

# St James Church Magazine



March - May 2014 Edition

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**‘Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God’**

(Isaiah 41:10)

**As I write this** in February, I have fresh in my mind a visit to an old friend from our Cullompton days who with his wife was very influential in our family’s Christian journey.

He and his wife had just retired to Suffolk to be nearer their family, and my friend is now in the terminal stages of a brain tumour diagnosed suddenly about three months ago. We spent a very special time together and shared Communion among other things. Both of them know a better world awaits but are naturally apprehensive about the journeys which remain and are disappointed to be leaving so many possibilities undone and relationships behind... *‘Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God’*. I brought this back from my visit with renewed meaning.

**This morning** in church Geoff spoke so helpfully on John 8 and the encounter between Jesus and the woman caught in adultery. He reminded us that God’s grace is much stronger than the finger pointed in accusation; much bigger than the law which condemns; much greater than the guilt which weighs us down. Not that the law is wrong of course – we need to understand that in our own strength we stand condemned before the unchanging God; but that his grace has set us free from the consequence our fallen human nature deserves, and he says to us, *‘Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God’*. Thank God for Christmas, Good Friday and Easter.

**The Somerset Levels** are flooded far worse than usual. People have been evacuated from their homes and farmland has been inundated for too long. The blame game has started among politicians; public employees as ever seem to be the target: this or that should or should not have been done... and of course at minimal cost to the ‘hard working family’. No-one wants to admit that there are forces beyond our control as human beings... humankind, after all, should have all the answers...

I was struck the other morning reading a prayer for fair weather in the 1662 Book of Common Prayer. Here there is no illusion that human beings could be in control; our natural response needs to begin with repentance not condemnation. **Note carefully** that no-one is saying that someone’s house is flooded *because* they themselves are bad people; but read this prayer:

*'O Almighty Lord God, who for the sin of man didst once drown all the world, except eight persons, and afterward of thy great mercy didst promise never to destroy it so again: we humbly beseech thee, that although we for our iniquities have worthily deserved a plague of rain and waters, yet upon our true repentance thou wilt send us such weather, as that we may receive the fruits of the earth in due season, and learn both by thy punishment to amend our lives, and for thy clemency to give thee praise and glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.'*

What people then took for granted was that there is a connection, however remote, between people not acknowledging God as Lord (which is unconfessed sin, or 'iniquity') and the inevitable consequences of a world out of kilter. God's grace cannot break through unless people voluntarily turn to him or, like the woman in John 8, are brought to meet Jesus.

Alongside our prayers and practical actions for those personally involved, do the floods and inconveniences we face also remind us of our need to repent, and to draw others' attention to their most pressing need – to know God through Jesus in the power of his Holy Spirit? Of our human dependence not our human independence? This is another side of *'Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God'*. It is only because we as Christians recognise him as God that we have nothing to fear: without that recognition people are right to be afraid – for *'I am your God'* is true whether they like it or not... and if they do not acknowledge that and come to know him personally through Jesus Christ (to quote a tag-line of our church) people are living under God's law not grace, and stand condemned by that law. Unbelievers, hypocrites and Pharisees beware!

*'Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God' (Isaiah 41:10)*

Our church motto for 2014. I hope you all have a copy somewhere where you can see it regularly – it can be a good form of gentle witness to put one up in your home where visitors will see it too.

May it remind us of God's amazing grace, and that only by fully acknowledging his redeeming love do we stand forgiven, free, and guiltless in a world where by our human natures, we cannot but fail.

God bless you this Good Friday and Easter.

Tim

# FORTHCOMING EVENTS



## Barn Dance

7th March in Church at 7pm  
Tickets £5 to include food  
Contact Jenny Wakefield  
277318



## Desert Island Discs

14th March in Church  
at 7.15pm  
Contact Annie Reid  
07812 130619

## Pub Theology

TOPICS: Other Religions,  
Spirituality, Happiness

VENUE: Coal Orchard Pub,  
Bridge St, Taunton at 8pm

19th March

Contact Nic Tall

## Bring a Friend

SUPPER & TALK

by Tim

1st April in Church at 7.15pm

£5 double ticket

Contact Annie Reid

## Towards a Missional Church

What does it mean to be church in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? The world around has changed and continues to change. Our Good News remains the same. How do we need to change to communicate it to that changing world around us?

What might a missional community look like and how could we begin the journey to this new way of thinking and being?

Richard Carpenter will be running sessions as part of our series of Lent Alternatives - 19<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup> March and 2<sup>nd</sup> April – to give us an opportunity to think through issues such as these.

SEE BACK COVER FOR THE CHURCH WEEKEND AWAY



Bishop's Message – March 2014  
Rt Revd Peter Maurice, Bishop of Taunton

### **Are we all in this together?**

As the credit crunch unfolded in 2009, I remember hearing Robert Peston on the BBC saying that whoever and whatever was to blame for the economic downturn, there was no denying its reality. Excessive lending exercised by some has led to others losing both home and jobs. “So”, wrote Howard Jacobson in the Independent at the time, “who is finally going to say it; that there is such a thing as too much? Excess makes you ill. Your humanity goes after too much money. More importantly, the idea of a society for our mutual benefit goes”, and that appears to be the case.

Although the rhetoric of the government has been ‘we are all in this together’, those who rely on credit unions and food banks will tell a rather different story.

It is an interesting issue for our reflection as we move into the season we call Lent. Traditionally, it is a time of fasting and prayer, but for many of us, and I include myself, the fasting has become rather tokenistic; Lent lunches are rarely frugal in my experience! This year I have encouraged us to join in a carbon fast for Lent and Jane Tibbs has produced a really sensible practical guide with ideas to try (it was written with children in mind, but this adult has found it equally helpful!) Do contact Jane through the Old Deanery for a copy.

I have also been further challenged by the charity 'Send a Cow' who are inviting people across the UK a little after Lent to live 'below the line' on £1 a day between April 28<sup>th</sup> and May 2<sup>nd</sup> in order to deepen our understanding of the challenges faced by those who live in extreme poverty.

I am not one of those who look for the judgement of God when things are difficult, but given the context in which we are now living, perhaps we do have something to say about how we might live differently for the sake of humanity. At the heart of our life as community is the Eucharist. It is always more than a device to nurture our private, individual relationship with God. Indeed, as the couple who met the risen Jesus on the road to Emmaus did not recognise him until they broke bread together, perhaps we will not recognise him unless we break bread with each other until all are satisfied and none are in need.

*Extravagant God, lavishing your love on our poverty of heart,  
Inspire us to give without stint,  
To lose life that we might find it again  
So that humanity will be filled with the fragrance of your love  
Through Jesus Christ who offers himself for us.*

+Peter Taunton

# INTRODUCING



**Jamie and Becca Fox** came to Somerset from London, with their daughter, Lucy, just nearly four years ago. Having been members of a Church fellowship in London, finding a local church was one of their priorities. It's St. James' good fortune that they decided to give us a try, having looked us up on the web!

Both Jamie and Becca originate from the West Country, Jamie from Somerset and Becca from Plymouth. They also both experienced growing up in the security of a Christian family and came to their own acceptance of the importance of a personal faith in their lives. Their paths might never have crossed if they hadn't separately decided to start their careers in London; Jamie training in the Law and Becca working in Information Technology. They met while they were in London, initially through mutual friends and shared houses. At that time Jamie had been attending Holy Trinity Brompton and Becca started to go along too. HTB was (and still is) a dynamic and busy place, with a large clergy staff and they feel that they benefited greatly from the teaching and experience they received there.

They married and set up home in London, but with the decision to start a family, they wanted to move back to the West Country, where they would be able to buy a house and establish their family in an area that they knew and be nearer to their wider family. Jamie was initially commuting back and forth to London three days a week, but then was able to move to working more locally. First in Bristol and currently in Exeter for the Environment Agency, in their legal department, which allows him to be back in time for the bedtime routine, which is a real bonus.

Having worshipped at a lively church in London, they were keen to find a church, where they would feel at home and continue to grow in their faith. Their research via the internet, drew them to St. James and once they visited they felt welcomed and convinced that this was somewhere that they could feel at home and come with their family. The crèche area was a winner for them as it meant that they could stay in the church rather than have to go out. This has been increasingly important for them with the arrival of a sister and brother for Lucy, now that Anna and Thomas have arrived.

Jamie and Beccy have certainly succeeded in getting involved at St. James. Their previous church experience has led to them wanting to play their part and although three young children keeps them very busy, they seem to have an ability to ‘make time’. Beccy has become very involved with the Parent and Toddler group and sees this as an important service that the church can offer to local mums. She is pleased that it has a good press on one of the local Mums’ social networking sites. They have both become involved in the Music Team, and no doubt readers will recognise them from their photographs as they help us to enjoy our worship. Beccy has also been brave enough to join the PCC, which she enjoys and finds interesting. Thomas’s arrival at Christmas has led her to miss a meeting or two, but she can still keep up with the developments. She is keen to see the development of our publicity and as an “IT person”, understands the importance of digital media in today’s society. When she has a spare minute, cooking and baking is something that Beccy enjoys and while Jamie continues to work full time, she hopes to develop a cake making business. Her culinary skills were noted by a certain Mrs Dykes and it was not long before Beccy was helping to make multiple shepherd’s pies for a parish lunch.

We haven’t mentioned the children yet. How do they keep so many balls in the air with three children under 5? They exude an impression of cheerful calmness which is hugely impressive as they have not had the easiest starts. Many will remember the fact that Anna was very premature and spent a long time in hospital post birth. As a family they were grateful for the support and prayer that they had from family, Church and Christian friends. Anna is making very good progress and they feel much of this is due to a gracious God and faithful prayer. Thomas’s safe arrival has been a real blessing and it is a great joy for us that we now have Five Fantastic Foxes in St. James.

And finally what does their faith in God mean to them? –“ it’s central to everything, its vitally important to build our family life on a firm foundation that has God as the Rock and Centre of everything we do.”

*Let Your God Love You*

Be silent.  
Be still.  
Alone.  
Empty  
Before your God.  
Say nothing.  
Ask nothing.  
Be silent.  
Be still.  
Let your God look upon you.  
That is all.  
God knows.  
God understands.  
God loves you  
With an enormous love,  
And only wants  
To look upon you  
With that love.  
Quiet.  
Still.  
Be.

Let your God—  
Love you.

Edwina Gateley

# Behind the Scenes

“Do Stay for a Cup of Coffee after the Service” – The aroma of fresh

brewed coffee blends with the closing hymns and everyone makes a bee line for the back of the church. So what goes into make the brew? Quite a large number of people are part of the coffee rota, over twenty in fact. Managed by Kay Seed and over seen by Ruth Crooks there is a rota of at least two people every Sunday morning who make sure



the milk is there, the tea bags are on standby, the cups are out, the coffee filtered and the tea and coffee is served with a cheery smile. Wilson is often the first on the scene making sure the machine is out and the cups laid



in straight rows. Behind the scenes Karen ensures that the coffee pods are ordered and Kay keeps a check on the tea bags, biscuits and sugar. And of course afterwards the washing up is part of the action too.

Supplies of coffee are transported up to the chancel for the music team who are busy stowing the myriad of cables; after a hour of singing they definitely need to whet their whistles.



There is no doubt that this time of fellowship is an important part of our Sunday worship, and whether you stand around with your coffee or sit at the tables supping your tea it is a much appreciated time for us as a Church family. So a Big Thank you to all the ladies and gents who make this possible, and who ever decided on the coffee machine – it’s a real hit.

Julie Kimber  
**Your Kingdom Increase...**

This is an account of my everyday work with young people. I hope it gives you a glimpse into the working life of a youth justice organisation. We are a team of personal advisers who came under the 'umbrella' of a youth offending team in 2010/11. We joined probation workers, social workers, police officers, leaving care workers, youth and community workers, career advisers, personal advisers, youth justice workers/officers, police and clinical psychologists. Teams were set up throughout the Country as a result of the Crime and Disorder Act in 1998.

I started this type of work just before the Crime & Disorder Act, in 1997, and left for the Connexions Service, for a similar role, in 2002. After the government disbanded Connexions in 2008/9 I became part of a Local Service Team with Somerset County Council. New government cut backs in 2010/11 meant I was then redeployed back into youth justice and into the same youth offending team I started in 1997.

As a personal adviser I help young people into work and training. I also carry out drug and alcohol assessments and support young people in this respect too. Fundamental to my work is building a relationship with a young person. This can take a number of days or weeks. Most of the young people I come into contact with have had profound past tragedies. They may already be receiving help from the youth justice system to which I belong. Others may be estranged from family and friends and subject to residential care by the local authority. They are usually unemployed homeless and/or teenage parents. Many have a drug and alcohol problem. These young people are very vulnerable and usually live in relative poverty, below the bread line. Some may lack education or life and social skills or suffer mental health problems. Often there is a lot of work to do to prepare someone for a job interview, college or further training. It may take weeks and months before a young person is confident enough to enter the world of work and primarily we try to improve their level of attainment first. Often there is work to be done before that stage is reached too!

For instance, the absence of the basics needs in life such as food and shelter is a great barrier to many of the essential things in life and often providing basic needs take priority. Financial means for these young people is usually Job Seekers Allowance/Income Support or a Care Allowance together with any other benefits associated with these. This is often not enough. Any other extras may come by way of grants, education bursaries or a part time job if they are confident enough, old enough and/or there are jobs available. Sometimes, financial implications are too complicated and they rely on our help for support. Work experience is often the stepping stone that leads to employment for some. Sometimes previous convictions can conflict with the Disclosure and Barring Service (CRB checks) and a young person finds it hard to understand the system and their rights to the type of work or course he/she cannot do.

My colleagues and I have a caseload of young people to support. We usually start the day by seeing a young person at the youth justice centre or we visit them where they live, often this is in temporary accommodation. Sometimes a visit will take place in what the government calls a young offender institution. However, it is hoped that our preventative work will stop a young person going into custody. I may also visit a

secure therapeutic setting when someone has been placed there by the police and children's social care for their own safety. During the day and over a period of weeks I use a variety of interventions, either one to one, in a group setting or by working in partnership with another agency to help a young person overcome their problems and work towards their future. My work is solution focused and this enables a young person to take small steps towards their potential work or career. It helps them to prepare for a positive future. Often we work with a young person for a specific time only. We have lots of administration to cover and are subject to statutory inspections from HMIP and Ofsted.

I'm frequently a member of a multi-agency team and some meetings for complex cases are headed up by the police, an independent review officer from children's social care or a lead clinical psychologist. Some cases concerning safeguarding are as a result of sexual exploitation, domestic abuse or child protection. I attend risk management meetings and care reviews concerning the health, welfare, education and training options. Often my work is statutory and may become part of a pre-sentence report for the courts or a formal intervention as part of a court order.

As a Christian in a secular setting it is not always easy. I am often left despondent because I am unable to express my faith in a direct way and can see the benefits that a Christian faith would have on a young person's life. But I do share my faith with my colleagues, when the need arises. I hope that by reflecting the way given to me by Jesus that others will benefit too. Each young person is subject to my personal prayer and I'm often rewarded which I witness the gift of Grace when a young person begins to receive a release from the affects of their past.

Like all of us, these people were born into the world as innocent babies and children. But a tough life journey, for various reasons, has left them in really complex situations. Frequently survival for these people has taken place in a dark and frightening world, without the knowledge of Jesus. I hope you will make them a subject of your own prayer, if you don't already. Here are a few Bible verses to look up that may help you too: (Eph 4: 22-25.) (Psalm 91.) (Phil: 4:11-13) (2 Peter 2:19.) (2 Cor.1: 8-11.) (Psalm 27)

The hope for me and for others too, I'm sure, is that we do know Jesus and it was Jesus, manifest, who came to give life in this dark world (John 3:16) Christian compassion or God's love, however tough and in whatever service, is often the essence to the truly amazing transformation we see in others, like the healing of the broken heart or the glimmer of hope through a brave smile. I love these wonderful words by the famous Christian songwriter, Graham Kendrick. They often come to mind as I reflect on my every day work and I hear God's calling:-

Beauty for brokenness  
Hope for despair  
Lord, in your suffering  
This is our prayer  
Bread for the children  
Justice, joy, peace  
Sunrise to sunset  
Your kingdom increase!

## The Baby and Toddler Group

If you come to the church centre on a Monday during term time you will find the corridor full of prams and buggies. You will hear the sounds of children playing in the hall, the Baby and Toddler group is open.



We start at 10am and from the kitchen window at 9:45am you will see a queue of parents hoping to get one of the thirty five places on offer.

The hall is often set up on a Sunday evening when the furniture and equipment is put out ready for the following morning.

The group is run by volunteers from St James and other churches in Taunton. We aim to provide a warm and welcoming environment for parents/ carers with pre-school children (despite temporary heating!) The group provides an

opportunity for parents and carers to socialise and enjoy friendship and support. In order to help children interact and experience new play opportunities we provide a wide variety of toys and equipment. One of our most popular activities is the craft table, pop into the hall and look at the monthly wall display created by the parents. We rotate the toys and equipment so that there is something different each week. (All toys are tested by the adults before the children are allowed to play with them!) Once a month we tell a Bible story and provide a related craft activity.





We charge £1 per family which includes a healthy snack for the children and tea/coffee for the adults. We are grateful for the rota of ladies who work in the kitchen. All profits are used for craft and play equipment.

It's a privilege and joy to be able to minister to families, if you would like to visit or become a volunteer please contact me

Praise'n'Play: On the 2nd Wednesday of the month we offer a time of worship and play for pre-school children in the church from 2:00-2:45pm.

Kate Taylor

## The COMpassion of the Christ

This was the time of the Passover and the whole town of Jerusalem was seething with people. I was the servant of Caiaphas and having a difficult time, because my master was extremely edgy. He was afraid that there would be an insurrection led by those followers of Jesus, who claimed that he was a king. In fact the whole crowd had cheered him on his way, when he came into Jerusalem a few days ago. I tried to keep out of my master's way, but then he summoned me, "Go with the Scribes and Chief priests to arrest this Jesus". "Oh well", I thought, "better than the monotony of my everyday life, "Let's see what happens". So off we went and I was surprised to see a disciple of Jesus, leading the crowd.

"He's turning against his master", I thought. "He's not a very loyal subject!"

We eventually came to the Garden of Gethsemane - an odd place to arrest a man! A quiet and peaceful place.

Jesus was praying and there were only a few followers with him.

They did not seem to be armed and had only a couple of swords between them.

Then the disciple of Jesus went up to him and kissed him. I learnt later that his name was Judas. "The kiss must have been nothing more than a sign", I thought, so they would know the one to arrest!

Then suddenly I felt a searing pain and blood running down my tunic, and I realised that my ear had been cut off! Then this man Jesus was beside me. He touched where my ear had been and the pain was gone and I put my hand to my ear, it was as whole as the other one! This was an amazing thing, but even more amazing was when I looked into his eyes, I saw such love and compassion there. He seemed to look right into the depths of my soul. He knew all about me and yet there was still the love and compassion there. I felt I needed to fall at his feet, yet here I was, part of the crowd that had come to arrest him!

What could I do but report back to Caiaphas and tell him that the arrest had been made?

For the next few hours I escaped back to my usual duties, but early next morning I was summoned again - Would I go with the Temple guard and make sure that this Jesus really was crucified and was dead.

So that is what they were going to do to this kind and compassionate man! My heart sank, how could I go and see this terrible thing carried out? But then I was under orders and had to obey my master.

I tried not to look too much at all the Roman soldiers were doing and I spent some miserable hours myself, while he was on the cross.

There were some strange happenings too. It became very dark, even though it was mid-day! Then there was an earthquake and the Centurion and other soldiers were saying, "This was surely the Son of God". They must have felt that he was different.

Then I noticed that there were several women standing at the foot of the cross and I strained forward, because Jesus was speaking to them, and the one follower of Jesus who was there with them. "Woman", he said to one of them, "Here is your son", and to the man, "Here's your mother", he said. I thought this was amazing in the middle of all that agony, he had time and care to think of his mother!

I had no doubt that very soon afterwards this follower took the woman off with him. The soldiers were getting impatient and they broke the legs of the other two prisoners with Jesus, but they did not break Jesus' legs as he was already dead. They knew this because they pierced his side with a spear and out came blood and water. The fluids were separating in his body already.

I was relieved, because now I could go back and report to my master that Jesus was indeed dead. I hoped that this would be the end of the business for my master, but for me all this had made a lasting impression that I would ponder over for the rest of my life.

Apparently there was a rumour going round that Jesus' disciples were claiming that Jesus had predicted that he would rise from the dead after three days, so the soldiers thought that these men would come and carry him away from the tomb then claim that he had risen from the dead!

I was to go with the soldiers and make sure this did not happen.

What an amazing night it was, first the earthquake, then the sound like thunder, which was the stone being rolled back from the tomb entrance, then, most amazing of all, no body in the tomb at all! The soldiers talked among themselves and agreed they would say that the disciples had come and removed the body, I knew this was not true and wondered what I would say to Caiaphas. Would I agree with the soldiers or would I say what really happened? I only knew that something wonderful had happened and I had to find out more!

# SERVICES OVER EASTER

## **Ash Wednesday**

5th March at St Marys at 7.30pm

## **Mothering Sunday**

30th March 10.30am Special All Age Worship

## **Palm Sunday**

13th April - 10.30 Holy Communion;  
6.30 A special evening service Journey  
through Holy Week with praise, meditation  
and stations round the church.



## **Maundy Thursday**

17th April, 7pm - Last Supper: a Passover meal led by Mike Gillingham and Tim Jones

## **Good Friday**

18th April - 10.45 united worship at St James' followed by walk of witness for all

## **Easter Sunday**

20th April - 10.30 Holy Communion and baptism; 6.30 evening service





# ST. JAMES CHURCH SCHOOL



An Interview with the Head Teacher, Heather Cunningham

It was a great pleasure to meet with St. James School's Head Teacher, Heather Cunningham to talk with her about her role in the development of the school since her appointment in September 2012. When we met, Heather had just been showing a prospective family around the school, a task which she enjoys as she is able to see the positive impression the school, children, staff and environment makes on visitors.

Heather has always been in the teaching profession and from an early age always wanted to be a teacher (if she couldn't become a naval rating!). As the oldest of four children, she demonstrated organisational and teaching skills with her younger siblings and often "played school" with them. Consequently, leaving school she trained as a teacher and although jobs were at a premium when she first qualified she has been continuously in teaching now for 31 years, and loves it. Her enthusiasm for her role is very evident, as is her energy and determination, a quality much needed in the current world of education.

Heather is married to John and has a daughter Ellen aged 23. She has taught in a number of different schools, both in the private and public sector, in Shepton Mallet, Leeds, Yeovil and most recently Trull. The majority of her teaching time was spent in years 1 and 2 and she recognises the importance of establishing the basics of learning in the early stages of a child's school life. She did not intend to move into management, as her passion was always for classroom teaching; however circumstances led her into taking on an acting deputyship and then being encouraged to apply for further senior posts. Her first headship was in a small school where she still had a teaching role and then moved to become a head in a larger school. She now feels comfortable and able to use her skills to develop structures and good management which enable a school to function.

**So why in 2012 the change to take on the then struggling Archbishop Cranmer School, while already a successful head in an outstanding school?** Heather told me that she had felt that the time had come for a change. She was acting as a Local Leader in Education helping schools that were experiencing difficulty, however this was advisory and she wanted to be at the sharp end of making a difference but was not sure where that could be. She was asked three times to consider coming to “ABC” and, influenced by people who were aware of its “reputation”, she declined. Then she visited and was shown round the school ... the rest as they say is history. “I fell in love with the place ... it was the children that did it ... they were so open and welcoming and even point blank asked: “Are you our new head teacher?” Despite the dire warnings and from an initial position of reluctance, Heather then started badgering the powers that be and the appointment was made. A breath of fresh air and hope was brought into a seemingly hopeless situation.

**And now?** Heather admits that the last two years have been challenging and hard going and many alterations have needed to be made. There have been many changes both in personnel and the overall physical appearance of the school (one of her first tasks was to oversee the new build and refurbishment which has transformed the appearance of the school and given much needed, good quality office and staff space). The challenge of turning round a school in special measures is immense, with the looming presence of Ofsted, and the complexities of changing the whole status of school to that of an Academy. However despite all of this Heather told me that she has never once not wanted to be there, and loves coming to work each day.

**What has been the biggest challenge during the four and half terms that she has been there?** Heather feels that this has been to change the outside perception of the school. To those who didn't know or only had limited knowledge of the school there was a very negative perception, some of it quite undeserved. She wants to change that and she feels that this is gradually happening, something she sees whenever she shows visitors or new parents round. This is demonstrated in the physical appearance of the school and the attitude of the children, where a greater calmness and willingness to learn is apparent. Changing the name with the onset of a new Academy era, new uniform, website, signage and equipment has helped as it heralded a new start; it is the hard work by everyone that has been the key in changing the public perception. It has been a team effort and getting everyone to work together and be accountable for the progress and enjoyment in learning has been a major task.

**And the vision for the school in the future?** Heather would like the school to become an outstanding school in the right sense: a vision for the children to get the best education possible so that they can have a chance for the future. She wants to see the children being proactive in demanding the best from their teachers.

**And the next steps?** To be able to extend the sense of unity of purpose to the wider community and enable parents to share in the task of learning. Links are being built and relationships being made with communications both in and out of school but as with many schools this remains an area for creative development. Attendance continues to be a major problem and one that they need to be constantly proactive with, using all the resources available. “If the children are there we can make a difference for them, if they are not, we can’t”.

**How do you see the links with the Church and Parish?** As a church school there is an explicit expectation that the school will have a noticeable Christian ethos. Heather feels that for the school the move to being supported and governed by the Multi Academy Trust has been a positive experience which is working supportively and well.

She values the primary link that the school has with St. James Church, and both Tim and Kate are regular visitors to the school. Moreover there is also scope to widen the net to encourage links with other church communities some of whom had had involvement before, so that there is a rich range of different church representatives who come in to mainly lead collective worship.

With St. James Church she would like to see further development of using the church space even more for festivals and celebrations. The afterschool club which Tim and Kate run on a Wednesday is one example where church members have been invited in to work directly with children. Heather would like to see more of this, with church members coming into the school to use their skills to support specific activities – she mentioned such things as supporting reading, sewing, knitting or cooking. Events like our Easter and Pentecost Experience have been well received and Heather is keen for more of this and other ways of interacting with the children to support their learning.

This is a real and exciting challenge to us as a church to be supportive in a tangible way to the school with whom we share the name of one of Jesus’ closest disciples.





## **Tales from the St. James, Taunton War Memorial**

**Soldier, Sailor, Gardner, Dairyman, Teacher, Mine engineer, Collar maker .....**

The list of men on our 1914/19 War Memorial and their occupations is long and varied emphasising the individuality and diversity of the 103 men who died in the first world war and commemorated in the Church. Many were associated with the church and its school and nearly all lived in

the Parish. As we approach the centenary of the start of the First World War the War Memorial Project team is continuing to find out as much as possible in order to put more meaning into the time honoured annual pledge to “remember them”. From information in the public domain we have already been able to build up profiles of many of the men, including some photographs. The one above has been supplied by a relative of Trooper Douglas Aplin, who died in 1917 shortly after his engagement to his cousin while on what proved to be his final leave

The profiles are beginning to appear on the website so do please have a look: <http://www.tauntonstjameswarmemorial.org.uk/> If you know of anyone who might have information please encourage them to get in touch either by e mail: [info@tauntonstjameswarmemorial.org.uk](mailto:info@tauntonstjameswarmemorial.org.uk) by post to War Memorial Project, St James Church Office, St James Street, Taunton, Somerset, TA1 1JS or talk directly to Nic Tall, Jenny Wakefield Liz Harewood, Margaret Cottrell, Lin Davies or Chris Denton.

## Book Review for St James Parish Magazine

### ‘Chasing Francis: a pilgrims tale’

By Ian Morgan Cron,

Published by Zondervan £9.99 paperback, £5.99 Kindle or  
£27.39 CD

Francis who?

Do you mean St Francis, who cared for animals and birds?

Who wrote ‘Make me a channel of your peace’?

Yes and no! Yes this book helps us to know more about who St Francis was, but no, it is not about him directly.

The book starts with a man who is having a spiritual crisis – a minister who is so worn down he is finding faith really difficult. Things come to a head and he is forced to take leave of absence from his congregation and goes to visit a friend of his in Italy who helps him by challenging him to retrace the footsteps of Francis and find out how his simple way of loving Jesus changed the history of the world.

The opening chapter reveals the awful place that Chase Falson finds himself when during a service he is unable to go on, and how afterwards at home, the visits from well-meaning church colleagues clarify for him the desperate need to get away. He contacts a Franciscan Friar who welcomes him into his community in Italy where is accepted and loved and allowed to spend time just being himself, expressing his despair, his anger at how things are going back home. He is encouraged to explore who Francis was, finding out about his background, his way of life, how he came to minister to so many people, what his ethos was and how he had such a real and vibrant faith that affected so many lives.

At the end of the book is a second section which is designed to be used after each chapter is read - there is a short factual piece about Francis, and several questions to be used individually or in groups. These questions make you think carefully about how what you are reading relates to your life, and challenges your existing prejudices and closely held views about different aspect of the Christian life.

As the story unfolds Chase visits the different places that Francis lived and worked including Assisi, and shows how the support and love of the other members of the community and a visit from one of the most unlikely members of his congregation back home have a profound effect on him and he is able to find peace, hope and true faith again.

I found the story to be really 'gripping', a page turner with good pace, description and dialogue. I did stop after each chapter partly to reflect on what I had just read, but also I found that the additional information in the section at the back to be a really useful insight, and the questions did challenge! I often read last thing at night so did not put as much thought into the answers to these questions as I would if I were discussing them with a group. I would wholeheartedly recommend it for both individual reading and contemplation, or for group discussion.

*Make me a channel of your peace, where there's despair in life let me bring hope, where there is injury your pardon Lord, and where there's doubt true faith in you. Oh Master grant that I may never seek, so much to be consoled as to console, to be understood as to understand, to be loved as to love with all my soul.*

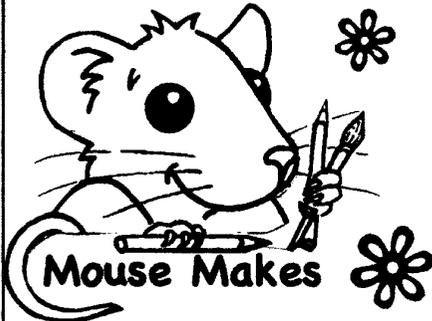
A great prayer, thank you Francis!

## WORDSEARCH FOR MARCH 2014

Life is full of ups and downs: after blessings, hard times often follow. They are not meant to destroy us but to help us grow spiritually by deepening our faith and dependence on God. The Holy Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil – to give him the opportunity to stand fast against the enemy. The devil's temptations were based on half-truths, which Jesus rejected by standing firm on the whole truth of Scripture. The truth sets us free!

Holy	Alone	Temple
Spirit	Kingdom	Stone
Jordan	World	Foot
Wilderness	Authority	Angels
Tempted	Glory	Bear
Devil	Worship	Strike
Fasted	Me	Test
Hungry	Serve	Temptation
If	Jerusalem	
Bread	Pinnacle	

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



The 4th Sunday in Lent  
is celebrated as  
**Mothering Sunday.**  
Originally families would  
get together for a special  
service at the 'mother'  
church, often at the local  
cathedral.

Today Mothering Sunday  
is celebrated as a family  
day, a time to say '**thank  
you**' to our mothers and  
to all who look after us.



There are many wonderful Mothers  
in the Bible, look up the Bible verses  
and find out who they are....

Matt 1:16    **M** \_ \_ \_

Num 26:59    **O** \_ \_ \_ \_ \_

Luke 1:57-60    \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ **T**

1 Sam 1:20    \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ **H**

Genesis 4:1    \_ \_ **E**

Gen 25:21-26    **R** \_ \_ \_ \_ \_

Gen 21:1-2    **S** \_ \_ \_ \_ \_



Thank you Mum  
for all you do,

For all your  
love and care,

For helping me  
as I grow up,

For all your  
loving prayers.

For teaching me  
about Jesus,

Of how he loves  
me too.

Thank you Mum  
for loving me,

**I LOVE YOU!**



A bookmark gift for Mother's Day. Cut out the  
bookmark above, glue onto card and colour in.

# Women's Day Of Prayer

Friday 7th March

10.30am

*at*

*Temple Methodist Church*

*with Guest Speaker*

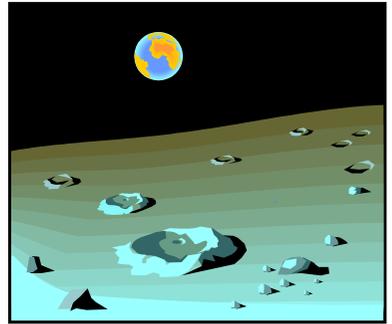
**Brenda Cottey**

# SALVATION

My name's Matt, Deputy Station Commander. I'd just started the midday shift. I looked up at the photo taped to the bulkhead. The picture had been taken three years ago, a year before our flight had left Ulan Bator in Mongolia. This was the one keepsake I'd been allowed to bring with me, a reminder of my previous life. The picture showed my ex wife Martha, her then new husband John and my twin babies.

I'm always caught out by emotion when I look at that shot. To say the picture gives me pangs of regret would be completely inadequate. Back in 2065 when the mission was being planned, I thought I'd found the perfect way to control my career and destiny. After John joined the multi national team, I'd offered him lodgings in our home. But gradually an opportunity presented itself. I could see a way of manipulating things so that Martha could be well provided for, and I could be free to fulfil my dream: to be first to colonise the Red Planet. To be a pioneering hero for mankind!

I looked outside. The storm whirled around the base with malevolent intent like some crazy noisy dervish. Airjets cleared the observation window, but such was the blizzard of thick red dust, the Martian day resembled night. I knew that when the storm subsided, the sun would be restored to a pale ochre disc high in the sky, weak and ineffectual. The collateral damage at the base was clear to see. Solar generating systems were only operating at 25%. The project to rebuild fuel cells for the spacecraft's return journey was falling further behind schedule. Our team of engineers was literally fading, weakened by radiation and internal conflict. The biodome stopped most ionising radiation, but the tiny fraction that penetrated its skin was progressively making us more unwell. The trip from Earth was looking increasingly like a one-way ticket.



I peered with my failing eyesight at the radio transcript which had been left on the desk. It was timed 11.57, just before I'd clocked on. It read:

*'Matt, we arrived by rail today in Cannes under armed protection and we're staying at John's villa. Sudden climate change is driving people south to seek warmth. Gangs control food and water supplies. Society is collapsing into anarchy. At least you escaped this. Think of us all, won't you? No one else does, it's every man for himself. On the journey here there was a nun in our compartment, Sister Theresa. She was so calm. Serene, even. We talked about our families; her great grandfather had survived the Nazi concentration camps. You might be interested, she told me that the name Matthew means 'gift from God.' How I need God now- what a gift that would be! As I slept last night I had a dream. From a bright light in the far distance a voice spoke to me, said I had to forgive you for walking out. I needed to tell you that. Sort of lifts a weight from me. Be in touch. Love Martha and the twins. xxx'*

I slumped forward. I felt the cold metal of the control panel on my throbbing temples. I could sense the low-oxygen warning light flashing monotonously, even though I had my eyes closed. Each pulse of light seemed to strike me like a dagger as I loathed myself for my selfish past. Far worst of all was the realisation that if I'd been given another chance to fly this mission, I would volunteer again, powerless to stop myself. Fame, pride, new technological advances...I'd replayed it all and it was still an alluring cocktail.

I must have fallen asleep, exhausted by my own confusion. By and by I saw an image of a dark-skinned woman with a brown headscarf and shawl of rough cloth round her shoulders. She had been bleeding for twelve years and had been unable to find a cure from doctors, despite spending all her money. She pushed her way through a hostile crowd, risking humiliation from those who considered her an outcast. She came up behind a man and touched the hem of his robe. He felt power go out from himself. The woman experienced healing and explained to the crowd why she had sought the man, whose name was Jesus. She realised the crowd needed an explanation. He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well."

A shower of stones and rock clattered against the armour plated biodome, made me jump and brought me round. I reflected on the environmental catastrophe which was affecting every planet in the solar system and I remembered a Bible verse which I'd learned at Sunday School in Watford:

*'God said, 'I will pour out my Spirit upon all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. In those days I will cause wonders in the heavens and in the earth- blood and fire and pillars of smoke. The sun will be turned into darkness and the moon will be blood red before that great and terrible day that the Lord arrives. And all who call on the name of the Lord will be saved.'*

And so it was, from a puny shelter deep in the Valles Marineris canyon, that I Wing Commander Matthew Price VC, asked the Maker of the universe for the same faith that had been given to the woman in the crowd in my dream. I then prayed for salvation for those that I loved, and then for myself.

Afterwards, I felt an overwhelming peace such as I'd never known before.

## **PCC Roundup**

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

### **Finance**

There is likely to be an excess of expenditure over income of around £2,500 in 2014. This takes into account increases in the Parish Share, insurance, etc, and allows more for repairs than in 2013.

The PCC approved a Legacy Policy, which aims to encourage church members to leave a gift to the church in their will. Richard Taylor, our Planned Giving Officer, will launch the scheme at the annual meeting. An explanatory leaflet will be available.

Stewardship giving for 2013 was £84,000, down £2,500 on 2012. The main action for all members is to review their standing orders.

### **Worship**

The PCC acknowledged the effort that was put into the Christmas services; the arrangements for the readings at the carol service had worked well. About 160 people had attended the excellent Crib Service, and the young people had engaged with the Nativity Play.

### **'Open Ears' Programme**

Geoff Treasure and Annie Reid are developing an 'Open Ears' Programme which will link church members who have the experience or training to provide a listening ear to fellow members who may be experiencing specific problems within their lives. The plan is to trial Open Ears in the area of bereavement, and then to look at other possible areas, such as marriage, terminal illness, the world of work, 'depression', spiritual matters, family life, addiction, finance, caring, education, retirement etc.

### **Mission and Outreach**

The PCC spent a lot of time continuing its review of local outreach and our support for external mission partners. Regarding outreach, the main themes were: planning events to which members can invite their friends; appoint a coordinator; build an online St James community; consider a parish visiting scheme; and planning for a presence at local events.

A small group has begun work on the parish visiting scheme, following-up on the pilot scheme run a few years ago.

## **Poverty in Taunton**

Julie Kimber reported on the inaugural meeting of a group to consider ways in which we might support the poor in Taunton. The group will bring proposals to the PCC in due course. One idea is for a 'relief fund', but the criteria for making grants will need to be drawn up carefully. The PCC noted that there could be links with the St James Debt Advice service.

## **Hall Refurbishment Project**

The PCC gave the go-ahead to the large hall refurbishment project. The building works will cost £47,000 (+VAT), though some reduction might be negotiated with the contractor. There will also be some new furniture and audio-visual equipment. The aim is to bring the hall up to an acceptable standard, and enable us to offer a wider range of services; for example an affordable wedding 'package', with the hall suitable for the reception. The hall is also an important source of income, and the refurbishment will attract more hirers.

Part of the cost will be raised through an appeal to the congregation, to avoid depleting the Projects Fund of money we wish to use on other improvements.

## **Other premises matters**

An entry-phone system is being installed to improve security for our staff when they are working alone. The gas heaters in the large and small halls need to be replaced. An inspection will be carried out on loose stonework on the tower. The projects to replace the servery, install video screens on the pillars, and replace the chancel carpet, are still in hand, but dependent on the effort available.

## **Non-alcoholic communion wine**

The PCC considered the question of how to make communion more inclusive for those who cannot take alcohol (for various reasons). This is a complex issue, and the discussion was purely exploratory. The matter has been left with Tim.

*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**    Bell ringing (alternate weeks) Contact Marian Gentile (275278)

**Wednesdays**    Art Group in the Church Hall Contact Church Office (272931)

Praise and Play in the Church 2:00-2:45pm - for pre-school children  
and their parents/carers (second Wednesday of the month).  
Contact Kate Taylor (335833)

**Thursdays**    Thursday Fellowship (first Thursday of the month)  
in the Church Hall Contact Vicky Dykes (282507)

11+ Club 7pm – 8.30pm for young people aged over 11 years  
in the Church Hall. Contact Nicky Bradford (337690)

# St. James Church Weekend Away 2015



## Lee Abbey

Devon

**Friday 13<sup>th</sup> – Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> February 2015**

### **A Date for your Diary**

We have been fortunate in being able to book 80 places at Lee Abbey which is a wonderful venue on the North Devon coast. This will offer a relaxing all inclusive weekend for all ages at £99 per person with special rates and programme for children. As with the last weekend there will be the option to pay by instalments.

Booking forms will soon be available so keep a watch out

### **Hope to see you there**

For more details please see Tim Jones, Jenny Wakefield or Mark Stevens

## **June Newsletter Deadlines**

The Next Church Newsletter is due out on Sunday 1st June. All Entries for this newsletter need to be submitted by 30th April. All entries are at the discretion of the Editorial team and the space available.