

St James Church Magazine



December - February Edition

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He's here!

Dad was upset when his son appeared to have 'got religion'. He was even more concerned when it seemed to affect him not only on Sunday but midweek and sometimes Saturday's also. He himself was an atheist with no time for religion at all. He did all he could to dissuade his son from his new found faith but in vain.

Christmas came. While the son went off to celebrate the birth of Jesus at the Midnight communion, dad busied himself with paper and felt tip. His work completed, dad climbed the stairs and placed a large poster on the door of his son's bedroom. The message was clear.

GOD IS NOWHERE

It was almost two hours before the son returned in the early hours of Christmas morning. A brief conversation, a 'goodnight' and the son retired to his bedroom. Within seconds, however, he came running down the stairs, burst into the room, excitement written all over his face. 'Guess what dad,' he exclaimed, 'guess what it says on the door of my bedroom?'

'GOD IS NOW HERE'

Those for whom God is nowhere will be preparing to celebrate a seasonal festival. For those whose conviction is that God is now here Advent will be preparing to celebrate the miracle of

'GOD, CONTRACTED TO A SPAN INCOMPREHENSIBLY MADE MAN'

And as they look at the babe in the manger, their eyes will move on to the cross on the hill for the two are inextricably bound. In that birth

'God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's' sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.' (2 Cor.5.19).

So for us, Christmas is a reminder both of what God has done for us and what he has entrusted to us to do for him.

Geoff Treasure

UPDATE from The Whitehorns

We have recently had a news update from David and Margie Whitehorn from WEC, following their recent visit to us in September sending their thanks for prayer and support. They have been on their travels in Africa and have visited Ghana and Chad. Margie writes:

*"The time in **Chad** was an important one for us and a privilege, giving us a better understanding of the situation and what it is like to serve there. The living is simple, the climate mostly very hot and dry, and commodities fairly expensive as it is land-locked. French and Chadian Arab are a must.*

We spent a few days in the capital at both ends of the visit and were able to accompany one of our colleagues who is building relationships with people in the market sometimes there is real interest, at others rejection.



*Two weeks were spent in the east, in **Abeché**, which is a 12 hour bus journey away, thankfully in an air-conditioned bus! The team runs a popular **Learning Centre**, teaching English, running an English club and teaching computers: a good way of making contact with local people, and in particular with the Chadian Arabs. But it takes time building these relationships and there is always the need for personnel to be involved in the*

*Centre; they rely very much on **Short term workers**".*

They were able to gain an experience of the culture and challenges faced by the church there - there is a significant nomadic culture and they saw a way a life that has resonances with the life of Abraham in the bible.

"There is a large church in Chad, made up of mainly southerners, who are very different in culture from the eastern and northern Arab peoples.

One thing is very clear: much prayer is needed for breaking up the hard ground and for personnel".

Dave and Margie then flew on to **Ghana** where they were attending a conference and finding out about the developments working with the evangelical church of Ghana with a particular concern for the unreached people's in the North of the country.

WEC is an international mission society that seeks to work with and encourage local churches to spread God's love to those who have not yet heard. **Interested in short term mission?** Check out WEC's website:

http://www.wecinternational.org.uk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=3&Itemid=113

10 November 2013



Taking the good news relevantly to every young person in Taunton

Urgent situation – please can you help?

Taunton Youth for Christ employs one youth worker and a part time assistant and relies on volunteers for everything else. We are doing ministry in Taunton which no churches can do: namely being invited into all the secondary schools to run Christian discussion and lunch-time clubs, as well as working with and mentoring young people. We enjoy the support and trust of these schools, built up over the years through caring and sensitivity.

In addition, TYFC seeks to serve the young people of church families by providing Power Station monthly, where they can enjoy Christian teaching and fellowship as well as bringing their friends and learning what it means to be disciples.

The finances are always tight as you can imagine, and most support comes from generous individuals who give regularly. However this is the first time for over seven years that a special appeal is being made: unless more funding comes in the centre will have to close in six months. We have been relying on a certain amount from reserves for a few years now, and there are signs of great hope: but we cannot continue to pay Dan and Rachel beyond the Spring unless the churches provide part of God's answer. As Trustees we really believe in this work and seek God's will through this appeal.

Please would you consider your church giving something as part of your mission support? Could you enthuse any church members to become individual donors? Time is of the essence, so an advance now and a promise of more later would be fine!

There is a great new two minute video at:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=uTaHZeJIPzg&feature=em-upload_owner
which is suitable for showing in church or for individuals.

Thank you for reading this,

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'R Webb'.

pp Tim Jones, Chair of Trustees

THE 'ALTERNATIVE' BISHOP'S MESSAGE

DECEMBER 2013



The Unbelievable Truth

The Venerable Andy Piggott, Archdeacon of Bath

I enjoy listening to the radio when I'm travelling around the archdeaconry. On Sunday mornings as I drive home from parishes, I usually turn to Radio 4 to enjoy *Just a Minute*, *I'm Sorry I Haven't a Clue* or one of the other comedy shows that form the staple diet of this pre-prandial broadcasting slot. Unless of course *Test Match Special* is on!

In recent years a new programme has appeared, *The Unbelievable Truth*. Panel members give a short lecture on a given topic and the aim is to 'smuggle truths' past fellow panellists, who in turn have to 'spot' truth-telling from falsehood. The mini lecture can be very amusing but, apart from five 'truths', is entire fabrication.

I've been thinking about truth-telling in the last week or so. The news has been dominated by coverage of a court case and a Parliamentary enquiry in which at the heart is the question, 'who is telling the truth?' Were three policemen telling lies about a former Cabinet Minister? Was Rebecca Brooks aware of what was going on within the organisation for which she held key responsibility?

How good are we at truth-telling? Would you dare tell someone you love their hair looks awful or give an honest answer to the question most husbands dread, 'Does my bum look big in this?'

More seriously, are we tempted to collude when others hide from the painful truth that the one they love is terminally ill? When we've been hurt deeply by someone we love, do we say we're fine, or tell them the truth?

What is truth?

- John tells us in his Gospel that Jesus is the **true** light (1:9).
- He came from the Father, **full of grace and truth** (1:13).
- Later he records the words of Jesus himself, 'I am the Way, the **Truth** and the Life' (14:6)
- and 'For this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. **Everyone on the side of truth listens to me**' (18:37).

In Jesus Christ, God's truth is embodied and personified. Jesus makes real for us the truth of God's love and commitment to everyone. His whole life was lived seeking to reveal God's love for us and for all people.

As the season of Advent begins, I'm challenged by Jesus who is the Truth to live truthfully. I reckon myself to be on the side of truth so I resolve to live with utter integrity. I want to avoid telling the bald truth without love and I want never to manipulate the truth by exaggeration or telling only that part of a story that reflects well on me. As Jesus came into the world to testify to the truth, I too want to commit myself in all that I am to living a life which speaks of God's love in Christ for me. And to that end I pray the Spirit will fill me with the same grace and truth Jesus showed to all he met.

And as we naturally begin to turn our eyes to our celebrations of Christ's first coming, I'm humbled and in awe again of the truth that in this baby, the truth of who God is was truly revealed.

Unbelievable? It's the truth.

Archdeacon Andy Piggott

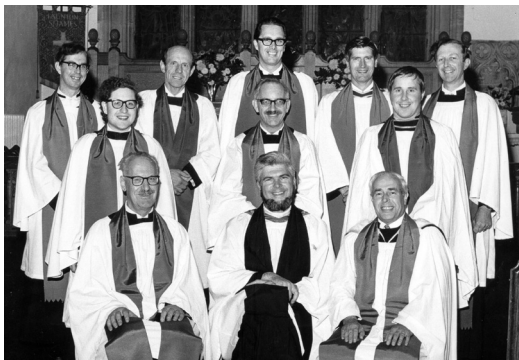


INTRODUCING

There are some people at St. James who need no introduction and this certainly applies to Mike and Jacky, who have been at St. James since they were a newly married couple. However with Mike spending more time on loan at St. Peter, it seem appropriate to remind ourselves of these stalwarts of St. James and what they are doing.

Both Jacky and Mike were not born in England. Mike remains proud of his Welsh heritage and Rugby allegiance even though he left Wales when he was 9 months old for Weston-s-Mare. Jacky was born in Mumbai, India and travelled widely before she was 5 as her father was based overseas as an employee of Lloyds. She and her brother went to boarding school in Taunton, at Weirfield and Taunton School respectively, while her parents continued to work abroad. I have the impression that her memories of Taunton during that time were not glowing ones, although she did recall the floods with a wry smile recalling her headmistress being wheeled through them in a wheelbarrow.

Although they lived in Somerset it was not until they were both in London studying that their paths crossed. Jacky was at Kings College Hospital training to be a radiographer and Mike at Kings College. Mike has always been fascinated by beetles, bugs and mini beasts so studying biology at uni and then going on to train as a teacher seemed an obvious choice. Both had church backgrounds but it was not until Mike was 14 and Jacky 19 that it made sense to them in a personal way. Mike had gone to university as a committed Christian and had become involved in the college and university Christian unions; Jacky had begin to question and seek answers about faith towards the end of her course and it turned out that they had a number of friends in common in the university Christian Union although their paths hadn't crossed. it was in his PGCE year that the teacher and the radiographer met at St. Helen's Bishopgate, a church with a mission to both the student and business community of London, and



the rest, as they say, is history. Mike had to persuade a somewhat reluctant Jacky to return to Taunton, where he had obtained a post as a Biology teacher at the then girls grammar school, Bishop Foxes.

In addition to starting teaching, Mike had also been prompted by the Vicar of his home church to train for lay readership, and when he came to Taunton in 1971, this was further encouraged when he became a member of a team of (relatively) young members of the St. James ministry team. Some people may recognise some other faces in this picture. The team of lay readers were encouraged to go out to churches all over the Deanery by successive vicars of St. James. As a result Mike was often leading worship or preaching in small village churches and chapels. Jacky felt it important to support him in his ministry and as a result initially she did not pursue her career but became a full time mum when their two boys were born, Gareth in 1975 and David in 76. Both were involved in church activities, something which has not ceased. In addition to readership, Mike led the Explorer children's group with others for many years, and this included weekends away and other activities. As an outward bound and mountain leader Mike was able to use these skills on many expeditions. Some may remember caving trips on the Mendips, joined on one such occasion by an intrepid septagenarian June Crew who entrusted herself to Mike's leadership. Jackie was involved in supporting these activities and in participating in the young mum's group at the church.

Mike and Jacky also found time to be on the PCC and Mike has served on Deanery, Diocesan and General Synods (both Jacky and he have been on Deanery and Diocesan synod for 23 years) taking a deep and knowledgeable interest in the developments within the wider church.

Some years ago Mike became ill with a form of ME, which eventually this led to him giving up teaching, by which time he was a departmental head. This proved a very difficult time for them both and he still has to remain careful about over stretching himself. More recently has had a complete change of career as first a driver for people with learning difficulties with the County Council, then coordinator and now manager in Transporting Somerset. At the same time he took on the role of Church warden at St. James for four years, a role which Jacky very able took over when she retired from the hospital in 2011.



More recently, and this is why we have seen less of Mike, he responded to a new challenge when the Vicar of the parish in which he lives, asked for help. He has been spending increasingly more time at St. Peter's, a modern church in the Priorswood estate, where there is a challenging ministry to the local community. With others from St. James, Mike has provided additional support in leading a house group, preaching and worship, to provide support for the church's wider ministry. Whether this is a continuing call or for a season is not clear, but Mike and Jacky have been ready and willing to respond to God's call. When I asked them about their views about their Christian commitment they commented that it has been part of their life to be part of a family that grows, gets older, cares for each other even when there are "little tiffs" - a community also that continues to review what it is doing prayerfully.

Jacky and Mike have a host of interests, Mike's interest in botany, biology and theology is everywhere in their home - although he no longer has a snake or his piranas. They both enjoy orchids and have about 50 different ones in their home. Jacky enjoys painting and a wide range of handicrafts including lace making, some of which can be seen on the alter falls in church.

When I spoken to them for this interview they have recently been on holiday to the Holy land and their enthusiasm for what they were able to see there and learn is inspirational. Do ask them about it when you see them next.

Mike and Jacky are essentially, caring and people centred, good humoured (Mike's laugh is legendary) and practical. They exemplify that sense of service that makes them "ready and willing" for whatever God has in store next.

Asking Questions by Nic Tall

Can you remember being at school and not understanding something, something you felt that those around you understood only too clearly? And when you felt like that, were you sometimes reluctant to let on that you were in the dark and ask your teacher to clarify whatever it was that you didn't understand? I certainly know I had some moments like that.

Sometimes we can have that feeling in matters of faith. We can all have questions, big or small, about important life matters or just things we are curious about. But sometimes trying to work through these questions on our own is hard work.

Thankfully St James church has a good number of clergy and readers, and part of our role as licensed ministers is to help you work through such questions. While we all have some theological training, we would be the first to admit that we are not experts, and we have faced all sorts of questions of our own as we have grown and developed in our faith. We are here to help you think through your faith and ultimately help you to grow closer to God.

Sometimes it can be difficult to approach someone to talk about questions you are wrestling with, but that is exactly what we are here for. So whether it's a heavy question that's troubling you, or something you just want to know a bit more about, please speak to one of us.

Tim Jones
Geoff Treasure
John Dykes
Ken Jamieson
Kathryn Clarke
Ken Cleves
Mike Gillingham
Nic Tall
Kate Taylor

St James Church School

The school has been busy this term with a number of events and activities taking place. These have included a visit from Paul Cookson a nationally renowned poet, no pens day in which children were engaged in active learning which did not require the use of writing implements, and a disco. The school was formally opened as an academy by the Bishop of Taunton on Wednesday 13th November.

Charity fundraising has included selling poppies, and a non-uniform day for Children in Need. They have made shoeboxes for Samaritans Purse Operation Christmas Child and will present these in church on Friday 15th November.

The school celebrated Harvest festival in St James church. The service was well-attended by a greater than usual number of parents which is encouraging. The children brought donations for Open Door and shared poems, pictures, readings and prayers with a harvest theme. The prayer shared by Oak class is printed below.

Kate and Tim and several helpers run a weekly Xplore group after school. This is attended by a small but consistent number of pupils which helps to build up links between the church and the school.

The school will be holding carol services on December 19th with Key Stage 1. Please read the bulletin for further details of these and try to attend as it would be lovely for the school to see members of our congregation encouraging them.

If you are interested in keeping up to date with school news, they have a very informative website which includes an occasional blog by the head. (<http://www.stjamessch.co.uk>).

A Harvest Prayer

PEAS ARE A HARVEST VEGETABLE

1. Peace within ourselves
2. Peace with each other
3. Peace in our school
4. Peace in our world

SQUASH IS A HARVEST VEGETABLE

1. Squash unkindness
2. Squash rudeness
3. Squash unhelpfulness
4. Squash selfishness

LETTUCE IS A HARVEST VEGETABLE

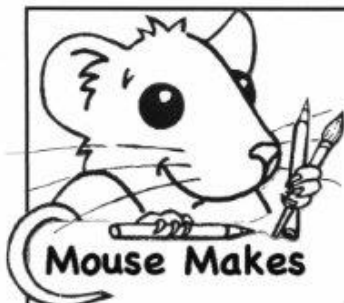
1. Lettuce be hardworking
2. Lettuce be kind
3. Lettuce be patient
4. Lettuce show our care for one another

TURNIPS ARE A HARVEST VEGETABLE

1. Turn up when you're needed
2. Turn up to lend a hand
3. Turn up to help one another
4. Turn up and make a difference

THYME IS A HARVEST HERB

1. Thyme for ourselves
2. Thyme for each other
3. Thyme for family
4. Thyme for friends



A SAVIOUR HAS BEEN BORN!
 "Good news! - **wonderful, joyous**
 news for **all** people.
 A Saviour has been born.
 He is **Christ the Lord.**"

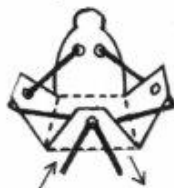
"Glory
 to God
 in the
 heavenly
 heights,
Peace
 to all
 men and
 women
 on earth
 who please
 him."

Read about the
 birth of Jesus
 in Luke
 chapters 1 and 2

- Make this
 crib box
 to hang
 from the
 Christmas
 tree.
- Glue onto
 thin card then
 carefully cut
 around the
 outside.
- Fold back
 the sides
 along the
 dotted lines.

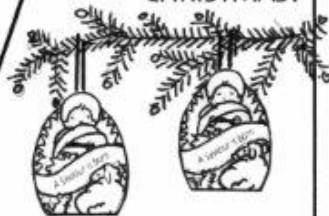


- Punch out the
 ⊗ holes then cut 30cm
 of thin ribbon and thread
 through the holes.



- Pull
 together
 and knot to
 form a box.
 Hide small
 sweets inside.

HAPPY
 CHRISTMAS!



- Photocopy this page onto card
 to make lots of crib boxes.



Wonderful Counsellor,
Mighty God, Eternal Father,
Prince of Peace." Isaiah 9:6

1. What's the name of the period leading up to Christmas?
2. How many Wise Men brought gifts to Jesus?
3. How does Good King Wenceslas like his pizzas?
4. What was the name of John the Baptist's Mother?
5. Who brings presents to children in Holland on the 5th/6th December?
6. How many letters are in the angelic alphabet?
7. In what town was Jesus born?
8. How many presents were given in total in the 12 Days of Christmas?
9. In what decade was the first Christmas Card sent in the UK?
10. What country did the family escape to?
11. How many of Rudolph's eight companions names start with 'D'?
12. What country did Christmas Trees originate from?
13. Who was the Jewish King who ordered the babies to be killed?
14. What's the second line of "I'm dreaming of a white christmas"?
15. What was Joseph's job?
16. Who started the custom of Wassailing?
17. Who were first people to visit the baby Jesus?
18. What's lucky to find in your Christmas Pudding?
19. What Angel visited Mary?
20. Where did the baby Jesus sleep?

**Celebrating
Christmas
at**



**Christmas Services at
St James Church, Taunton**

Sunday 15 December

**10:30am: Family Carols and
Nativity**

Tuesday 17 December

6:15pm: Business Carols
Service for all who work in Taunton

Sunday 22 December

6:30pm: Carols by Candlelight

**Celebrating
Christmas
at**



Tuesday 24 December

4:00pm: Crib Service

Especially for families with young
children

Tuesday 24 December

11:30pm: Midnight Communion

Wednesday 25 December

10:30am: Family Communion

A short service for all the family

Forthcoming Attractions

A series of different events are planned for the New Year to run alongside Home Groups which will be available to anyone in the congregation. There will be sign up lists at the back of the church after Christmas. Below is some information to help you make choices.

Two evenings to which to invite friends and colleagues. A meal and after dinner talk by the vicar. Evangelistic but cringe free, and on subjects (yet to be confirmed) which hopefully will engage your guests ... Let the vicar have any ideas!)

Cooking Demonstration for beginners. A chance to learn to cook some basic dishes.

Lunch date for daytime Home Groups in the Large Hall. An opportunity to catch up with friends and enjoy a meal together.

A series of 4 talks about Listening Skills. Learn new ways to be a good listener.





JAMES IS NEW AT LEADING ADULT BIBLE STUDY.

Fancy a pint and a challenging discussion? Nic Tall will be running a ‘Pub Theology’ session in the Ring of Bells.

Do you have a favourite piece of music that has been significant in your Christian journey? Why not share it with others? An evening of Christian ‘*Desert Island Discs*’ is planned to hear different testimonies and share some lovely music.

Learn the basics of Bell Ringing or take part in Dance Workshops.

A series on ‘Mission Shaped Church’ by Richard Carpenter.



More tea, Vicar?

Or should it be, 'More tea, folks?'

For a number of us the fourth Sunday in each month has been a new experience with our Tea and Teach In. A core group of between thirty and forty have met each month at 4.30 pm. A constant supply of cups of tea and a varied and delicious selection of cakes have greeted us as we came, provided by church members and served up by Elaine and Roger.

At about five o'clock the tea gave way to teaching. This past year we have tried to gain an overview of the Bible with an introduction to the gospels, Acts, Epistles and Revelation. This autumn we have turned our attention to the Old Testament, trying to understand God's great rescue plan. Hopefully our time together has enabled us to put into some order many of the stories and characters already known to us and introduced us to others whom we may not have met. It is important to have the general overview before we try to make sense of the particular.

In the New Year I am planning to look at St Mark's Gospel in more detail. It is the shortest of the four gospels, full of action and conflict. It is my favourite gospel and I really pray that some of my love and enthusiasm for it will be transmitted to you as we study together.

If you haven't been to a Tea and Teach In before, why not make it one of your resolutions to join us in January. In fact why not write these dates in your new diary for 2014? January 26th; February 23rd and March 23rd

It would be really good to you, not simply because of a numbers game but because without a knowledge of Scripture, we cannot fulfil our church mission. Unless we are taught ourselves, we cannot teach others; unless we understand our faith, we cannot share it with others in a meaningful way.

So come and have a double fill- tea and teaching.

Geoff Treasure

ANSWERS FOR CHRISTMAS QUIZ

1. Advent
2. More than one, the Bible doesn't say how many!
3. Deep pan, crisp and even!
4. Elizabeth
5. St. Nicholas
6. 25; 'no el'!!!
7. Bethlehem
8. 364
9. 1840s - 1843 by Sir Henry Cole
10. Egypt
11. Three - Dasher, Dancer and Donner
12. Germany - it was Latvia but it was part of German then!
13. King Herod
14. Just like the ones I used to know
15. Carpenter
16. The Anglo Saxons - it means 'good health'
17. Shepherds
18. A six pence
19. Gabriel
20. In a manger

Women! A Call To Prayer

Friday March 7th 2014

Womens World Day Of Prayer is hosted
this year by St Peters Church, Priorswood
and the Salvatin Army

Please join this wave of prayer which
circles the earth

(Contact Jane Dean 246925)

TO GLUE OR NOT GLUE

that is the question!!!



How do you cover your boxes celloptape or glue? And as for those tricky corners that just won't go right.....

However you did it, you did it - so please accept a BIG THANK YOU!



This year we were able to send 114 boxes in a joint effort by the Church family, St. James School and some additional boxes which arrived on the last collecting day. (Thank you Roger's family). It was amazing to see all the boxes piled high ready for collection and to imagine the 114 children who would receive them.

Many people have contributed again this year, especially the Knitters of St. James who produced a wonderful collection of knitted hats, gloves and scarves for the boxes from St. James School. Others brought in additional items to make up 2 of the boxes. Over 50 people supported the soup* and pud lunch at the beginning of November which raised £241. Some of this will be sent to cover the transport cost of the school boxes and the rest is for the general work of Samaritan's Purse.

We have heard from Roger Fenton, who is the South West Regional Director for Samaritan's Purse about other areas of ministry that the organisation is involved in worldwide. They are one of the major relief organisations involved in the aftermath of Typhoon Haiyan and at the forefront of other disaster relief operations, as well as many other projects seeking to make a difference for those living in harsh and unsanitary conditions, which we can barely imagine. Check out the Samaritan's Purse web site for more details:

<http://www.samaritanspurse.org/>



*Parsnip and Apple, Butternut Squash, Vegetable and Lentil and Bacon soup recipes available on request from Nicki or Jenny.

I know the plans I have for you,' declares The Lord

As many of you will know I have just started a new role as the Church and Community worker at St Michael's Church, Galmington and thought it might be helpful to some if I shared a little of my journey to this position.

I grew up in Taunton as a member of St James Church but left Taunton to go to teacher training college in Matlock, Derbyshire where I met Steve. We were married here in St James in 1988 and it was great to share our Silver Wedding Anniversary with you in July. We have two children, Jenny and Luke, both of whom are now at university. Due to Steve's initial career change from teaching to the Devon and Cornwall Police Constabulary and subsequent promotions we have moved several times ending up in Cornwall in the year 2000.

I continued to teach and by 2006 had begun to look for headships in Cornwall. This had proved both encouraging and frustrating as I had been second in the selection process at several schools but not gained promotion. During this time I had been praying with several friends and had received a number of encouraging Bible verses through them. On one occasion this included all the book of Nehemiah. The friend who had received this for me said she had never been given a whole book before but it probably meant something special - and the fact that the book, whilst short, actually covers many years was probably a hint from God as to the length of his plans. I also received the promise from Jeremiah 29 v 11

'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares The Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.'

However whilst this was encouraging the headship interviews were still coming but leading to nothing.

Steve and I had mostly worshipped in Baptist churches during our married life. I had been asked many times about baptism by immersion but had never felt the need as I had been baptised as a baby with Christian parents (Sue Collard, my mum has been a member of St James for many years) and confirmed as a believing teenager. However in June 2007 nine members of our Church in Truro were going to be baptised in the sea at Falmouth one Sunday afternoon. The service the morning before consisted of their testimonies and with members of the Church giving each candidate a Bible verse, one of which was Jeremiah 29 v11. Our pastor preached on Jesus' Baptism and how for Jesus it was not a sign of needing forgiveness but rather as a symbol that he was ready to take on the role and witness God had prepared for him. This stuck a chord with me and when Matt, the pastor, appeared in the vestry where I was counting money after the service, grinning at me I knew that this was what God was calling me to do. I gave my testimony on the beach that afternoon saying that I believed that this baptism was a commissioning for the future rather than a first public expression of my faith and that I was willing to give myself once more to God to go and do what he wanted. I knew that God was reaffirming his promise from Jeremiah for me as well as the candidate who had received it that morning.

Shortly after that a good friend challenged me to consider whether I should only be looking in Cornwall for headships. I cast my net further and in September 2008 became head teacher at Cheddon Fitzpaine Primary School. God's promise had been fulfilled I thought! Unfortunately, like most headships, this proved to be a very challenging post and in October last year I was forced to take time off work with stress related depression. I found it very difficult to hold on to the promise of a prosperous future (had God gone back on His Word?), but at the Church Weekend Away one of the first passages Geoff talked about included Haggai 2 v 5.

'I made a promise to you when you came out of Egypt and my Spirit is still with you. So don't be afraid.' (New Century Version)

I clung to that promise as I remained unwell for a significant time. Unfortunately things didn't work out at school and in March this year the job ended. I slowly began to recover and in September knew it was time to look for new employment. My passion has always been to support children and families (in the very widest sense of families) and I had been looking for posts in that sort of area, but without any real idea of what God was calling me to until the post at St Michael's appeared. I was offered the post almost one year to the day after I was first signed off work.

The job is quite wide but has two main strands - to coordinate the work of children and young people within the Church and to extend and establish links with the community of Comeytrowe, including the schools within the parish.

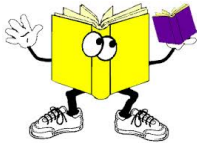
It will require me to worship at St Michael's most Sundays as you cannot work in a community and invite people to Church and then say but I'm only there on the second Sunday!! However I do intend to keep links with St James and for now at least Steve will continue to worship here.

It has been and, no doubt will continue to be, a long journey. The post is initially for three years and I am not naive enough to assume that because I am engaged in Christian employment things will always go smoothly. However I have learnt much about God, and myself, during this time. I now know that I quite like not being at work all the time (having only had short maternity leave after both children, I have always worked full time) and that being a teacher isn't all that I am. I also learnt that holidays in term time are amazing! I know that God is faithful and that He really does have good plans for all of us even if His timing and plan doesn't match our desires. I know that God speaks the truth when he says to all of us.

'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares The Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.'

I know that many of you have been praying for me during all this time and I am very grateful for this and ask for your continued prayers as I seek to support St Michael's Church in their desire to bring the presence of Christ to their community.

Nicki Bradford

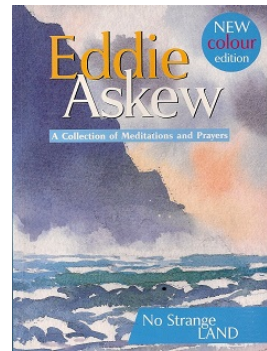


Book Review

Eddie Askew OBE - No Strange Land

This book is a series of readings and meditations; it is one that some people may find helpful, particularly if you are a bit stuck with your daily Bible Study or needing something to help during a difficult time. The late Eddie Askew worked for the Leprosy Mission until he retired in 1987 in addition to his remarkable life's work he had gifts as a poet and painter and has an ability to offer insights that connect with the reader's struggles and dilemmas. Among his books he has produced a series of daily (undated) meditations, which provide an overall theme, with a daily bible passage with thoughtful commentary or reflection followed by a piece of contemplative prayer-poetry. Throughout the book there are illustrations from his own paintbrush - seemingly simple watercolours which have a depth that complements the thoughts. Five of these books have been written:

***Unexpected Journeys,
A Silence and a Shouting;
Disguises of Love
No Strange Land and
Facing the Storm***



Frequently on reading the passages I have found an echo that resonates with my own questions and searching. For example his prayer following a meditation on Psalm 8:
"Lord there are moments when I just can't get my balance.

*When I'm pulled one way, then another, so many pressures and demands
Times when I'm scared to move.*

*When the effort of putting one foot in front of the other, is a major problem that needs
a deep breath....*

However like the Psalmist he moves through the anxieties towards a resolution based on God's love and compassions to a positive hope based on his own experience of a Faithful God:

*I can start out slowly at first, then quicker,
knowing that your safety net of love spreads out beneath me,
catching me when I fall,
bouncing me back to where I belong, with You.*

If you want to find out more his books are available from the Leprosy Mission or Amazon.

PCC Roundup

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

Finance

Stewardship giving by church members has reduced by around £3,000 compared to the same time last year. The Parish Share for 2014 has been calculated by the diocese as £58,070, an increase of 13.6%. This means an overall negative swing of £10,000 per annum before taking increases in fuel prices, etc, into account.

St James Debt Advice

The PCC receives regular reports from the SJDA team – Graham Reid, Mark Johnson and Martin Ingrams. Two further advisors are being recruited. The overall running cost of the service is turning out to be around £1,500 per annum. The general method of working is to put information collected from a client into a computer programme, which then sets out the best way of dealing with the debt. SJDA staff approach creditors on the client's behalf to negotiate repayment terms. Tim Jones reported good feedback from clients about how SJDA is helping them.

Annual Reviews

Annual reviews have been carried out of the Insurance Policy, the Health and Safety Policy, and compliance with various items of legislation. These are important reviews, and this year prompted action to be taken to record the cleaning chemicals we use.

Coordinators' Reports

Highlights from the quarterly reports from the coordinators include:
Worship: evening services are being used to try out new ideas that might reach out to other parts of the community.

Teaching: the coordinators are looking at establishing small teams to support areas of special need, such as bereavement, marriage enrichment, loneliness, redundancy, singleness, etc. They are also looking at how to provide personal mentoring for specific individuals.

Pastoral: planning is beginning for a range of activities for February, March and April. This will be similar to what has happened before with 2-3 week workshops and teaching sessions on a variety of topics and activities.

Children & Young People: there is a new group for 3+ year-olds in Sunday Club; the Praise 'n' Play sessions are going well, and the "Xplore" after school club has started.

Administration: there is continuing good communication between the office and church members, noting especially everyone's understanding while the church was being painted.

Mission and Outreach

The PCC has devoted a lot of time at each meeting recently to exploring what we mean by our 'mission', how we should approach outreach locally, and what our role should be in relation to the wider church – both giving and receiving. An Away Day was held on 9 November. A full report will be made when the various strands of discussion have been drawn together, and some practical 'policies' drawn up. Two topics that have come to the fore are the fact that we are entering a new world of social network media, and that much of the general population doesn't see a link between its increasing interest in "spirituality" and what churches have to offer.

Premises matters

The redecoration of the interior of the church has been completed. 'Pat the Painter' has done an excellent job.

Work on the refurbishment of the washrooms is almost complete. Grab rails have still to be fitted in the disabled washroom.

The Hall refurbishment project is now at the point where invitations to tender will be issued to selected building firms. We are currently hoping that the work will be done by Easter.

The project to replace the server at the back of the church is almost at the point where a faculty application can be made to the diocese.

The PCC has given the go-ahead for the replacement of the chancel carpet, which is 33 years old and now beyond repair.

New external notice boards have arrived and will be erected shortly.

The project to put video screens on the pillars in church is in abeyance while the team completes other projects.

PCC minutes and agendas are displayed on a board near the coffee area. The "Contact Points" leaflet and the photograph board tell you who to talk to about the various things we do as a church.

Martin Wakefield

NEWSLETTER CONTACTS LIST

Contacts for Pastoral Matters

Vicar: Rev. Tim Jones 01823 333194 e-mail: timjones@tesco.net

Pastoral Care Coordinator - Annie Reid 07812 130619

Church office: 01823 272931 e-mail: info@stjamestaunton.co.uk

Children and young People's Coordinator - Kate Taylor 01823 335833
e-mail: rhtaylor14@tiscali.co.uk

Magazine Editor - Andrew Slade 01823 259440 e-mail: 3waypersonalprint@gmail.com

Churchwardens - Mandy Slade 01823 259440 / Stan Wojcik 01823 443287

Associate Churchwarden - Jacky Gillingham 01823 270044

HOME GROUPS

EVENING GROUPS

Tuesday 8.00pm

25 Whitmore Rd Contact Kathryn Clarke 283691

Wednesday 7.30pm

13 Giffarde St Contact Mark Stevens 365714 (hosts Bethan and Tim Baigent 271655)
28 Killams Crescent Fortnightly Contact Les Andrews 254344
28 Comeytrowe Lane Contact Steve Bradford 337690 (hosts Wakefields 277318)

Wednesday 7.45pm

42 Ashley Rd Contact Richard Sainsbury 284688

Wednesday 8.00pm

Hesperia, The Avenue Contact Richard Carpenter 277916
16 Vera Street Contact Mark Johnson 07796525094

Thursday 7.30pm

69 Richmond Rd - **Women's group** Contact Margaret Jones 333194
Gable Cottage, West Lyng Contact Geoff Treasure 490458
94 Sherford Road Fortnightly Contact Andy Hall 274656

Thursday 8.00pm

12 The Avenue Contact Sue Doyle 271223 (host Annie Reid 07812 130619)

HOME GROUPS

DAYTIME GROUPS

Tuesday 10.30am

56 Manor Orchard Contact Celia Wojcik 443287 (host Joyce Lander 278387)

Wednesday 2.30pm

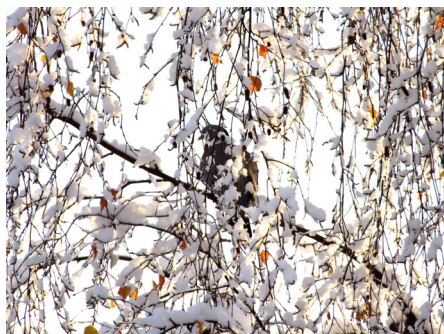
15 Barrington Close Fortnightly Contact John Gould 272597

Thursday 2.30pm

27 Priorswood Rd Contact Kay Seed 251077 (host Sue Collard 271858)

OTHER GROUPS

- | | |
|------------|---|
| Mondays | Parent and Toddlers Group 10am-11.30am in the Church Hall
Contact Kate Taylor 335833 |
| 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 (272931) |
| 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 Elaine Fenton (412113) |



December Newsletter Deadlines

The Next Church Newsletter is due out on Sunday 2nd March. All Entries for this newsletter need to be submitted by 31st January. All entries are at the discretion of the Editorial team and the space available.