



St James Church Magazine

December 2021 - February 2022

Letter from the Vicar

Reverend Fabian Wuyts
Vicar of St James



Transformed by the carpenter...?

I recently met with Roger D'Albertanson, a member of St James church, who shared with me a story of his Godfather, Uncle Will. Roger wrote:

'Uncle Will, my Godfather, was a coal-merchant in Purley and a regular communicant of the Parish Church. One Sunday he was button-holed by a rather self-important man, recently moved from a more affluent area of Surrey.

"Of course, in our church we had a High Court Judge, two barristers, a Junior Minister in the Foreign Office, and a couple of Chief Executives of International Companies."

Uncle Will smiled: "Any carpenters?" he asked, meekly.'

Uncle Will's wise and insightful response draws us afresh to the heart of the Christmas story. In Jesus Christ, God did not come as a High Court Judge to sort out the evils of humanity in judgment and condemnation. To illustrate that, John, in his Gospel, says that, 'God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him. There is no judgment against anyone who believes in him.' (John 3. 17-18)



Nor did God come as the 'Chief Executive' of heaven and earth to impose his will and be served, but as Matthew writes, 'the Son of Man [Jesus Christ] came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many.' (Matt. 20. 28)

At the heart of Christmas



Jesus Christ who, being in very nature God and therefore the supreme 'Chief Executive' and 'High Court Judge', did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage. He made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness [the carpenter]. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death – even death on a cross!

(Phil. 2. 6-8)

I am grateful to Roger for sharing the story of his Godfather because it leads me to ask myself the following questions: Will I choose to behave more like a High Court judge pointing fingers in judgment and condemnation or like a Chief Executive expressing my sense of entitlement and superiority? Or...will I let myself be transformed by the carpenter?

A prayer

Almighty God, who has poured upon us the new light of your Incarnate Word, grant that the same light enkindled in our hearts may shine forth in our lives through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. Book of Common Prayer

AS WELL AS OUR NORMAL SUNDAY SERVICES AT 10:30AM, JOIN
US FOR THESE SPECIAL EVENTS AT THE HEART OF CHRISTMAS

SATURDAY 4 DECEMBER

Christingle Service 3pm
A magical moment

TUESDAY 7 DECEMBER

Business Carol Service 6:15pm
For all who work in Taunton

SUNDAY 19 DECEMBER

Carol Service 4pm

FRIDAY 24 DECEMBER

Crib Service 4pm
Christmas fun for all ages

Midnight Service 11.30pm

CHRISTMAS DAY 10:30am

A short hour, unwrapping
the Christmas gift

stjamestaunton.co.uk



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*Thank you to all the contributors to this edition of the Magazine. If you have something to share for the March - May 2022 edition, do contact the Editor either directly or through the Church Office - details on page 32 - **deadline for copy is Tuesday 15th February 2022.***

As a difficult 2021 for many draws to a close and we look forward to 2022, this edition of the Magazine is a bit of a mixed bag!

We have an update on the work being carried out in the churchyard, a review of COP26, and a further article about the Church as missionary disciples. Andy Hall has some thought provoking words about Covid and our dependence on God's grace, while Jenny looks at the history of the hymn 'How Great Thou Art'. Alongside this, Freda shares memories of when she and her husband ran a sausage shop (yes, you read that correctly...!).

Nicki Bradford has penned her final article for the Magazine with an update on her and Steve's life in their new home and roles, and alongside news of events in St James' Church School, David Jordan tells us what it's like working with children as an early intervention coach with TLG.

Shona Gilmour-White sent in the poems on pages 9 and 31 - they take a sideways look at Christmas from some animals' points of view. Please be sure to read Fabian's and Bishop Ruth's letters that both remind us and emphasise that Jesus is at the heart of Christmas.

May the joy of Christmas be with you and best wishes for a happy 2022.

Chris Doyle - St James Parish Magazine Editor

Once you've read the magazine, do feel free to give it to someone who otherwise might not get to see it. The magazine is also published online.

*Please let friends and neighbours know how they can access this and previous editions through the St James website: **www.stjamestaunton.org***

Wilder Churches...update!



Susie and Sue D raking

We have extended the meadow area in the Northern corner of the churchyard, and some intrepid rakers prepared the ground and sowed yellow rattle seed in November. The seed had been harvested from the plants we grew in the meadow area this year. (We did well – the seed is expensive!) Yellow rattle weakens grass growth and allows other plants to thrive.

We are hoping for more diversity of plants, which in turn will feed more invertebrates....



Yellow Rattle



Blackberrying!

In September, the children at church joined in with the Diocesan theme, celebrating God's creation and looking at our responsibilities to care for the earth in the way we live. One session was spent finding out about how we are trying to improve the way we look after the churchyard for the benefit of wildlife as well as the church and community.

We found some different habitats, added sticks and dry leaves to the thriving bug hotel and some of us shared the blackberries growing along the edge of the meadow!

The children made some new bunting flags which will mark the extended meadow area along with some posts and an interpretation board.

I hope to mow a path through the meadow, so that next spring and summer you can walk through the area and take a closer look at what grows and see the bees and butterflies more closely!



Working on the Bug Hotel

Sue Carpenter



*Sue D, Sue C and Susie...
finished for the day!*



DIOCESE OF
Bath & Wells

Living the story. Telling the story.



Letter from:
**the Right Reverend Ruth Worsley,
Bishop of Taunton**

At the heart of Christmas



What is at the heart of Christmas for you? Is it the feasting and festivities? The carols and the candles? The stockings and the gifts? Or the presence of those you love?

This Christmas we may find ourselves investing more in our preparations, as last year Christmas plans were curtailed and for some even cancelled. A year ago we were to have had all our family gather for Christmas at our house and then just before, my husband Howard had a positive Covid test. Everything changed and in fact neither of us felt well enough to enjoy a special meal together let alone welcome others. So, this year I want to pull out all the stops!


The children and grandchildren will be with us and Howard tells me that Father Christmas will be paying a special visit! However, we are also wanting to make sure that we don't get carried away with all the tinsel and trappings and forget the heart of the story. So, we shall limit our spending on pressies but make sure that we really value the presence of one another and particularly of the Christ child at the heart of it all.

This year as you anticipate Christmas, through the stories told through Advent windows, or carol services in your church, or Nativities on the move, how might you prepare your heart for the coming Christ child? The wonder of Christmas is that God has never given up on us and in fact loves us so much that he wants to spend time with us. The birth of Jesus, God's Son, into a humble human family, brought God into our very midst, into the heart of our homes. This Christmas let's make space for Him once more and listen to the words of love, hope and joy He wants to share with us. And may that inspire our faith in the future, for ourselves and our world.

Wishing you much joy and peace this Christmas!

Every blessing
+ Ruth

The Right Revd Ruth Worsley



Following on from Bishop Ruth's message, I found this American poem that seems to fit the bill... Ed.

A Different King Of Christmas

Sometimes Christmas is just overwhelming, it seems,
As we rush around buying up stuff.
We spend without end, and we rack up those bills,
But it feels like it's never enough.

So this Christmas, let's all take a different approach:
Let's try to be more in accord
With God's Christmas gift, the best one of all--
Our sweet Jesus, our Savior, our Lord.

We'll be gentle and patient, and loving and kind,
And we'll keep our priorities straight;
The gifts of the Spirit, the gifts of the heart
Are the ones that we'll all celebrate.

And our stress will decrease, and we'll feel more at peace,
As we decorate, package, and trim;
Our new Christmas will be a pure joy and delight,
As we try to be much more like Him.

by Joanna Fuchs

Nicki's News

Many of you will remember Nicki and Steve Bradford and the numerous activities they undertook during their time at St James'. Nicki was licenced as a lay curate on July 1st and ordained as Deacon on Saturday 25th September in Wells Cathedral. She now serves as Curate in The Quantock Villages Benefice, which is made up of the parishes of Nether Stowey, Over Stowey, Goathurst, Aisholt, Spaxton and Enmore. Previously she has documented her time during training and this is her 'farewell' article for the St James' Magazine to keep us up to date with her new role.

The pictures were taken at my ordination in September. It's hard to believe that by the time you read this I will have been curate for 5 months and ordained 2.



The first task of curacy was getting to know each of the six churches in the Benefice. This includes both getting to know the people and basics such as how to get from one church to another. I am totally geographically challenged so my sat nav has never worked harder and my ability to drive country lanes is improving exponentially. The churches are all quite different, but all are more formal than St James' so I am also getting used to wearing robes and knowing which colour I need for which occasion. The benefice is well served with retired priests and Readers so I am fortunate to be exposed to many different ways of leading worship. The most challenging for me so far is probably leading Matins from the Book of Common Prayer. I'm not sure I had even attended Matins before but all went well and the congregations are very patient.

One difference I have noticed in a rural benefice is how involved the local community are with their church. Even those who are not worshippers very much feel the church in their village belongs to them and so they are often willing to get involved with social events, looking after the building and church grounds or even to take on roles in the PCC. This is a great way to get to know the community but of course the challenge is to find ways to encourage them to engage with worship.



As most of you know prayer is my thing and in one of the villages, they have a weekly morning prayer group using Celtic liturgy. I don't get there every week as we lead collective worship in one of the three schools in the benefice that morning, but it is a joy when I can join them. I am sure that it is no coincidence that in this village there are many opportunities to share faith. Perhaps most excitingly we have launched a Stay and Play Group for the new families that moved in during lockdown. Do pray for these families and the church as they learn to grow together.

Outside of church Steve and I have begun to sort new routines as we adjust to my six-day working week. This has however been somewhat affected by Steve's unexpected hospital stay. Hopefully things are now improving, and we await surgery some time next year. Steve is still working at Heathfield and particularly enjoys times when he can engage with the students. As you know we have been living in Bridgwater but the diocese has now purchased a house in Nether Stowey so we should have moved again by Christmas. It will make my life easier but make Steve's journey to work longer.

We do appreciate all your prayers and interest. Mum often passes on your good wishes. Do keep in touch. We would also like to take the opportunity to formally thank you for our gifts when we left St James'.

Blessings Nicki and Steve

The Shepherd's Dog

Out on the windy hill
Under that sudden star
A blaze of radiant light
Frightened my master.

He got up, left our sheep,
Tramped over the moor.
And I, following,
Came to this open door,

Sidled in, settled down,
Head on my paws,
Glad to be here, away
From the wind's sharpness.

Such warmth is in this shed,
Such comfort from this Child,
That I forget my hard life,
Ignore the harsh world,

And see on my master's face
The same joy I possess,
The knowledge of peace,
True happiness.

Leslie Norris

"Climate change and the Covid-19 pandemic have exposed our deep vulnerability and raised numerous doubts and concerns about our economic systems and the way we organise our societies."
(Pope Francis)

Among all the spin, it may not be easy to work out whether COP26 was a success or not until the dust has settled. Will the words turn into actions or just remain within the covers of the agreement signed in Glasgow? The reactions so far have been somewhat mixed:

- *"One step closer..."* (Christiana Figueres)
- *"It could have been worse..."* (Guardian environment editor)
- *"Empty words, no action"* (First Nations people)
- *"Building blocks for the future"* (António Guterres; UN Secretary General)

As we approached COP26 the stakes were clear, the UN had put it this way, *"From the ocean depths to mountain tops, from melting glaciers to relentless extreme weather events, communities and ecosystems around the globe are being devastated. COP26 must be a turning point for people and planet."*

Existing commitments would see a global temperature rise of 2.4°C even as the science shows that 1.5°C should be seen a boundary for the planet's climate beyond which some impacts will become catastrophic and irreversible.

And in our own country, we have the rhetoric but too often actions seem to contradict them – making internal flights cheaper, opening up new North Sea oil fields, a massive commitment to road building, cutting aid...

"Promises ring hollow when the fossil fuels industry still receives trillions in subsidies..." (António Guterres; UN Secretary General)

Too often we allow the existing polluters to frame the questions – hence the drive for electric vehicles rather than stepping back and asking what forms of transport will be best for society in the twenty-first century. Surely it is in this framing of the debate that church should be able to contribute as it reflects on Jesus' words that *"One cannot serve both God and Money"*. There are better ways to do things. Have we reached the stage where we need to question the fundamental economic models which have underpinned the capitalism we have known for the past 400 years or so?

With the focus of climate change at COP we need to remember that there are other fundamental issues facing our planet and its people in the coming years: species loss, ocean damage, the water crisis – billions face drought, but many others will suffer increased flooding.

It would seem that we have seen some positives come out of COP26:

- a) It keeps alive the goal to limit temperature rises to 1.5°C. The Fijian Prime Minister did though describe it as “battered and bruised”.
- b) An agreement to revisit climate commitments annually. The UK government retains the COP presidency until the next conference so we will have opportunity to affect this.
- c) It is – almost unbelievably – the first time that fossil fuels have been directly mentioned in a COP agreement. The text on reducing coal usage may have been watered down, but at least it’s an opening for the future.
- d) Some (potentially) useful side agreements on topics such as deforestation and methane reduction. There was also the bilateral agreement on reducing emissions between China and the USA



What though was missing? Principally it would seem commitment to the poorer nations by the rich. It seems far too likely that targets for 2030 will be missed with the disproportionate impact on those who have contributed least to the problem.

I leave you with some words from Her Majesty the Queen’s address for the opening of the COP:

“...we are doing this not for ourselves but for our children and our children’s children, and those who will follow in their footsteps.”

Richard Carpenter

I'M NOT A ROBOT



'For a time, I believed that mankind had been swept out of existence and that I stood there alone, the last man left alive.' This is a quote towards the end of HG Wells' sci-fi novel, *The War of the Worlds*, published in 1898. Some elements of this book made me think about the situation we face today.

The book is about an invasion from Mars. The Martians decide to colonise Earth because of climate change on their own planet. After the invasion near Woking, in a space of four weeks, they lay waste to Surrey and London using their fearsome Heat Rays and Black Smoke. The population flee north in panic, displaying the best and the worst in human behaviour towards one another. At one point the narrator thinks he's the only person left in London, described in the quote above.

But the Martians were slain not by the heavy guns brought to bear on them, but by bacteria, to which they had no resistance. As Wells describes it, *'after all man's devices had failed, they were slain by the humblest things (bacteria) that God, in his wisdom, had put upon the Earth.'*

In the real world, humans have developed resistance to many bacteria, but not all. The most deadly pandemic to hit this country was the bubonic plague (or Black Death) in 1348, in which an estimated 60% of Europe's population perished. The plague would continue to break out in waves over the next 330 years. Somerset was badly affected. In 1348-1349, it's thought at least half the population of Taunton may have died.

In his story, Wells remarks that the Martian invasion was *'not without benefit... it had robbed us of that supreme confidence in the future which is the most fruitful source of decadence.'* Perhaps as we reflect on the current, real life Covid pandemic, it is useful to accept that we don't have all the answers either.

Genesis, the first book of the Bible, tells us that God created everything. This must therefore include viruses and bacteria. Apparently, there are 10 million viruses known to us, the vast majority of which our bodies tolerate without problems. About 200 viruses cause disease, including HIV, Ebola and Coronaviruses. So, the question may be asked, why does God allow bad viruses to exist, and not just leave us with the good ones?

Better minds than mine may have theories about that. But I can only think this is not a question we are capable of answering. Because God is sovereign over all of us. We were made in God's image, but not equal to Him.

We are not robots on this Earth. We were given free will, which means we are capable of doing both good and evil. Doing good includes loving one another as Jesus commanded. In the context of Covid, in my opinion, this must include having vaccinations, obeying the Public Health advice and helping those who are suffering.

When I make an online purchase, I'm often asked to tick a box to confirm 'I'm not a robot.' The reason for this is apparently to deter scammers. Perhaps when we are asked to tick this box, it could be a prompt to thank God that we are indeed not robots and to pray that we would love our neighbour as Jesus requires.

When I look at the stonework in our church at St James, I think about the countless prayers that have been offered to God down the centuries, and visualise those prayers having seeped into the masonry. There are wooden plugs in some of the pillars; in my imagination, I think they may be holding those prayers in! Knowing that generations of Tauntonians have prayed here before, is one reason why an ancient church like ours is a special place for me. From the Middle Ages, for example, prayers would have been said here for deliverance from plagues, at a time when medicine was not as advanced as it is today.

Jesus reminds us that ultimately, we are all dependant on God's grace, and our faith in that fact. This holds true, irrespective of the century in which we live and however good medical advances are. That will never change.

For finding comfort during Covid today, someone helpfully wrote this: Peace doesn't come from finding a lake with no storms; it comes from knowing Jesus is in your boat.

Andy Hall

A Church of **missionary disciples**

Within the overall umbrella of being **Simpler**, **Humbler** and **Bolder**, the Church of England vision sees three particular strategic priorities: it envisages that God might be calling us to be:

- a church of missionary disciples
- a church where mixed ecology is the norm
- a younger and more diverse church

We will focus on the first of those in this article.

A beginning

“Again, Jesus said, ‘Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.’” (John 20:21)

Our word mission comes from the Latin for sending (missio) while apostle similarly comes from the Greek (ἀπόστολος (apóstolos)), meaning ‘one who is sent away’). A disciple is simply a pupil or apprentice.

Stephen Cottrell (the Archbishop of York) describes it in this way as part of his reflection on the CofE vision:

“We are an apostolic church. God calls every one of us to be a missionary disciple. In the New Testament, the same twelve who are named disciples are also called apostles. There is no point when they graduate from one to the other. They are always those who gather around Jesus and follow him. And they are always those who are sent out by him. It must be the same with us. We are called to gather around Jesus in worship, prayer and fellowship. In the power of the Holy Spirit, we are sent out by Jesus to be his witnesses and ambassadors in the world, drawing explicitly on the five marks of mission as the five marks of Christian discipleship.”

And as a reminder, those five marks are:

To **proclaim** the Good News of the Kingdom

To teach, baptise and **nurture** new believers

To **respond** to human need by loving service

To **seek** to transform unjust structures of society

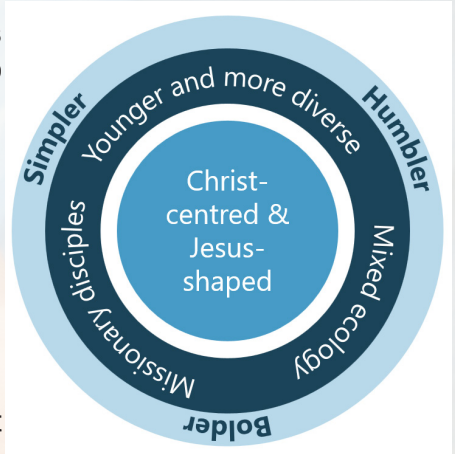
To **strive** to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth

We are perhaps too ready simply to think of the first when faced with the word 'mission' – it is clear though that the calling of the church, both collectively and as individuals, is to something much broader. As individuals, we can be active in some areas, in others we will seek to support or influence, and in still others our response will simply be prayer.

For all

In this country, for many centuries, it was often assumed that to be British was to be Christian: there was then simply no need for mission – the most your faith might need was the occasional spring clean. Mission, if considered at all, was something for professional missionaries to do 'out there'.

A question for us today must then be to consider how we recover the understanding that mission is for all of us rather than just being for a small group of professionals.



In the 1970s, organisations like Tearfund opened the eyes of many to see that provision of aid to those in need was as central to Christian service as preaching the good news. In more recent years, we have begun to see how political action in areas such as protest to highlight the climate emergency or action to reduce the growing inequality in our country must equally be a core aspect of our mission.

Turning briefly to the first two marks, it is increasingly clear that that the church's (and hence our) interaction with society around us is very much one of cross-cultural mission. We can no longer assume that those we meet will have the background to understand us if we talk 'church'.

To be effective then we need to understand – who we are trying to reach; how they might learn; where is there need in society around us; how is society today unjust; what will be the impact – especially on the poor and weak – of the current climate emergency? Only then can we be effective; only then will we discover our own mission field.

Richard Carpenter

'Tales From The Sausage Shop'

Some years ago, when their children were at secondary school and uni, Freda Davis and husband Reg got together with another couple and decided to purchase 'The Sausage Shop' in Green Street, Bath. Freda describes some of their experiences...

Relationships are always a challenge and we were warned that getting into a business is far easier than getting out! All true BUT it shouldn't necessarily stop you taking a leap of faith! It was hard work and after bringing up our three, I was particularly out of practise in the world of work. Reg had continued to work part-time and then the rest of the week, including weekends with the shop. He's an accountant by profession so the books had to be completed, wages included.

Making the sausages was interesting and sometimes fun! We also decided to have another outlet in Broadmead, Bristol which meant transporting readymade sausages by refrigerated van at least twice a week, bringing what was unsold back to Bath every Saturday, and there were a few deliveries too. Bath Rugby home matches were a great sales day and when Leicester played, the sales were even better!

We had many famous actors visit us when they were performing at the Theatre Royal or living locally. I served John Thaw and Sheila Hancock a few times. We even had an order from Spike Milligan who wanted to send HRH Prince Charles a box of sausages for one of his birthdays.

People who were gluten intolerant came regularly knowing that the lamb and mint chipolatas were a welcome change (early 1990s); I still enjoy a lamb and mint sausage/burger when I can get them.



Our venison sausage was very popular too. However, one day we had a visit from a lady customer who wanted to complain. She came close to the counter and said, "I must complain that there's too much venison in your sausages!" All Reg could do was apologise (trying not to laugh out loud!) and ask if she would like anything else. The well-spoken lady said, "No thank you," and walked out of the shop!

After about 4 years we stepped back. The shop continued in the hands of the other partners for a couple more years, but didn't survive the cheaper supermarket varieties so was sold off. That's life!

Freda Davis



School News



The ongoing pandemic continues to be a tough one for families and children and although Covid rates are falling there is a need to **remain alert to changes in regulations in order to keep everyone safe**. It was good to know that the Year 6 children were able to go for their residential at Kilve – one of the highlights of the children's school experience.

However, sadly it was not possible for the school to celebrate Harvest at the church, but we are hoping to welcome them in December for their Christmas services, Nativity and Christingle. Do pray for the preparation that is going on for these and that the children will enjoy hearing the timeless story.

Underpinning everything at St James School are the values that are important to live by and in mid-November it was **Kindness Week**.

"...the theme this year is 'One Kind Word' and the children will be participating in lots of activities exploring this, kicking off the week with Odd Socks Day. The children could wear odd socks to school on Monday 15th November to celebrate difference and diversity within the St James community." (November Chatterbox)



The school also recently had a 'Values Day' in which the focus was Prayer. Nigel Johnson, the head teacher, told me, "The children made different types of prayers and shared them with each other on Teams. Their work was fantastic!"

At St James Church we too are a diverse community and often it is the small kindnesses where we can see and show love in action.

Please pray for all the children, staff, head teacher, senior leadership team, parents and volunteers at St James and all the schools in Taunton, that they will be safe and enabled to learn and grow well together. Especially pray for year 6 pupils and their teachers preparing for their SATs this year and that they will be thinking positively about secondary school next year.

"I believe kindness has the power to change the world. To change us as people." Patrick Regan – Kintsugi Hope

Jenny Wakefield

So, what's it like to spend an hour, 1:1 with a child in school?

Well, before I answer that, let me take you on a typical day. Firstly, spending some time preparing, which will include prayer and some preparation for the project that we have been working on for the last couple of weeks. It works really well to focus your child's attention on an item that you can create together. Recently these have included:

- making planes and flying them
- creating models out of clay and painting them
- creating books and Lego models and even a Buzz Wire game

Sometimes we make mistakes and laugh together about them, but most importantly it's about the joy of seeing the child engage with you and going on a journey of fun and exploration together.



We were making paper aeroplanes together when my lad noticed I was shaking slightly trying to concentrate on cutting out the shape accurately, when he commented, "Seeing you shaking, that reminds me of when I was to first meet you. I had no idea what you would be like and I felt scary and shaky inside. Now I know you, this is the best hour of the week." Then there was a pause before he said, "Can you help me? I really struggle with parts of my life."

And that was an amazing answer to what my prayer partner and I had really focussed on before the coaching session. Until then all the conversation had

been fine, but it was surface stuff, not coming from deep down with real meaning. He at last understood why I was there and he wanted me to help him. So, we were then able to focus on his real needs and look to see if there were ways we could work together to get through the difficulties and be encouraging with the progress he made each week.

An hour passes really fast when you're having fun. Besides a project, we will usually have a game challenge where you soon find out how competitive they are! All through the time together we chat – about life, families, school, fears, joys – whatever direction they lead; and as coaches try to bring in ideas and discussion to help with the ones they find hard.



So, to answer the question, it is a real joy to spend an hour with a child you will grow to love and care about, and want the best for as you work together with God's help and grace.

Jesus said, "I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest." There are more children than coaches, and our school is asking for help.

David Jordan

As David implies, there is always space for more coaches. If you think this is something you might be interested in and maybe would like to help with, why not go to the TLG website (www.tlg.org.uk) and see some of the tremendous work they do? (The quotes in the article above give some stats on how children have assessed the results of working with their TLG coaches.) Or you could talk to David. He would be very happy to give you more information about the scheme and what is involved should you wish to think about becoming a TLG coach and how you can help transform lives for good. Ed.

How great Thou art

*Oh Lord, my God, When I, in awesome wonder
Consider all the works Thy hands have made.
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder
Thy power throughout the universe displayed.*

*Then sings my soul, my Saviour God to Thee,
How great Thou art, how great Thou art.
Then sings my soul, my Saviour God to Thee,
How great Thou art, how great Thou art...*

Humming this as you read? There are certain hymns and songs which resonate and follow you through life, with their universal and personal meaning. For me 'How great Thou art' is one of those. I first came across it as a 14-year-old Norfolk bumpkin on Pathfinder camps in the Lake District and later in Wales where the enormity of God's incredible creation started to seep in, and that was the real starting point of my faith journey.

It was only relatively recently that I discovered what an amazing journey the hymn has had; and that when I was singing it in the 1960s it was a relatively 'new' Christian song, published in 1949 and popularised by the musicians of the Billy Graham movement.

The origins of the hymn, however, had started life much earlier, in 1885, as a poem written in Sweden by Carl Boburg after he had been caught out in a raging storm. The next day, as he contemplated the calmness that followed the power of the storm which had so impressed him, he wrote the poem of praise to the God who was so awesome. Entitled 'O Stor Gud' (O Mighty God), it was later set to a traditional folk tune, then translated into German, Russian and Ukrainian and sung in those countries.



The version that we sing today was composed by Stuart Hine who was an English Missionary in the Ukraine where he first heard the hymn when working with local communities. The third verse was written by Hine apparently having heard a small Ukrainian village community fervently praising God for his love and responding to it with thankfulness and repentance.

*And when I think that God, His Son not sparing
Sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in
That on the cross, my burden gladly bearing
He bled and died to take away my sin...*

The fourth verse that we sing today was written after Hine's return to England at the beginning of the second world war when he was working with Polish refugees. One man told him that he had been separated from his wife during the war when she was a Christian and he was not. Subsequently he had come to faith; he didn't think he would ever see her again in this life but was looking forward to their sharing Eternity together.

*When Christ shall come, with shout of acclamation
And take me home, what joy shall fill my heart.
Then I shall bow, in humble adoration
And then proclaim, my God, how great Thou art...*

It's a hymn that has resonated with many during its journey since Carl Boburg first put pen to paper and has been adapted to meet the needs of different communities and times, and will no doubt continue to do so. For our own time an alternative verse, written by Hine, could well speak to the issues highlighted by COP 26:

*O when I see ungrateful man defiling
This bounteous earth, God's gifts so good and great;
In foolish pride, God's holy Name reviling,
And yet, in grace, His wrath and judgment wait.*

Jenny Wakefield



...MISSION

During the Covid Emergency period we have been able to provide monthly information about the Missions we support, both in the Bulletin and online on the St James' Facebook page. This autumn we focus on the following organisations.

December - Samaritan's Purse

Thank you to everyone who responded to the Samaritan's Purse Operation Christmas Child Shoebox Appeal again this year, either online or by taking your boxes to local centres. We are hoping that next year it will be back to normal, and we can have our collection and packing in Church. Our local church school want to join in too. It provides a very practical way of sharing God's love across the miles.

Of course, Samaritan's Purse has a much wider focus than shoeboxes and provides relief to those countries affected by different types and dimensions of need. These include water and sanitation, flooding, family and livelihood programmes, disaster relief and aiding women at risk. More information can be found on the Samaritan's Purse UK website <https://www.samaritans-purse.org.uk/>. This year we have also seen the suffering following the political changes in Afghanistan and Samaritan's Purse workers are involved in relief with partner organisations

The Covid pandemic has continued to provide additional challenges to their work and the need for emergency relief for places which are less equipped to deal with the scale of the social and medical need.

There are many ways of supporting Samaritan's Purse especially in prayer for the safety of workers as they respond to need. Also, as Christmas approaches, if you would like an alternative gift idea you can visit the SP gift catalogue where there is anything from honeybees to a tree for you to 'buy' for your friends.

January - TYFC

Taunton Youth for Christ have continued to be very active both in schools and in the community. Ant continues to work in schools with Jo, a student youth worker and member of the team; they currently mentor around 40 young people a week. We look forward to hearing from Ant Stevens and his team in January, but in the meantime, here are some items from their recent Prayer Letter:

- That supportive relationships with schools will continue to flourish
- The Friday Night Project run in conjunction with Canon Street Church
- Prayer walking and meeting young people on the streets
- The purchase of a Youth Bus, which is in the process of being fitted out and will be used as a mobile youth centre, extending the work they can do with young people in a safe (and warm) space

The overall aim of TYFC is to see young people changed by Jesus and supported in their ongoing journey. It's been a tough two years for young people and their families, so please pray for all the staff, volunteers and trustees.

Check out their Facebook page for the latest news and newsletters. <https://www.facebook.com/TauntonYouthforChrist/>

February - Taunton Team Chaplaincy

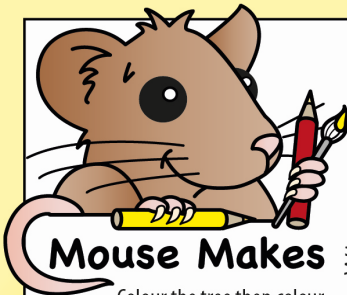
The Chaplaincy provides free, confidential, and unconditional support to adults of any faith or none at all. They recognise that everyone has physical, emotional and spiritual needs, and chaplains are motivated by their Christian faith to offer compassionate and caring support to anyone who needs it. Chaplains offer a non-judgmental and confidential listening ear to the people they meet. Typically, each volunteer does this work for half a day each week.

There are currently 37 volunteers. Chaplains operate in seven 'clusters', serving shops (both large stores and sole traders), 3 offices, 7 care homes, open spaces (e.g. Vivary Park) and retirement housing. They also work with the marginalised and homeless at a residential hostel, with the YMCA and with the street homeless. Chaplains badged as 'Rail Responders' operate at the railway station and its immediate environment at Obridge, where they particularly look out for vulnerable people. They will shortly be starting chaplaincy at Taunton Magistrates Court for defendants, witnesses, families and staff.

The pandemic has meant that chaplains have had to adapt to provide the service in new ways where their traditional face to face approach has not been possible. Several members of our church congregation are involved directly with the Chaplaincy.

There are various ways of supporting their work, through prayer, financially or becoming a chaplain yourself (there are vacancies across all of their work and the demand is very big). Please contact Andy Hall (07817 680436) if you would like to find out more or look on the TTC website: <https://www.tauntontc.co.uk>

Children's Pages



Mouse Makes

Colour the tree then colour in one star each day until Christmas. Leave the large star at the top of the tree to colour in on Christmas day!

What's on the Christmas Tree?



A STAR
shows the way
to Jesus
Read
Matthew 2:1-12



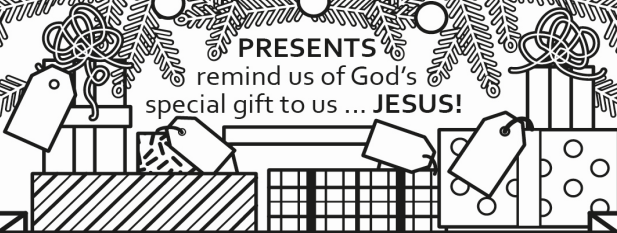
ANGELS
bring messages from God
Read about
Gabriel's message in
Luke 1:26-38

Read the
shepherd's story in
Luke 1:26-38

**LIGHTS
AND CANDLES**
remind us that Jesus
lights our way to God
Read Luke 2:29-32



PRESENTS
remind us of God's
special gift to us ... **JESUS!**



"For God loved the world so much that He gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not die but have eternal life." John 3:16

Presents at Christmas
under the tree,
A red Christmas stocking
waiting for me,

But what really is Christmas,
What is it about?
Just look and the Bible
and you will find out!

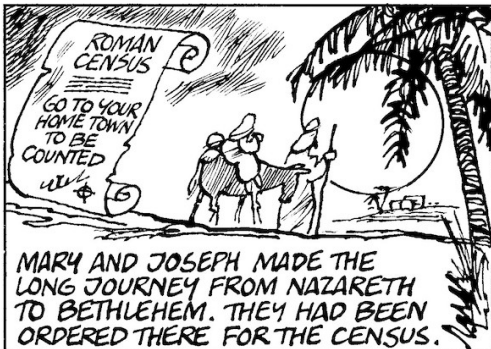
It's about **JESUS**
- the best present of all,
JESUS our **Saviour**,
God's gift to us all!

A Very Special Baby

JESUS WAS BORN ABOUT 2,000 YEARS AGO IN THE SMALL TOWN OF BETHLEHEM, NEAR JERUSALEM.



AN ANGEL HAD TOLD MARY SHE WOULD HAVE A VERY SPECIAL BABY.



BUT THE TOWN WAS FULL



...WHICH IS WHERE JESUS WAS BORN.



SHEPHERDS IN FIELDS NEARBY RACED TO SEE THE BABY



AN ANGEL HAD TOLD THEM WHERE JESUS HAD BEEN BORN.

WISE MEN CAME FROM THE EAST. THEY TOO WANTED TO SEE JESUS. THEY HAD BEEN GUIDED BY A STAR.



BUT MARY, JOSEPH AND BABY JESUS SOON HAD TO ESCAPE TO EGYPT...



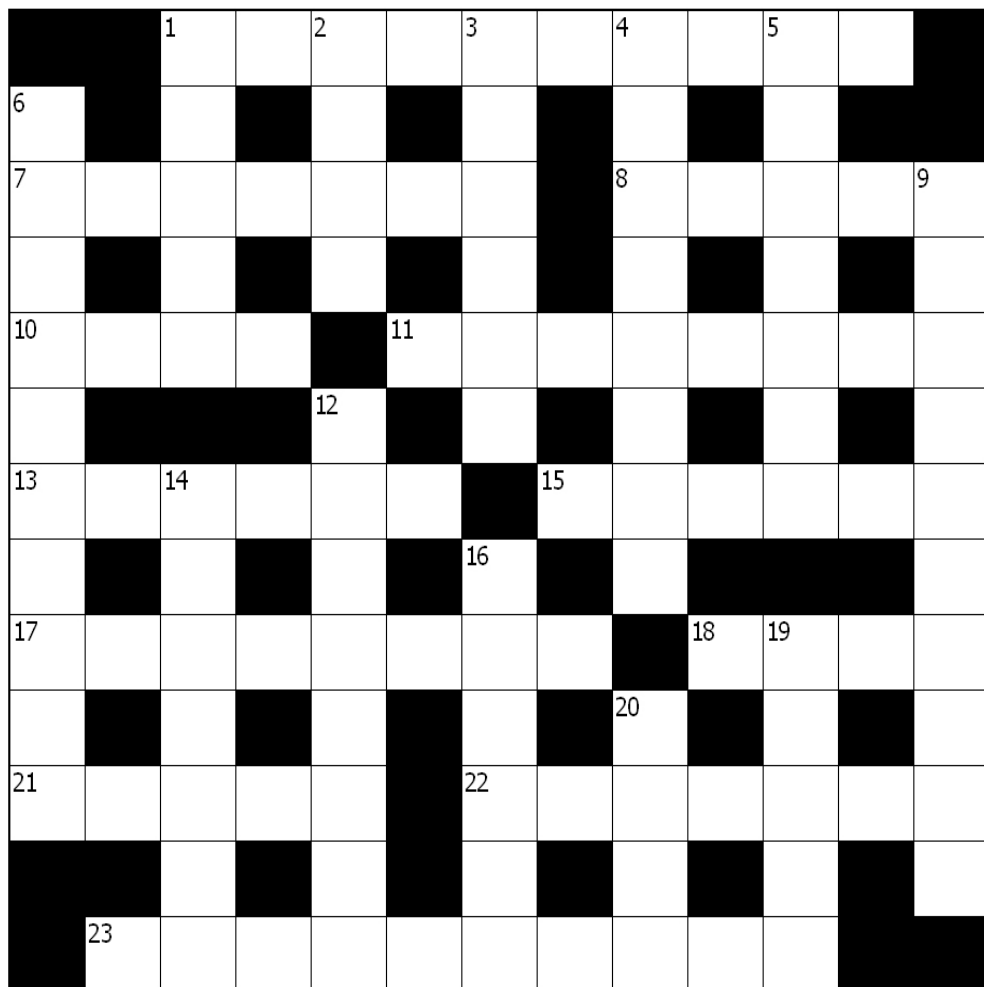
CROSSWORD

Across

- 1 Provisional meeting place of God and the Jews (Exodus 25:9) (10)
- 7 David's third son, killed when his head got caught in a tree during a battle with his father (2 Samuel 18:14ñ15) (7)
- 8 They ruled much of the west coast of South America in the 15th and early 16th centuries (5)
- 10 Small deer of European and Asian extraction (4)
- 11 Seized control of (Numbers 21:25) (8)
- 13 Terror (Luke 24:5) (6)
- 15 First World War heroine shot by the Germans in Brussels, Nurse Edith ____ (6)
- 17 Stormy (8)
- 18 A bitter variety of this, together with lamb and unleavened bread, was the Passover menu for anyone 'unclean' (Numbers 9:11) (4)
- 21 Arson (anag.) (5)
- 22 How John Newton described God's grace in his well-known hymn (7)
- 23 Habitation (Isaiah 27:10) (10)

Down

- 1 '____ and see that the Lord is good' (Psalm 34:8) (5)
- 2 'The wicked man flees though no one pursues, but the righteous are as ____ as a lion' (Proverbs 28:1) (4)
- 3 One of the exiles, a descendant of Parosh, who married a foreign woman (Ezra 10:25) (6)
- 4 He escaped from Nob when Saul killed the rest of his family and joined David (1 Samuel 22:19ñ20) (8)
- 5 City and lake in Central Switzerland (7)
- 6 'Offer your bodies as living _____, holy and pleasing to God' (Romans 12:1) (10)
- 9 Pouches carried by horses (Genesis 49:14) (10)
- 12 One who accepts government by God (8)
- 14 Aromatic substance commonly used in Jewish ritual (Exodus 30:1) (7)
- 16 He asked Jesus, 'What is truth?' (John 18:38) (6)
- 19 Are (Romans 13:1) (5)
- 20 'You are to give him the name Jesus, because he will ____ his people from their sins' (Matthew 1:21) (4)



ACROSS: 1, Tabernacle. 7, Absalom. 8, Incas. 10, Roes. 11, Captured. 13, Fright. 15, Cavell. 17, Cyclopic. 18, Herb. 21, Sonar. 22, Amazing. 23, Settlement.

DOWN: 1, Taste. 2, Bold. 3, Ramiah. 4, Abiathar. 5, Lucerne. 6, Sacrifices. 9, Saddlebags. 12, Theocrat. 14, Incense. 16, Pilate. 19, Exist. 20, Save.

Two snowmen were standing next to each other.
One said to the other: "Can you smell carrots?"



The PCC has been discussing...

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

Vision, or 'The Big Picture'

Everybody Welcome:

In October, the PCC looked at the "Everybody Welcome" material and the plans for church members to engage with it. In November, the PCC reviewed the discussion sessions at the previous day's 'Everybody Welcome' Sunday service. Each member of the PCC was asked for their thoughts. The main themes emerging were the needs to:

- enable newcomers to make friends, not just join a friendly church.
- understand where (a diverse range of) non-Christians are coming from and what will appeal to them and what will put them off.
- think wider than just what happens at 1030 on a Sunday.

The responses collected during the discussion sessions will be analysed, together with the returned questionnaires. If you have not received a questionnaire, please contact the church office.

The welcome strategy group will be planning the next steps shortly.

Action Plan:

Fabian presented an Action Plan listing various matters for attention over the next few months. These include reflecting on Vision and Purpose and communicating this to the church; exploring how we can all play our part in helping the church grow; training a Sunday Welcome Team; evaluating current roles and responsibilities; create patterns of prayer for the whole congregation; visiting church families and exploring with them the future of family ministry; engaging with young adults.

Looking further:

During the above discussions, other themes are emerging that will require the attention of the PCC in due course. The main topics identified so far are: to consider the future of our online presence; to resource our communications; to support church members in their Frontline ministry; and to consider whether we can serve the needs of all church members in a single worship service.

Miscellaneous Matters

Finance: On present trends, stewardship giving is likely to be £6,000 down at the end of the year. However, hall hire income is now returning. A stewardship campaign will be planned for early next year.

Safeguarding: a recent Church of England briefing paper, Safer Recruitment and People Management 2021 amplifies, clarifies and extends existing guidance on all matters of recruitment. DBS checks now need to be renewed every three years. Anyone involved in recruitment of paid staff or volunteers must complete the Safer Recruitment training.

Social Media: a Social Media Safeguarding Policy has been approved. A review will be undertaken of how we manage each social media channel.

Congratulations to Nic Tall, who has been elected to General Synod!

Living in Love and Faith: this is the CofE discussion material on “what it means to be holy in a society in which understandings and practices of gender, sexuality and marriage continue to change.” The PCC reviewed the approach being taken, and decided to explore the subject at an Away Day, open to all church members, in the new year.

Children and Families Worker: the deadline for applications has been extended. It was noted that there is a shortage of youth and related workers in the wider church, and we may need to rethink our approach.

Wilder Churches: a survey by the Somerset Botany Group found 118 different plant species in the churchyard. SWT Council are on board with our wildflower area and the Wilder Churches initiative. The grass will be cut higher, and the areas on the St James St side of the church will be no-mow for part of the year. Thanks to Sue Carpenter and her team!

Church Transport: with services restarting, the need to arrange transport for some members is re-emerging. The matter is being kept under review.

Car Park: the non-availability of the Coal Orchard car park continues to put pressure on our own car park. The PCC has agreed to a proposal to install gates across the entrance for better demarcation.

Annual Reviews were carried out of Wages, Fees and Charges, the insurance policy, the Capital Expenditure Plan, the Financial Policies, the Health and Safety Policy, the Fire Risk Assessment, the diocesan policy for preventing bullying and harassment and the Disability Policy.

Martin Wakefield

Current PCC Members

A reminder of the current members of the Parochial Church Council
If you'd like to raise any issues with the PCC or find out more about what
the Council does, do talk to any of these people



*Rev Fabian Wuyts
Vicar*



*Nigel Bright and Joyce Kirk
Church Wardens*



*Rev David Wilkie
Curate*



Martin Bluemel



Richard Carpenter



Roger Fenton



Marilyn Gibson



*Lizzie Haddell
Associate Warden*



Lyn Jones



David Jordan



Julie Kimber



Sue Lucas



Sheila Marlow



Chris Rickard



Richard Sainsbury



Vashti Smit



Nic Tall



Jenny Wakefield



Martin Wakefield

Camels of the Kings

'The Camels, the Kings' Camels, Haie-aie!
Saddles of polished leather, stained red and purple,
Pommels inlaid with ivory and beaten gold,
Bridles of silk embroidery, worked with flowers.

The Camels, the Kings' Camels!
We are groomed with silver combs,
We are washed with perfumes.
The grain of richest Africa is fed to us,
Our dishes are silver.
Like cloth-of-gold glisten our sleek pelts.
Of all camels, we alone carry the Kings!
Do you wonder that we are proud?
That our hooded eyes are contemptuous?

As we sail past the tented villages
They beat their copper gongs after us.
'The windswift, the desert racers. See them!
Faster than gazelles, faster than hounds,
Haie-aie! The Camels, the Kings' Camels!
The sand drifts in puffs behind us,
The glinting quartz, the fine, hard grit.
Do you wonder that we look down our noses?
Do you wonder we flare our superior nostrils?
All night we have run under the moon,
Without effort, breathing lightly,
Smooth as a breeze over the desert floor,
One white star our compass.
We have come to no palace, no place
Of towers and minarets and the calling of servants,
But a poor stable in a poor town.
So why are we bending our crested necks?
Why are our proud heads bowed
And our eyes closed meekly?
Why are we outside this hovel,
Humbly and awkwardly kneeling?
How is it that we know the world is changed?

Leslie Norris

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email: info@stjamestaunton.co.uk

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Joyce Kirk 01823 971431

Associate Warden: Lizzie Haddell 07443 873747

Children & Young People's Co-ordinator:

currently vacant

Discipleship & Home Groups Co-ordinator:

Roger Fenton 01823 412113 email: rogrifenton@gmail.com

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01823 277318 email: martin@scoopscoop.co.uk

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