



Interior Church Banners by the children of Archbishop Cranmer School

St James Church Magazine



December - February Edition

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HOME GROUPS

Tuesday	10.30am	56 Manor Orchard (278387) Joyce
	11.30am	3 Addison Grove (353316) Anita 'Tea and Teddies'
	8.00pm	25 Whitmore Road (283691) Kathryn
Wednesday	2.30pm	15 Barrington Close (272597) John
	7.30pm	27 Priorswood Road (251077) Kay
	7.30pm	13 Gyffarde Street (365714) Mark
	7.30pm	28 Killams Crescent (254344) Les
	7.30pm	28 Cometrowe Lane (337690) Steve
	7.45pm	42 Ashley Road (284688) Richard
	8.00pm	Hesperia, The Avenue (277916) Richard
Thursday	8.00pm	The Gamma Group (272931) Contact Church Office
	7.30pm	69 Richmond Road (333194) Margaret
	8.00pm	12 The Avenue (271223) Sue

OTHER GROUPS

Mondays	Parent and Toddlers Group 10am-11.30am in the Church Hall Contact Alison Buckman (07783 883053)
Tuesdays	Jungle Club 4.30pm – 5.45pm for children aged 6-11 in the Church Hall Contact Tim Jones (333194)
Tuesdays	11+ Club 7pm – 8.30pm for young people aged over 11 years in the Church Hall. Contact Nicky Bradford (337690)
Tuesdays	Bell ringing (alternate weeks) Contact Marian Gentile (275278)
Wednesdays	Art Group in the Church Hall Contact Church Office (272507)
Thursdays	Thursday Fellowship (first Thursday of the month) in the Church Hall Contact Vicky Dykes (282507)
Friday	The Ark Support Group for parents/carers of children with special needs. Meets once a fortnight. Contact Alison Buckman (07783 883053)

NEWSLETTER CONTACTS LIST

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Associate Churchwarden
Stan Wojcik

ONE OF TIM'S CONTROVERSIAL THOUGHTS...

- The forthcoming Olympics
- My having entered the 21st century at last with a mobile phone (no, I'm not ready to give you the number yet)
- School league tables of results
- Hundreds of people being employed by railway companies to try to work out who is to blame for delays and therefore who should pay compensation
- Potential starlets in tears because they have been excluded from the latest round in some TV talent show

What have these in common? Perhaps if I give you a bit more information about the second of these it will give you a clue. I was on a hilltop outside Lynton and needed to contact somebody. So out came the mobile phone. Yes, five bars of signal. Was it my network though? Oh no. Not allowed to connect to that one! The other four networks have no signal there at all.

Competition. *Is it something to celebrate and see as God-given? Or is it part of the fallenness of creation, at best a necessary evil?*

I'm afraid I think the latter. Every time I hear someone say that more competition is 'good' it makes me cringe. All it really means is that there is going to be another load of losers. Is it because I hated organised sport as a young person that I think as I do? Perhaps. And maybe competition is necessary because of human nature. Probably – we've all known of organisations under-performing because they have a monopoly.

But does that make competition itself something to rejoice over? I don't think so. It is wasteful; leads to duplication - like the two different buses that compete on the Minehead route always vying to get ahead (literally) of the competition by leaving a minute before; or at least three times as many mobile phone transmitters as are needed and still a very patchy network compared with the situation if all were combined. Nor has the competition culture done anything to prevent the differential between the highest salaries in a company and the lowest, on average, having increased ten fold in the last twenty years, nor the same between nations.

We do live in a fallen and imperfect world. That's why we need laws and prisons and armed forces. And OK, probably some competition too - otherwise we'd end up lazy and complacent. But for me, competition itself needs to have serious limits placed upon it, as being as intrinsically dangerous as a military régime.

Thank God *he* doesn't operate like that: 'Who's doing the most good for me? Let me cheer them on and set targets and remove my patronage from the losers!' 'Let me set my churches against one another, that way they'll all try harder!' 'Fishermen? No way. And *tax collectors*? You must be joking.' 'Nazareth? What good can come from there?'

What he actually says is: 'Don't be afraid. I have redeemed you, I have known you by name. You are mine.' To all alike, with a special place for the weakest and despised in this world.

Rant over. Feel free to disagree and maybe write something from a different perspective?

God bless,
Tim

Children and Young People

The Children & Young People's Policy Group highlighted the need for someone to coordinate the staffing of the various groups.

Premises Matters

Work is now complete on the SW Porch (by the Side Chapel). The roof has been repaired following lead theft, and a steel gate installed to deter rough sleepers, who regularly left it in an unhygienic state.

Work is about to start to convert the SE Porch into a small room which can be used as an extension to the crèche.

Stan Wojcik undertook a lot of work investigating the potential for solar panels, but the recent reduction in government funding now means they are not viable. However, quotations will be sought for insulating the main church roof.

Repairs have started on the church roof, mainly to replace worn lead in the valleys, where water has been getting into the church.

The carpets in the main church have been cleaned, the first time this has been done fully since fitting in 2001.

Following the theft of a set of keys, the opportunity is being taken while replacing the locks to reduce the number of keys to three.

The PCC accepted an offer of another bench for the churchyard, probably to go beside the path to the garden of remembrance.

Health and Safety

The Health and Safety Policy has been reviewed by the churchwardens. Church members are encouraged to inspect the copy on the board outside the office, or to ask for their own copy.

The latest PCC minutes and agenda are displayed on a board near the coffee area, and previous minutes can be inspected in the office. The "Contact Points" leaflet is available near the photograph board; this tells you who to talk to about the many and varied things we do as a church.

Martin Wakefield

PCC ROUNDUP

Here's a summary of the main things the Parochial Church Council looked at in September, October and November 2011.

Financial Matters

Income and expenditure are running according to expectations.

The PCC reviewed the diocese's Legacy Campaign, but decided that the priority is to raise awareness of the need for month-by-month stewardship giving. The church is dependent on income from hall hire, which is not a sound basis for developing our mission.

Vision

A Strategy Group has been looking at what has to be done to enable the church to grow beyond its present size of around 150 active members. This is a well-known organisational barrier, and it stops us from supporting a larger number of people. The results of the study were presented at the Away Day on 19 November, and there will be further communication to church members as the plans develop.

Review of capital expenditure plans

The PCC is reviewing the priorities for capital spending, last looked at a couple of years ago. Around £45,000 remains uncommitted from the money received from the sale of the field and part of the churchyard, and it is important that this is used wisely and not spent simply because it is there. A further £15,000 has been set aside for grants as part of our mission giving.

So far, a first pass has been made at prioritising the list of projects that have been identified, but no firm decisions have been made about which ones should be taken up in the near future. They are: update the external sign boards and add a board on the wall of the hall; install video screens to cover areas of the church behind pillars; refurbish the Large Hall; staff "pump priming" to support growth (e.g. more administrative support); redecorate the church interior; reorder the outer vestry with proper storage for large items; and supplement the staging kit to fully meet users' requirements.

Kitchen

The kitchen project took an unexpected turn just as it was nearing completion. The main issue is that the extractor hood did not meet current regulations; this in turn meant that the gas cannot be connected, leaving the kitchen without a working cooker. There are also a number of other faults with the installation. The matter rests with the firm through whom the order was placed, and much effort is being expended by them to achieve a solution with the supplier. The building works are complete. There will need to be a further mini-project to sort out the doors to the Large Hall, which fell foul of Building Control, and now open the "wrong" way.



BOXES, BOXES, BOXES

Talking about Christmas in October might seem a little early (just like the shops!!), but in order to be able to have boxes ready for the Operation Christmas deadline, it had to be done. And for the eleventh year running you all responded magnificently.

This year the Senior Adventurers group have been working on a video of the process involved. There's still quite a bit of editing to do, but we hope that we will be able to use it next year to publicise the event.



Thank you to everyone who has supported us. The result of the Cake sale was £107.43 (plus several enveloped donations and payments in the boxes). We were literally bowled over by the number of people coming to buy cakes and every last crumb went. Some of our sales team are pictured here. In addition, as a church we have 39 lovely boxes, packed with care and love which were taken to join the boxes collected by Archbishop Cranmer school.

This is a very special opportunity to share our Christmas joy with children in other parts of the world who often have very little and who have experienced traumatic and difficult times.

Thank you to every one involved and we hope that you to have a Wonderful Christmas.



THOUGHT ABOUT

OPEN OUR EYES, LORD

I am aware that I am writing this letter in the aftermath of the awful motorway crash on the M5 over the first weekend of November. I am also conscious that this letter will be read as we prepare to celebrate the joy of the Christ child. Christmas invites us to celebrate the presence of God in this world of His, but often it only serves to highlight for many people the sadness and grief, the pain and the hurt that they are currently going through.

Those two realities seem to be in stark contrast to one another, until we look more deeply into the context in which God chose to make his home with us. We are reminded in Luke's gospel that Jesus was born under the reign of Caesar Augustus. He was born under Roman oppression, evidenced by the forced registration with which Mary and Joseph, like all the citizens of Galilee, were required to comply.

As well as that, the familiarity of the season's festivities should not prevent us from realising the scandal that God came into human history completely helpless, as a newborn, and was laid in a feeding trough. He slipped almost unnoticed into a small province, far from the seat of power. Born to a young couple, unwed or only recently married. God was born on the road, and those who first visited him were shepherds, the often despised ones, and not kings.

HELPING TO STEWARD CONCERTS & PLAYS

Throughout the year people hire our Church for Concerts etc. Are you in a position to help the Church by Stewarding with the added bonus of seeing the event for free. If you would like to help please contact Mandy Slade.

PUTTING THE NEWSLETTER TOGETHER

Do you have a couple of hours to spare to help with the final putting together of the newsletter. This is required every 3 months. If you would like to help contact Andrew Slade.

POSTING OUT NEWSLETTERS

The Newsletter comes out every 3 months and we will also be looking to offer posting a copy to those who would like to receive one. If you feel you can help please contact Andrew Slade.

Being A Support Driver

At St James we have our regular drivers who bring people to Church on a weekly Basis, We help these drivers with Support Drivers but we would like to add to our number. On average you will be asked to assist around 4 times a year. Please speak to Andrew Slade.

HAVE YOU EVER

STAY-AT-HOME CHRISTMAS?

Are you staying at home for Christmas? Would you open your home and share Christmas with a student from China, India, or some other part of the world, who would otherwise be stuck at an almost deserted UK university? HOST invites you to give Christmas, perhaps for the first time in their life, to someone who is a guest in this country, who would love to experience your way of life and make your stay-at-home Christmas special. HOST will match you with one or two guests to suit your household. More volunteer hosts are urgently needed for 1-3 days at Christmas, and weekends all year round.

Please see www.hostuk.org or call your local voluntary organiser for a chat:
Margaret Astridge 01458 251699

So this birth that we prepare for is one which identifies God with those who are literally 'going through it'. In the harsh reality of their experience and our experience, God dares to offer the gift of hope and new life. I use this Iona Prayer to get ready for Christmas. I hope you might also find it helpful.

Open our eyes, Lord, especially if they are half shut because we are tired of looking, or half open because we fear to see too much, or bleared with tears because yesterday and today and tomorrow are filled with the same pain, or contracted because we only see what we want to see!

Open our eyes, Lord, to gently scan the life we lead, the home we have, the world we inhabit, and so to find among the gremlins and the greyness, signs of hope we can fasten on and encourage. Give us, whose eyes are dimmed by familiarity, a bigger vision of what you can do even with hopeless cases and lost causes and people of limited ability.

Show us the world as in your sight, riddled by debt, deceit, and disbelief, yet also shot through with possibility for recovery, renewal, redemption. And, lest we fail to distinguish vision from fantasy, today, tomorrow, this week, open our eyes to one person, one place, where we, being even for a moment prophetic, might identify and encourage a potential in the waiting.

And with all this, open our eyes in longing, for Jesus - on the hills, in the valleys, in the cities, in the villages, through the corridors of power and the streets of despair, to help, to heal, to confront, to convert. 'O come, O come Emmanuel!'

+Peter Taunton

For Bishop's Appeal See page 22

Advent Antix

Just over 30 children booked in for this year Advent Holiday Club. At ten o'clock the doors opened to welcome the children who were all



enthusiastic about Getting Ready for Christmas. After decoration making and story telling in the church, every moved to the hall, to get in stuck into a wide variety of crafts. All the children had a chance to decorate Christmas biscuits prepared by Joyce, Eric and Jean.

Advent wreaths, Christmas decorations, jewel boxes and cards kept everyone busy

and occupied for an hour, with lots of sticky glittery hands that needed attention before sandwiches and crisps could be eaten. After lunch it was Tim and Chris B's turn to raise the noise levels with Games with improbable names like Duck and Goose, Cat and Mouse and Jump the Dumpit



“Religion that is a matter of careful, moral calculation is all wrong. Christ does not counsel a safe, manageable morality that anyone can learn in ten easy lessons, but a reckless, adventurous life commitment. The goal of the Christian way is not human purity but divine fellowship. Our task is not to sweep and beautify the house so that there is not a speck of evil dust to be found, but to invite our Lord to dwell with us and fill the house with the laughter of forgiveness and the conversation of grace”.

Eugene Peterson



WOMEN'S DAY OF PRAYER

In March the morning service will be held in our own Church St James. The service emphasizes unity in the Christian World. For example this year it was compiled and directed by Chile. In March Malaysia will be the host taking as its theme; "Let Justice prevail" In the following Years France, Egypt and the Bahamas will take turn to host.

Furthermore no less than 18 different churches are represented, Catholic, Protestant all working together as one!

The services begin on the international date line – the first being in Tonga. Then as the earth rotates a "Mexican Wave" rises in the Pacific and goes round the World to end again in the Pacific in Samoa.

The services are straightforward, simple and easy to participate in. They do however give an idea of the customs and the nature of the host country. They are always interesting and colourful in simple format. Above all that the Christian Spirit is unifying and not competitive between creed or country, that Christ should be followed in love and harmony.

It is hoped that many from our Church will be able to support us on the 2nd March. Further details will follow later in the Church Bulletins.

Incidentally Men are welcome, many do attend so no excuses!



Smiling faces as Hannah and Martha get ready to make an Advent wreath and learn more about the symbolism of the different candles

More smiling faces as Alison, Chris and Sue take refuge from the games with a welcome brew



Tim says

CHAPLAINS AT WORK

On average, a person in full time employment spends around 25% of their available hours at work, 33% sleeping and the rest in relaxation and doing more jobs. We are told to live out our Christian faith on all days of the week, and not just on Sundays, but when we are at work, do we find that a faith-free zone? Anyone in work in the present economic climate knows how tough life in the workplace can be.



Twelve months ago, at the Business Carol Service at St James, 14 chaplains were commissioned to work in businesses in Taunton, under the Taunton Team Chaplaincy Trust. The team comprises lay people and three ministers. Two more volunteer chaplains have recently joined us. How have we been getting on?



Each chaplain has been assigned to a shop or an office. At the present time this comprises the two Sainsburys stores, ASDA, Boots, BHS, County Stores, Cornerstone, Taunton Police Station, the UK Hydrographic Office, Taunton Deane Borough Council and, in my case, Somerset County Council. Typically, each of us attends for half a day each week, although arrangements vary.

Our job is to be a listening ear for any members of staff who have problems or crises which arise at work or at home. Jonathan Sacks, the Chief Rabbi, wrote in the Times that 'Listening is sometimes the greatest gift we can give to a troubled soul...it means being genuinely open to another person, prepared to enter their world, their perspective, their pain. It does not mean that we have an answer to their problem. Some problems can't be solved... When we listen we share a burden so its weight can be borne... Listening is where pain is healed by being shared.'

We are there to support staff of any faith or none at all. The Biblical basis for the work is Jesus' command to 'love one another as I love you.' Chaplains are supported by

STREET PASTORS

At St James, we currently have 3 Street Pastors who are Chris Buckman, Marilyn Gibson and Stan Wojcik. Annabel Campbell and Martin Kennard are going forward for training in January 2012.

Street Pastors was pioneered in London in January 2003 by Rev Les Isaac, Director of the Ascension Trust, and has seen some remarkable results, including drops in crime in areas where teams have been working. There are now over 150 teams around the United Kingdom.

They are run by a local coordinator with support from Ascension Trust and local churches and community groups, in partnership with Police, Council and other statutory agencies.

In Taunton, Street Pastors emerged after the brutal death of 17 year old Luke Fouracre in 2005. Adrian Prior-Sankey and Vince Carrington encouraged the churches to set up Taunton Street Pastors. The first patrol was in May 2008.

Taunton Street Pastors are Christian volunteers from around 20 different local churches. Young people on the streets often call us Pasties or Pasta and the latest is Fruit Pastilles, as a couple of girls said we are quite sweet!!!

In fact, the term pastor implies a shepherding, caring role which is a pretty accurate description.

We go out to share the love of Jesus in a very practical way and our remit is to CARE, LISTEN AND HELP those who may be vulnerable on the streets in the town centre at night

So a Street Pastor is a someone with a concern for society - in particular young people who feel themselves to be excluded and marginalised - and who is willing to engage people where they are, in terms of their thinking (i.e. their perspective of life) and location (i.e. where they hang out - be it on the streets, in the pubs and clubs etc).

As we get to know people in the community we find out what their needs are and what can be done to help. We hand out bottles of water and flip flops, (Girls are often too drunk to walk on their heels.) We also give out sweets for lads who are becoming aggressive. (The sugar rush often helps.!!!) A presence of Street Pastors earns credibility in the community, so that people know that the Church is there for them in a practical way. The role is NOT about preaching or evangelism, but one of listening, caring and helping - working in an unconditional way.

People say our society is becoming increasingly unchristian. However we find that in this environment young adults frequently open up to us about spiritual matters.

We have a number of stories of our experiences on Taunton's streets. Speak to Marilyn, Chris or Stan for more details.

If you feel God is challenging you in this area, have a word with any of us. Also a training course commences early 2012. See the Bulletin for the training course dates.!!!

St James is the supporting Church for Prayer on January
14th, please come and support if you can



BISHOP PETER ENDORSES SURVIVING WINTER APPEAL



Bishop of Bath and Wells Peter Price is urging parishioners to help save lives this winter by supporting the Somerset Community Foundation's Surviving Winter appeal.

The Somerset Community Foundation (Charity no. 1094446) is calling on all who can afford to forego their Winter Fuel Payment to donate the money to help elderly people in Somerset who are most vulnerable during the coldest weather.

Bishop Peter and his wife Dee have already pledged their support.

He said: "Many pensioners could suffer real hardship this winter unless urgent action is taken to help them," he said. "The rapidly rising costs of gas and electricity, high inflation pushing up the cost of living and low interest rates eroding incomes added to cuts in national and local government expenditure are putting terrible pressure on the poorest in society.

"I commend the Somerset Community Foundation Surviving Winter Campaign which will deliver help to those in most need as and when they need it. We are warned we could face another really hard winter and that could cost lives. I am one of the lucky ones and Dee and I are in a position to donate the winter fuel allowance to the Foundation's Campaign which we will do in the sure knowledge that it could help save lives. I would urge anyone else who can manage without the Winter Fuel Payment also to donate it to the Foundation."

Hundreds of people die each winter – the majority over 75 years old – from causes attributable to poor living conditions and the cold, and it is estimated that more than 33,000 older people in Somerset live in fuel poverty, many suffering in silence during the coldest months.

The Somerset Community Foundation will work with local charities and community groups to make sure financial and practical assistance is available when and where it most needed. More information is available on the Somerset Community Foundation's website: www.somersetcf.org.uk or you can call 01749 344949. Donations received from outside the SCF area will be sent to the appropriate Community Foundation according to postcode..

To support the Surviving Winter Appeal please send your donation to: **Justin Sargent, Somerset Community Foundation, Yeoman House, Bath and West Showground, Shepton Mallet, BA4 6QN**

Surviving Winter Gift Aid Declaration

Somerset
Community Foundation

Please gift aid my donation. I confirm I am a UK Taxpayer and I pay an amount of income tax or capital gains tax at least equal to the tax reclaimed by the charity.

Name:

Address:

Post Code:

If you would like to be kept up to date with the progress of our appeal and the people we support, please let us know your e-mail address

Neil Randall, the head chaplain. Neil arranges our training, prepares the groundwork with management, arranges publicity to the staff and generally supports us all. The team meet up frequently and, together with people from other churches in Taunton and beyond, we support one another in prayer when we are in our workplaces.

We explain to staff that we are not counsellors, but if they want specialist advice we can signpost them to agencies like the Citizens Advice Bureau, Relationship Somerset, etc. Some employers, like the County Council, have a confidential external counselling service for staff as well. Only if it seems appropriate, and with their consent, do we offer to pray for them. Invariably, if asked, people like us to do this. We have seen answers to prayer for some of the staff who have approached us. A variety of matters are brought to all chaplains, including health problems, family relationships, bereavement, addictions, work pressures and worries. In shops, because chaplains can be identified by their shirt or uniform with the Trust logo we find that some of the customers approach chaplains for a talk as well.

For myself, I find that I have been welcomed by staff at County Hall. I found it a bit daunting at first, and as it is a big place, it will take time to build relationships. However, a number of people have already asked to see me. A room has been provided for me to use whilst I am there, because we commit to maintaining confidentiality at all times. This is absolutely key. I try to be as visible as possible by walking round the offices. People sometimes ask me if I represent a particular church. I say that I attend this church, but it also really gladdens me to be able to say the chaplaincy is supported by twelve churches in Taunton, including St James. There is a lot of evidence to show that so much more can be achieved in a town when its different churches work in partnership together.



It is a privilege to be able to do this work, and very rewarding. If you think you may be interested yourself, or that your own business could benefit from having a chaplain, I would be pleased to have a chat with you.

Andy Hall

TAKE CARE, BE GAS SAFE

Throughout the year it's important to make sure that your gas boiler, gas fire and gas cooker are working safely and correctly.

Did you know Gas Safe Register is the only official list of gas engineers who are legally allowed to do work on your gas boiler, gas cooker and gas fire? By law, all gas engineers must be on the Gas Safe Register, it replaced CORGI. This list is there to help protect you from unsafe gas work.

Badly fitted and poorly serviced appliances can cause gas leaks, fires, explosions and carbon monoxide poisoning. Carbon monoxide is a highly poisonous gas. You can't see it, taste it or smell it, but it can kill quickly with no warning.

Get your gas boiler, gas fire and gas cooker regularly serviced and safety checked every year. Annual servicing not only helps keep your heating and hot water working properly, it helps keep you safe.

All Gas Safe registered engineers carry a Gas Safe Register ID card. Before any gas work is carried out always check the card and make sure the engineer is qualified for the work you need doing. Alternatively to find and check an engineer go to www.GasSafeRegister.co.uk or call free on 0800 408 5500. Take care, be Gas Safe.



PLANNING FOR CHRISTMAS? AT ST. JAMES WE ARE PLANNING FOR EASTER!!

Last Easter a few of us visited St. Michael's Galmington and were very impressed by their Easter Experience, where they invited children from their local school to the church to hear about the real Easter story using material from the Diocese of Gloucester. Inspired by this we have talked about a similar presentation at St. James. This involves putting on a series of living Easter displays in church illustrating six scenes from the Easter story. We will be inviting children from Archbishop Cranmer as well as our own congregation to come and experience the importance of Easter and its relevance in the present day



Help is needed from a wide range of people – actors, seamstresses, scenery makers, welcomers, refreshment providers etc for this very special event. We have already begun recruiting and we have a number of willing volunteers, but more are needed, so if you are interested in being part of this dynamic and exciting event please contact: Sue Lucas, Jenny Wakefield or Nic Tall.

The displays will be going up on Monday March 26th with presentations on 27th and 28th and then will stay up for part of the Easter season.



Pictured left is one of the scenes from the Diocese of Gloucester material, which we will use as the basis for our displays, but we be using our creative talents to tailor the scenes to our own church building.

NEWSLETER VIEWS SUGGESTIONS BOX

This is your magazine . . .
. . . we really want to hear your views.



SOME QUESTIONS?????

. . . who is this magazine for? The congregation?
- only the congregation? If not, who else?

. . . what would you like to see more of in this magazine?

. . . more photographs needed?

. . . more topical / newsy articles?

. . . more articles about members of the congregation?
Who's who etc

. . . what's missing - do we need a children's page?
Cartoons, jokes, funny stuff?

WHETHER YOU LIKE THE MAGAZINE OR HATE IT - PLEASE GET IN TOUCH . . .

. . . we need to know what you think.

We welcome e-mails to the editor at: 3waypersonalprint@gmail.com
or letters to Andrew



RETURNING HOME

There is something special about coming back to a place you know well. It is comforting to have with familiar faces and surroundings and a chance to settle back into the life you had before. However, God often encourages us to go outside of our comfort zone and

This has been the case for us – Keith and Mélanie Whittaker and our children, who have returned from Québec in Canada after serving as missionaries with Youth With A Mission (YWAM). Yes it is good to be back, we are so happy to be with you again and have had a warm welcome. However we are reminded that we are not to settle back into our old life – God has other plans!

“So what are God's plans for you?” This is the question we have been asked several times since we have been back. Well we are sure that God has put a calling on our lives to make Him known here in Taunton, in the south west of England and in French speaking nations.

We have been specifically called to start up a Youth With A Mission location here in Taunton. As part of God's plan for us, He sent us to Quebec – so we could learn more about Jesus, relationships, discipleship, young people, working in unity across different cultures and languages, but most of all about trusting in Him completely.

We are taking a few months to settle the children into school, move back into our house (once the squatter moves out), make contact with friends and family then taking a temporary job.

During Spring 2012 we will be embarking on a new adventure of setting up a YWAM Location in Taunton that will:

- Work in partnership with churches, voluntary organisations and local people
- Have a focus on ministries that promote and encourage families
- Promote leadership and train people how to lead in a way that honours God
- Promote and develop ministries that inspire, disciple and allow leadership opportunities for young people
- Work with people who speak French and English so they can work in unity to make God known through service, evangelism and outreaches
- Work with other organisations to serve people within the community with a focus on those who are on low income, homeless or have other needs
- Work with, and offer training for churches and fellow Christians so we can all be intentional in the way we positively influence society and make God known
- Help to make God known during the 2012 Olympics in Weymouth by hosting teams and taking part in ministries
- And once we have suitable premises, offer five month intensive residential Discipleship Training Schools to help people have a deeper knowledge of God and a passion to make Him known

So, here are some good reasons to give if anyone asks why you have a separate men's ministry:

- In churches in the UK, women outnumber men by more than two to one.
- This situation has worsened over the last thirty years.
- Existing outreach efforts such as Alpha are not changing the mix.
- Churches have been geared more for youth and women, and they need to change to provide specifically men's events.
- Men respond to the Gospel differently from women and need a different approach.
- Because of group dynamics men are often more open about spiritual matters if women are not present.
- Men enjoy the company of other men – at football, in the pub, Rotary and at a Masonic lodge.
- Men don't make friends as easily as women – they talk of work success and their computer, not of under-the-skin issues.
- The relevance of church to men seems small as male issues are often not addressed in churches; workplace, personal failure, vulnerability, finance, sexuality.

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For more information see the Christian Vision for Men (CVM)
website www.cvmen.org.uk

And finally, some statistics published in Evangelicals Now (August 2003):

- If you lead a child to Christ, 3% of their families follow
- If you lead a mother to Christ, 17% of their families follow
- If you lead a father to Christ, 93% of their families follow!

MEN'S MINISTRY AT ST JAMES

Over the last 18 months a group of St James' men have met to pray and plan for reaching out to their friends and neighbours who are not yet Christians. We want to get alongside them and introduce them to Jesus. So far we've had 2 walks followed by supper at a pub, 2 breakfasts and a skittles evening. Future events including bowling and a brewery tour!

We have been asked "But why just men?" Carl Beech, director of Christian Vision for Men, explains that "over the last 20 years 38% of believing men left the church. In fact for men aged under 30, nearly 50% left in the same period of time. Now that's believing men deciding they don't want to go to church anymore! So we are facing a crisis before we even think about reaching men who aren't yet believers. The decline is pretty terminal. In 30 years time there could be zero men left in church communities in the UK." That's surely motivation enough for reaching out specifically to men. The article below (from the Christian Vision for Men website) gives some answers to the question, "But why just men?"

WHY DO WE NEED MEN'S MINISTRY?

For many men under the age of 45, church is most likely to be a somewhat foreign environment.

In fact, today on average men are outnumbered by women in UK churches by 2:1. This has happened for a number of reasons:

- Since the eighteenth century, science has been placed in the public arena, largely the domain of men. At the same time, religion has been given the status of private opinion and has become associated with the private domestic world, primarily the domain of women.
- Until recent years, as a result of the industrial revolution, the primary role of men has been that of provider and by default spiritual matters have been left to women.
- Many families lost fathers and husbands in the World Wars; the mix of men to women in the church changed at that time and is changing only very slowly in favour of more men.
- Gender differences can manifest themselves in that men tend to be more practical and motivated by factual things; women tend to be orientated towards emotional and spiritual facets of life.

The next question people often ask us is "How will you do that?" Well that is the exciting part. As humans we like to have the answers and it is true, we have given much thought and prayer to the possible ways we could do these things (come and ask us if you want to know more). However we have learnt to just write our plans in pencil, because The Holy Spirit has shown us His ways of doing things are much better – so we will follow Him.

We are excited that we are part of God's plans to build on what He has already done here in Taunton. We come with an attitude of wanting to learn, encourage, help, support and serve. But we also want to provide opportunities to try new ways of making God known, take steps of faith and be thirsty for God's word in your life and the life of others. We want to challenge you to share the good news with others in Taunton, the south west and other parts of the world, whilst offering you help to do that.

The truth is, that no person or organisation can fulfil God's plans on their own, we need to work in unity. So we look forward to working with you, and for you in the coming months and years.

If you would like more information you can contact us at:

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Christmas is Coming

Pre- Christmas Week Services at St. James



10.30 Sunday 4th December
Nativity Play and Service

5.00 pm Sunday 11th December
Christingle Service



9.30 Tuesday 13th December
Archbishop Cranmer School Carol Service



10.00 am Friday 16th December
North Town School Carol Service

10.30 Sunday 18^h December
Family Carol Service



Christmas Services at St James's



Carols by Candlelight

*Sunday 18th December
6.30 pm
With choir and instrumentalists*

Business Carol Service

*Monday 19th December
6.00 pm
Come along on your way home from work*

Carols round the Crib

*Christmas Eve, Saturday 24th December
4.00 pm
Especially for families with young children*

Midnight Communion

*Christmas Eve, Saturday 24th December
11.30 pm*

Christmas Day Family Communion

*Sunday 25th December
10.30 am*