

# St James Church Magazine



December 2016 - February 2017 Edition

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## Should Christians tell non-Christians how to behave?

I have recently had an interesting and challenging discussion on Facebook, beginning with the following post, which was my response to the so-called 'Christian' right in America, having found that several of my colleagues in Taunton churches support their sentiments (and even Donald Trump):

*'I am a Christian minister. But why, oh why, do Christians feel they have any right to tell non-Christians how to behave? Stopping them having abortions etc will not save their souls! Amending laws of the land on personal morality ditto. Of course, for a Christian, there are moral issues which need to be addressed on a personal level before God. And in churches, there is a need for us to give and receive moral guidance - Christian to Christian.*

*What Christians need to do for non-Christians is to look after the poor and powerless, the outcasts, refugees and prisoners (numerous Bible references). And to bring the Gospel.*

*Am I not a proper evangelical?'*

Among some very good contributions were those who were relieved that they were not the only evangelical Christians to have similar feelings. But for me the most thought-provoking were those who pointed out that Christians in the past and present have been at the forefront of working for abolition of slavery; and that the 'powerless' should surely include the unborn child?

The question in my mind is not whether we should be actively involved individually, driven by our Christian commitment – we should! Rather it is whether we should join secular campaigns *corporately in the name of Christ*. What troubles me is when Christians try to exert political influence, in the way we saw in the recent US elections, often promoting one issue above all others, assuming that all 'proper' Christians will agree, and supporting one candidate or political party who will then impose that view on a non-believing majority.

The heart of the discussion actually hinges on the way we interpret the Bible. I have no disagreement with my friends and colleagues about the Bible containing all that is necessary for salvation, or of it being our primary source of hearing God speaking (so you may be relieved to hear that I am a proper evangelical!) But when it comes to behavioural issues and personal morality, especially issues not directly addressed by Bible texts, I find we can easily state, 'The Bible says...' while actually relying on one interpretation with which we have grown accustomed, and using it as a vehicle for our own views.

I have increasingly come to realise that when it comes to applying Old Testament morality today, the interpretation factor becomes even more prominent. Some try to discriminate between 'ceremonial law' and 'moral law' – but there are lots of grey areas, and passages where one leads straight to the other with no distinction. And to whom does the OT law apply? Basically it is for God's people – and it can be argued that his people today are the Christian church, not the nation state, only relevant in OT times as a vehicle for God eventually to come as his Son. See Isaiah 40:10-end to see how to regard God in relation to our human institutions!

The direct injunctions I see that are given in the New Testament are those which the 'Christian' right like to ignore: love enemies, not retaliating, mixing with the outcast to bring good news, holding lightly onto property, action not mere words when it comes to providing for the poor...

But surely our key role, the unique one which Christians can offer the secular world, is contained in the great commission at the end of St Matthew's Gospel, where the risen Christ commands his followers, *'Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I will be with you, to the very end of the age'*. The order here is vital: it seems to me that jumping straight to 'teach them to obey' will be meaningless unless they have first heard and accepted the Gospel. Obeying a set of rules alone will certainly not result in them being with Christ eternally... that comes as his most wonderful promise for those who are made disciples.

So our priority must be to spread the Good News to individuals, who, when they are right with God, will then be called by God to get to work in this needy world, using whatever individual, social and political means are at their disposal. We cannot assume that every Christian will receive the same ministry or mission burned on their hearts – indeed, we know that like different parts of one body, we will all have different jobs to do.

May God bless us this Christmastide and into the New Year in his mission and ministry, as we each listen to his call on us, and together become the answer to Our Lord's prayer, 'Your Kingdom come, your will be done on earth'.

Tim



# PRAYERS FOR CHRISTMAS



POVERTY

## Christmas prayer

Let the love that shaped earth and heaven

Dwell within us this Christmas.

Let the love that created humanity

Dwell within us this Christmas.

Let the love that overcomes suffering and hatred

Dwell within us this Christmas.

Let the love that causes us to rejoice with  
loved ones

Dwell within us this Christmas.

Let the love that forgives and renews

Dwell within us this Christmas.

Let the love that brings reconciliation after  
separation

Dwell within us this Christmas.

Let the love that brings the blessing of peace

Dwell within us this Christmas .

May we share that peace with all people near  
and far.

**Amen**

### OPEN DOOR CALENDAR 2017

Raising money for the Homeless in Taunton  
Please purchase your copy, available at the  
Open Door stand just inside the Sainsburys  
Town Centre store on Weekdays between  
10am and 1pm or call Open Door on  
01823 271996





## Wonder and worship

Have you ever wondered how many stars there are? We know there are lots and we know we can't count them. It is clearly not a straightforward question. So what do we know? We believe the universe is some 14 billion light years old. We think it is expanding, but we don't know if it is infinitely large or not. And the fact that space-time seems to be curved makes it even more complicated. But if the Milky Way has some 100 million stars in it and if there are in the order of 100 trillion galaxies, we are looking at something like '1 followed by 24 noughts' as an answer. That is a lot of stars! And throughout all of human history people have wondered not only how many stars there are but also who made them.

The Bible gives us an answer to this and reveals God as the Creator of all things. The prophet Isaiah wrote this:

*'Lift up your eyes and look to the heavens: Who created all these? He brings out the starry host one by one, and calls them each by name. Because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing.'* (Isaiah 40: 26)

Stars are beautiful, mysterious, awe-inspiring. They cause us to wonder and marvel. Who has not stopped at some point and just gazed at the night sky? It is said that the US President Franklin D Roosevelt used to take his guest out after dinner to look at the night sky. They would stare at the stars and then he would say: 'Now that we feel small enough, let us discuss our business.'

At the first Christmas it was a star that led the wise men to the baby Jesus. 'When they saw the child with his mother Mary, they bowed down and worshipped him.' Christmas reminds us that Jesus is God's Son, our Saviour and our Lord. In the midst of all else that is happening may we make sure that we take time to wonder and to worship.

+ Peter Bath and Wells

# Introducing .....

## ....and behind the Scenes



Recently Tim announced another Coordinator, to join the five that have already been appointed (C&YP, Pastoral, Discipleship, Outreach and Administration). The new appointee is the Facilities Coordinator, Martin Wakefield. First a word of introduction. Martin has been at St. James since 1979, which is a pretty long time. He was born and grew up in Grays, Essex. Although he was a member of the local church choir (which paid 3d for singing at services) his family were not practising Christians (whatever that means). Like many, his parents' experiences and losses during the second world war had taken their toll of their faith. It was not until Martin went to University (Liverpool) that after much questioning of his flatmates that he found that belief in God and Jesus made sense and he made his commitment, which marked his life time journey of faith. He still maintains a friendship with two of uni friends, despite their now being in Lancashire and Essex. On leaving University, he worked for Decca Survey as a sea-going geologist in Great Yarmouth for two years. He then met and married a Norfolk lass, who bizarrely was then living and working in his home town of Grays (but that's another story). Following a brief period of unemployment and then working as a computer programmer for Marconi, he landed a job at the Hydrographic Office in Taunton, and the rest as they say is history. Martin and Jenny have two adult children, both of whom grew up in St. James.

As a long established member of St. James, it is not surprising that Martin has had a fair share of different roles at St. James, these include magazine editor, home group leader, PCC member, churchwarden, PCC, sides person and projection team member. Most of these roles he still continues with. The role of Facilities Coordinator sort of emerged, as he and Stan Wojcik, another long serving former warden, had been keeping an eye on various aspects of the church building, fabric, fittings and future; together with Tim they felt that a team based approach to the task was the way forward.

## So what is the role of Facilities Coordinator?

Over to you Martin ...

The simple answer is that the Facilities Coordinator looks after the buildings and their fixtures and fittings, and also all the various bits of technology we use in the church. The long answer would be to describe all 109 items we have on our work list at the last count! But instead let's look at who's involved and see what they do – it's all teamwork.

**Stan Wojcik** is our Premises Manager. He organises the work on anything which needs doing to the buildings or churchyard. Sometimes we do the work ourselves, and we are blessed to have **Brian Pretty** with us, who has the experience to tackle some of the bigger jobs. At other times we call in our friendly handyman/builder **Andy Hull**. Stan's current challenge is sorting out the blocked drain in the car park, which is a bit of a saga.

**Richard Carpenter** leads our technical team, which mainly means organising the rota for the sound system and projector operators, and planning maintenance and changes to those systems. He is ably assisted by **Norman Bambridge** who has deep technical knowledge and experience, and the team of enthusiastic and long-suffering operators.

**Beccy Fox** has recently taken charge of maintaining the office computer and small network. She is currently doing some 'digital spring cleaning' before bringing the system up to the latest standards.

**Joe Gentile** looks after our present website, and **Chris Buckman** is setting up the framework for a new website. We will eventually build a team to keep the new website up to date – it's no longer a one-person job, and is of increasing importance in this digital age.

As Facilities Coordinator I prioritise the many things that need doing and maintain a simple list so we don't forget anything. There are also a number of bigger issues to deal with, such as the proposed Coal Orchard redevelopment, and liaising with our neighbours. On the other hand, you may also see me with screwdriver or soldering iron or keyboard in hand, helping at the coal face – all part of the fun!



## Sheila Tremaine

We have recently received notice that one of our former link Missionaries, Sheila Tremaine has died, after a life time of dedicated work with the Rikbaktsa people of the Amazon. Sheila worked for Wycliffe Bible Translators, a society formed to bring the Gospel to people who had no knowledge of the Bible, Jesus and the Christian faith.



Sheila's work, starting the 1960s, as a linguist and translator was extremely skilled and required painstaking attention to detail and an ability to work with the indigenous tribes, gaining their respect and trust over the years. Her pioneering work started with defining the language and writing it down for the first time. This has enabled the Rikbaktsa people to be educated in their own language. It is also essential for preserving their culture in this literate age, since language and culture are inseparable. In addition to the New Testament, Sheila has produced a dictionary with the help of the people. She has also translated other stories, including Pilgrim's Progress. In addition, she has been able to develop other materials including pamphlets on alcohol and drug dependency to help the local administration counter a growing problem among the communities. She continued her life long work into her 70s and 80s and was only recently planning further trips back to Brazil. Sadly, she passed away recently following a short illness.



Those of us who have heard Sheila speak or read her letters over the years will be aware of what a courageous and pioneering spirit she possessed as she travelled by canoe, trekked through the rain forest, crossed ravines on precipitous rope bridges, living among the Amazon people to bring the message of God's love to a small tribe, that few people in the wider world have ever heard of, but who were infinitely precious to God.



## Prayer Works ..... Doesn't it?

As Christians we are encouraged to pray. On this page I have included three quotes from the bible and two from well-known Christians. Sometimes God's answers are not quite what we expect, sometimes they exceed all expectation. What we sometimes fail to do is to share God's blessings and answers. These can be an enormous encouragement and a means of increasing each other's faith.

Do you have an answer to prayer that you would like to share with our magazine readers – (anonymously if you wish). If you don't want to put it in the magazine do

***Therefore encourage one another and build each other up.....Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you*** 1Thessalonians 5 v 11, 16-18

***Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.***  
Philippians 4: vs 6-7

share it with someone – Your home group, a fellow Christian or a friend or neighbour – it's a real way of showing your faith is alive and active.

***Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.*** Matthew 7 v 7

***To be a Christian without prayer is no more possible than to be alive without breathing.*** Martin Luther

***Don't pray when you feel like it. Have an appointment with the Lord and keep it. A man (or woman) is powerful on his (her) knees*** – Corrie Ten Boom

***And here is one example of answered prayer*** – Corrie ten Boom was a prisoner in a concentration camp in Germany in World War 2. The conditions were harsh and difficult and included being infested by fleas. Corrie and her sister Betsy were challenged to pray with thanksgiving even for her flea infested circumstances. Later she found that these very fleas discouraged the guards from entering the barracks, giving opportunity for them and their fellow inmates to have uninterrupted bible studies and worship. (From The Hiding Place)



# Church School News

## **New Head at St. James**

Following the retirement of Heather Cunningham, Mr. Jason Eveleigh has been appointed as the new Headmaster. He started at the beginning of this term and the next issue will feature an interview with him. Do pray for Jason, and his leadership team.

## **Weekly Worship**

Most Wednesdays Reverend Tim, goes in to St James school to take the whole school morning assembly. Did you know that in Church and state schools there is opportunity for daily collective worship during the day and it is an important part of affirming the school ethos.

## **Xplore Club**

The Xplore afterschool club which started about three years ago is going from strength to strength. This term we increased our numbers to 24, as there was a waiting list and recruited Sheila Marlow as an additional helper to join the team of Tim, David, Deb and Jenny. The club meets every Wednesday, for fun, games, craft, bible story and food... that's a lot to fit into 60 minutes!

## **Prayer Meeting**

Members of the church continue to meet twice a term to pray for the school. See Jack Edmonds or Sue Lucas for details or the bulletin for dates.

## **Harvest celebration**

On the next page are some photographs taken from St. James School's Facebook page celebrating the Harvest Service, which was held in the Church. The children brought harvest gifts for Open door and celebrated the occasion in song and verse.

Rob Rawle visits the school on a regular basis as a volunteer to help with music making, its something he really enjoys and loves seeing the children develop their music making ability





A big thank you to everyone who packed shoeboxes or made donations. We have been able to send off 74 boxes and an additional £30.



"Of all the cheek! Rides up on his sleigh in his flashy red suit, pushes to the front of the queue to the stable shouting 'Ho! Ho! Ho!'... who DOES he think he is?!"

**TURNOVER FOR CHRISTMAS SERVICES,  
AND DON'T FORGET THE PANTO...  
FULL DETAILS ON THE BACK COVER**



*Christmas*

**Sunday 4th December**

**10.30am** Christingle Service

**Sunday 11th December**

**10.30am** Nativity & Family Carols  
(followed by coffee & mince pies)

**Tuesday 13th December**

**6.15pm** Business Carol Service

**Sunday 25th December 10.30**

*Join us on this very special day*

St James Church, St James Street



# *Christmas Services*

**Sunday 18th December**

**10.30am** Morning Service

**6.30pm** Carols by Candlelight  
(followed by coffee & mince pies)

**Saturday 24th December**

**4.00pm** Crib Service

A special service for families to  
celebrate the Christmas Story followed  
by refreshments

**11.30pm** Midnight Communion

**Dam Christmas Day Celebration**

*Day for worship and communion*

Meet, Taunton Tel: 01823 272931

# Bible Bite

## A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in  
Luke ch.1 verses 1-25 & 57-80

The Romans had invaded Israel and still ruled it. Zechariah and Elizabeth were an old childless couple living in the hill country.



It was Zechariah's turn for temple duty in Jerusalem.

He was given a once-in-a-lifetime chance to burn incense in the holiest place in the temple



As it burnt he prayed



Lord God, please rescue us, your people.

Then he saw the angel standing next to him



God has heard your prayer, and you will have a son.

At our age that's not going to happen



To show you that God means what He says..

you will be unable to speak until your son, John\*, is born



\*In Hebrew, 'John' is 'Yochanan' or 'God is gracious'

When Zechariah came out of the holy place..



What happened?

He went home and soon Elizabeth had good news



I'm pregnant!

Elizabeth's cousin Mary visited her...



but left before..

Elizabeth's baby was born.



He is called John

But that's not his father's name

Zechariah wrote...



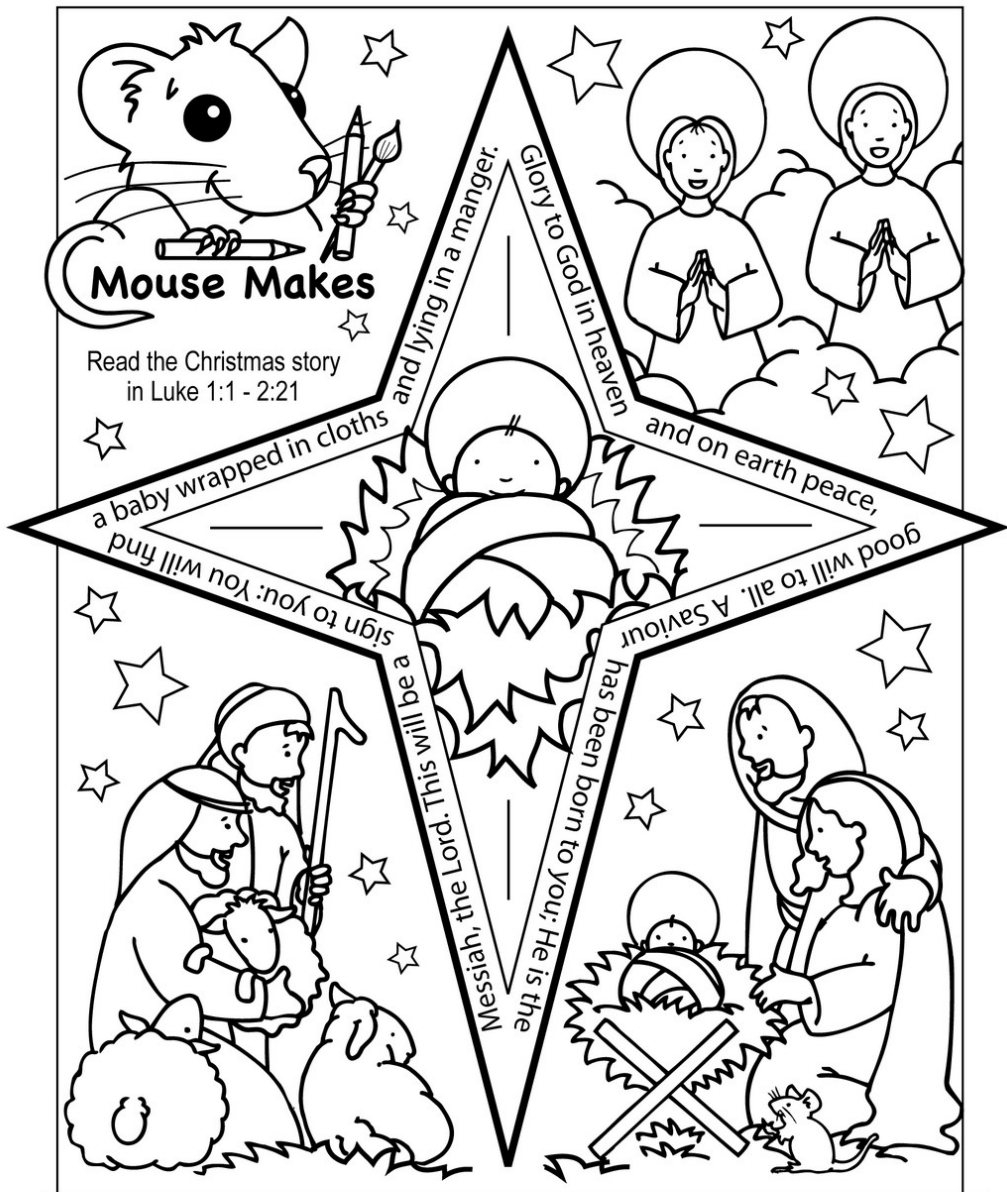
His name is John and could speak again.

He praised God for what He had done...



and what He was going to do...





## Mouse Makes

Read the Christmas story  
in Luke 1:1 - 2:21



Eastern star, white and bright,  
In the darkness a shining light,  
Points to Jesus, God's precious Son,  
Our Lord and King, our Saviour has come!

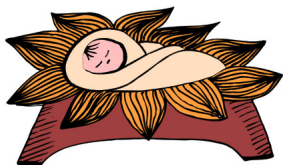
Shepherds hear the Angels sing;  
"Glory to the heavenly King,  
Peace on earth, good will to all."  
Come to Jesus the Saviour of all.



## NATIVITY PLAY

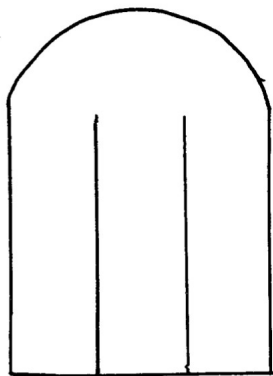
To see the story of the first Christmas through the eyes of little children makes it fresh and new. I like the story of the little boy who so wanted to be Joseph but was picked as the inn keeper instead. All went well until the nativity play started and Mary and Joseph arrived at the inn. The boy playing the innkeeper greeted them with 'Come in Mary love, there's plenty of room for you, but Joseph can get lost!'

Mary may insist that her teddy is the Baby Jesus, the angels may trip over their robes made from sheets, but every nativity play shows the wonder of the story of the first Christmas when the son of God was born a baby, like us. Tea towels used as shepherd's headdresses and angels' haloes made from wire coat hangers only serve to underline the humanity of it all. A baby born in a stable – a simple story that changes the world.



## LOTS OF LOVE

Time to make some Christmas decorations? Cut out two shapes like the pattern below, one in red card, one in green card. Don't forget to cut the slits.



Interlock the 2 shapes by weaving the strips under and over their opposite



colour. This will give you a heart shape. Use a little glue to hold them together if needed. Punch a hole in the top at the centre and thread with cord to hang your decoration. You can make lots in different colours and decorate them with sequins or stickers too. Nice symbols of love to decorate your Christmas.

## The Cat's Christmas Hymns:

Oh, Come All Ye Fishful  
Silent Mice  
Joy to the Curled  
The First Meow



# WORDSEARCH

c	o	u	s	i	n	v	a	d	e	d	l
f	e	h	g	o	n	d	n	g	s	t	f
o	f	l	o	o	n	c	g	m	e	e	i
g	c	h	i	l	d	l	e	s	s	m	s
m	a	r	y	z	y	l	l	n	s	p	r
p	r	e	g	n	a	n	t	u	s	l	a
j	o	h	n	s	x	b	o	b	g	e	e
s	o	d	u	t	y	i	e	i	a	e	l
h	i	r	e	s	c	u	e	t	m	b	i
z	e	c	h	a	r	a	i	a	h	u	y
j	n	a	r	o	m	a	n	s	q	r	u
h	n	g	p	r	a	y	e	r	t	n	r

God

temple

duty

incense

Jerusalem

rescue

gracious

cousin

Romans

holy

Elizabeth

prayer

childless

pregnant

invaded

Zecharaiah

Mary

Israel

name

burn

angel

son

baby

John

## I've been reading ...

***The Four Generations – Finding the Right Model for Mission*** by John Finney, former Bishop of Pontefract. Grove Evangelism Series, No 82 (28pp, 2008).

Most of us are familiar with the term “post modernism” and are aware that the church needs to keep in touch with a post-modern society. This booklet explores the changes that have taken place in society with regards to Christian faith and points out that different strategies for evangelism are needed for each of four generations over the last 50-60 years (with variations across the country).

For Generation 1, adults and children go to church, so there is a good knowledge of Christian faith in society. Evangelism is mainly centred on preaching. Adults in Generation 2 don't go to church, but continue to send their children, but in due course the children grow up and in Generation 3 not only stop going to church but don't send their children. Evangelism found that mass rallies worked to begin with, but now has come to rely on “nurture groups” (such as Alpha).

But in the present Generation 4 in the UK, knowledge of the basics of Christian faith in society is falling away. Nurture groups are becoming less effective because fewer people are even aware that the church has something for them to offer. And a nurture group assumes too much knowledge for many people (though it is still very valid for many others). Those of an historical bent note that the new pre-nurture groups now coming into being look a lot like the catechumenate of the early church – the process by which people were brought from paganism to faith in Christ.

To quote from the booklet: *The implications of this for the programme of the church are daunting. The ‘accompanied journey’ [of pre-nurture courses] is so lengthy ... and so fundamental to church growth that it demands to be fully integrated into the life of the church. It cannot be an activity bolted on to the outside of the church’s activities. ... The Worship of Almighty God must remain the focus of the church, but the missio dei must have a far greater priority than it has in many churches.*

The booklet goes on to note the diversity in our society, and notes that we can't rely on a ‘one size fits all’ approach.

Our current thinking about our ‘Frontlines’ is very relevant too. Are we all up to the challenge?

I've been catching up on "back issues" of the Grove Evangelism series, and No 100 also caught my attention: **The Gospel Message today – Language that Connects in Communicating the Gospel**, by Laurence Singleton, a former director of YWAM England (2012).

This booklet picks up the same theme as No 82, that we have become a mission field where knowledge of the gospel is sparse. It looks at how the language we use is opaque to many of the people we wish to reach out to. Furthermore, even if the words and phrases are familiar, they now carry negative overtones.

We need to speak in the language of our audience. St Paul preached differently to Jews and pagans. In this present post-modern 'live for yourself' generation, talking about "sin" is meaningless. But instead, using "selfishness" will be understood.

Furthermore, we might have lost the original meaning of some of our familiar words. For example, "repent" is used to translate the Greek word *metanoia*, which actually means "think again", i.e. to change one's world view.

The booklet then looks at the message itself, and recommends that we concentrate on telling stories about Jesus, and telling the stories that Jesus himself told. It suggests taking four stories that mean something to you, and rehearsing them in your own mind so you have the confidence to use the appropriate one when the opportunity to do so arises. This is much less confrontational than attempting to preach doctrine. A lot of these stories will be new to our audience, and will interest them.

Finally, an outline of how we might structure our approach is given:

- Begin with a story which creates a rapport between you and the listener.
- Pick up on a related issue that affects our society today.
- Describe the hope that is brought by applying Jesus' way of living out his values so that we can change our culture.
- Invite the listener to try out living for Jesus rather than living for ourselves.

In conclusion, the booklet observes that this whole package of communicating the gospel applies as much to speaking to Christians as to non-Christians. Discipleship is a continuous process.

MW





## Side by Side with people with dementia in Somerset



A local charity is seeking volunteers for a new service to help people with dementia to keep doing the things they love. Side by Side is a free service from Alzheimer's Society that provides one-to one support, making it easier for people with dementia, who might sometimes feel isolated or find it difficult to leave their homes, remain active and feel part of their local community.

A survey by Alzheimer's Society found 40 per cent of people with dementia in Wales, England and Northern Ireland, have felt lonely recently (Dementia 2014). There is strong evidence that life satisfaction in general for older people is positively correlated with levels of activity. Social activity and social support are thought to be directly related to better physical and cognitive function and help slow down the rate of decline.

Katherine Pratt, deputy manager of the charity's 'Side by Side' service in Somerset, said: "This new service focuses on enabling people with

dementia to lead more fulfilling lives and to continue to take part in the activities that they have always enjoyed and try new ones.

“We need more volunteers to enable people with dementia to stay connected and help to reduce feelings of loneliness that may be felt after a diagnosis.

“By doing things like going for a walk, to a football match, or joining a local class together, our volunteers support people with dementia to take up hobbies and get out and about. What they do together is entirely based on what the person with dementia wants.”

“Volunteers are crucial to the success of this service and can be any age. Volunteering could range from providing support once a week to once a fortnight at a time that works for the volunteer and person with dementia.

“It might be taking a walk in the park, a visit to a café or a chat over the phone, sounds simple, but it can make a huge difference to someone’s life.” said Katherine.

By 2017 we want every person with dementia in England, Wales and Northern Ireland to have opportunity to access Side by Side.

The service will help grow Dementia Friendly Communities by building local networks for people with dementia, bringing opportunity and widening what people with dementia can bring to their community, reducing stigma and social exclusion.

If you are interested in becoming a Side by Side volunteer, please contact the Langport office on 01458 251541 and ask for Katherine for more details. Training will be provided so that volunteers are confident about carrying out the role. Volunteering provides a great opportunity to learn new skills, share your hobby with others and enhance your CV in addition to supporting a person to live more independently with dementia



# Warm Chocolate Cherry Pudding

## Ingredients

175g self-raising flour

50g cocoa

1 tsp baking powder

1tsp cinnamon

1tsp vanilla essence

4 large eggs

225g caster sugar

225g butter

Milk to mix

2 large jars of morello cherries in juice

Half a large bar of milk chocolate broken into chunks & giant chocolate buttons



Bake 170 -180 for 30 mins for a fondant centre, longer for a firmer sponge.

Serve with dollops of clotted cream icecream.

This quantity serves around eight to ten but can easily be halved for smaller gatherings.

Place the cherries in a baking dish, reserving most of the juice. Whisk flour, baking powder, cocoa and cinnamon slowly for a couple of minutes to aerate, (no need to sieve.) Add eggs, sugar, softened butter and vanilla essence and whisk briskly to make sponge mixture. Gradually add milk for a soft dropping consistency. Fold in the chunks of chocolate. Spread lightly and evenly over the cherries and bake for required firmness. The fondant finish is our favourite.

The story that follows is a light hearted look at family life over Christmas.

A few years ago our two daughters with their spouses and our grandsons aged five months and four years had just returned from a time of high festivity with their respective in laws. Now on the thirtieth of December, that fallow period between

Christmas and New Year, it was my turn to cook up a feast for the family. The pudding smelt delicious as I lifted it from the oven and received appreciative murmurings from around the table. I was certain I was on to a winner. To make it extra appealing to the four year old, I had liberally sprinkled giant chocolate buttons on the top.

Once served, we settled to enjoy each mouthful, except for son-in-law who has an aversion to anything that ends in 'berry'. From the strained expression on his face this obviously extended to rhyming words too!

'This looks delicious, like a warm black forest gâteau,' my older daughter enthused. As I took my first mouthful, a chocolate button somehow wedged itself between my two front teeth. Mortified, I attempted to remove it as elegantly as possible and in doing so removed a crowned tooth. Clapping my hand over my mouth in horror I hurtled into the kitchen looking for something to put the tooth into on the pretext of finding an alternative pud for the son-in-law. Popping the tooth into an egg cup and grabbing a soya custard I returned smiling feebly, forgetting the horrible black gap in my teeth.

Older daughter sat up sharply in her chair with a look of extreme pain on her face. At the same time our four year old grandson, dressed in his knight's costume disappeared under the Christmas tree and started rolling on the carpet, howling. Mortified that my witch like smile had created this chain reaction, I apologised profusely to everyone.

'No Mum,' gasped the daughter in pain, 'James has just jabbed me in the back through the bars of the chair with his light sabre. He's upset because he's hurt me.'

Feeling somewhat relieved that I hadn't been responsible for the mayhem, we turned to see that during the furore, Toby, the baby had been sucking unnoticed on a red paper napkin and red drool was pouring out from both sides of his mouth, adding another nuance to the macabre scene and resulting in fits of laughter from the whole gathering.

Families, don't we just love them!

Bridget Hall

## ***The PCC has been discussing...***

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

### **Five Year Vision**

Following on from the July Away Day (at St Paul's Weston), the PCC reviewed topics to be taken forward:

- Numerical growth: St Paul's shows us that a church of 400 members is a practical possibility.
- Young People: "Churches with young people are twice as likely to be growing".
- Vision for the town: what difference can we make in the various communities of which we are part?
- Frontline: equipping church members to talk about their faith.
- Feedback: keep church members informed of progress.

The PCC is now working through the Church of England's ***From Evidence to Action*** material, which covers a broad range of growth factors. The results will be recorded in a new Parish Profile.

At the October meeting, the topic covered was:

- *A church that understands its context, actively engages with it and with those who might not currently go to church.*

At the November meeting, the topic was:

- *A church that is willing to change and adapt.*

(Too many points were raised to record in this short article!)

The topics to be covered in future meetings are:

- *A church which is welcoming and builds on-going relationships with people*
- *A church that has clergy and lay leaders who innovate, envision and motivate people*
- *A church where lay people as well as ordained clergy are active in leadership and other roles.*
- *A church that actively engages children and young people.*
- *A church that nurtures disciples.*
- *A church that has a clear mission and purpose and whose clergy and congregations are intentional about growth.*

## **Supporting Volunteers Group**

The Supporting Volunteers Group met on 26 September (and will meet next in February). Three ideas are being taken forward:

- Finding someone to look after recruitment to relieve the pressure on the Parish Safeguarding Officer, and to support the coordinators in recruitment and training.
- Preparing a booklet to provide information for members on all aspects of the church's life and activities.
- Improving access to the church database for the coordinators and other leaders.

## **Finance**

- Our Parish Share is due to increase by over £9,300 next year. The PCC agreed to express our concerns to the archdeacon.
- The PCC reviewed the capital expenditure plan. We have sufficient funds to progress the video screens project (when volunteer time becomes available), but not other things such as the refurbishment of the outer vestry storeroom.

## **Snippets**

- The PCC received a one-hour safeguarding course. Watch out for other courses which are being put on for other volunteers working with children and vulnerable adults.
- We have received a £1,000 grant from Somerset Churches Trust towards the repair of the west window in the North Aisle.
- New LED "stage" lights will shortly replace the old power-hungry incandescent lights. They are being funded through a donation.
- An information sheet on the organ is being prepared to explain the work needed to bring it back into use. The PCC does not have the funds to do this, and has decided that an appeal would be inappropriate, given that we do not use the organ regularly.
- The PCC has lodged an objection to the loss of car parking that is proposed as part of the outline planning application for the Coal Orchard redevelopment.
- The PCC received a presentation on Open Doors, which supports the persecuted church worldwide, and has been proposed as an alternative to supporting Barnabas Fund.

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

# NEWSLETTER CONTACTS LIST

Contacts for Pastoral Matters

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

Churchwardens - Joyce Kirk 01823 971431 / Ruth Stevens 01823 972838

## HOME GROUPS

Tuesday

10:30 am The Nomads (Contact Joyce Lander 278387)

Wednesday

2:30 pm 15 Barrington Close Fortnightly (Contact Ken Jamieson 289367)

7:30 pm 13 Gyffarde Street

(Contact Mark Stevens 972838; hosts Bethan and Tim Baigent 271655)

7:30 pm 28 Comeytrowe Lane

(Contact Steve Bradford 337690; hosts Wakefields 277318)

7:30 pm Killams Group Fortnightly (Contact Les Andrews 254344)

7:45 pm Ashley Road (Contact Richard Sainsbury 284688)

8:00 pm Hesperia The Avenue (Contact Richard Carpenter 277916)

8:00 pm North Taunton Fortnightly (Contact The Church Office 272931)

Thursday

2:30 pm 27 Priorswood Road (Contact Kay Seed 251077; host Sue Collard 271858)

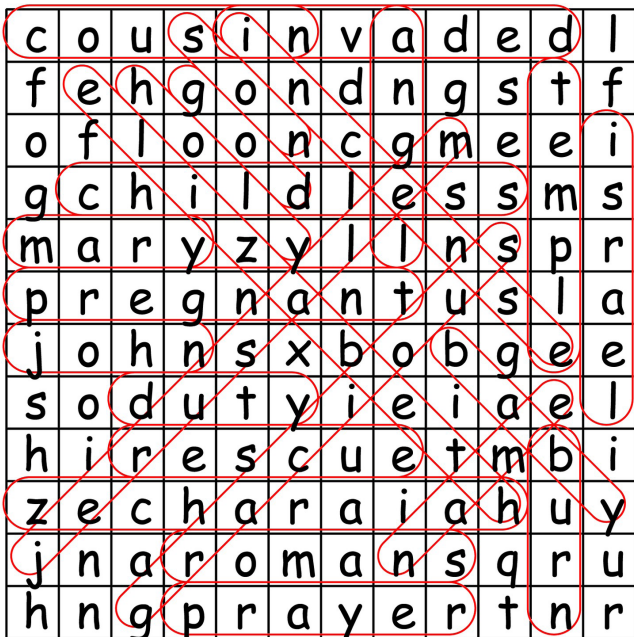
7:30 pm 69 Richmond Road Womens' Group (Contact Margaret Jones 333194)

7:30 pm 21 Ryesland Way (Contact Geoff Treasure 490458)

8:00 pm 12 The Avenue (Contact Sue Doyle 271223; host Annie Reid 07812 130619)

# OTHER GROUPS

- Mondays      Parent and Toddlers Group 10am-11.30am in the Church Hall  
Contact Sheila Marlow 01823 254367
- 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 9.30am - 11am - for pre-school  
children and their parents/ carers every Wednesday.  
Contact Kate Taylor (619739)
- Thursdays    Thursday Fellowship (first Thursday of the month)  
in the Church Hall Contact Vicky Dykes (282507)





**St James' Players  
Present**

**BABES  
in the  
WOOD**

**THURS 26TH JAN 2017 7.30pm**

**FRI 27TH JAN 2017 7.30pm**

**SAT 28TH JAN 2017 5.00pm**

Tickets are £5 Adults £2.50 Children and are available from our Church Office on 01823 272931 or see a member of the cast

St James  
at Church, St James Street, Taunton

**IN AID OF**

Taunton Street Pastors

&

Christian Care Foundation for Children with Disabilities in Thailand



**MARCH NEWSLETTER DEADLINES**

The Next Newsletter is due out on 4th March. All entries for this Newsletter must be submitted by 31st January. All entries are at the discretion of the Editorial team and the space available.