

He is risen!

He is risen

*indeed...
Hallelujah!*

St James Church Magazine

March - May 2022

Letter from the Vicar

Reverend Fabian Wuyts

Vicar of St James



What would it be like to have breakfast with Jesus...?

I wonder how many of you value breakfast. It is said that breakfast is 'the most important meal of the day.' Not only does it provide fuel to make it through the morning, but it also jumpstarts our metabolism and, thus, helps us burn more calories throughout the day. As we approach the season of Lent leading up to Easter, one of my favourite resurrection stories involves a breakfast on the beach prepared by Jesus.



In the Gospel of John (John 21), Jesus appears to his disciples on a beach and prepares a breakfast for them. Simon Peter, the main protagonist in the story, does not recognise Jesus at first. It takes an extraordinary catch of fish and the beloved disciple's words, "It is the Lord," for Simon Peter to finally recognise him. In no time, he jumps from his boat to meet Jesus at last.

I wonder what went through his mind as he sat around the fire with Jesus. Just a week or two had passed since Simon Peter had denied ever knowing Jesus while warming himself around a fire because of his fear of the Romans. Will Jesus speak of his disappointment with Simon Peter and utter words of reproach and discipline? To my great surprise Jesus does none of that. He sets the scene for Simon Peter to remember when he was first called. You can read the story in Luke 5 1-11. It also involves a miraculous catch after a night of fruitless fishing.



Like Peter, you might have deep remorse, or might feel distant from God and confused about his direction for your life. Imagine you are Peter, sitting on that beach, being served breakfast by Jesus. Jesus comes to you not with words of accusation, but with an invitation to have breakfast with him. In

that moment of fellowship, where you feel safe and cared for, he will guide your thoughts and your heart to what really matters and open new horizons. He will call you afresh to discipleship and as you hear his call to follow him, you will respond not out of duty or fear, but because you understand, more deeply, that Jesus is truly good and that walking in obedience, even if it is hard at times, will lead to life, life in all its fullness.

Prayer

In you, LORD, I have taken refuge; let me never be put to shame.

In your righteousness, rescue me and deliver me; turn your ear to me and save me.

Be my rock of refuge, to which I can always go; give the command to save me, for you are my rock and my fortress. (*Ps 71. 1-3*)

CELEBRATE
EASTER at St James

For full information on our services and activities for Holy Week, Good Friday and Easter Day, visit our website:
www.stjamestaunton.org

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*Thank you to all the contributors to this edition of the Magazine. If you have something to share for the June - August 2022 edition, do contact the Editor either directly or through the Church Office - details on page 32. **Deadline for copy is Tuesday 17th May 2022.***



What a bumper crop of articles we have for you this time!

This edition of the Magazine, March to May, covers so many important events in the church calendar - Shrove Tuesday on 1st March (see page 26), Ash Wednesday (2nd March), Lent, Mothering Sunday (27th March), Good Friday (15th April), Easter Day (17th April) and Ascension Day (26th May). Phew! Plus there's St James' Church AGM on Monday 9th May - see the article about the Electoral Roll on page 7.

We often think of spring as a time of new beginnings and new growth. Do see Sue Carpenter's article (*opposite*) about progress in the churchyard and Richard's articles about Eco Church and how church is changing and becoming a more 'mixed ecology'...

As well as the usual updates on School and our Mission Focus, there are also articles to encourage, uplift and inspire your wonder, including some lovely poems as well as Ruth Dunn's reflection on patience.

Here's to a more relaxed spring, as we try to move on from and out of Covid, and a growth in our fellowship, prayer and church life. A happy Easter to all.

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!

As you may know, Somerset Botany Group found over 100 species of plants in our churchyard in June 2021.

What's happened recently?

- We have now installed the posts marking the extended meadow area (see right), and the bunting made by the St James children is in place.
- We hope to mow a path through the area during the spring and summer so that you can go and have a closer look at the bug hotel, and also see what is growing.
- We have tidied the rather enthusiastic bramble along the hedge! (see below)



How is the mowing managed?

Somerset West and Taunton mowers manage our grass, and they are supportive of a new mowing regime for 2022. There will be a variety of grass cutting across the site so that more and different plants and, therefore, other wildlife can thrive.

The two areas on the South side of the church will enjoy a 'No Mow May', 'Let it Bloom June' and 'Knee High July' before a late summer cut! We plan to mow a path through these areas too, so that you can look more closely at the plants and insects.

Where can I find out more?

Visit the church website to see the Eco Church section and other useful links, including the full Somerset Botany Group survey:
<http://stjamestaunton.org>.

Sue Carpenter



Here's a Hornet mimic hoverfly visiting our brambles in July.



DIOCESE OF **Bath & Wells**

Living the story. Telling the story.



Letter from:

Trevor Willmott,
Honorary Assistant Bishop for Bath and Wells

**“Lord, when was it that we saw you a stranger
and welcomed you?”**

For any would be follower of Jesus, the teaching in Matthew 25 is surely some of the most challenging in the whole of the New Testament. What sort of disciples are we called to be? Will the world recognise Christ in us both in our words and in our actions?

Faced with persecution, with the temptation to instant popularity and self-aggrandisement, Jesus remains true to himself and to his call to be a servant leader. This, he says, is what is required of anyone who would follow me: “to love the Lord your God and your neighbour as yourself”.

While we may talk a great deal about being a welcoming Church, the reality is much harder to achieve. To welcome is not to want the stranger to become just like us. It’s about valuing the gifts they bring and about being willing to be changed ourselves by the new life coming among us. It begins, as Jesus began, by seeking to serve the stranger’s needs and, to do that, we first have to listen.

Some of the harshest of Jesus’ words were directed to the religious people of his day, too occupied with their own agendas, their own self-righteousness, to notice the stranger in their midst. It is only when we are prepared to leave the security of our own home, “launching out into the deep”, going onto the other’s territory, can we begin to feel just how strange and at times threatening the community of faith can be to the outsider.

Lent, with its invitation to de-clutter our busy lives, brings also the promise of new life. Let’s use this God-given time to pray that our hearts and the life of our communities may be opened such that we can truly welcome the stranger as a sister or brother in Christ.

With my blessing
+ Trevor

Electoral Roll

Each spring in the Church of England the Electoral Roll is revised or renewed. This year is a revision, so if your name is already on the existing roll you need do nothing – except check the roll if wished, when it is displayed – which it will be during each service on Sunday from March 27th to April 17th.

What is the benefit of enrolling on the Electoral Roll?

This is beautifully put by Bishop Peter on the back of a previous Electoral Roll Application form -

'I am delighted that you want to enrol as a member of the Church of England in the Diocese of Bath and Wells.

By doing this, you are indicating your commitment to being part of a lively, vibrant faith community in your local parish. Today we have many opportunities to share our faith with our neighbours and friends. Being a member of your local church can provide you with the support and encouragement that you need to keep faithful to God in the world today.

Do encourage others to join too. Membership of your local church is vital for its future. We are here to be a sign of hope and faith in an increasingly secular age, and your support is vital.

May God bless you as you seek to serve Him among the people with whom you live and work. Please pray for church leaders, clergy and lay people, as together we seek to bring the unchanging good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ into a changing world.'

Enrolment Application forms are available at the back of church, and if you have been attending St James (at any of the services, midweek or Sunday, online or in person) for 6 months or longer, please complete a form and hand it to Sue Doyle or the parish office. Thank you!

Bike Pilgrimage 2022 – Kent to Cornwall and back via Taunton!

Retired vicar Robert de Berry is undertaking a massive sponsored bike ride for persecuted Christians in 2022 – and needs your help!

Robert will be speaking in local churches to raise awareness and encourage prayer, and aims to raise £250,000 through sponsorship. Robert and his team will arrive in

Taunton on Thursday 26th May

and will be speaking at Taunton Baptist Church



HOW YOU CAN HELP!

- Join the bike pilgrimage for just a day or more...
- Offer to be a support driver, taking riders' luggage from point to point...
- Offer evening meal, B&B to one of the riders when they visit Taunton...

If you can help please see Jenny Wakefield

The Real Easter Egg celebrates its 12th year with an invitation to 'Let's Celebrate'!

For the first time since the pandemic began, churches and communities across the UK will be coming together to celebrate Easter as restrictions are relaxed. So, no wonder that the theme for the Real Easter Egg this year is 'Let's Celebrate'!

The Real Easter Egg was created in 2010 as a way for churches, groups and individuals to share the Easter story while supporting Fairtrade. 12 years on, it has a network of thousands of churches and supports. More than three million people have read the Easter Stories we produce and it has raised more than £320,000 for good causes.

This year, you can also reach out to UK families facing hardship by donating to food banks through the new foodbank scheme.

All Real Easter Eggs are made of Fairtrade chocolate, and come with an Easter story in the box. The stories range from simple guides to 24-page activity book versions with a prize competition worth £200. They are Palm oil free and plastic free.

Because of the continued effects of the pandemic, it is more important than ever that we find ways to share the Easter story in 2022 and support producers. The Real Easter Egg is a proven way to do this. More details at www.realeasteregg.co.uk

Losing someone close to us can be a sad and upsetting time. Those left behind often experience a whole range of emotions - sorrow, anger, shock, bewilderment, But what about the person who has gone? If they have the knowledge that they belong to Jesus, their approach to their passing can be different, and it can be comforting for those left behind.

Joycey's husband, Allan, attended the Celebration of the Life service in East Yorkshire for a friend who passed away in December. In the order of service he found this lovely poem.

I'M FREE

Don't grieve for me, for now I'm free
I'm following the path God laid for me.
I took His hand when I heard Him call,
I turned my back and left it all.

I could not stay another day
To laugh, to love, to work or play.
Tasks left undone must stay that way,
I found my place at the close of day.

If my parting has left a void
Then fill it with remembered joy.
A friendship shared, a laugh, a kiss
Ah yes, these things I too shall miss.

Be not burdened with times of sorrow,
I wish you the sunshine of tomorrow.
My life's been full, I savored much;
Good friends, good times, a loved one's touch.

Perhaps my life seemed all too brief,
Don't lengthen it now with undue grief.
Lift up your hearts and peace to thee,
God wanted me now; He set me free.

As one COP sails off into the sunset, another comes over the horizon. You may well be surprised to learn that this is COP 15, being held in China in April. The numbering is explained by this being the fifteenth *Conference of the Parties* (ie COP) for another UN convention – that covering Biological Diversity.

Hopefully the publicity stemming from the event will lead to greater realisation that it's not just a *climate* emergency – the overall crisis facing our planet encompasses far more, especially the current loss of biodiversity as many species of plants and animals face extinction.

This devastation is caused by *our* activities – climate change plays a large part but there are many other causes including pollution, unsustainable fishing, and the destruction of wild areas for farming. The latter often leads to monocultures where every other animal and plant is removed to allow a single crop to 'flourish'. The palm oil plantations of Borneo have become well known of late or you may have seen the impact of Californian almond plantations recently described in David Attenborough's *Green Planet*.

It is estimated that 60% of mammals, birds, fish and reptiles have been wiped out since 1970. Currently, just under 30% of species are threatened with extinction. Though species do naturally die out, the current rate of loss is 1000 times higher than that.

Nearer to home, it is thought that 1 in 7 of the UK's wildlife species is currently at risk of extinction.

I cannot write about this without recalling Jesus' words, recorded in the gospels as to God's concern for even a single sparrow. (Luke 12:6 – "*Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten by God.*"). Imagine how he feels as millions of creatures die and species disappear.

Which in turn brings to mind the urgency of the fifth mark of mission where we are called, not just to be concerned but to show action:

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

As well as this focus on biodiversity, within the UK 2022 should also see the initial impact of the Environment Bill passed by Parliament towards the end of last year. While, hopefully, we will see swift implementation of its protections, there remains the risk that its loopholes will simply allow yet more 'business as usual' – a state which has led to this being one of the most nature-poor countries in Europe.

In a recent update from Tear Fund, they ask that: *"Out of love for our global neighbours on the frontlines of the climate crisis, we must keep the pressure on the UK government to keep the promises made at COP26 and to push for stronger action globally. The church has a vital role – and Christians and churches all over the world are rising up and playing their part. How will your church get involved?"*



Climate change won't be out of news altogether of course – UK remains chair of the climate change COP until COP 27 which is due to be held in Egypt in November. Also, we appear to be seeing more 'concerns' raised by some in politics as to the cost of 'going green'. Sadly, they – by and large – don't seem to have thought about the far greater cost if we don't!! Think carefully about what you see and hear from the media.

Finally, the A Rocha blog has some thoughts on how to Go Green (er) for Lent - <https://arocha.org.uk/go-green-for-lent/> - giving (as they describe it) *"ideas on better caring for creation and improving our lives and the lives of others through healthy, eco-friendly and sustainable living."*

Richard Carpenter

p.s. We now have an Eco church page on our website – under the 'Explore' tab - <http://stjamestaunton.org/eco-church>

I'M NOT RELIGIOUS...

We're all very aware of our image. How we look, what other people may think of us. Who isn't concerned about showing others their best image?

How would a non-Christian friend react if you told them that they were made in God's image? And what's more, if you said that everyone on the planet was made in God's image too? That would be anyone you might interact with, however remotely. For example, the person you've just passed in the street; the person in China who made the TV you've been watching, or the person on the supermarket till who served you...and so on...billions of human beings. How differently might we view other people if we saw them as made in God's image? Let's be honest; it would be easier in respect of people we like, but not so easy with those we don't.

The first book of the Bible, Genesis Chapter 1, describes creation:

'God said (in the presence of Jesus and the Holy Spirit), "Let us make people in our own image, to be like ourselves"...so God created people in his own image, patterned after himself...then God looked at what he'd created and it was excellent in every way.'

As we know, things began to go wrong from Adam and Eve onwards, and the image was marred: such that God eventually sent Jesus to Earth to rescue us.

People often say, "I'm not religious," when the subject of personal faith is raised. The dictionary defines religious as:

'having belief in, or worship of, a supernatural power or powers considered to be divine or to have control of human destiny'.

If we are all made in God's image, surely that means His presence is hard wired into our 'DNA'? Whilst this may only be acknowledged by some, it's inescapable for all of us.

How awesome is it that each person can be part of God's plan for mankind and has the potential for seeing the world as God sees it? In an age where many struggle with self-worth, knowing you are made in God's image and valued by Him surely offers hope. Sometimes there's a double blindness involved; not only do people not feel part of God's work, but they don't feel they're worthy of his care either.

OR AM I...?

What does it mean to be made in God's image in practice? Image means more than our looks, which we often think of when we use that word. Indeed, although Jesus came to Earth, we don't have any drawings of him made at the time. Being made in His image has given us the ability to choose, create, reason, know what's right and wrong, capacity to love other people and so on. To sum up, whether we know it or not, I think each of us has the potential to fulfil God's purpose for us as an individual, using the unique gifts we've each been given. And if some people don't realise this, Jesus commanded us to let them know.

Recently, I was contacted by a local care home on behalf of one of their long-term residents. I'll call him P. He was ill with cancer. I'd last seen him six years ago in my chaplaincy work. We used to meet up once a week until closure of his day centre. Sadly, our recent reunion was to be a short one and he died in January. P had learning difficulties and had lost his sight as a child. He'd been in care for most of his life. He'd been taken to church in his youth, and his Christian faith had remained with him. He loved to sing snatches of Christmas carols and Easter songs. 'Jesus wants me for a sunbeam' was one of his favourites. I can say that he was a man of God who it was a privilege to have known.

In John Chapter 9, Jesus encountered a man who had been born blind. In that more superstitious age, the disciples asked him whether it was the man's sins or those of his parents which had made him blind. Jesus replied, "No, it was so that God's power could be seen in him." Jesus then miraculously healed the man. Unfortunately, P never regained his sight, but he was someone whose gentle nature reflected wisdom from heaven as described in James Chapter 3. Despite the multiple difficulties he had to endure in his life, the power of God could be seen in him. To those who knew him, P was evidence of someone made in God's own image.

Let's all be aware of God's handiwork among the people around us.

Andy Hall

The Story behind '*Blessed Be Your Name*'

*Blessed be Your name, in the land that is plentiful
Where Your streams of abundance flow
Blessed be Your name, blessed be Your name*

*When I'm found in the desert place,
Though I walk through the wilderness
Blessed be Your name,
Every blessing You pour out, I'll turn back to praise
When the darkness closes in, Lord, still I will say
Blessed be Your name...*

Like many older hymns, this modern song written in the 21st Century resonates and gives voice to many people, because it connects with our human experience and struggles. When times are tough and bleak the tendency is to question God's purposes or even his very existence. And yet it can be in that very pain, turmoil and loss that the reality of God becomes even more real. The *Footprints in the Sand* poem epitomises these struggles.



Blessed Be Your Name was written by English songwriter and worship leader Matt Redman and his wife, Beth. Matt writes about the story behind the song in his book '*Blessed Be Your Name*'. The song was written a short while after the 9/11 attacks

on the twin towers in New York, at a time when Matt and Beth were travelling in America and witnessed at first hand the shock and distress felt throughout the country. Matt writes:

'On September 15, 2001, we flew into L.A. for the start of a sabbatical break in California. Four days earlier we'd watched with the rest of the world, gripped by those terrible, nation-shaking events of 9/11. Over the next few days and weeks in the U.S, as we watched the news, talked with neighbors and visited many different churches, the full effect of the



terrorist attacks began to unfold before us. Brokenness was everywhere, and many people sought some kind of comfort in the church... For the few weeks following those attacks, church attendance all over America went up dramatically.'

However, although preachers and pastors preached inspired and powerful sermons, speaking into the heart of the pain in the Nation, the Redmans, as musicians, were left with a worrying question of "Where were the songwriters at such a time as this? Where were the musical poets and prophets to help the people of God find a voice in worship at this tragic time?" There was a lack of vocabulary to give expression to the pain and lament that was so much in evidence.

Although written a few weeks after 9/11, *Blessed Be Your Name* wasn't a conscious response to those dark events but they undoubtedly influenced its birth. It has given voice to that, often, hard long journey to reach the point where God's grace has become real and sustaining enough to be able to say:

*God, you give and take away
Oh you give and take away
My heart will choose to say
Lord, blessed be Your name*

While very different from the shocking events of 9/11, our recent experience of universal pandemic, climate change impact, international conflicts and societal dysfunction has meant that many people have had to grapple with the issues of loss, destitution, violence and aloneness, and face unanswerable 'Whys'. *Blessed Be Your Name* reflects that hard journey towards finding the reality of God's infinite healing grace and compassion.

Jenny Wakefield





School News



Walking into St James School (and hopefully many others) you are struck by the sense of normalcy: children playing in the playground, laughter and noise with the occasional squabble; inside, children working and discovering and, threaded through, staff who care and connect with the children as individuals, patiently and genuinely. It is a real privilege to be involved in the school community.



The last two years have been difficult ones and the management of the safety of children and adults alike has not been an easy task – Covid cases continue to cause disruption to pupils, parents and staff. However, the commitment to keep school life normal remains strong. Before Christmas classes were enabled to enjoy outside events like 'The Wind in the Willows' at the Brewhouse and fieldtrips to Yeovilton. Christmas carol services, Nativity and Christingles went ahead and both Dave and Fabian were traditionally stuffed...as human Christingles! It was wonderful to welcome children and parents back to church for these latter events.

Technology has been absolutely key in maintaining that sense of routine. Children seem to find this more acceptable than many adults. Both Fabian and Dave have had to adjust as they have delivered a weekly collective worship to the whole school on Zoom – is it more daunting speaking to 11 plus classes of children than the Sunday Congregation? Well I asked Dave and he says:



"Yep - here is a bit about my experience of running virtual assemblies. The tripod with the tablet is set up, Microsoft Teams is connected, the guitar is over my shoulder, script, music and props are in front of me and then they start to arrive. One class, two, three, ten, eleven, suddenly there are around 100 smiling faces filling my small screen,

waving at me listening expectantly for what I have to say over the next fifteen minutes. It was a nervous experience at first which has turned into such an exciting and joyful time, filled with songs, scripture and prayer. It is always a challenge to keep coming up with ideas but not one I begrudge".

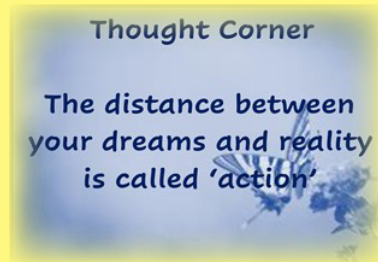
Technology has also enabled us to keep the church-school prayer meeting going via Zoom throughout the pandemic. We have been grateful to Nigel and Fiona for joining us and for Sue Lucas providing the opening thoughts as we have asked God for his strength and blessing for all those in the school; and praying especially for new staff who have joined.

TLG Coaches and Make Lunch food delivery volunteers have been able to continue. This is such a joy and privilege to be able, in a very small way, to help children and their families.



So please keep St James, and all the schools in Taunton, in your prayers continually as they seek to support, encourage, inspire and equip those very special young people for their future.

I'll leave you with a message from the school chatterbox newsletter*:



May the children be inspired to dream big and have the right support to make those dreams really real.

Jenny Wakefield

*The School Newsletter is a brilliant way to find out about how the school is helping children engage in social and academic work – they even have their own mini police patrol! (see right)



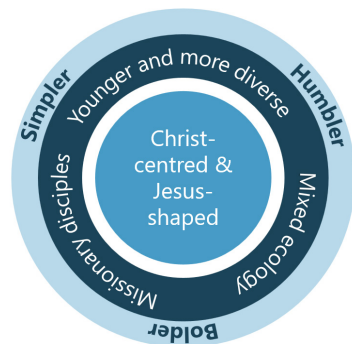
*'Peace is joy resting,
Joy is peace dancing.'*

(Quote from a Mike Gillingham sermon)



A church where **mixed ecology** is the norm

Mixed ecology - mixed *what* you may think... It almost sounds like it has strayed across from an eco-church article. At its simplest though it just means that the church of the future will need to be far less uniform if it is to bring Jesus to the widest audience.



The phrase owes its origins to earlier descriptions of the mix of traditional church (everything from cathedral evensong to family services) and ‘fresh expressions’ as a *mixed-economy*. More recently it has been widened - and the analogy rendered more organic - to encompass not only the church’s increasingly digital presence but also initiatives such as chaplaincies and pioneering.

Frequently these approaches mean that we will go to where people are (be it physically or in networks), rather than expecting them to come to us.

Put simply, the question facing us is how we are to extend the community of Christ to those not attuned to our ways of doing things. In Paul’s words, how will we “*become all things*” (1 Cor 9:20-23) in order to reach all? As churches, led by the Spirit, respond to the needs of their own contexts, we will see different approaches being adopted.

As well as ‘new’ things, this approach can also see a revaluing of traditional approaches such as a commitment to the religious life in community – or in the community as practised by, for example, Third Order Franciscans (<https://tssf.org/>).

The absolute need for such an approach was summarised by Mike Harrison (Bishop of Dunwich) in a recent CofE webinar when he posed the simple question: “*Time-honoured church reaches some of the people; how are we to reach the rest?*” It’s less about saying “come to church” and more “how can we be church together?”

In speaking to the recent General Synod, Stephen Cottrell talked about how we need to find ways of reaching and serving people in the very diverse circumstances and contexts of our national life today. This of course means

being where people are – at work or leisure; online or meeting in person. At the heart of it all must be a living presence in every community – in the Archbishop's words we need to see a revitalisation of the parish, not its demise.

From this presence we need to develop new communities of faith both large and small – a workplace chaplaincy, messy church or after-school club, or simply a group of believers being church where they are. Chaplaincies, he believes, will be fundamental to our reaching out across the full spectrum of everyday life.

“...God is calling us to be a church of glorious and profligate diversity”

Addressing an earlier synod, Cottrell had summed the approach we need to see, saying, *“I believe that God is calling us to be a church of glorious and profligate diversity”*.

Moving to this new approach will, I think, make us carefully consider exactly what it is that makes something ‘church’. All, perhaps, exhibit four dimensions:

- Up** – our journey towards God in worship and sacrament; disciples being transformed
- In** – recognising and valuing unity in our diversity
- Out** – embracing the breadth of the five marks of mission
- Of** – with the wider church both geographically and historically

In short it is our seeking to be a church that is Holy, One, Apostolic and Catholic.

As we seek to form this mixed ecology of church, it will mean listening; it will mean working together. I was also reminded of words of the well-known missionary Vincent Donovan - on encountering western youth:

“In working with young people, do not try to call them back to where they were, and do not try to call them to where you are, beautiful as that place may seem to you. You must have the courage to go with them to a place that neither you nor they have been before.”

Richard Carpenter

*This is the second of three articles focussing on the strategic priorities identified in the Church of England vision; next time we will consider what it might mean to be a **younger and more diverse** church.*

The Gift of Patience

I am Ruth. I have been a member of St James for the last 14 or so years. I am 44 years old, and in May of 2021 I became a Mum.

For those of you that don't know me, when it comes to the gifts of the spirit – I have always struggled most with patience... It seems God had a plan in place to help me learn that things happen in His time.

I got married in 2008 here in St James and just assumed that babies would follow. The years passed, and we hadn't been blessed with a family. As we grew older, we began to think that being parents was something that wasn't going to happen for us, and then just as we were giving up hope, in November of 2019 it happened. The test read "Pregnant". We were overjoyed! Just four short weeks later, the unthinkable happened, and I sadly miscarried.

This was a real challenge of my faith. I was very angry with God – why, after all this time, let me get pregnant, just to take it away? It seemed mean and very hard to understand. I realised that I had a choice – I could stay angry with God, or I could trust Him. This verse from Jeremiah kept coming back to me;

*"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD,
"plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you
hope and a future"*

I had to believe that He continued to have a plan for me – and if that meant not being a parent, then I had to trust Him.

A short time later Covid hit, and the world changed! I work in events, and overnight everything stopped...! After a brief release from lockdown in the summer of 2020, August came and outdoor events briefly resumed. After working at an outdoor cinema, lugging fire extinguishers around a field for a week, I discovered I was pregnant again. This time, the joy was mingled with trepidation.

Covid restrictions meant that I had to attend the twelve week scan on my own... as I sat in the waiting room, filling in the paperwork, I felt a real sense of peace. When the image came up on the screen of a wriggling little creature, it was overwhelming!

I was blessed with a very healthy pregnancy and it seemed like no time at all, and the day arrived for our little baby to come into the world. On the 17th May 2021, little Miriam Rose Dunn arrived, and completed our family, a beautiful, healthy baby girl! Praise the Lord!!

I have a perpetual calendar with a verse and an old school hymn for each day. On the day little Miriam was born, the verse was Romans 8 v 28



"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."

The hymn reads

*"God moves in a mysterious way,
his wonders to perform;
He plants His footsteps in the sea;
and rides upon the storm.
You fearful saints, fresh courage take;
the clouds you so much dread
are big with mercy and shall break
in blessings on your head."*

He had a plan for us all along and I feel incredibly blessed.



...MISSION

Over the next three months our Focus will be on Street Pastors, Besom and WEC and we shall focus on each during one of our regular services.

March - Street Pastors

Street Pastors are part of a national team pioneered in 2003 that continues to grow throughout the UK and across the world. Street pastors are trained volunteers from local churches who care about our community.



Street Pastors, led by a local coordinator, have support from local churches and community groups in partnership with the police, local council and other statutory agencies. Teams work in the community during the daytime too, getting involved with residents, taking part in local litter picks and generally offering a genuinely caring and listening presence.

Covid has affected Street Pastors' operations but patrols are back in operation, both in Taunton and in Bridgwater, where the night entertainment scene is now more active. School Pastors also work at the Academy in Taunton and more are needed.

Members of our church are or have been involved with Street Pastors. If you want to know more, talk to Chris Buckman or Vivian Turner. Have a look at the new Street Pastors video, you may see some faces you recognise!

<https://streetpastors.org/locations/taunton/>

April - The Besom in Taunton

The Besom has been serving in Taunton since 2005. Its purpose is to be a bridge between members and groups from local churches in the Taunton and Wellington area who want to give, and those who are in need. It has been a challenge to fulfil that purpose during the coronavirus pandemic and restrictions, and they are delighted to be back offering their full range of services to the local community. This includes providing donated furniture and household items, starter packs of basic kitchen and household items (for those moving into accommodation with nothing), crisis food boxes and help with gardening and decorating.



If you would like to support and get involved with Besom you can do this by:

Praying - it's at the heart of all they do! You can also sign up to receive a monthly prayer letter

Giving your time -

- on the van team, collecting and delivering furniture
- on the crisis food box teams, packing or delivering the boxes
- on a project team, helping with gardening or decorating work
- on the warehouse team on a Tuesday or Thursday morning, sorting and cleaning donations
- supporting the behind-the-scenes administration

Giving your good quality, unwanted furniture and household items, non-perishable food supplies for the crisis food boxes, or financially.

For more information, or to get in touch, visit their website:

tauntonbesom.org.uk or call 07432 629444.

May - WEC (World Evangelisation for Christ)

In May, we look forward to a visit from David and Margie Whitehorn, hopefully on May 22nd.



WEC is a world-wide organisation covering over 90 countries, where the aim is to support, resource, train and encourage the local churches in their mission to reach those who have not yet heard the Good News of Jesus. David and Margie are Area Directors for Africa and with two other colleagues their 'patch' includes Central, West, East and South Africa. They plan to hand over this role at the end of 2022 or start of 2023 providing their successors are in place. However, they will still be seeking God's leading for their ongoing involvement with WEC and their local church in Sheffield.

Covid prevented their normal pattern of visiting churches in Africa, but they have maintained links via Zoom and learnt like many of us how technology can be useful for God's purposes. They were able to visit Chad last October and they hope to be visiting The Gambia this March and Mozambique later in the year. While internet contact has been useful there is no substitute for real contact with local church leaders and their families, many of whom have challenging roles.

When in England, David and Margie are involved in their local church and Galeed, a multi-ethnic community project. Their daughter Ruth and her husband Mark work for Betel, which is an allied WEC ministry in the UK, working with people suffering from addiction.

David and Margie send us regular news in the newsletter which is posted on our website pages: **<http://stjamestaunton.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/2022-02-Whitehorn-letter.pdf>**

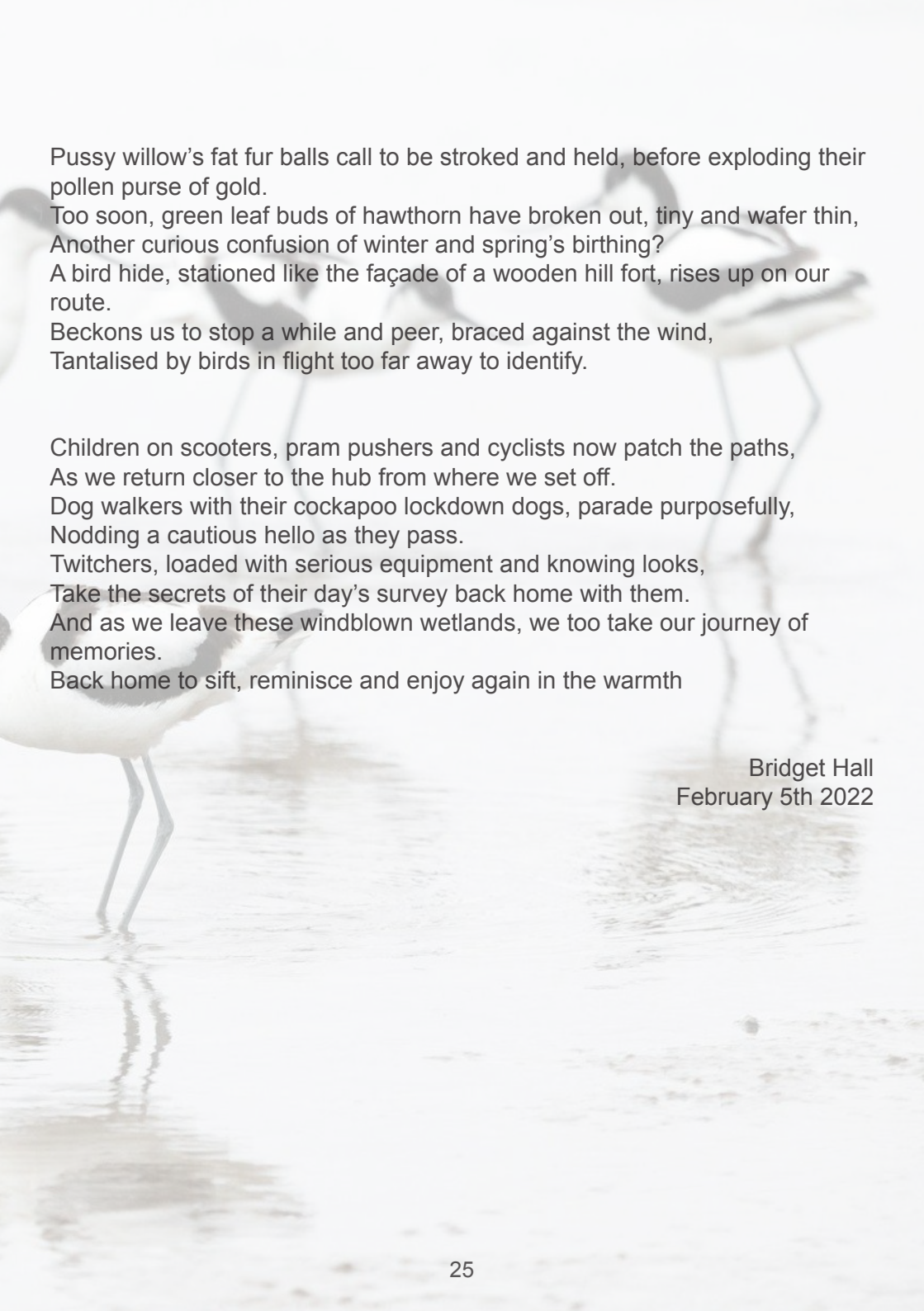
Steart Marsh On A Winter Day

Gravelled paths draw us on, winding grey from the car park.
We are wind pummelled and shoved forward into a flat marshland.
A featureless place, entrenched with micro life hidden within,
Feeding the birds that scavenge in this green mat of wet.
Grassy banks lead to gleaming pools, lit by the sun, pushing through
thunderous clouds.

Hundreds of starlings meet, rise, drop, disperse and land to graze,
Within seconds are airborne to whirl and dive in a haphazard huddle.
A flock of lapwing beats a high path,
Flickering black and white, black and white, repeatedly, like an early movie.
A solitary quack reveals a shelduck amongst the dark green tufts,
Its bright amber barrelled chest, bringing a welcome break of colour into a
dark patch of shallow water.

An egret lifts off slowly, pounding great white wings, searching for a fresh
source of food,
Landing quickly beside a pool, it stands alert, sentinel and still.
Chaffinches flit and bob, dropping suddenly to the ground to rest,
Before charging with renewed energy into the wind to be bounced and buffeted.

A suggestion of bird song rises from the reeds, trilling and inviting a
response.
Swans, bottoms up, sift through the silt for tasty morsels.
A pair of coots, cluck and chunter to each other as they paddle by on the
river.
The hedges boast dogwood's new growth, its red stemmed glory shining
bright.



Pussy willow's fat fur balls call to be stroked and held, before exploding their pollen purse of gold.

Too soon, green leaf buds of hawthorn have broken out, tiny and wafer thin,
Another curious confusion of winter and spring's birthing?

A bird hide, stationed like the façade of a wooden hill fort, rises up on our route.

Beckons us to stop a while and peer, braced against the wind,
Tantalised by birds in flight too far away to identify.

Children on scooters, pram pushers and cyclists now patch the paths,
As we return closer to the hub from where we set off.

Dog walkers with their cockapoo lockdown dogs, parade purposefully,
Nodding a cautious hello as they pass.

Twitchers, loaded with serious equipment and knowing looks,
Take the secrets of their day's survey back home with them.

And as we leave these windblown wetlands, we too take our journey of memories.

Back home to sift, reminisce and enjoy again in the warmth

Bridget Hall
February 5th 2022

Shrove Tuesday or Pancake Day...what's it all about?

Ever wonder why we eat pancakes just before Lent? The tradition dates back to Anglo-Saxon times, when Christians spent Lent in repentance and severe fasting.

So on the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday, the church bell would summon them to confession, where they would be 'shriven', or absolved from their sins, which gives us Shrove Tuesday. At home, they would then eat up their last eggs and fat, and making a pancake was the easiest way to do this. For the next 47 days, they pretty well starved themselves.

But we know that we can confess our sins to God any time and we do not have to do penance to 'earn' His forgiveness; because of Jesus' death and resurrection, it is a free gift of God. This verse from 1 John 1:9 (Living Bible) says it all...

'But if we confess our sins to him, he can be depended on to forgive us and to cleanse us from every wrong. And it is perfectly proper for God to do this for us because Christ died to wash away our sins.'

These days, some prefer to take up things during Lent. The page opposite suggests that for each of the 40 days you give away a bag to bless someone. Why not tick them off as you go? And we can still enjoy pancakes...

So, here's a recipe!

100g flour / pinch of salt / 1 large egg / 250ml milk
butter for frying / lemon and sugar for topping

Sift the flour and salt into a bowl. Make a 'well' in the centre and into it crack the egg and add about a third of the milk. Use a wooden spoon, carefully stir all together drawing the flour in from the sides. As you mix, gradually add the rest of the milk. Beat it with the spoon then use a whisk to mix it all.

In a non-stick frying pan add a knob of butter and heat until it is foaming. Ladle in about 2 tablespoons of batter and tip the pan so it flows all across the base. Cook for about a minute or so until the underside is brown. Then flip it over with a wooden spatula or toss it and cook the other side.

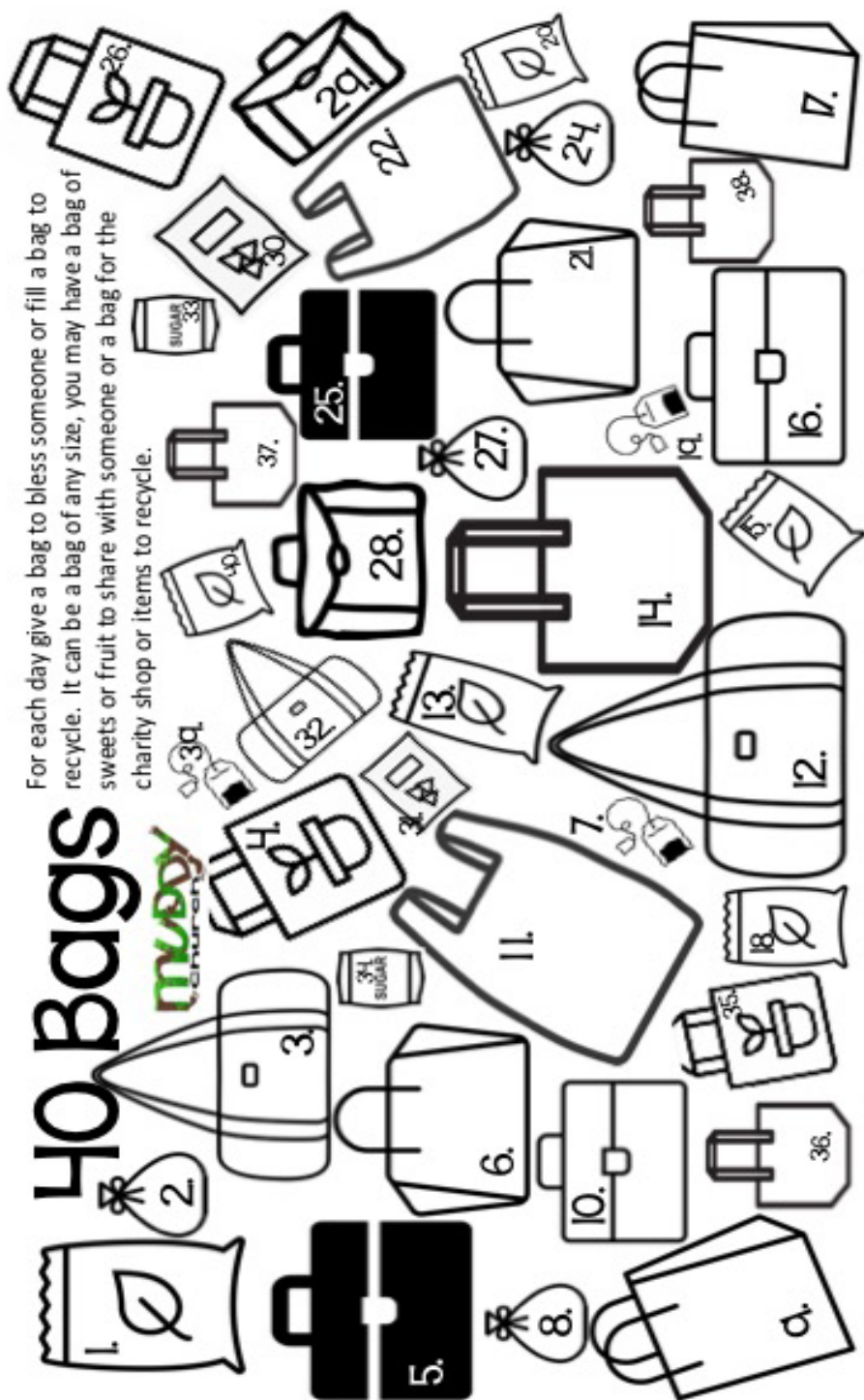
Slide out of the pan onto a warmed plate. Add a little more butter to the pan and cook the rest of your pancakes. The mixture should make about 12 pancakes.

As each pancake is prepared, sprinkle with sugar and a squeeze of lemon juice, or add chocolate spread or jam. Roll up the pancake and enjoy!

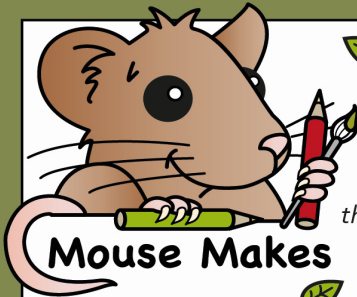
40 Bags



For each day give a bag to bless someone or fill a bag to recycle. It can be a bag of any size, you may have a bag of sweets or fruit to share with someone or a bag for the charity shop or items to recycle.



Children's Pages



Mouse Makes

GOOD FRUIT OR BAD FRUIT?

Jesus said:

"No good tree does not produce bad fruit,
nor does a bad tree produce good fruit. Each
tree is known by its own fruit..."

...Good people bring good things out of the good
things stored in their hearts. But evil people bring evil
things out of the evil they stored in their hearts.
People speak the things that are in their hearts."

- Luke 6: 43-45

During LENT ask God to help you through His Holy Spirit to turn your hate to **love**, your
impatience to **patience** and your unkindness to **kindness**, so we can be like a good tree that
grows good fruit.



READ
Luke
6: 27-45

How did Jesus
say we should
treat others?

Look up
Luke 6:31

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

Do

_____ to everyone
who asks you
Luke 6:30

_____ to those that
hate you
Luke 6:27

_____ for those who
are cruel to you
Luke 6:28

_____ those who
curse you
Luke 6:28

_____ and you will be
forgiven
Luke 6:37

Find these words from **Luke 6** in the word search above.

GOOD • BAD • FRUIT • TREE • HEART • EVIL • EACH • OWN • STORED
PRODUCE • BRING • SPEAK • REPENT • FORGIVE • LOVE • BLESS • PRAY • GIVE

Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in
Luke 15:11-32

Jesus told stories about a lost sheep and a lost coin, then one about a man with two sons. The younger son said to his father...

I want my share of what I'll inherit from you now!



So the father divided his property between his sons.

The younger son took his money and went to another country.



Then his money ran out and there was a famine.



The only job he could get was feeding pigs.

He was so hungry he would have eaten their food.



Then he came to his senses -

I'll go to my father, say sorry, and ask him for a job as a workman!



He set off for home.

His father saw him coming, ran to him and hugged him.



Father, I am so sorry. I am not good enough to be your son...



But his father sent servants to get clothes for his son and prepare a feast to celebrate his return.

The older son came back from work and heard the noise.



Your brother has returned and your father is having a feast

The older son was so angry he wouldn't go into the house..



so his father came out to see him.

For years I've slaved for you and you've given me nothing. He returns after wasting your money and you give him a feast!



My son, all I have is yours, but we should celebrate because he was lost and now he has been found.

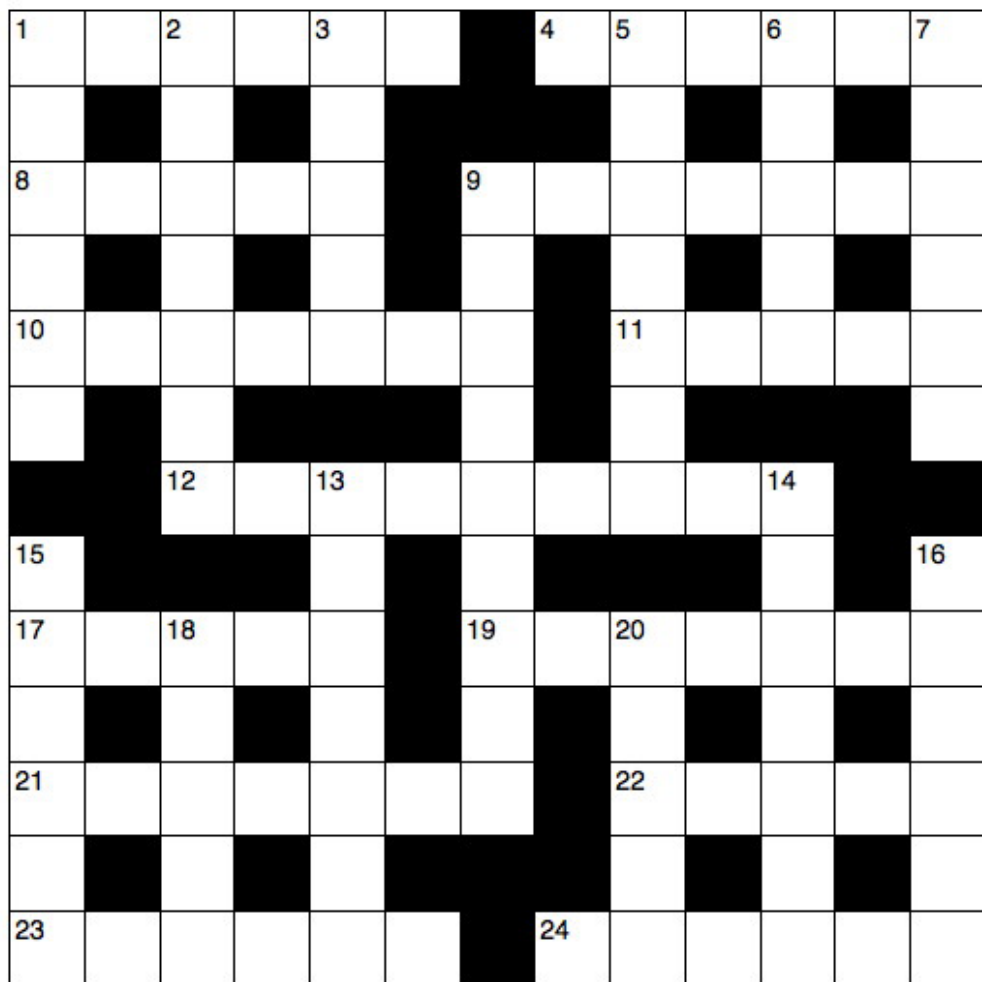
CROSSWORD

Across

- 1 Arouse (Song of Songs 2:7) (6)
- 4 Extinguish (Isaiah 1:31) (6)
- 8 “They — — ,” you will say, “but I’m not hurt!” (Proverbs 23:35) (3,2)
- 9 Unhappiness (Nehemiah 2:2) (7)
- 10 Jewish (7)
- 11 Dirge (anag.) (5)
- 12 ‘A truthful witness gives honest — , but a false witness tells lies’ (Proverbs 12:17) (9)
- 17 Paul quoted from the second one in his address in the synagogue at Pisdian Antioch (Acts 13:33) (5)
- 19 ‘Do not use your freedom to — the sinful nature’ (Galatians 5:13) (7)
- 21 ‘As you can see, he has done nothing to — death’ (Luke 23:15) (7)
- 22 Name applied by Isaiah to Jerusalem (Isaiah 29:1) (5)
- 23 ‘All the people — — one man, saying, “None of us will go home”’ (Judges 20:8) (4,2)
- 24 Lazarus, who was carried by angels to Abraham’s side when he died, was one (Luke 16:20) (6)

Down

- 1 Appalled (Job 26:11) (6)
- 2 ‘In an — to escape from the ship, the sailors let the lifeboat down into the sea’ (Acts 27:30) (7)
- 3 Expel (Acts 18:16) (5)
- 5 ‘But I have a baptism to — , and how distressed I am until it is completed!’ (Luke 12:50) (7)
- 6 ‘Of the increase of his government and peace there will be — — ’ (Isaiah 9:7) (2,3)
- 7 Hurry (Psalm 119:60) (6)
- 9 ‘For I desire mercy, not — , and acknowledgement of God rather than burnt offerings’ (Hosea 6:6) (9)
- 13 One of its towns was Sychar, where Jesus met a woman at Jacob’s well (John 4:5) (7)
- 14 Shouting (Acts 7:57) (7)
- 15 Arachnid (Isaiah 59:5) (6)
- 16 One of Paul’s first converts in Philippi was Lydia, a — in purple cloth (Acts 16:14) (6)
- 18 Donkeys (5)
- 20 Raked (anag.) (5)



DOWN: 1, Aghast. 2, Attempt. 3, Eject. 5, Undergo. 6, No end. 7, Hasten. 9, Sacrifice. 13, Samaria. 14, Yelling. 15, Spider. 16, Dealer. 18, Asses. 20, Drake.

ACROSS: 1, Awaken. 4, Quench. 8, Hit me. 9, Sadness. 10, Semitic. 11, Ridge. 12, Testimony. 17, Psalm. 19, Indulge. 21, Deserve. 22, Ariel. 23, Rose as. 24, Beggar.

When a minister rehearses his sermon,
is he practising what he preaches?

The PCC has been discussing...

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

Vision and Action

Welcoming Team: initial training for 'welcomers' has been carried out. The aim is for the team to start on the first Sunday in March. Meanwhile, thought is being given to restarting the team of Deputy Wardens.

Children and Families Worker: the recruitment exercise was not successful, and it was agreed that we should not advertise a third time but instead look at other ways forward. Some of those praying about the situation have suggested a series of smaller roles, starting with an overseer for the Children's Church and someone to work with families to learn about faith. The feasibility of using an intern from one of the training colleges will also be explored.

School contacts: there are many families that feel comfortable attending school services in church and the PCC looked at how we might develop this area of ministry. Among the possibilities suggested were that School Chaplaincy looks to be most worthy of consideration alongside 'school gates' ministry for parents. Meanwhile, the TLG Make Lunch team is planning to start making meals for families now that the relaxation of Covid restrictions allows freer contact with parents; regular events such as Easter and leavers' services will be resuming and a visit from the reception classes of North Town School is due to happen soon. These are indicative of how we work closely with schools' leaders.

Prayer: the PCC looked at how people's prayer life had developed through the pandemic and went on to think about how prayer could grow in the life of the church. This was a starter discussion and the topic will be revisited in due course.

Finance

Forecast for 2022: Richard Sainsbury presented a forecast of income and expenditure for 2022. A deficit of around £45,000 is possible due to gradually increasing costs and reduced income.

Stewardship: Chris Rickard presented the end-year summary of the Stewardship Scheme: there are 95 contributors, and the income from regular planned giving was £85,209 (£91,311 in 2020).

As members' situations change, it is important that everyone checks that they are paying enough tax to cover their Gift Aid declarations.

Miscellaneous Matters

Safeguarding: the Supporting Volunteers Group is being reconvened to look at the CofE paper '*Safer Recruitment and People Management 2021*'. Jenny Wakefield has provided a report on how this affects us.

Holy Communion: the PCC noted the desire of most church members for the return of Holy Communion in two kinds, but noted the reservations expressed by many members over the use of an actual common cup at a time when the Covid virus continues to circulate in some form. The PCC agreed to seek an early and appropriate way forward.

Church Transport: while there is no immediate need to restart the scheme, the nominated drivers will be contacted in preparation for when lifts to church begin to be requested. This does not affect people bringing friends to church. Queen's Platinum Jubilee (2-5 June): the PCC looked at what events St James could run for our parishioners and wider community. A picnic in the churchyard is being considered, with local residents invited; this could include tower tours, a bouncy castle, face painting, etc.

Mission Support: the annual review was carried out, which resulted in some changes of detail in the arrangements. It was noted that, in these times of financial pressure, some of our local mission partners are very dependent on the support we give.

Vicar's Mission Trip to Burundi: the PCC wholeheartedly supports Fabian taking up an invitation to help introduce a discipleship course called '*Rooted in Jesus*' to dioceses in Burundi over two weeks in August.

Facilities: the annual review was carried out. In summary, the premises are in good condition, requiring only minor repairs. However, 2021 saw an unusual number of equipment breakdowns, including all of the heating boilers, water heaters and water boilers. Lack of available effort prevented other projects from proceeding very far. The Technical Team carried out various improvements to support livestreaming, and background work has continued on the church website.

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



PARISH CONTACTS



Vicar: Rev. Fabian Wuyts 01823 333194
email: fabian.wuyts@gmail.com

Curate: Rev. David Wilkie 01823 325496
email: davidwilkie83@gmail.com

Church Office: 01823 272931
Administration Co-ordinator: Rachel Knowlman
email: info@stjamestaunton.co.uk

Church Wardens: Nigel Bright 07817 627326
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

Fabric (buildings & technical) Co-ordinator: Martin Wakefield
01823 277318 email: martin@scoopscoop.co.uk

Pastoral Care Co-ordinator: Annie Reid 07812 130619

Worship Co-ordinator: Richard Lucas 01823 412942
email: richardlucas.net@gmail.com

Church Treasurer: Richard Sainsbury 01823 284688
email: rjsainsbury61@gmail.com

Parish Safeguarding Officer: Jenny Wakefield 01823 277318
email: jenny@scoopscoop.co.uk

Magazine Editor: Chris Doyle
email: dancingdoyle@sky.com



St James Players
present

Death
on
Delivery

A Murder Mystery by Richard Adams

**Friday 18th / Saturday 19th March
7:00pm at St James Church**

Tickets £8 from:
St James Church Office
jennywakefield@btinternet.com
07796248369

Canapés and cake
- bring your own
alcoholic/soft drinks

All proceeds in aid of:



**a charity working with schools and
disadvantaged young people in Taunton**