

St James Church Magazine



March - May 2015 Edition

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‘Each other’ ministry

I thought it would be good to share some insights which I gained from the sessions at Lee Abbey led by Simon Farrar, formerly the minister at Taunton Baptist Church. He was talking about the times in the New Testament where the phrase ‘each other’ occurs, and how central it is to our Christian lives.

The phrase occurs well over 50 times in the New Testament: ‘be devoted to one another’; greet one another’, ‘agree with one another’, ‘serve one another’, ‘bear with one another’, ‘submit to one another’, ‘admonish one another’... the list goes on. But particularly important and common are ‘encourage one another’, and ‘forgive one another’.

What struck me most was how well the teaching fitted into our church theme of living ‘beautiful lives’ for God. Some people have found the homegroup course quite challenging, with its emphasis on seeing how our whole lives communicate our real faith, and on not being afraid to learn techniques to aid that communication. It doesn’t always come naturally! That’s not surprising, since the natural human condition is one of rebellion to God, and working out the new covenant in Christ is a lifelong transformation process.

This is particularly true of ‘encourage one another’, and especially ‘forgive one another’. The world’s way is of competition, striving to outdo others not to encourage. Similarly it is of revenge, saving face, paying back, punishment, rather than forgiveness. So it is again not surprising that encouragement and forgiveness are things we need to learn.

Encouragement involves words and action; it is a mindset to be fostered. It takes effort – to write, phone, email or message – with thanks, sympathy, or good wishes. It takes effort to see the world from another’s viewpoint rather than one’s own and to be encouraging rather than grumbling. It takes effort to make time and do something.

Forgiveness is very much a skill to learn. We have received it from God in Jesus, that's a fact; but going on to practise it with one another is much harder. The Lee Abbey community have a rule of life which includes, 'Say nothing of others that could not be said to them personally if love and wisdom required it'.

We need to learn to forgive others despite how they might feel or act towards us; even before they realise we are forgiving them (indeed they may never know). Why? Because this is the Kingdom way; and it is actually for our own benefit. Unforgiveness does nothing to the person who has hurt you – it only harms you. In fact it has almost nothing to do with the person we are forgiving! But remember it is a process, a supernatural one, which can only be begun when we realise just how much God has already forgiven us. It involves an act of will on our part, but may still take a long time to achieve, so do not be discouraged if you find it almost impossible at first.

Simon Farrar used the picture of a swinging bell, being kept in motion by the pulling on a rope. We are being asked to let go of the rope with God's help! It is so tempting to take it up again, give a little tug of grudge or unforgiveness when we recall those hurts... but while it will take some time for the inertia of the bell to stop the swinging, if we do keep away it will eventually stop altogether.

All of the 'one another' passages in the New Testament are summed up by some of the greatest words of Jesus in John 13 – 'love one another as I have loved you.' 'By this people will know', says Jesus, 'that you are my disciples'. Let's pray, in the words of a song: 'Mirrored here may our lives tell your story'.

Tim



A special prayer for Mothering Sunday

I said a Mother's Day prayer for you
to thank the Lord above
for blessing me with a lifetime
of your tender hearted love.
I thanked God for the caring
you've shown me through the years,
for the closeness we've enjoyed
in time of laughter and of tears.
And so, I thank you from the heart
for all you've done for me.
and I bless the Lord for giving me
the best mother there could be!



Christians must play full part in society

I'm writing this letter on the day that the church celebrates Candlemas – the day that Jesus is presented by his parents at the temple in Jerusalem. Along with their new born son, Mary and Joseph brought a sacrifice of two pigeons, the offering permitted in the Law of Moses for those too poor to afford a lamb. Despite their lack of wealth, however, these peasants from Galilee carried in their arms the

child that we have come to believe as the Saviour of the world.

From the very beginning the Christian faith has had a deep empathy with those who are both born into poverty as well as those who have been thrown into poverty for whatever reason. The creation of a community where all are valued and especially those who are marginalised or excluded through poverty or dis-ease is a key part of Jesus' vision for the Kingdom of God as we know from our reading of the gospels.

And yet, according to Cole Morton writing in the Independent on Sunday at the beginning of February, 'the richest people living in this country now take a greater share of the total wealth than they did at the beginning of the century. The poverty gap is wide and getting wider.'

In a few weeks time we will be voting in a General Election. There are some strong voices that argue that politics and religion should be kept separate. However, the Bishop of Derby, Alastair Redfern, argues convincingly in his book 'The Word on the Street' that all public debate is theological debate. 'Public debate is God's children trying to decide who we are, where we are going and how best to proceed.'

A key part of our discipleship is God's invitation to each of us to engage with that public debate so that we can play our full part in the well being of society for the sake of the Kingdom.

+Peter Taunton

Behind the Scenes

One of the great 19th Century Evangelists, Charles Haddon Spurgeon referred to the Prayer Room of his Church in London as “the Powerhouse of the church”. In a room in the basement, a group of people were constantly to be found in prayer.

At St James, at 8 a.m. on Friday mornings a small dedicated group of people has met for many years, to pray for our church, for St. James School, for events that are happening, for people who are not well or situations that are troublesome.



There are currently nine in the group, facilitated by Jack Edmonds or Ken Cleves, who get up early to pray together. In addition twice a term, on a Thursday morning they meet in the St. James School Nursery to pray there for the school, staff, pupils and parents. Usually after prayers they meet together for a coffee and time of fellowship.

They welcome requests for prayer via Tim or other members of the ministry team or direct to them. Anyone with a heart for prayer is welcome to join the group.

Pictured here are some of the members who kindly agreed to be photographed, (Sue, Jack, Jenny, Daphne, Liz and Marilyn). Others include Ken, Cherie and Ian. Over the years they have seen many answers to prayer which has been a great source of encouragement and confirmation of God's faithfulness.

In the letter to the Colossians 2000 years ago Paul urged the Christian Church at Colossae to:

“Continue steadfastly in prayer, watching therein with thanksgiving”;

That message is as relevant now as it ever was, whether it be in home groups, personal prayer or those groups like the Friday morning group.

INTRODUCING.....

Interviewing **Michelle Durnell** in the Ring o' Bells before a PCC meeting seemed entirely appropriate as it was her interest in bell ringing that played an important part in her first coming to St. James some three or so years ago.



Michelle was born and brought up across the border in Exebridge, Devon, and lived near to her grandparents' farm. She attended Exeter University and graduated in 2003 with a BSc in Biological Science. After University she returned to live in Exebridge and obtained a part time job working at Somerset College as a laboratory technician combining this with working in another part time job near to home and also being a part time helper for her great aunt. When her hours increased and she became a technical demonstrator about 5 years ago she decided to take the step of moving to Taunton. At first she rented a flat and then house-shared in the centre of town testing out the viability of urban living and then more recently buying her own house in Bishop's Hull in 2012,

Michelle's journey to faith has been one of gradual but steady development. Her father's family were Jehovah's Witnesses and her mother a member of the Church of England. As a child she recalls attending church for special festivals and events, enjoyable but not having great significance on her life. Following university, Michelle had been drawn to attending her local church through involvement in bell ringing and singing in the choir. She had enjoyed both activities and attending services had been a natural extension of this and part of her weekly pattern of life. Her local vicar suggested that she be baptised and confirmed and she recalls that doing both in quick succession seemed quite a big step. (However she did in fact take this step in April 2012.) She enjoyed her involvement in church life, which included singing and forays into drama productions with the Bampton Players. Visits to Lee Abbey also brought her into contact with different forms of worship and helped her to question the pattern of church life she had become accustomed to,

Michelle's first experience of St. James was the Business Carol Service in 2010. On moving to Taunton she tentatively checked out St. James as she had been made aware by Susie Peeler, whom she met at work, of there being a bell ringing group and an interest in drama. (Tim's excitable welcome, as a fellow bellringer, was slightly alarming but she has enjoyed being part of the group who herald our

Sunday mornings to the town (pictured here). When she attended her first church service in Spring 2012 after ringing she recalls



being introduced to “another Michelle” and was invited to a roast at the Winchester Arms with the 20/30s Revival group. Being part of this group, which met under the leadership of the Curate of St. Mary’s has played an important part in developing her faith and confidence as a Christian. Indeed when the curate left, it was Michelle who offered tentatively to take on the organisation of the group to ensure it continued.

Since arriving St. James Michelle has risen to a number of challenges including joining the music team, succumbing to gentle persuasion to be elected on to the PCC, working on the newly formed Taunton Against Poverty group and most recently starring as Princess Pekoe in the biennial Church Pantomime. She also has developed her interest in Christian Environmental issues and our responsibility to the world we live in through an organisation called “SPEAK”. (www.speak.org.uk)



Michelle comments that each year there seems to be more things happening. She enjoys the involvement in different parts of church life, whether it is the practical aspects of summer working parties, learning to be part of a small music team without the anonymity of a big choir, finding out why things happen on the PCC, singing solo in the panto, helping with the fundraising cream tea for TAP, learning more about prayer at Revival and in her home group and generally feeling that her Christian life is part of her whole week, and not just confined to Sundays. She has welcomed that freedom in worship and the development of understanding that Christianity is not a rule based straight-jacket but a way of life. She is steadily finding that God’s presence and strength can go with her into her working week and His power is available to help with the ups and downs of life.



Delivering the Shoe Boxes – Faces against the Window

Roger Fenton is shortly retiring as South & South West Regional Manager for Samaritans Purse the parent organisation for Operation Christmas Child. In January this year he visited Belarus to deliver boxes – Here he writes about an earlier visit to Armenia in 2003.

It was the faces against the windows that will haunt me. Faces of small children wanting to be part of the excitement, but from which they were excluded.

We were at Kasakh village school, just outside Yerevan, the capital of Armenia, making our first shoe box distribution of the day. Preparations had been made, the school had been closed for the day in honour of our visit, and the local dignitaries were there for the welcome.

Everywhere we had been with the shoe boxes, we had been made so welcome. It was overwhelming. In the Church service we attended (of about three hours duration!) we must have been hugged and kissed by more than 800 people.

We were about one hour late arriving so the children's enthusiasm was at bursting point, having been, no doubt, 'sat on' by their teachers as they waited in the freezing cold school hall (no heating - it was colder inside than out). The snow lay thick on the ground and the three 4 wheel drive vehicles that had brought both us and the shoe boxes were soon unloaded. Advance news of the distribution had reached the local grapevine and a crowd, mainly children, had gathered in the road outside. They were just kicking about, as children do all over the world, hoping for something to happen.

Once inside the school Levon Barbakjian, leader of CCMI our partner in Armenia, spoke to the children; their cheering and clapping response was sufficient explanation of what Levon had said (Armenian language is



incomprehensible to the British ear). It was then that I first became aware of the faces at the windows. They were the children who had been outside as we arrived. It will be a crush in here when they are let in, I thought. As Levon continued to talk, I was making quick mental calculations as it seemed to me that we hadn't brought enough shoe boxes. Perhaps one of the vehicles hadn't been unloaded? No, all we brought are here with us. Slowly the reality of the situation crept through me.

No one had prepared me for this. I knew we had sent about 80000 shoe boxes to Armenia and that more were always needed, but I had not thought through the implications of what that shortfall means for our partners. Of course I realised that the need was greater than we could supply, but here, right here where I am standing, some children will receive and some not. Those faces at the window! How can I deny those shiny red faces? Every child in the school was to receive a box, but not every child in the area. Our partners must select, choose and somehow make decisions. Some children are in here bursting with excitement and about to be given probably the first present they have ever received. Some children are outside. Outside!

This was a tough moment for me. That's why my abiding memory of the shoebox distribution in Armenia is the faces at the window. I pray that when I am next tired and need reasons for making one more presentation or fund raising speech, I will remember those faces outside. Long may I be haunted.

Roger Fenton
OCC Shoe box distribution in
Armenia with CCMI January 2003



Experiencing Christmas with the schools.

Christmas is a very special time with a very special message and we are fortunate that we were able to share it with pupils from our local school in different ways last December.



Using the story telling format that we have previously used at Easter and Pentecost, a story telling team was able to share the Christmas Message with at least 360 children from three different schools. The majority came from St. James School where every class visited the church and listened to the wonderful story, but we also had visits from North Town and



Trinity Schools and we are grateful to Taunton



Baptist Church who kindly lent some of the props. The children listened so well and engaged with the thinking activities that were offered.



In addition to the story tellers there was a large team of helpers without whom the Experience would not have been possible; Scenery makers, cake bakers, the refreshments team and also people like Karen and Belle who supported it so well.

Christmas also saw the schools coming to church to celebrate with their own Christmas Services. The St. James Nursery and Foundation Stage children and their parents celebrated a **Christingle service** in the church, with each child holding their Christingle candle as they heard about Jesus' love for the world. A great deal of work and organisation was needed by Mrs. Lucas and Mr. Slavin and their teams to enable the children experience the wonder of a candlelit celebration safely and joyfully.



Both St. James and North Town celebrated their **Christmas services** in the church. The St. James KS1 Nativity told the story with beautiful simplicity, KS2's classes each contributed different aspects of the season. (You can see pictures of the Nativity on the school website <http://www.stjamesch.co.uk/topic/parents> – look under School Blog for 19th December). North Town's service was a joyous celebration with a memorable commemoration of the pathos of the 1914 Christmas Truce.

St. James and North Town and Taunton Preparatory Schools participated in the **Christmas Sheep Trail**. Well over 2000 leaflets were distributed with the Christmas story as part of the trail leaflet. In January it was a great pleasure to present prizes to children who had participated and drawn lovely pictures



of their favourite sheep. Pictured here is Bella drawn by Emily Higgins from North Town (Bella was one of three knitted by Betty Partridge). We are very grateful to shop keepers who supported the trail and feedback when the sheep were gathered in was very positive.



The plan is for the sheep to be auctioned and the money sent to Open Door. So far Clementine has been raising funds at Taunton Prep School and Lucy at Brendon Books in exchange for a donation. Watch out for your opportunity to purchase one of the flock. "Jimmy" and "Baa" have both returned to St. James School





“Women’s World Day of Prayer”

Friday 6th March 2015

The Service in Taunton this year will be held
at

The Salvation Army Hall

South Street at 10.30am

This Year’s Service has been prepared by
Christian Women of The Bahamas.

If you are able, please come along and be a part of
this creative Service

which will be taking part all around the world
on that day from ‘sunrise to sunset’

A date for your diary

An Evening with
Archbishop George Carey

Former Archbishop of Canterbury



Thursday 18th June

*Commencing with
a Buffet Supper at 7 p.m.*

Tickets 2 for £10

This is an opportunity to start thinking
about who you could invite to this
very special evening

Celebrations in

Our Special Services are in ad

March 15th

MOTHERING SUNDAY

All Age Worship - 10.30am

March 29th

PALM SUNDAY - 10.30am

April 2nd

MAUNDY THURSDAY SERVICE

Last Supper - Holy Communion - 7.30pm

Lent and Easter

dition to our Regular Worship

April 3rd

GOOD FRIDAY

United Worship - 10.45am

Children's activities from 9.15am

Hot Cross buns from 10.15am

'An hour at the Cross' - 2.00pm

April 5th

EASTER DAY - 10.30am

May 24th

PENTECOST - 10.30am

ALADDIN 2015



When we started planning for the biennial Church Panto in 2014 we had no idea that our Director would be moving to Australia and that we would end up holding the Pantomime in the Church for the first time in the history of the St. James Players.





Those of you came will be able to judge the result, certainly the feedback has been extremely positive and along the way we have learnt a lot about the feasibility of a large scale production. The challenge of bringing in extra staging from

two different sources, hiring lighting and sourcing special effects to create explosions that wouldn't burn a hole in the new carpet were added to the usual tasks of assembling a cast, finding time to rehearse, borrowing costumes, choosing songs we could sing and designing posters and programmes. In all nearly forty people were involved which does not include those who were in the front of house and refreshment teams.



Huge thanks to Tim for trusting us to turn his church into a performance space, to Karen for ensuring the heating was on for our rehearsals, to

Rob Ray, Ruth and Simon for their 'magical musical ministrations', to Sheila for overseeing costumes to our technical and stage genies, (Martin, Dan, Norman, Laura, Bob, Michelle O) and to Matthew Dietz, newly arrived Chaplain at Taunton school, who John Newton cajoled into directing our motley crew as he flew off into the sunshine.



For those of us involved it was a great experience, but not without challenges and we were very grateful for the support and encouragement of each other in the prayer time as both practical and personal difficulties were shared. The younger members of the team were a great asset, and worked really hard, fuelled by pizza and chocolate bars.

It was a wonderful exercise in Team work, both in front of and behind the scenes. We hope that those who came, especially those who wouldn't normally come to a church building, discovered a warm welcome and were able to gain understanding of us as a Christian community which can have fun and fellowship along-side our faith.

And the Fund raising side? Well we raised a fantastic total of £1376 for Somerset Sight and St James hall chairs appeal. **Thank you** to everyone who supported us.



World War 1 Centenary Concert

Saturday 30th May 2015

at

3 p.m

An afternoon of Music and Readings

Followed by

Afternoon Tea and Exhibiton

at

St. James Church Taunton

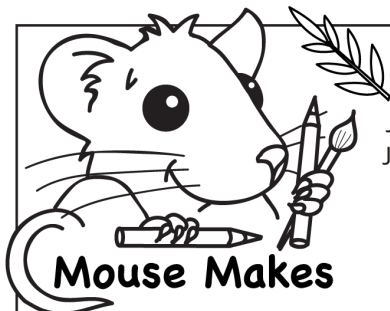
Tickets £5 (£2.50 concessions)

In aid of The Royal British Legion

In 1919 the people of St. James Church decided to use some of the funds collected to remember those who gave their lives in the Great War to renovate the church organ.

This is still used today and will be played during the concert

The photograph on this poster is Cecil Troake who was a member of St. James Church and would have regularly heard the organ playing as he sang



Mouse Makes

Some believed Jesus was God's Saviour, the Messiah, but some did not.

What do you believe?

Read these stories from Mark's Gospel - 1:40-45, 4:35-41, 5:1-43 and 6:30-56

JESUS COMES TO JERUSALEM AS KING

As Jesus and his disciples approached Jerusalem they came to the Mount of Olives. Jesus sent two disciples ahead of him and said

"You will find a donkey and her colt, untie them and bring them to me."

A large crowd spread their coats and branches cut from the trees onto the road in front of Jesus and shouted:

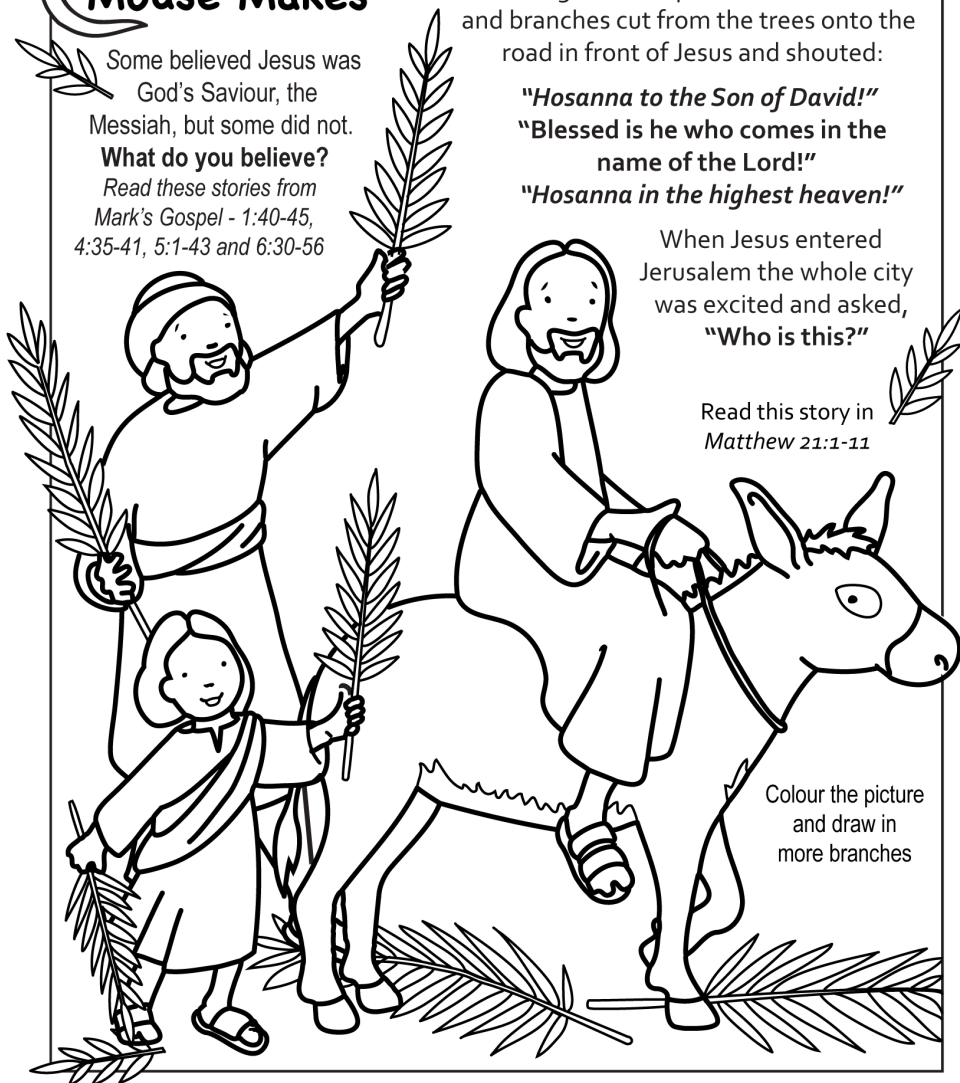
"Hosanna to the Son of David!"

"Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"

"Hosanna in the highest heaven!"

When Jesus entered Jerusalem the whole city was excited and asked, **"Who is this?"**

Read this story in Matthew 21:1-11



Colour the picture and draw in more branches

Who is the greatest?

A Bible Sketchbook Bible Study.

- 1) Read Matthew 18: 1-5. Verse 1: The disciples were arguing. Why? They were followers of Jesus. Are you aware of any followers of Jesus today who ever argue together?
- 2) Verse 3: How can grown-ups “change and become like little children”? Is there a difference between being “like little children” and being “childish”? What is the particular quality of a child that Jesus finds so important?
- 3) v3b: What does Jesus mean by “entering the Kingdom of heaven”? Where and what is this “Kingdom” and who is the King?
- 4) v 4: What does Jesus mean by being humble? Is it possible to be humble without being pushed around, teased or made to feel inferior or like a door-mat?
- 5) v5: Jesus says that if you welcome a child in his name like he did, you are in effect welcoming him. How can this be so? What is it about a child that is so special? Why does Jesus talk about welcoming a child “in my name”? What does he mean by this?
- 6) Mark 9: 35b: Think about what Jesus means here about being a “servant”. What does being a servant mean today? Is it possible to be a servant and a leader at the same time?
- 7) Read Luke 9: 46-48, especially verse 48: What does Jesus mean about being “least”? How can the “least” be the “greatest”? Can you think of any great leaders who have lived up to this, or who live up to this today?
- 8) In our world today are there principles here that are relevant for our attitudes towards those who are weak, elderly, poor or in some minority group?

7		9					8	3
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	6						3	
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9					3			
			5	8	6		1	9
6	3					2		8

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Planned Giving - Giving for Life

Life Giving:

Through giving his life for us, Jesus provided the ultimate demonstration of God's generosity. Giving is at the centre of God's character – God gives us life, and his giving is renewed daily.

Question:

In what ways have you expressed your thanks for all that God has given to you?

Giving throughout Life:

When considering matters concerned with giving and generosity many Christians find that they are on a lifelong journey. They see that their thinking about money and what they should give has changed over time.

Question:

Where are you on your journey of generous giving?

Giving Life:

When we give we give life. Regular committed giving by church members enables the church to carry out God's mission in the world. Church and charitable giving gives new life, new vision, new hope.

Question:

*Do you give regularly? Do you give generously?
Is it proportionate and planned?*

Giving in all of Life:

Christians are challenged to be generous in every aspect of their lives. It's not only about giving money, but offering hospitality, giving time and using our skills – in our churches, but also in our homes, our workplaces and communities. Giving is the outworking of faith.

Question:

*In which area do you find it easiest to give?
Which do you need to work at?*

What can I do?

1. Give Thanks

Give thanks for everything with which God has blessed you. Do this regularly, as the more often we give thanks, the more we realise how much we've been given.

2. Give Regularly:

Commit or re-commit to giving money regularly to the church and to other charities. Review your giving in other areas, such as time or hospitality.

3. Give Generously:

General Synod has challenged church members as an initial target to give 5% (or £1 in £20) of their after tax income to and through the Church, and a similar amount to other work that helps to build God's kingdom.

4. Give Yourself:

Be involved with the organisations you support. Spend time praying for the work of your church and that of other causes you support. Keep up to date with what they are doing so that your prayers and your giving are properly informed.

*Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.
Luke 12.34*

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If you are a UK tax payer please consider the Gift Aid scheme. For all UK tax payers, we can claim an additional 25% of all of your giving from HM Revenue and Customs, at no additional cost to you. If you require a Standing Order form or a Gift Aid declaration, please contact me.

Tel: 01823 619739 or

email: rhtaylor14@tiscali.co.uk

Richard Taylor
Planned Giving Officer
22 February 2015

Celebrating Life

By the time you read this, Bernice and I will have celebrated our 80th birthdays. Can you imagine anything more embarrassing than walking into a dining room full of strangers and finding a big balloon telling everyone what stage in life I had attained. But then, celebrations are the very essence of family life.

We have just come through one big celebration in our Church family life. The celebration of the birth of Jesus and the significance this has not only for Christians but also for the life of the world. Here is the beginning of the story of someone, whom, if we listened to him, has the potential to change the world and in the process to change us too.

We are moving on towards two other celebrations. The dramatic story of Easter with the stories of the Cross and The Empty Tomb and shortly afterwards, the story of the coming of the Holy Spirit, the strength and energy of God being given to people in a new way, transforming a frightened, hiding group of men and women into a group of people who made sure that the stories of Jesus was kept alive. A story that is still kept alive today. A retired minister, in his 90's still with the ability to thump a table in his convictions, used to assert, 'The task of the Church today is to keep the mind and spirit of Jesus alive today'. It is difficult to see how it can do this without the Spirit being active in and through them.

We don't need telling that celebrations are costly. Someone has to provide the wherewithal for them to happen. Our Christian celebrations are rooted totally in the generosity of God towards us. The generosity of giving to us to enable us to do things that we could never manage for ourselves. The generosity of love and grace.

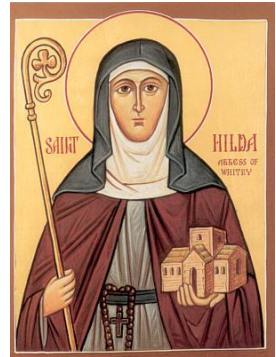
An Indian lady in Swindon lost her husband in very sad circumstances. As usual people gathered around her to offer support and help to see her over a very difficult time. The one person she waited to welcome was her sister who was living in America. She came and was the rock upon which her sister depended. Supervising all the arrangements for the funeral and calling friends to celebrate the man who had died. The time came for her to return home. As the day came to pack, the widow gave her the last gift that her husband had bought her, a beautiful white silk sari. When she was asked why she did this, giving away this precious gift of her husband, her reply was simple, 'How can I give my sister something that I do not value?'

The Generosity of God was costly, but how wonderful, to give to us, the gift of Jesus whom we celebrate every day.

Brian Stocks

Saints Alive!

Well not quite. In a post reformation, post-modern age Saints do not feature hugely in our thinking. In fact it probably came as quite a surprise that St. Dunstan, (archbishop, reformer and 10th century statesman) was a candidate for the newly proposed “Somerset Day”. However, although once England’s most popular saint, his share of the vote was a meagre 2% compared to the 51% for the chap who burnt the cakes and lost his cloak-clasp at Athelney.



But how much are we missing out by neglecting remarkable Christians of times gone by, men and women who pioneered the Christian faith in times as dark and difficult (perhaps more so) than our own. One such heroine of the past is St. Hilda of Whitby, the subject of a new book recently published by BRF by **Ray Simpson: Hilda of Whitby: A spirituality for now.**

Hilda was a feisty and courageous Northumbrian princess who was one of the movers and shakers of 7th century Britain when Christianity was only just being established in a turbulent and brutal land. (Her own father was poisoned and as a young girl she had to flee her home). However she came to be a figure greatly revered by both secular and religious leaders. “All who knew her called her Mother because of her outstanding devotion and grace” (Venerable Bede)

Ray Simpson comments: *“I think Hilda was probably the greatest first millennium woman in the English-speaking world,” he said. “In an age of brutality she converted people to Christianity and started to have a passion for education. She was a tremendous mentor of young people..... She was the first person to found a monastic community for both men and women and when women started to get educated in the 19th Century and 20th Century many schools, colleges, and institutions were dedicated to her all over the world because she was thought to be a frontrunner for women.*

Hilda lived in tumultuous and dangerous times where she needed a strong faith and great wisdom. The present Archbishop of York commends her example of living wholeheartedly for Jesus as relevant for us now *“carrying the light of God into the communities in which we belong and seeing the love of God transform both church and nation.”*

PCC Round-up

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

St James Debt Advice

Graham Reid reported that all debt advice services now have to register with the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA). The opportunity is being taken to form a new trust separate to St James, so that the service can be seen to be town-wide.

Finances

The preliminary accounts for 2014 indicate a deficit of a few thousand pounds. This is due mainly to unexpected maintenance costs including replacing gas heaters.

The budget forecast for 2015 predicts an operating deficit of around £5,000, of which £3,400 is due to an increase in the Parish Share.

Looking ahead to 2016, a further increase in the Parish Share of around £5,000 is expected. This is due to the annual count of attendance showing an increase.

Allocation of Mission Funds

The allocation of the remaining Mission Fund money to non-local organisations was decided. One part was allocated to WEC, Tearfund, Barnabas Fund, Wycliffe Bible Translators and Samaritan's Purse, in the same proportions as the initial allocation in September. Bearing in mind the suffering being experienced by displaced Christians in the Middle East, the remaining £2,365 was divided between the three relief organisations (Tearfund, Barnabas Fund and Samaritan's Purse).

Actions Arising from the PCC Away Day

A number of action points were raised at the PCC Away Day in November, for further consideration:

- Form an All Age Worship team.
- Trial and develop café-style worship.
- Provide coffee before services as well as afterwards (the existing teams would need to be augmented).
- Provide occasional breakfasts before services.
- Consider running another "Growing Leaders" course in 2016.

- Consider “repeating” the main Sunday service at another time during the week, or establish a “Messy Church” congregation.
- Draft a “buildings strategy”.
- Consider how to respond to “peace and justice issues”.

Some of these items are just initial thoughts, and may take some time to develop.

Project Updates

Hall Refurbishment: the sound-deadening panels are now complete. The PCC decided to proceed with the purchase of a data projector for the Large Hall, which will be installed shortly, followed by an “interim” sound system.

New chairs for the hall: it took some time to find a suitable chair to complement the Large Hall colour scheme, but the appeal for 130 new chairs is now underway. Please give this your full consideration, as the halls are used by many groups.

Replacing the Servedy: following a long search for a joiner willing to undertake the replacement of the servedy in church, a final cost estimate of £8,000 has been made. A faculty application is in hand. This will be paid for from reserves, so won't affect the church's operating costs.

Video screens: following the investigation of a complex technical issue, the video screens project is being resumed. The PCC agreed to buy an initial batch of equipment. Once work on the singers' screen is complete, it is planned to resume the trials of screens on the front pillars, for people with restricted sight-lines in the aisles.

Other matters

The PCC noted the Annual Premises Report on work done, work identified and the status of annual safety checks on gas and electrical appliances, etc. The major repair work expected is to the tower stonework, which is being inspected in March. The gas inspection also indicated that we will need to budget for around £2,000 to replace the main heating boilers in five year's time.

The PCC noted reports on the Christmas Experience, the Christmas Sheep Trail and the Aladdin pantomime. All had led to contact with many people new to church. See the reports elsewhere in the magazine for the details!

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

NEWSLETTER CONTACTS LIST

Contacts for Pastoral Matters

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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 (619739)

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)

Parting Shot God Bless ...

The late Thora Herd told this story on a BBC1 Programme Praise Be,
about a little girl saying her prayers; God bless Mummy, God bless
Daddy, God Bless my brother Tommy, God bless Granny – and God look
after yourself , because if anything happens to you, we've had it ! “

Lee Abbey February 2015



JUNE NEWSLETTER DEADLINES

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