponentially in his lifetime and the consequent impact on resources and changes that have been brought about for both good and ill. Those of us who are over 60 can also recall a life without plastic, fast food, central heating and on-tap transport – and yet it is our generation that has perhaps been the most profligate in making use of these things.

However, Sir David is not just a prophet of doom; he is a messenger of hope, and both documentary and book provide examples of extraordinary and ingenious work being done to tackle the lurch toward the sixth great extinction of life on this planet. These include:

- solar plants in Morocco that could in time provide alternative energy to Europe as well as North Africa
- projects to regrow coral reefs to help reverse the impact on the ocean
- urban farming methods to make use of untapped urban spaces
- the Great Green Wall in the Sahel area of West Africa aimed at planting 8000 km of trees to revitalise desert areas, which is already having an impact on communities.

These are encouraging but what is clear is that the problem is urgent, global and everyone's responsibility.

As far as I can see, David Attenborough is an honest agnostic and while declaring against religious 'fundamentalism in science' he does not feel that belief in God is incompatible with science. He leaves his listeners and readers free to make up their own minds about where they stand as regards their beliefs about the world, but is in no doubt that it is an awe inspiringly beautiful, unique, resource-rich place and we have a responsibility as part of the planet to safeguard its future.

As Christians we would echo that but with the belief that we have a sacred responsibility to act as stewards of God's creation. In that I believe we can be thankful for the passion of people like David Attenborough and his dedication in fostering understanding of the awesome nature of the world in which we live.

Jenny Wakefield





In March, April and May we have updates from Taunton Street Pastors, Besom in Taunton and WEC.

Over the lockdown period we have had regular monthly interviews with representatives of the organisations we support; Tear Fund, Taunton Youth for Christ and Taunton Town Chaplaincy being the most recent. You can find these at www.youtube.com/c/StJamesChurchTaunton/playlists

Taunton Street Pastors

In March, our focus will be Street Pastors, which is part of a National network. Locally there are trained volunteers from 20 local churches who care about our community, providing on the ground presence both in community areas day times and in the town centres during weekend nights. They usually patrol from 10 p.m.



to 4 a.m. on a Saturday night to care for, listen to and help people who are out on the streets. The lockdown periods have required patrols to pause but some have taken place as and when restrictions were lifted and have been warmly welcomed. More recently some members have been able to help at the vaccination centres offering a genuinely caring and listening presence.

Members of our church are or have been involved with Street Pastors. If you want to know more, talk to Chris Buckman or Vivian Turner or visit their Facebook page on:

www.facebook.com/Taunton-Street-Pastors-179517162773540/

Besom

In April we turn our attention to The Besom in Taunton. This started in 2005 at Taunton Vineyard Christian



Fellowship with a group of time-givers who wanted to give practical help to those of our town in most need. This has expanded to include decorating and gardening projects, delivery of food boxes, furniture and household items, all to meet the needs of our neighbours in distress. At Christmas and Easter, Besom provide hampers for the individuals and families they have worked with during the year.

Since 2017, Besom operates from a unit on the Crown Estate where they are able to store their goods and crisis food boxes for distribution to individuals and families referred by the many social working agencies and authorities in

Taunton and Wellington. Having the warehouse as a base has enabled the team to meet and pray together. This enhanced fellowship has further energised all those involved and encouraged their own churches by the answers to prayer experienced.

During the pandemic, their operations have had to be curtailed in line with Government guidelines which has affected the decorating and gardening projects. However, they have still been able to respond to calls from key workers for furniture, starter packs and crisis food boxes. Initially they had to close the warehouse but now have developed Covid-safe procedures to resume deliveries. There has been a significant increase in requests to help homeless people being rehoused.

Many churches in the Taunton and Wellington area, including several members of St James, support the work of Besom in prayer, giving of time and skills, and finances.

You can find more details at: www.tauntonbesom.org.uk/ or contact Elaine Fenton for further information on 01823 412113

WEC (World Evangelisation for Christ)

We think about WEC in May. This is a worldwide organisation covering over 90 countries. Their 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, Dave and Margie continue to work from home supporting the front line workers in the field where limited medical services are a major concern during the pandemic. They are based in Sheffield, using Zoom and other technologies as well as participating in the work of their local church.

Dave and Margie send us regular newsletters which are posted on our website pages:

 $www.stjamestaunton.co.uk/Text/MissionaryLinks.htm \verb|#Overseas_Partners||$

Author! Author!

The Lost Child's Quest by James Haddell



I've not done any rigorous research on this, but something tells me that if you were to browse the shelves in the children's fiction section of your local bookshop, every third book you pick up will probably feature a main character who has been orphaned. Factor in the stories where a character has lost, or been estranged from, at least one parent in some other way in their early years and the percentage would be even higher.

Children who have experienced early trauma feature prominently in children's literature. These children make for immediately interesting characters and kindle instant empathy in the reader. My own bookshelves are stuffed with heroes and heroines who would qualify as 'looked after children' in the UK today. I don't want to criticise these stories in any way – many of them are truly wonderful and I adore them. But as a parent of two adopted children, I often felt there was room for a deeper unpicking of some of the lived experiences of these children, whilst still telling an escapist story of magic and adventure.

So, I decided to write a book that, if they ever read it, my own children would see themselves in; a story that didn't skirt around their feelings of anxiety, fear and sense of being a lost child, but rather used those very real emotions to drive a tale that was threaded with fantasy.

I ended up not delving into this theme as deeply or as explicitly as I had intended. My wonderful editor did have to politely suggest more than once that Tia's inner voice was a little too mature for a ten year old and I reluctantly edited out some material, such as the paragraph below, after eventually conceding that it probably belongs more in an article such as this than in a children's novel:

For those who have grown up knowing the love of a nurturing parent it is impossible to fully appreciate the anxiety that can bind the body and mind of a child who was not shown the goodness

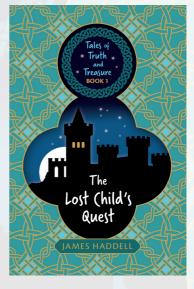
20

of the world at an early age. Without that love, one is left to form an image of life as a series of strange threats that must be fought against or hidden from. The feeling had become so normal to Tia that she was completely unconscious of how fearful she felt almost all of the time.

But this is the heart of Tia's story in *The Lost Child's Quest*, and in the other *Tales of Truth and Treasure* that will follow. Any other

themes were only allowed in if they served to enhance and explain my heroine's search to understand and accept herself.

Historical exploration and treasure-hunting adventure provided a perfect foil for Tia's search for answers. The postmodern attitude to the nature of truth became an increasingly prominent undertone to my writing as I realised how well this endorses the experience of those who have so many unanswerable questions about their early childhoods. And the idea of national heritage being quite a complicated thing, and all the richer for it, reflects the



multifaceted background of adopted people beautifully. These are all strong themes in the book.

I hope that many will love *The Lost Child's Quest* (and the *Tales of Truth and Treasure* series that will follow in the coming years) for its history, mystery, magic and adventure. But I also hope that some will love it because it makes them feel that it's ok to experience their confusing mixture of emotions, and that they can find themselves even though they may not be able to find all the answers they are looking for.

James

The Lost Child's Quest is published by Emira Press and is available from Amazon RRP £6.99. Alternatively, contact James and he can supply a copy locally (maybe slighty cheaper!) - james_haddell@hotmail.com

What does it mean?

When I did my training for the Methodist Ministry, it was a time when the really important theological emphasis was the study of words, and asking the fundamental question, 'What does do they mean?' We were taken into an exploration of the Hebrew and Greek languages and the mystery of what lay behind the words translated into English as 'spirit', 'soul', fellowship', to discover a richness that we never suspected. After all, we were first year, very naive students! The important thing was that we became 'questioning' students: 'What does it mean?' This is something I have never lost. When we come to the Bible, reading it to deepen one's spiritual life or preparing sermons or as a critical student, this question never goes away.

In the season of Lent we are preparing ourselves for entering into the spirit of the season, it is a question that doesn't go away. It's niggling away at us. When Jesus in on trial before Pilate, there is a conversation between the two. John records it in chapter 18 of his gospel. None of the followers of Jesus were there! How did John get hold of the story? How do we understand the crucial bit? 'My Kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest. But my kingdom is from another place!' What does this mean? Is it the Spiritual sentiment 'This world is not my home I'm just passing through' or something much more significant about power, political and religious?

I don't feel that Jesus is saying that his kingdom has no place or relevance to this world. God is far too involved in this world for that to be true. He is affirming that his kingdom is nothing like the geo-political power of the Roman Empire that straggled across the ancient world. It is nothing like the despotic kingdom of Herod. It is nothing like the kingdom of Priests and religious strangle hold of Caiaphas and Annas and a Sanhedrin that did not recognize him.

It was inevitable that there would be a clash and it was now being worked out across the whole drama of the Easter story.

There are glimpses of the inevitability of this clash in the gospel story when the question of power and dominance arose amongst the disciples. Who will sit in positions of power when this new kingdom comes into being? A mother pleaded for her sons. She wanted them in the dominant seats. No wonder the others were annoyed. In any group of people there is nothing worse than this kind of split. No wonder too that Jesus gave them a sharp rebuke '...the rulers of this world lord it over them, you are to be as servants...' At the very end, the disciples of Jesus were concerned about what would happen. 'Lord, at this time are you going to restore the kingdom to Israel?

Are we at long last going to rule ourselves under God?' All the way through the story some people wanted to eliminate Jesus altogether, or at least, to reduce his influence.

The joy of Easter is all to do with renewal and hope. Forgiveness. New priorities in living. Bringing onto fruition the manifesto of Jesus. It will be a kingdom where '...the poor have good news preached to them, where prisoners will be set free, the blind eyes will be opened, the oppressed will find a new freedom, the year of the Lord's favour will be announced.' Of course, there are lots of things in those words that need to be unpacked. What do they mean? How will they be worked out? In what ways is my kingdom going to be different from the ones that surround you? Talk to any Christian and they will tell you that one of these applies to them.

We are back where we started! What do these things mean?

Brian Stocks

Passioneaster2018

Palm Sunday marks the start of Holy Week and many of you will remember Passioneaster2018 - a play that looks at the events of that week from the point of view of some of the people who were there, but about whom we know little.

Plans are well underway for ToneFM to broadcast a radio adaptation of the play on Good Friday and again on Easter Sunday.

If you remember it and liked it, tell your friends.

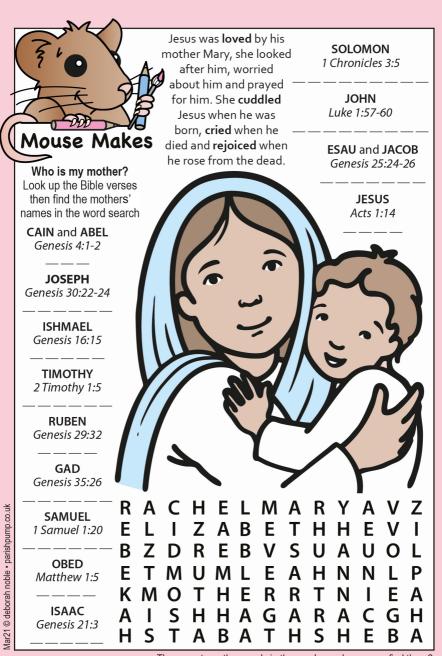
And if you missed it the first time...why not listen in?

Look at their website nearer the time for a schedule (as we go to press we're still not sure of exact timing)

www.tonefm.co.uk/schedule/

and listen in on ToneFM 107.8

Children's Pages



There are two other words in the word search, can you find them?

The Widow's little coins



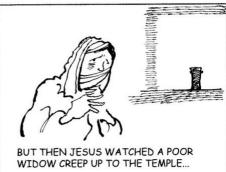




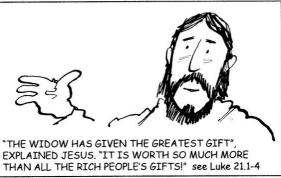












Crossword

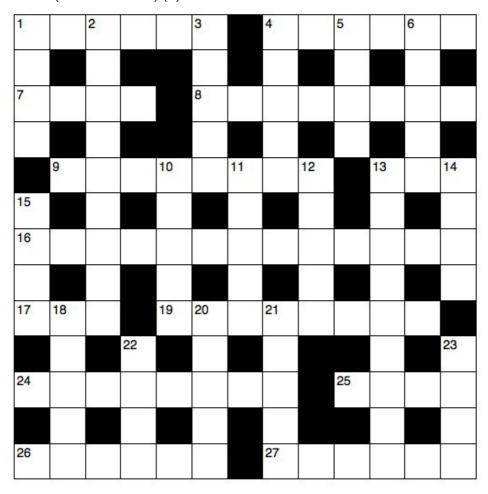
Across

- 1 The earth is one (6)
- 4 'On a hill far away stood an old cross' (6)
- 7 'I am the vine and my Father is the gardener' (John 15:1) (4)
- The Caesar who was Roman Emperor at the time of Jesus' birth (Luke 2:1) (8)
- 9 'Your should be the same as that of Christ Jesus' (Philippians 2:5) (8)
- Jesus said that no one would put a lighted lamp under this (Luke 8:16) (3)
- 16 Involvement (1 Corinthians 10:16) (13)
- 17 Armed conflict (2 Chronicles 15:19) (3)
- 19 Where the Gaderene pigs were feeding (Mark 5:11) (8)
- What jeering youths called Elisha on the road to Bethel (2 Kings 2:23) (8)
- 25 The Venerable , eighth-century Jarrow ecclesiastical scholar (4)
- 26 8 Across issued a decree that this should take place (Luke 2:1) (6)
- 27 Come into prominence (Deuteronomy 13:13) (6)

Down

- Where some of the seed scattered by the sower fell (Matthew 13:4) (4)
- 2 Sexually immoral person whom God will judge (Hebrews 13:4) (9)
- 3 Gospel leaflet (5)
- 4 Physical state of the boy brought to Jesus for healing (Mark 9:18)
- 5 Tugs (anag.) (4)
- 6 To put forth (5)
- 10 Nationality associated with St Patrick (5)
- 11 Leader of the descendants of Kohath (1 Chronicles 15:5) (5)
- 'After this, his brother came out, with his hand grasping heel' (Genesis 25:26) (5)
- 13 At Dothan the Lord struck the Arameans with at Elisha's request (2 Kings 6:18) (9)
- 14 'Peter, before the cock crows today, you will three times that you know me' (Luke22:34) (4)
- 15 Spit out (Psalm 59:7) (4)
- 18 'When I , I am still with you' (Psalm 139:18) (5)

- 20 Concepts (Acts 17:20) (5)
- 21 Thyatira's dealer in purple cloth (Acts 16:14) (5)
- 22 Does (anag.) (4)
- The second set of seven cows in Pharaoh's dream were this (Genesis 41:19) (4)



22. Odes 23. Lean

DOWN: 1. Path 2. Adulterer 3. Tract 4. Rigid 5. Gust 6. Exude 10. Irish 11. Uriel 12. Esau's 13. Blindness 14. Deny 15. Spew 18. Awake 20. Ideas 21. Lydia

27. Arisen

ANSWERS ACROSS: 1. Planet 4. Rugged 7. True 8. Augustus 9. Attitude 13. Bed 16. Participation 17. War 19. Hillside 24. Baldhead 25. Bede 26. Census

What has the PCC been discussing recently ...?

Here's a summary of the main things the Parochial Church Council looked at in December, January and February.

TLG

Preparations for the TLG Make Lunch Project at St James Church School continue. Grants totalling £5,900 have been received, as well as donations from church members totalling £275.

Meanwhile, a half-term food box delivery was made in mid-February to over 30 families from five schools.

David Jordan has taken over the role of TLG Mentoring Coordinator from Geoff Treasure. Mentoring restarted in January.

Recruitment

A job description for the Children & Families Worker post has been drawn up with the advice of the Diocesan Go Team, and a draft Recruitment Pack produced. We should be ready to advertise by Easter. It was agreed that there was nothing to be gained by waiting for some form of post-coronavirus 'new normal' to be established. Funding will come initially from donations already received and reserves, with a further appeal to be launched in due course.

Work continues to draw up a new job description for the Church Administrator to take into account new requirements, largely relating to communications. The present interim appointment is due to end in March and we are aiming to advertise as soon as possible.

Coronavirus ... and after

While the lockdown, which began in England on 5 January, included an exception for corporate worship and private prayer in church buildings, the recommendation from the Diocese was: "We would like to commend that you take worship online where possible." In light of the rising infection rate in Taunton at the time and the vulnerability of those attending the 9am service, the PCC resolved to follow the advice of the Diocese. The church has also been closed for private prayer due to staff working from home. At the time of writing, it is unclear when the restrictions will be eased.

It is intended to form a group to take forward our thinking about services as we move into a changed situation. Some early steps have been taken in respect of developing the evening service into a more personal approach to connecting with people. The PCC is also aware that the present morning service is being pulled in two directions, with different approaches being required for family content and more in-depth teaching.

The PCC is further considering how best to help church members engage in prayer together. It is recognised that a variety of approaches is needed to engage with members' different circumstances.

Finances

It is expected that the deficit on 2020 running expenses will be around £20,000, after deducting legacies (£97,510), donations for the Children and Families Worker project (£2,200) and the balance of monies remaining on TLG grants (£4,355). This deficit is larger than that for 2019 due to the loss of income from hall hire and the increased Parish Share. Stewardship giving was £91,211 (up from £89,531 in 2019).

The projected running expenses deficit for 2021 is around £36,000, assuming a fall in stewardship due to changed financial circumstances and the further loss of hall hire income. The Parish Share for 2021 is £95,759, an increase of £1,233; the Diocese is drawing from reserves to limit the increase to the current rate of inflation.

A beguest of £12,000 had been received from the estate of Mollie Smith.

Miscellaneous Matters

Safeguarding: reminders to renew training have been sent out to those affected – responses would be appreciated! Material for explaining safeguarding to children has been received.

The planned review of Mission Support did not take place due to other matters taking precedence during lockdown. This has now commenced.

Various welcoming-related developments are being developed by Andy Hall and John Henden, including an 'Everybody Welcome' course.

The Diocese is starting a programme of events to help parishes consider the CofE's 'Living in Love and Faith' report.

The annual facilities report noted that the premises are in good condition. Only minor works were identified in the quinquennial inspection carried out in mid-2020.

Martin Wakefield

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 Vicar



Steve Bradford and Joyce Kirk Church Wardens



Rev David Wilkie Curate



Lizzie Haddell Associate Warden



Richard Carpenter



Ruth Dunn



Roger Fenton



Marilyn Gibson



David Jordan



Sue Lucas



Sheila Marlow



Ruth Praeter-Gillard



Chris Rickard



Richard Sainsbury



Liz Sykes



Emily Tall





Jenny Wakefield



Martin Wakefield

THE DONKEY

When fishes flew and forests walked And figs grew upon thorn, Some moment when the moon was blood Then surely I was born

With monstrous head and sickening cry And ears like errant wings, The devil's walking parody On all four-footed things.

The tattered outlaw of the earth,
Of ancient crooked will;
Starve, scourge, deride me: I am dumb,
I keep my secret still.

Fools! For I also had my hour; One far fierce hour and sweet: There was a shout about my ears. And palms before my feet.

By GK Chesterton

PRAYING

It doesn't have to be the blue iris, It could be weeds in a vacant lot Or a few small stones.

Just pay attention
Then patch a few words together
And don't try to make them elaborate

This isn't a contest
But a doorway into thanks;
And a silence into which
Another voice may speak.

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