

St James Church Magazine



December 2014 - February 2015 Edition

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Christmas Cards. The St James Art Group have designed and produced a set of Christmas cards. There are four different designs and two of each are available to buy in packs of eight. They have been professionally printed to ensure a high quality product. Profits are in aid of TearFund. The price is £3 per pack.

After the initial sales, the cost of production has been covered. This means that any more that are sold will effectively be a 100% donation to TearFund. So hurry as there is only a limited number left. See the back of church or Joe Gentile for more details.

Shine like stars

I was converted during Lent 1997. No, not to Christ (you'll be glad to hear because I had already been a church minister for 11 years by then!), but to astronomy. I had actually been interested since I was a child, but during 1997 something special happened.

Every Lent in the group of parishes in Herefordshire where I served, we held weekly open meetings where preachers from different denominations all spoke on the same text – with fascinating insights. But it was not the preaching which re-converted me to astronomy. These Lent meetings were held in one of the smaller churches, at Tyberton. Here there were no street lights and the skies were really dark; and in the spring of 1997 there it was in the sky... the best comet we have seen in my lifetime, comet Hale-Bopp. I can remember walking up to the church with the comet hanging there above the tower, its tail stretching halfway across the sky. Near new moon the sky was alive with stars, planets and the comet, and I saw it as if for the first time. A thing of great beauty and fascination, speaking of the creator.

‘Shine among people like stars lighting up the sky, as you offer them the message of life’ – so writes Paul in Philippians 2:15-16, our church motto text for 2015. People of beauty, speaking and showing the creator and redeemer: what a lovely picture of a local church in action! Lighting up lives in a sometimes dark and dismal world, with the good news of life.

I think that the church in Philippi was one of Paul's favourites. In Acts 16 you can read how the Holy Spirit clearly guided Paul and Silas to go there, preventing them from carrying on along their planned route. It was in Philippi that Lydia lived, and where Paul and Silas were miraculously released from prison, their chains falling off and the jailer's whole household becoming Christians.

So it is perhaps not surprising that Paul's letter back to this fledgling church is one of the most joyful in the Bible, despite being written while Paul himself was imprisoned. How were the church members in Philippi to 'shine like stars'? How are we to do so?

- Remember that you are working out God's purposes in your life, and thereby your own salvation (Phil 2:12-13). It is not your life, really, but God's – your future is a lot safer in his hands than in your own
- Don't grumble or argue (v14), so that you will stand out in a generation where grumbling and argument are the normal ways of going on – ways in which people make sure their own needs are put first. A local church should be a place where we are practising an alternative lifestyle to the 'me first' culture which has pervaded our lives since the Margaret Thatcher era
- Hold firmly on to, and offer up, the word of life (v16). The word used by Paul means that the word of life is both for us to hold on to and to give away. The enemy is at work in subtle and more blatant ways to try to get you to fall away, to doubt, to think you are not good enough, to prevent you from coming to worship. Resist him – for this we need one another's fellowship and corporate worship – and spread the word!

Then the miracle is that we – ordinary, imperfect human beings – will be able to shine with Christ's light reflecting from us as we go about our normal daily lives.

We have just appointed a coordinator role for outreach (a job share between Roger Fenton and Jenny Wakefield), and early in 2015 we shall be encouraging homegroups to take part in the 'Beautiful Lives' course. It is an ideal time for us to shine among 'our' people like stars lighting up the sky, as we offer them the message of life. It will probably renew your own faith too: like my comet experience, these things can open your eyes again to the beauty and fascination of the creator and redeemer God.

Have a great Christmas and journey with him into 2015.
God bless, Tim

A Child Is Born

One Christmas morn -
A child was born.
A sweet child whose light
will show the way.
Born that day -
A star shined so bright.
Born that day -
That one Christmas morn.
In Bethlehem where all lay still,
Peace and calm -
His light for all to know so well.

A child was born that day -
That one Christmas morn
Bringing us peace and love.
Peace and love to all the World.

Jesus!

Precious child!

The light of the world -
A child is born.

by Doris Washington



The adventure of Christmas

I passed a shop this summer which had Christmas goods and Christmas cards on offer - and it was still only August! Every year shops seem to start their Christmas displays a week earlier. But in the annual rush to Christmas (which we all have a sinking feeling about) we risk losing a great deal. In particular we lose the distinctive

emphases of Advent which is a season of preparation and expectation.

In Advent we are invited to be still, to be watchful and to be prayerful and to prepare ourselves to celebrate once again the birth of Christ. The word Advent suggests both 'Event' and 'Adventure' and Christmas is both of those things. Christmas is when we remember the birth of a baby in a stable in Bethlehem: a baby who was God himself. This was God taking our nature upon himself and putting into effect his great plan of love, whereby we might be reunited with our Creator. That stable in Bethlehem may seem a long way away from us, but God's love is the same. This is an event for us and our families today - an event to be celebrated.

But Christmas is also an adventure. It was an adventure for the shepherds who 'returned glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen' (Luke 2:20). It is an adventure for us as we open our lives and our homes to God. It is an adventure as we look forward to 2015 and all that that may mean for us. It is an adventure as we trust ourselves and those we love to Christ as Saviour and Lord.

So let me challenge you to take time this Advent to make a space in the rush to pause, to be still, to reflect and to prepare for the wonder and joy that is Christmas. Let us pray that all our church services and activities will help us draw nearer to God and help us to concentrate on the great 'event' and great 'adventure' which is at the heart of all we are celebrating.

Furthermore, let us ensure that this Christmas is centred more around the coming of Christ and the needs of others, and less around ourselves.

May God grant you a peace - filled Advent and a joy-filled Christmas.

+Peter Bath and Wells

Eddie and Stephanie Gannon would like to express their sincere thanks for all the love and care shown over their recent loss of Zena Gannon a member of St James of over 40 Years.

Introducing

Jane Dean was in the air returning from a trip to Israel, aboard an El Al flight with her children and grandchildren when we arranged a date for this interview for the magazine. It was a memorable trip, so don't hesitate to ask her about it.

Jane is no stranger to travel having lived in both India and Australia. She was born in Surrey then moved to Putney and has a three year old's memories of hiding under the kitchen table while their home was being bombed during the blitz and seeing the lorries collecting rubble after a raid. The family moved back to Surrey after the war, and Jane was sent to boarding school at the age of 7. Although she feels this has given her a certain self reliance, they were not entirely happy years and she remembers being bullied, to the point she decided to leave school at 16. Following a period at secretarial college, she trained as a nurse at St. Mary's Paddington, and spent the next three years nursing in London.



Jane became a Christian at 15, while attending a girls CSSM camp with a friend. She was impressed by everyone's kindness, so different from most people she had known at that time. She responded to the leader's invitation to give her life to Jesus and thus began a relationship that has been vital throughout her life. Although taken aback by her parents unenthusiastic response when she told them, she has been greatly encouraged by how good God has been in "putting Christians in her path" wherever she has gone and whose warmth, encouragement and hospitality enabled her to grow and feel supported.

Jane met and married Christopher, a tea planter, in the early sixties. For some years they lived in Assam, India, and two of her children were born there. Her self-reliance and ability to respond to challenges were certainly needed. Following economic difficulties in India the family returned to England, and a new adventure began when her husband and a group of friends decided to try their hand at tea planting in Queensland. Although the tea plan didn't work out Christopher turned his hand to dairy farming, and while their first attempts at buying stock were a little naïve, he proved to be a natural farmer. Their third child was born in Australia, but they returned as their children were suffering from severe asthma, which

improved in the English climate. Farming continued in Devon, where they enjoyed a rural life, which included for Jane riding and show jumping, in addition to being a farmer's wife and mother.

Sadly Jane's marriage ended when the children were in their mid-teens and early twenties and she moved to Taunton. Needing to start a new life with her youngest son still at home, she set about finding a new career and livelihood, which involved a steep learning curve (quite literally). Nursing in the 1960s had only required one O level so she had few qualifications, but she set herself to acquiring GCSE's and A levels and then went to Exeter University to study Psychology. This was a relatively new subject on the curriculum and on completing her degree she began assisting her former tutor at SCAT. When the latter left she applied for the post and was successful completing a teaching qualification in her 'spare' time. Since then she has trained as a psychotherapist and practiced privately before retiring.

Jane met her second husband Martin, when she was at Exeter, and following a lengthy courtship, in which he needed to successfully overcome the protective antipathy of her younger son, they married in 1995 at Wilton Church, with a reception on the West Somerset Railway! They lived in Taunton, but then moved to Crowcombe, where Martin, having retired as an economic development officer at TDBC, became the village post master.

They moved to Taunton about four years ago, to be closer to town. Having attended a lively evangelical free church on the Quantocks, Jane decided to try her 'local' church, which happened to be St. James and has felt very welcome here. At church Jane is a member of the Welcome Team, and is also involved with the Women's World Day of Prayer. Her husband Martin helps with the Taunton Food Bank, he has a strong sense that the world has been good to him and wants to be able to put something back; Jane is also involved with the Food Bank. In her spare time she enjoys music and plays the piano. Her three children and their families are very important to her, and she is grateful to God that her faith is shared with her elder children. Two of her grandchildren are pictured with her above.



Asked what was important to her she said "the faithfulness of Jesus... he's always faithful, even when I'm not, with all my doubts and questions".

Behind the Scenes

...The Bellringers

Ever wondered what lies behind the sound of the bells when they are ringing on a Sunday or for a wedding or festival? A dedicated team of ringers that's who. St James has 8 bells, the oldest of which is 404 years old. The heaviest weighs about a 17 cwt (850 kg.) Some of the bell ringers (or campanologists to use the technical term) are pictured here in action. Ringing requires a good set of muscles, co-ordination and team work. But those who do it have a lot of fun together. On occasion they head off to other churches to experience the challenge of a different set of bells. If you have ever thought about ringing then please talk with Marian Gentile, the Tower captain or any of the team who are always ready to welcome new members or answer questions you have.



The team pictured left, and yes that is our Vicar in the back row. Tim has been an enthusiastic ringer long before he came to St. James.



This picture show the bells, attached by timbers to wooden wheels and secured by a frame to the tower. A rope goes around each wheel and they are pulled 20 metres lower down the tower to ring the bells. The youngest bells were installed to celebrate the diamond jubilee of Queen Victoria over a hundred and twenty years ago and have been ringing ever since.

It's not just ringing that is involved either. During the August Working parties Marian and her merry men were to be seen in the bell tower erecting window screens and clearing up after the pigeons who had made their home there.



THE CHURCH THAT HAS LEFT THE BUILDING

A Christian friend described Taunton to me as a beautiful place. I wondered what he meant by that. Beautiful? There are no elegant crescents of, say, a Bath, or pretty thatched cottages of a Cotswold village. And doesn't Taunton have a dark side?

The apostle Peter gives a different interpretation of beauty which is less about outward appearance: 'You should be known for the beauty that comes from within, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious to God.' I think one thing which contributes to my friend's description of Taunton being beautiful is the work done by members of a great number of churches in the community. I have met Christians who have moved to Taunton from other parts of the country and who remark how vibrant the church is here. It is interesting to reflect how and why this work has grown. Over 10 years ago, an inter-church group led by Ray Avent, then minister at North Street church, met at St James to pray for the Global Day of Prayer and our town. Since then, there has been regular prayer here for Christian renewal in Taunton, and for the people that live and work here. Other groups have been praying similarly for a long time- Canon Street church, St Michaels Galmington, the B1 church leaders (which includes St James), Friday morning prayer at North Street, and no doubt many other group and individuals. It can be no coincidence that growth in community work has been matched by sustained prayer. These are all examples of where the church has left the building:

- Besom - practical help for the poor (decorating, gardening, meals etc);
- Chamberlains - meals and Bible study for the homeless;
- Open Door - meals, clothing, laundry and showers for the homeless, working with Taunton Association for the Homeless;
- Food Bank - donated food distributed to the poor;
- Hospital chaplaincy - spiritual support for patients and staff at Musgrove hospital;
- Street Pastors - help for young people on a Saturday night in the town;
- School Pastors - mentoring for students at the Academy school;
- School chaplains - for example, at the Academy, St James school, Bishop Henderson;
- Taunton Against Poverty - Julie Kimber's new initiative to provide help to the poor;
- Taunton Team Chaplaincy - care and support to people at work and in the town centre;
- St James Debt Advice Centre - practical help for managing debt;
- Taunton Youth for Christ - Spiritual support for secondary aged pupils;
- Youth With A Mission - Evangelism, training and helping those in need.

Members of St James are involved with many of these voluntary groups and charities, and there are lots of other examples where Christians work in the community in a practical way. They usually work side by side with people from other churches on the town. As our vicar Tim has said, there is only one church in Taunton, the church of Jesus Christ.

Andy Hall

TAKING THE CHURCH OUT & ABOUT

Loom bands, bracelets, bran tub and face painting at the French Weir Funday 2014



Following a wet and stormy mid August the organisers of the French Weir Fun Day wisely postponed the event til the end of September. The church was invited to have a stall and a small team arrived bright and early to pitch our gazebos and set out examples of what church is all about. It was a great day with loads of visitors to our stall. Becky, Lizzy, Chris, Jane and Jenny were kept busy with children making and doing and Martin, Roger and others were chatting with those who stopped by for a browse.

Chris pictured below in a state of happy exhaustion at the end of the day



REMEMBRANCE 2014



The centenary of the First World War, culminating in this year's remembrance events across the country has had a huge impact nationally for both the young and the not so young. At St. James school every class has been looking into the meaning behind the red and black of the poppy and the sacrifice involved. Their web site with falling poppies petals and class displays demonstrate their reflections and understanding.



At St. James the work done by the War Memorial project team has helped to present those who gave their lives as real people, who lived and worked in this parish, and who left behind families and friends who grieved for them and for whom life would never be the same again.

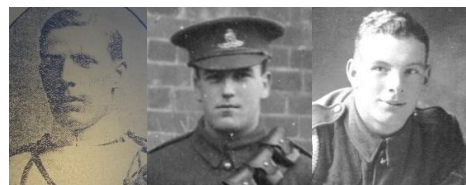
Hopes that we would never see such waste of life again, have sadly proved illusory, however as Nic Tall said in his sermon on Remembrance Sunday we



have a duty to those who died in any conflict, and those who returned traumatised by what they experienced, to work for peace. At national and personal level efforts need to be made to turn our enemies into friends, to learn lessons of love and forgiveness not hate and retribution. This may seem a lofty ideal in these times of global



unrest which is why we need to pray earnestly for our national and international leaders as they negotiate and strive for solutions. To pray for our armed forces that they will be effectively supported and most of all that the



message of the Gospel, of love and forgiveness will replace that of greed, self- interest and intolerance.



CHRISTMAS STARTS WITH BOXES

Once again our over 10s group has spearheaded the Operation Christmas Child Shoe Box appeal.

A **big thank you** to everyone who has contributed, in so many different ways. Wrapped boxes and bags full of presents started to appear in early October and as a result



74 boxes were ready for dispatch on 17th November (About 20 of these brought in from Creech Baptist Church). Many people have sent donations, including some on line which enables the donor to track their boxes as they progress to their destination.



Over 50 people attended the “Alternative” lunch and enjoyed sausage casserole cooked by the young people and their leaders; this raised over £235 towards the work of Samaritans Purse. Following the meal, Roger Fenton gave an illustrated talk about the work of Samaritans Purse

including information about the Greatest Journey, a discipleship programme run by the local churches, which children can opt into. 2.8 million children have enrolled on these courses since 2008 and a considerable number have made a decision to commit themselves to Jesus. Roger stressed that there was no compulsion or conditions imposed on the children, but the outcome was very encouraging.

Samaritans Purse has a much wider mission in that it is involved worldwide in disaster relief aid, clean water projects and a host of other involvements in communities affected by famine, conflict and catastrophies.



CHRISTMAS 2014

Sunday 30th November

10.30 am

ADVENT ALL AGE WORSHIP

.....

Monday 8th – Friday 12th December

10 am – 4 pm

CHRISTMAS EXPERIENCE

The Christmas Story told in a series of displays

.....

Sunday 7th December

10.30 am

ALL AGE WORSHIP

.....

Sunday 14th December

10.30 am

NATIVITY & CAROL SERVICE

Followed by

Bring and Share Lunch in the hall

.....

Tuesday 16th December

6 for 6.15 pm

BUSINESS CAROL SERVICE

Don't forget
Christmas Service
in local schools
separate



Sunday 21st December

6.30 pm

CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT

Followed by mince pies and coffee

.....

Wednesday 24th December

4 pm

CRIB SERVICE

.....

MIDNIGHT COMMUNION SERVICE

Commencing 11.30 pm

.....

CHRISTMAS DAY

10.30 am

FAMILY COMMUNION

.....

Advance Notice

30/31st January 2015

ALADDIN PANTOMIME

**With the St James Players
at St James Church.**

**Further details will be available
on the website and in church.**

**get the
sheep trail
ops. See
leaflet.**



The Sheep are loose!!!

All the sheep are knitted and the flock is now heading out into the town, so you will probably see them hiding in some of the local shops. You'll need a competition leaflet to find out where. Our local schools have received leaflets and will be on the lookout over the weeks leading up to Christmas. You and your families can join in too, so do pick up a leaflet from church.



And also don't forget the **Christmas Experience**, which



follows the **Easter and Pentecost** idea of having a series of tableaux, about the events leading up to the birth of Jesus, together with story tellers, to enable us to invite the children from our local schools and others to hear about the Christmas story and its importance for all. The displays will remain up in the week beginning 8th December, so

please encourage friends to come in and see them.

Please pray for these events and the opportunity to share the Christmas story about God's love for His world through the gift of His Son

Please see Jenny Wakefield, Chris Rickard, Sheila Marlow or Steve Bradford for further information

Have you got your feet wet?

The sunny beaches of the south west may seem far away as you have struggled to keep dry and warm in recent weeks. But just imagine yourself sitting on a stretch of sand in brilliant sunshine. No wind, blue skies and turquoise waters before you.

Just to your right is a family, obviously enjoying a day out at the beach. Seated in his deck chair, reading his latest novel, dad presents the picture of a contented man. The sea holds no attraction for him. Despite encouragement from his children, sandals and socks are remaining on his feet. He is happy to look up occasionally and watch others enjoying themselves in the water. When his children run up to him to try again, he smiles and asks them how they have got on in the water. But the water is definitely not for him.

His wife is more adventurous. She walks down to the water's edge, removes her shoes and decides to have a paddle. As she walks along the beach, she watches her elder daughter cautiously walking into deeper water. She steps very tentatively as the water rises on her body. When it reaches her stomach, she takes a quick gulp, turns and retraces her steps to the beach, taunted by her brother who rushes down the beach, into the water and plunges into the waves.

I was thinking of these diverse approaches to the water after talking to someone about attitudes today to reading the Bible. Research shows that it is a practice which has diminished significantly over the years. So which are you?

- Like dad. You never open the Bible at home but are happy to come on a Sunday and listen to someone who has?
- Like mum. You occasionally open your Bible, often when you are seeking comfort or encouragement. But it is only dipping your feet in the water.
- Like the daughter. You do immerse yourself in the Bible. You may have Study notes which you follow and find helpful. But you rarely open the Bible, study it independently and ask God to give you his thoughts for you.
- Like the son. You plunge into the Bible regularly, studying, praying, meditating, and listening to God before coming out washed all over.

Reading the Bible can be refreshing, shocking and cleansing. But until you take the plunge, of course, you will not have experienced any of these.

Our tea and teach in studies are where we are able to really plunge into the deep waters of the scriptures, wallow in them and to experience what those sitting at a distance may have found helpful had they put their feet in the water. Come on. Take a deep breath and throw yourself in.



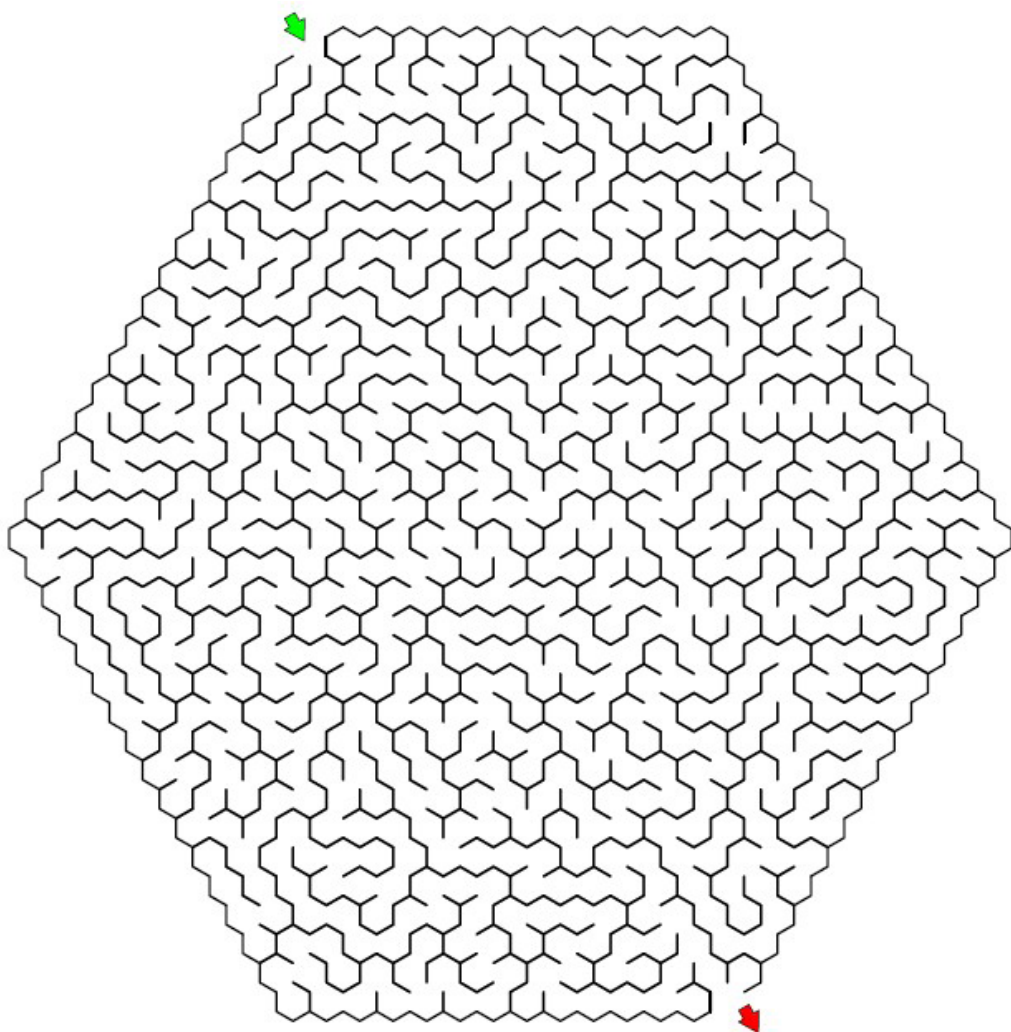
Girlguiding is the leading charity for girls and young women in the UK. Thanks to the dedication and support of 100,000 amazing volunteers, we are active in every part of the UK, giving girls and young women a space where they can be themselves, have fun, build brilliant friendships, gain valuable life skills and make a positive difference to their lives and their communities. We build girls' confidence and raise their aspirations. We give them the chance to discover their full potential and encourage them to be a powerful force for good.

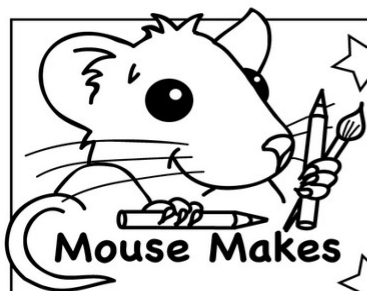
Girls can join from age 5, starting at Rainbows, then Brownies covers 7-10 year olds, and Guides from 10 upwards, they enjoy a varied programme of activities and games, aiming to have fun, learn about our community and our world and sharing in the values and experience of Guiding. Being a part of this organisation opens up a world of exciting challenges and the opportunity to try new things and to make brilliant friends.

Some of our unit's in Taunton Central require additional help as we have some leaders that are not available in the autumn, so we need to find some other brilliant adults to join our team of volunteers to ensure the girls continue to access the great opportunities that Girlguiding offers young people. We are keen to find adults who would be able to take on the challenge and, if it is someone who does not have a Guiding qualification already, who would be willing to start the adult leadership training. You will be given help, training and support and will definitely have a lot of fun!

Please contact Sandra Verrier, District Commissioner, (tel. 01823 282882) if you have a daughter who is interested to join or if you are interested in starting to help. Adult leaders/helpers will need to be over 18, someone who understands and likes working with children, and who has energy, humour and a positive attitude

THE MAZE





Countdown to Christmas by
colouring in one candle
each Sunday in
ADVENT

Jesus is coming! Christmas is near!
ADVENT is the time before
Christmas when we celebrate the
arrival of JESUS, God's son, our Saviour.
We remember God's promise to
the world, God's message to Mary,
God's love for us and God's promise
come true.



Nov14 ©deborah noble parishpump.co.uk



St HILDA

St Hilda was born a princess on November 17th 614 and was christened at the age of 13 with her uncle, King Edwin of Northumbria. When she was 33 she became a nun and in time she became the abbess (or leader) of a double monastery (where both monks and nuns lived) at Whitby in Yorkshire. And it was at Whitby, under St Hilda's leadership, that a famous conference was held to decide the date of Easter.



You know that Easter falls on a different day each year, but do you know that at that time the Celtic churches (in Ireland, Scotland and some of England) used a different way to the Roman Church (in the rest of England and Rome) to work out the date. This meant that in some kingdoms one group of Christians were still keeping the fast of Lent while others were celebrating Easter. The debate went on until finally it was decided that everyone would follow the Roman pattern.

CELEBRATION DAYS

The words hidden in this word search are names of holidays and seasons in the Church's calendar. The words go up, down, backwards, forwards and diagonally and some letters are used more than once.

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

Advent Ascension Candlemas
Christmas Easter Ember Day
Epiphany Eve Festival Lent
Rogation Trinity Whit



Whose parrot said 'Pieces of four, pieces of four'?

Short John Silver.

What is a ghost proof bicycle?

One with no spooks in it.

How does a boat show its affection?

It hugs the shore.

Camp Sawra (Hope): Barnabas Fund provides a tented camp for displaced Iraqi Christians



In Northern Iraq the scale of the refugee problem is enormous. Communities have been forced out of their homes of 1,900 years, they cannot go back and they need good accommodation. People need to be well looked after. There are large numbers of human beings, suffering terribly, we need to do all we can to help them.

Barnabas Fund is arranging for tents recently used by British Army officers and soldiers to be reused for refugees. They are heated, well-supported, and have shower and toilet facilities. Their double-skin makes them good for both winter and high temperatures and they are designed to be used for a long period of time. They are not the same as the temporary, thin UNHCR tents.

To find out more about this project, go online to www.barnabasfund.org and look for the link to “Bringing Sawra (Hope)”



Taunton Against Poverty has grown over the last year from an idea into a group motivated to try and tackle and relieve poverty in Taunton. The group, set up by Julie Kimber, has been meeting on a regular basis to get all the administration sorted. We are working with the Mothers Union to raise funds for the 'Away It From It All' scheme. The highlight of the year was the cream tea in August. Joyce Lander very kindly transformed her garden (and her next-door neighbour's!) into a tea garden. Well supported by people from St James and neighbours with plenty of tea, homemade cakes and scones to go round, the cream tea raised over £200! We have begun to work with other churches and are making good links with Christian organisations locally. Look out for our TAP tree at the Christmas Tree festival in the United Reformed Church in Paul Street (12-14 December). We continue to meet and hope to give another update in the New Year, it is amazing how much paperwork is needed to raise funds and champion a cause!



Book Review

On recent Sundays, we have been having a series of sermons and talks referring to the 2nd Coming of Christ. This is such a joy, people in the past have not sufficiently highlighted this fact, possibly afraid of the diversity it might produce. With this in mind, I would like to recommend 2 books on prophecy.

First book. “The Everlasting Nation and their Coming King” by the Rev. Samuel Schor. Being a privileged granddaughter of the writer, who was a second regeneration Messianic Jew, born, brought up and went to school and university in his home city, Jerusalem, attended Christ Church as a family. Arrived in this country in the late 1800s and was ordained in St. Pauls Cathedral, London. The book (one of many he wrote), published in the early 1930s, latest reprint in 1987, in which he so clearly, and with great understanding and compassion interprets prophecy from the major and minor prophets into the N.T. of Matthew 24&25 Thesolonians, 1Corinthians 15, Revelation. Throughout, the central person portrayed is JESUS. No bizarre dates or stating any time, only asking we watch, wait and be prepared for His Coming at a time of the Father’s choosing. All this can be found on the web. Google in his name, click Rev Samuel Schor 1859-1933. 2nd hand copies can be obtained from Amazon or other web sites. I have a copy which any one is welcome to borrow under strict lending conditions!

The second book, “Israel, the land of God’s Promise” by Murray Dixon, published by Sovereign World Ltd, in 2007. He is the present Rector of Christ Church, Jerusalem. The writer sites the issues of Israel going back over 40 years along with other areas of the Middle East and brings it right up to the present., showing God’s covenant through the ages allied to Biblical Prophecy. It makes reading it very amazing.

Kay Seed

All Change ... or it sometimes seems like it!

The appearance of the new chancel carpet took some members by surprise, so here's a summary of projects we have in hand.

Hall Refurbishment

Since the completion of the contract works, the main job has been dealing with the echo: we have fitted all the panels we need and they will be covered soon. Meanwhile, we have made plinths for the heater guards, carpeted the porch, fitted coat hooks for children, reinstated the display boards, and installed an internet wireless access point. Wiring has been installed for a data projector, which will be purchased soon. And we are collecting parts for an interim sound system, as a cost-saving measure over buying a new one. The final cost was £56,347, of which £20,722 was raised by the appeal. This is a good result at a time of economic difficulty.

New chairs for the hall

We still need to replace the chairs in the hall. The old brown ones are coming to the end of their lives and are at best only adequately comfortable. The green ones are much too heavy.

The testing of new chairs by church members didn't produce a clear favourite: 14 liked one, 16 liked the other, and 15 expressed no preference. So the PCC decided to go for the one that can be stacked up to 20 high on special trolleys that will enable us to move them between the church and the halls easily.

We are awaiting a sample of the vinyl covering before making a decision on the colour. Then in January we'll be launching a "Sponsor a Chair" appeal, with the aim of buying up to 130 chairs.

Replacing the Served

We've been planning to replace the served sink unit for some time, as we knew it would fall apart soon – which it has now begun to do! We also want to install a fixed water boiler, to avoid the need to use the urn. The new unit will go on the north wall of the church where there is room for it to be a little longer. We are discussing details with the preferred tenderer. The cost will be around £7,700, which includes not just the woodwork, but the water boiler and associated plumbing and electrical work. The work is likely to happen towards the middle of next year, as we first need a diocesan faculty.

The new chancel carpet

We had been repeatedly repairing the seam in the old chancel carpet for many years, so we knew we'd have to replace it eventually. We've also: changed the colour, because the old one "drained" the colour from the stonework (we took specialist advice on this); put in a wooden strip to highlight the top step – because we've had a number of falls there; and we've modified the step down into the vestry, because of stumbles there too.

The carpet at the east end, on the other hand, is hardly worn at all, so we decided not to replace it, and see what it looked like when the main area was replaced. Close up, the two colours do clash, but from a distance it is not so noticeable; and during Sunday morning services the view is obscured by singers, musicians and equipment. As it would cost over £2,700 to replace this remaining section, the PCC decided we had more important things to do with our money.

Video screens

This is another project we have had "on the books" for some years. The aim is to relay the contents of the main screen to those who find themselves sitting behind pillars, by installing video screens in the aisles. We'd also like to add a video camera, so we can show on those screens what's happening up front. The project has been held up by members' time going to other projects, and we also have a technical interference issue to sort out before we proceed.

What else in on our wish list?

We'd like to buy some more staging components, as we have difficulty using the present staging around the top step.

And we'd like to refurbish the outer vestry into a better storage area, to relieve pressure on the inner vestry. This is a longer term wish.

And how are we paying for all this work?

Some funding is from money we received from the sale of a field, and from the sale of the corner of the churchyard. We've also had two legacies, and the chancel carpet was paid for by a gift. Anything more has to be the subject of an appeal. We have around £8,000 left in the Projects Fund, so that will not stretch very far. So the servery may be paid for from general church funds.

Meanwhile, we have other "field and churchyard" money set aside to allow us to make grants. Part of this is being used to fund our own St James Debt Advice service.

PCC Roundup

Having reviewed elsewhere the building and equipment projects in hand, here are the other main things the Parochial Church Council looked at in September, October and November.

Outreach

The team of coordinators has been extended by the appointment of Roger Fenton and Jenny Wakefield as joint Outreach Coordinators.

There are various outreach activities in hand. The church had a stall at the French Weir Fun Day in September, the War Memorial exhibition has been appreciated by quite a few people who are not church members, and the Christmas Experience and the Sheep Trail “go live” in December. The PCC approved a proposal to stage the pantomime in the church itself, in January – bring your friends!

Next year the coordinators aim to develop, with God’s guidance, a more strategic approach to outreach.

Parish Visiting

Tim Jones has been carrying out door-to-door visiting: the majority (90%) of households are receptive. This follows on from the “prayer visiting” trial a few years ago. Tim and the outreach coordinators will consider how we build parish visiting into our regular programme.

St James Debt Advice

The SJDA team (Graham Reid, Mark Johnson and Martin Ingrams) reported on their first 18 months’ work. Of 20 clients, 2 are now debt free and 14 have been established on Debt Management Plans (DMP). The total debt being managed is £229,500, which has required 395 letters to creditors and 95 visits to clients’ homes.

Annual Reviews

The PCC continues to review administrative and management matters according to an annual schedule: this period it has looked at insurance, health and safety, hall hire charges, staff wages, and compliance with legislation. It has also reviewed the purchasing and payments policies. These may seem mundane, but are vital to the smooth running of the church so we can get on with our prime mission of “knowing Christ better, and making him better known”.

The latest full PCC minutes are displayed near the coffee area. MW

NEWSLETTER CONTACTS LIST

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Associate Church Warden - Ruth Stevens 01823 972838

HOME GROUPS

EVENING GROUPS

Tuesday 8.00pm

25 Whitmore Rd Contact Kathryn Clarke 283691
28 Killams Crescent Fortnightly Contact Les Andrews 254344

Wednesday 7.30pm

13 Giffarde St Contact Mark Stevens 972838 (hosts Bethan and Tim Baigent 271655)
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
North Taunton 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 10am - 11am - for pre-school children
and their parents/ carers every Wednesday.
Contact Kate Taylor (335833)

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



New Year Church Motto

'Shine among people like stars lighting up the sky, as you offer them the message of life'

MARCH NEWSLETTER DEADLINES

The Next Newsletter is due out on 1st March. All entries for this Newsletter must be submitted by 30th February. All entries are at the discretion of the Editorial team and the space available.