

The background of the entire page is a photograph of a cornfield at sunset. The corn stalks are dark and silhouetted against a bright orange and yellow sky. The stalks are tall and have long, thin leaves. The overall mood is peaceful and contemplative.

St James Church Magazine

September - November 2022



Letter from the Curate

Reverend David Wilkie
Curate of St James

Costly Living

“Do not worry,” says Jesus, “look at the birds they have enough, look how I dress the beautiful flowers...”

Did Jesus know about the coming cost of living crisis? Energy costs expected to go up 82% in October, fuel recently nearly hit £2 a litre, food prices spiralling upwards, and yet many wages being kept low. We have become accustomed to stable, relatively wealthy and predictable times pre-Covid. The world has changed. In 2021 an estimated 698 million people, or 9% of the global population, are living in extreme poverty – that is, living on less than \$1.90 a day. This figure was previously falling until 2019 when it rose by eight million people and continues to due to Covid, climate change and war.

I wonder if Jesus would change his words for us today to, “build bigger barns in the summer months when energy use is low so that you might afford the winter” or, “do not worry, invest in solar panels”... or, “do not worry, my body, the church, will provide the nation with food banks?!”



I’m being a bit tongue in cheek. But my point is that there are worrying months ahead, so how does our faith in Jesus and God’s coming kingdom help us? In his life Jesus experienced real poverty in the wilderness where he knew desperate hunger and thirst. He spent time with those begging on the streets or outcasts with a highly contagious disease. He spoke these words of comfort into a society where many were living hand to mouth. They were more jarring to his listeners’ ears than they are for us today.

There have been times in my life when I didn't know where money would come from and yet it is in those times that I have felt closest to God. 'Hard places are good soil for kingdom seeds,' writes Mark Sayers, meaning that in times where we feel like we are in the wilderness, at God's mercy, we discover his presence. When we are comfortable, we don't look for the giver of life.

Let us reframe the coming months ahead. While they may be painful, let us invite God to walk alongside us, to help us not to worry and hear the cry of those unable to manage with compassion rather than fatigue.

*Let us pray together that God's kingdom would come, on earth
as it is in heaven, for prudence, provision, generosity and joy.*

Much love
Dave

The Way

*Lord, lead us in your grace,
The grace we need each day,
To follow in your steps
Thro' your chosen way.*

*Lord, lead us by your love,
A love we can show the world,
Gently folded round us
Yet like a flag unfurled.*

*Lord, let us feel that warmth,
It comes from heaven above,
So we can love each other
With that boundless love.*

*Lord, one day we will see you,
Feel that love divine,
Know your warmth around us,
No need for bread or wine.*

John L Wilson

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*Many thanks to all the contributors to this edition of the Magazine. If you have something to share for the December 2022 - February 2023 edition, do contact the Editor either directly or through the Church Office - details on page 32. **Deadline for copy is Wednesday 16th November 2022.***



With Fabian away at the time of going to print, Dave Wilkie has kindly stepped in and written the Curate's Letter for this edition - thank you, Dave! He encourages us as we look forward to tough economic times ahead.

Several of the articles in the early pages of this edition are related to our environment, harvest, eco-system and nature - the Honoray Assistant Bishop, Richard and Sue Carpenter and Bridget Hall have all contributed some interesting pieces. Also, Andy Hall has written a very thought provoking item. Can prayer for our town make a difference and repair lives and communities...?

Sue Doyle tells us about an international event she attended virtually. You can read about the leavers' services for St James Church School and Northtown School, and David Jordan gives an update on the progress of TLG. Perhaps you could consider joining the team and becoming a coach. And Jenny Wakefield has written about Fanny Crosby, a remarkable 19th century hymn writer.

There's a round-up of the missions we shall be thinking about in the next three months and there's a little message from the after-service refreshments team they hope you will consider... Do also note dates for the new Hymns and Tea events on Sunday afternoon. And...have you ever seen an angel?

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***

International Christian Dance Fellowship Conference

At the beginning of August, I attended the International Christian Dance Fellowship Conference, in Sweden. It is held every three years, in a different country each time.

This year for the first time, and because of difficulties re: travel and Covid, there was the option to 'attend virtually' via an online conferencing app called 'Whova'. I signed up, managed to get sorted with this new app, and joined in from my living room.

I knew, and could see online, quite a few of those attending in person, and also quite a number of the other online attendees and we were able to communicate between and during the sessions via Whova. We online attendees were able to join in with one morning and one (of the two) afternoon workshop, and to 'attend' the evening presentation. Those present in person had to choose from about six different workshops for each session (covering a huge range of dance styles), but they only live streamed one of the workshops for us. A lot of the conference was recorded and it is possible to watch again via/using Whova until the end of the year.

It was a wonderful event and made me determined to go in person to the next conference in three years' time, wherever it is!

There is more information together with photos and videos available on the Christian Dance Fellowship of Britain website (www.cdfb.org.uk). On there you can also find information about the National Dance Conference day taking place on October 8th (Saturday) at Thornbury Baptist Church, just north of Bristol, which has as its theme this year 'More than Conquerors', based on Romans 8 vs37-39. Please have a chat with me if you would like to know more or are interested in going.

I find using dance/movement during worship expresses more fully what the sung words portray. It is liberating, freeing, joyful, and brings blessing to those moving as well as those singing. A flag is often used in church as it is difficult to see anybody unless they are elevated on a stage, but the fabric of the flag can be seen all over the building.

If anyone is interested in 'having a go' with a flag or any other dance/movements, but has not wanted to try it during a service, I would love to hear from you and will put together a short session with simple instructions on a convenient date.

Sue Doyle



DIOCESE OF
Bath & Wells

Living the story. Telling the story.



Letter from:

**Alastair Redfern, Honorary Assistant Bishop,
Diocese of Bath and Wells**

The Wonder of Harvest

In a simple sense harvest is about receiving – receiving the gifts provided from the fruits of the Earth on which our lives depend for survival. Harvest is also about giving – giving thanks for such wonderful and vital resources to provide us with what we need to live day by day.

But, of course, what we receive through the wonder of harvest does not just happen! Human beings who benefit from harvest have to contribute significantly to growing, pruning, fertilising, collecting and distributing the produce. We share in the creation as well as in the fruits.

This deep truth should remind us of a number of important factors around receiving and giving:

- each human life is received from the miracle of Creation, and is called to play a part in enabling this creation to produce the fruits that sustain us all – food, fellowship, dreams and hopes.
- We receive guidance in how to fulfil this primary purpose in our lives through the teaching and example of Jesus Christ.
- the key is partnership and participation - we are part of one body, with one Head. This is my body: do this in remembrance of me.





- The fact of sin and selfishness means that millions of God's children don't receive a fair share of God's harvest and are left hungry and struggling.

Harvest is the time for giving:

- giving thanks to God for our creation, and for our calling to play a part in the whole of the creation being fruitful.
- giving careful consideration to our failings to work harder for the inclusion of the excluded.
- giving priority to crafting actions which will enable a fairer sharing of the miracle of the harvest.

Harvest is a good time to go to church – let us join others in giving thanks, confessing our failings, and being joined in a universal body that seeks to include all God's children in the sharing of the fruits of the Earth. Give thanks, confess, commit to making a difference – and be part of our public witness for Harvest and Giving.

Every blessing
Bishop Alastair



“strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.”

It has recently become clear that our planet is worryingly close to a number of environmental tipping-points. These are often driven by the every-increasing levels of atmospheric carbon dioxide, increases in ocean temperatures and the rise in global sea level.

A tipping point refers to a situation where gradual change suddenly becomes catastrophic. On a national scale this could include loss of wildlife, fisheries collapse and dead, polluted rivers. Globally it could relate to areas such as:

- Loss of polar ice – ice reflects sunlight much better than open water or land, so a reduction in ice coverage directly leads to more warming which causes more melting and so on... Positive feedback loops such as this can cause very rapid change.
- Massive shifts in ocean circulation – as conditions change in the Arctic there is a very real risk that ocean currents may be fundamentally changed. This could include the end of the Gulf Stream leading to much colder winters in the British Isles.
- Corals – as ocean temperatures rise, persistent thermal stress can kill off the coral communities of entire reefs.
- Melting of permafrost – as permafrost melts large quantities of carbon dioxide and methane are released. Both are powerful greenhouse gases, so once again change becomes exponential.

In short, because things seem OK for now, it doesn't mean they really are.

Such tipping points may be fast approaching us in the UK. The Office for Environmental Protection has made it clear in a recent report that:

“Regrettably, environmental laws and government strategy and policy have not yet proved successful in significantly slowing down, halting or reversing biodiversity decline or the unsustainable use of resources or the pollution of the environment.”

An (almost local) example sums up this approach: one of Rebecca Pow's last acts as minister was to thwart the local council's attempts to stop pollution of

the River Wye from industrial scale chicken production in the area. It's all too easy to tip over from living river to lifeless sewer.

A tipping point is a threshold that when passed will lead to major changes in the state of the environment

There are also tipping points in society – once enough people make a behaviour ‘normal’ it can rapidly become the only way of doing something. We can make changes in many areas of our own lives

- Pray (and lobby) – our government may have published some ambitious targets but, as noted above, often does not seem willing to back them with meaningful action. It is a grave concern that, as I write (i.e. before the final vote for a new Tory leader – Ed.), the most pressing issue of our present time – the climate – appears low on the radar for both candidates for the Tory leadership
- Eat less meat and dairy – in most cases, these are both an inefficient way to feed humanity but also contribute significantly to climate change and deforestation
- When buying, use your LOAF (Locally grown, Organic, Animal friendly, Fairtrade) – transporting food and other goods can have a major contribution to their overall energy cost as does heating spaces to grow summer crops throughout the year
- Travel a little less – especially if using cars or planes. These generate far more CO2 than other, more eco-friendly, ways
- Don't buy into disposability – things should last
- Rewild – biodiversity is at risk as well as climate change.

Richard Carpenter

PS: Coming soon will be Creationtide or the Season of Creation¹ - from 1st September to 4th October, dedicated to God as Creator and Sustainer of all life. Its theme for 2022 is Listen to the Voice of Creation.

¹<https://www.churchofengland.org/about/environment-and-climate-change/season-creation>

Wilder Churches

It's been a busy few months in the meadow area in the church grounds!

We welcomed Jubilee Fun Day visitors in to walk the paths and see the bug hotel which is now well established and supporting a range of invertebrates.



A Bee orchid flowered in June! These are fairly rare and it was good to show this to visitors and also to Children's Church. You'll see from the photo, how it looks just like bees are visiting it.



The Bee orchid was a special sighting for the wildlife surveyors who visited in mid June. This time they looked at other wildlife, not only the plants as last year.

There's an interim report on the Eco Church section of the website:
<http://stjamestaunton.org/eco-church>

Children's Church helped to harvest the Yellow rattle, and took some home to sow later this year. St James School Y6 Leavers joined in with the Yellow rattle harvest and some mini bug hotel-making and other eco-friendly activities.





On July 21st we welcomed some Britain in Bloom judges to the Church grounds. They are interested to see environmentally friendly projects these days. We will have to wait until later this year to find out how Taunton fared.



Two hard - working scythers very kindly cut the meadow area for us on 27th July. And Johnny and Lilian Gill deserve a special mention for doing sterling work raking up the grass.

In November, we will be needing some help to scarify and prepare the meadow area before sowing the Yellow rattle we have harvested.

BUT...there is some spare seed! Thank you to our Homegroup who sorted it. If you would like to make a corner of your garden a bit more eco- friendly, you are welcome to have some. Please ask...I have sowing tips available too.

Yellow rattle seeds, instructions for sowing

You could sow the seed into a corner of your lawn?

Rake the area so that there's some bare soil

Scatter the seed September-November this year.

Stamp it in. (Wellies on?)

Don't mow the area between March and July next year.

Enjoy the bees and help the wild flowers to grow in your garden!

There's a useful YT piece here which explains how Yellow rattle works:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gr9hne6KdU>

<https://wildseed.co.uk/sowing-yellow-rattle/>



I write regular posts on the Church Facebook page. If you use social media, please have a look.

Sue Carpenter

Our Green and Pleasant Land?

Once a year, during the school summer holidays, we take our youngest grandchildren to a playground in a small village on the edge of Taunton. Mature trees line three sides of the field providing welcome shade and a village hall near the entrance gate is available to hire for community events and private hire. Brightly coloured play equipment beckons us in and includes the favourite, a zip wire! A large area of the field provides space for ball games.

At first glance the scene is welcoming and tranquil. Fields of wheat border one side and there's bird song from the trees. However, the periphery of the field tells a different tale and that is why we go armed with a litter picker!

On arrival this year on a hot, sunny day, the grass (though looking very parched) was tidy and families were out picnicking and enjoying themselves.

Working from the top edge, along the perimeter of the field, Toby and I were appalled at the amount of small plastics embedded in the grass. We found bottle tops, squashed cans, foil wrappers, crisp bags, plastic straws from cartons, plastic bottles (one still full of juice) and even a baby's dummy. None of them was easily visible until you got close.

The smaller, more insidious pieces of plastic that had worked their way deep inside the grass were the worst. Small golden foil discs glinting in the sun, detritus from a party celebration lay scattered beside a bench near the village hall and small pieces of balloon festooned the same area.

Within minutes we had attracted a little following of children.

'What are you doing?' they asked and, 'Can we help?'

We explained we were picking up plastics mainly because of the danger to birds and small animals and that the little pieces were particularly hazardous.

By the time we'd finished scouring the edges, Toby counted well over a hundred pieces of rubbish including a long plastic streamer, faded of colour and a large popcorn bag. At 5p per piece of rubbish he'd not only helped the environment but had earned some holiday pocket money. You can do the maths!

How important it is to pass on to our children and grandchildren that as stewards of God's wonderful creation we need to do our part in keeping our parks beautiful, not just for ourselves but for the birds, insects and animals living there.

Sunday Afternoon Hymns and Tea

Come and sing traditional hymns
and have an afternoon tea

At St James' Church, Taunton, TA1 1JS
'The church next to the County Cricket Ground'



Sundays 2:30 - 4pm

September 4th and 18th
October 2nd, 16th and 30th
November 13th and 27th
December 11th



A church that is Christ-centred and Jesus-shaped

This time we reach the centre of the vision – to be a Christ-centred church. It is his church, not ours; his ministry, not ours. And to be Jesus-shaped implies moulding or carving... what does that need to be for each of us?

To place Christ at the centre is to reject the focus demanded by society around us.

It all requires an intimacy built through prayer, word and Spirit: to become a church based on that relationship rather than on a set of tasks. It should lead us to focus more on **whose** we are and less on **what** we are or do.

To be shaped by Jesus reminds us of Paul's words in Romans (12:2) as translated by JB Phillips:

“Don’t let the world around you squeeze you into its own mould”



The idea of being Jesus-shaped is often used to describe a life shaped by the five marks of mission, outlining the need for us to:

- **tell** the story of Jesus Christ
- **teach** the faith of Jesus Christ
- **tend** to the cares of the world
- **transform** the unjust structure of society; and
- **treasure** and safeguard the integrity of God's creation

In telling the story, we need to have the confidence that we are dealing with a public truth rather than letting the world characterise belief as mere personal opinion. Also, we should recall that when Jesus first sent out his disciples it was both to preach and to heal. Caring for the needs of those around us out of love for them should play as great a part in our lives as sharing the good news.

As we see needs around us, our response must be two-fold – there will be hurts and deprivation which require immediate care, but often there will also be underlying ills in and of our society that should be challenged in the political arena.

Creation care is another area where we can both do things ourselves and also look to influence others. That could simply be encouraging those around us to follow greener ways but also should encompass seeking to have government and other leaders put in place policies that will encourage planet-friendly behaviours and also discourage or ban those that actively harm our environment.

That each mark of mission begins with a verb is a reminder that our faith is supposed to make a difference to us. Following God has always required an active response:

“And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.” (Micah 6:8)

It is also worth reflecting how much our thoughts and actions are actually formed by our relationship with Jesus or whether they simply depend on us living with the inheritance of a Christian-influenced culture – how do we make sure it is the former that guides us in our daily life?

I recently read an interview with Leigh Winsbury (Vicar of Hatherleigh). He described our interaction with God in the following way:

“This is my belief about God, essentially that He’s good and He puts desires in you so that He can fulfil that desire in the best possible way, and you can take pleasure in it being fulfilled and thank Him for it.”

Centring the entirety of ourselves on Jesus reminds us that most of our ministry is (should) not be in things that carry a ‘religious’ label. Christianity is not Sundays at 10.30; it is not accepting some statement of faith; it is relationships. As disciples, we are called **to** Jesus and sent **out** to be his witnesses and ambassadors.

Richard Carpenter

This is the last of five articles which have sought to unpack the key themes expressed in the Church of England vision. Next time we’ll start to look at some of its wider implications for us.

'REPAIR'



The future...or now?

Imagine you're living in a town like Taunton some years from now and that big changes have happened in that town. Now visualise a version of TV's 'The Repair Shop' which doesn't mend household items, it seeks to repair souls...

There's a very popular organisation in this town called *Repair*. It's a well-respected brand. It uses compassion as its currency, not a credit card. Members of this organisation are Christian churches of various denominations which all work together. They are partners with the Council, the NHS, schools and businesses.

Repair is open seven days a week. Churches cooperate to hold worship services at times which suit people's lives. Through volunteers they supply other services that the public or private sector can't provide. *Repair* was built on the seeds that were sown over several decades previously. 'Fruits of the spirit', church insiders call it. At *Repair*, you'll find help for young families, help for the needy, support for people at home and at work, clubs for teens, signposts to specialist advice, civic emergency centres and much more. Support is given to people with mental health problems in partnership with the NHS. At one of this town's churches, you can literally give blood!

In the early days of the project, recharging points were installed in church walls for electric vehicles and bikes. *Repair* then offered spiritual recharging too. People throughout the town asked, 'Why are they doing all this?' Then they thought, 'I wouldn't mind having some of what they've got.' And so, demand grew to find out more about the Christian faith which seemed to be behind it all. People found themselves listening to God about the journeys He needed them to make, not necessarily the journeys they favoured for themselves. Some discovered new and unexpected talents to serve their community. More found renewed hope.

A group of young Christians posted the following message on social media: 'Don't look for shortcuts to God. The market is flooded with sure-fire, easy-going formulas for a successful life which can be practised in your spare time¹.' This struck a chord, partly because few people felt successful anymore, and spare time was in short supply in the struggle to put food on the table. Gradually, respect for the younger generation increased as the eyes of townsfolk were opened to some fundamental truths.

Repair incorporates the NHS mantra in its constitution - 'Free at the point of delivery.' [This writer comments: that's only partly true. Some people found that following Jesus did come at a cost and openly broke down and wept when they knew they had to change, or 'repent', as the church calls it²].

The testimony of a local farmer was typical of the change that happened. "You could sense the Spirit of God hovering over the town, you could feel it in the homes, in my own fields, even as you walked along the road. Everyone was aware of the presence of God. His presence was like a canopy over the whole town²."

Another person who came to the church for help said the experience and support given to him had completely changed his life³.

How did this all come about? At one level, the economic recessions of the 2020s were the start. Society became under pressure in different and alarming ways. People looked back wistfully at the 'good' times earlier in the 21st century but remembered that just when things were getting comfortable, blockages in the road ahead seemed to appear. Climate change was often mentioned as one. As well as being materially poorer, somehow people felt spiritually poorer too. However, the changes that happened were not entirely for economic reasons. Historians later discovered that groups of Christians in the town had been praying in their churches for transformation for a number of decades. They sought to pray expectantly and wholeheartedly, expecting God to do the work when the timing was right. One of them quoted a promise in scripture, 'And so it was, God heard from heaven and came to them, forgiving their sin and healing their land⁴.'

Is this all fantasy? Could this happen here?

This story gives an imagined future. You might think the faith interventions are unlikely. But with God all things are possible. I think we all have a duty to reach out and make the gospel relevant to the people around us.

Andy Hall

¹ Matthew 7 v13 (*The Message Bible*)

² *Testimonies by people affected by the Hebridean Revival, Isle of Lewis, 1949*

³ *Feedback given to a Taunton town chaplain in 2022*

⁴ 2 Chronicles 7 v14

TO GOD BE THE GLORY

*To God be the glory, great things he has done;
So loved he the world that he gave us his Son,
Who yielded his life an atonement for sin,
And opened the life-gate that all may go in.*

*Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, Let the earth hear His voice;
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, Let the people rejoice;
Oh, come to the Father, through Jesus the Son,
And give Him the glory; great things He has done.*

You may recall that this hymn was sung at the thanksgiving service for Marjorie Bell, and was one that she and Frank sang in their last service together at Church. It is a wonderful song of praise and thanksgiving to our loving Heavenly father and encapsulates the central message of the gospel we read in John 3 v 16 and Galatians 1 v 4-5.

It is a hymn that was sung in the great revivalist movements in the 19th and 20th centuries; used by Moody and Sankey and Billy Graham in their evangelistic missions; and it's one that has not lost its appeal for allowing those singing to 'let rip' with joy.

So how did this wonderfully expressive hymn come to be? It was written in circa 1872 by an American woman called Fanny Crosby*. This in itself was not unusual as there were many female hymnwriters and lyricists over the centuries, but Fanny is remarkable because she was also blind from infancy. Her family could trace their lineage to the Mayflower settlers and Fanny was brought up within a committed and Bible-based family community. She did not complain about her blindness. She once said, "If perfect earthly sight were offered me tomorrow I would not accept it. I might not have sung hymns to the praise of God if I had been distracted by the beautiful and interesting things about me." She had an incredible memory and by 15 had memorised large sections of the Bible, including the gospels, psalms and the Pentateuch! She received her education at the New York Institute for the Blind where she taught and later met her husband, Alexander Van Alstyne, who was also blind.

Her output was extraordinary – composing 8,000 hymns and gospel songs, she was regarded as the 'mother of congregational singing in America'. Many of her hymns were written under pen names to avoid her name appearing too much. Writing about her method she said, 'It may seem a little old-fashioned, always to begin one's work with prayer, but I never undertake a hymn without first asking the good Lord to be my inspiration'. In addition, she also wrote secular songs and cantatas, poetry, and engaged in political writing and campaigning, including support for the abolition of slavery.



Passionate about enabling people to hear about Jesus, she spent much of her time involved in mission work in the slums of Manhattan, at times living in the area herself. She would have preferred to have been regarded as a mission worker than a gospel writer. The number of the rescue missions she was associated with is extraordinary. She lived simply and gave, what little surplus she had, generously. She always insisted, "You can't save a man by telling him of his sins. He knows them already. Tell him there is pardon and love waiting for him and make him understand you believe in him and never give up."

Fanny was an influencer of her day, often meeting with presidents, generals, politicians, philanthropists whose support she canvassed for her endeavours in working with the poor and marginalised. She died in 1915, aged 94 – the wording on her simple grave reads: 'Aunt Fanny: She hath done what she could. Fanny J Crosby'

*(*The wonderful tune of To God be the Glory was composed by Henry Doane, a philanthropist and prolific hymn composer with whom Fanny often collaborated. The contribution of the songs to the evangelistic campaigns of Sankey and Moody, Graham and Barrow was hugely significant, as is the importance of modern Christian song writing and music today.)*

A Message from the Sunday Service Refreshment Team

Since the Covid restrictions were lifted and service refreshments could start again we have reorganised the volunteer rota and some of the ways we do things, so it's less demanding and time consuming for the team.

The refreshments on offer after the morning services include:

- Filter coffee pre-made in flasks (including decaf)
- Tea (including decaf or fruit tea- please ask if would like these alternatives)
- Squash (usually orange and blackcurrant) and of course water is always available
- Selection of biscuits (including 'free from' biscuits - please ask for these alternatives)

We thank you for your donations as they are very important in covering our costs of providing refreshments



We continue to encourage you to bring your own travel cup/mug, which is a way to minimise the washing up needed as well as being a church eco-friendly action.



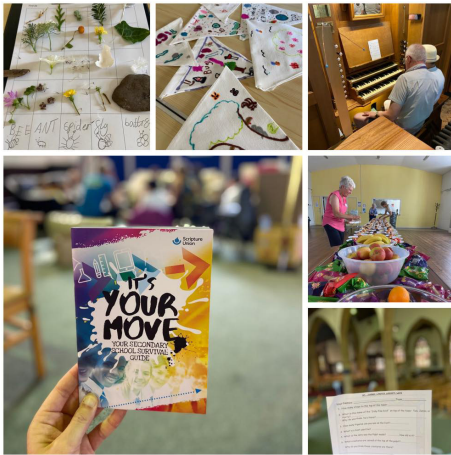
We can supply paper cups, which can be recycled. However, the additional cost to the church to provide these is around 10p per cup... You can ask for a china mug/cup if you find the paper cups difficult or hazardous to handle...or have forgotten your own mug!



'Oh the places you'll go' School News



The hottest day ever!? Well perhaps not quite, but it was a tad warm on the day that the St James Year 6 Leavers came for their final service, followed by what has become their traditional tower climb and other activities. The extreme weather did prevent this being an all-school event this year but we were able to welcome parents and enable them to have a good view without overcrowding.



The leavers' final service was a mixture of celebration and laughter as they talked about their memories of their school, sang their celebration songs (minus the confetti bomb that hadn't arrived in time, to Ian's relief!), watched the antics of their teachers on screen as they wished them well for the next part of their education journey, and heard a rendition of the wonderful Dr Seuss poem, '*Oh the places, you'll go*'. Photographs and shirt signing followed and then our team got organising the 60 excited children for food and fun. Grateful thanks to Tower

Captain Marian, and also to Johnny, Martin K and Martin W and Sue D who scampered up and down the tower, to Dave and Nigel enabling the children to 'Have a Go' on the organ, to Sue C and Susie introducing the eco elements of the churchyard, David J for overseeing the quiz, to Ruth, Lyn and Ivy for the wonderful feast that was consumed by children, teachers and helpers, while Fabian and Dave got discussions moving about 'Moving on'. It was a pretty fast-moving day and we were pretty exhausted by the end of it, but the children still seemed to have plenty of bounce.

The week ended with North Town School coming in for their leavers' celebration, giving the opportunity for the children to tell their parents and teachers what had been their special experiences at the school. It has been a difficult three years for all these school leavers as they have had to contend with how the pandemic has challenged everyone and forged new ways of learning.

Please pray for all those children who are moving on from nurseries, primary and secondary schools, that they will discover the joy of learning and fulfilment for their futures, especially in these uncertain and strange times.

Jenny Wakefield

Because of Covid, a planned one year program turned out to be 15 months, the coaches and children all enjoying the times together so much. That in itself would be a good result, but more importantly the behaviour and attitude to the coaching time was very positive and the teaching staff all saw the difference it made to their pupils. I have heard it said, "...an hour with the coach and we get back a different child!"

One child we knew from the reading program prior to Covid was not such a relaxed and fun character as before. She soon confided about some problems, and that set off alarm bells and initiated a number of staff/family actions. After a few weeks, the girl and the giggles that was known before returned as we all worked together with support and practical ways to help. She went up to senior school last summer, happily and with a lovely letter of thanks from her parents.

A child from a non-British family with no Christian background presented two challenges, communication with the parents and approach to Christian festivals, etc. A real challenge, but one to which the coach rose well, trying a range of ideas. Coach and child developed a rapport and had fun on the way. Another child we knew from Xplore afterschool club. His coach was a little unsure about working with a lad and having the right 'boy orientated' approach, but she is now 'expert' on Meccano, Lego, paper planes and electronics and they have really enjoyed their time together. A further child needed encouragement and belief in herself. This was again a challenge but the child is now bubbly and chatty. Some of the coaches made good friends with the mums and the whole experience has been very positive for each of them.

BUT the one most important factor is the prayer that supports all the coach sessions and the coaches as they seek to show Jesus to the children in practical ways...in play, creative projects, listening, encouraging...and just being a friend.

My grateful thanks to the current coach team: Sue Doyle, Jenny Wakefield and especially Deb Rowden who, sadly, has now moved away and will be greatly missed after working with us in school for many years.

Speaking with our school contacts, I have been told they have many more children who would love to be part of this program. The words were, "If you have the coaches, we have the children!!"

The coaches are trained and supported by TLG and devote **one** hour a week to coach **one** child for **one** year. So, if you feel you could be part of this team, we (and the children!) would love to hear from you.

David Jordan
St James' TLG Co-Ordinator



...MISSION

Our **September** Mission Focus is **Samaritan's Purse**. As autumn approaches, Operation Christmas Child is starting its build up to the collection and delivery of Christmas Gifts to children across the world. We hope that members of St James will be able to support this project either online or through preparing physical boxes for collection, thereby sharing a small gesture of God's love.

Often our UK boxes go to Eastern Europe which includes the Ukraine, particularly poignant at this time. Samaritan's Purse has been actively involved on the ground with relief work in the Ukraine and this includes seeking to assist families who have been forced to flee because of the war. Some of the families who have received boxes in the past are among those seeking shelter in other countries including the UK. To find out more, please look on the Samaritan's Purse web site:

www.samaritanspurse.org/our-ministry/ukraine-response

Samaritan's Purse is active all the year round in areas where there is humanitarian need. Regular updates are provided on the different theatres of operation. While the news headlines focus for a short while on different crises, relief organisations are in for the long haul, raising awareness for places like Yemen, where the internal conflict has been tearing the country and its people apart for years, to countries newly struck by famine, earthquake, floods and disasters of all kinds. Samaritan's Purse has the ability to respond quickly with medical aid, relief supplies and volunteers, but they need the support of Christians internationally supporting their work. If you would like more information, please talk with Roger Fenton.

In **October Open Door** is our Mission of the month. Open Door serves the Homeless and Roofless in Taunton, people who for a variety of reasons do not have the security of a home. Like other organisations the pandemic affected how they operate. Since lockdown has eased, Open Door has returned to keeping their door open for rough sleepers and those in temporary accommodation so they can access hot showers, breakfasts and have clothes washed and dried.

*Every day one new person finds their way to our open door, homeless.
Every single one is a very special person, with an unique story bringing*

them here, their own personal goals and dreams, challenges and choices. Very often initially feeling vulnerable, down and put down, worthless and unloved, lonely and alone. So we do something very ordinary. We smile. We welcome. By name. Listen. Answer and respond. Serve. Smile again. Share and care. Share everyone's journeys. Celebrate everyone's steps. Seeing a doctor. Asking about rehab. Escaping County Lines. And every day every single other little step.

There are three staff members at Open Door who work with over 40 volunteers and other visiting professional partners – vets, podiatrists, hairdressers, doctors, nurses – who work together as a team to provide the help and support that is needed over a vast range of different situations seeking to improve quality of life and create hope for the future.

There are many challenges, not least the increase in demand. The hopes of the 'Everyone In' accommodation initiatives have not been for everyone and this has led to more people needing help.

For more details about Open Door, do look at their website

www.tauntonopendoor.org.uk, read their newsletter or talk with Jonathan Sladden, their chairperson, or Susie Peeler who has been volunteering there.

In **November** we focus on organisations that we don't support financially but with whom we have links and connections including:

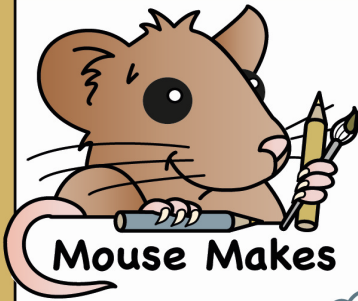
Home for Good - founded by Krish Kandiah, himself a foster carer and adopter, to promote the importance of Fostering and Adoption, to inform churches how they can support foster carers and adopters in their congregations and actively encourages Christians to consider if they could provide a permanent home for a child.

For more details have a look at their website or speak to Sheila Marlow, who is a former foster carer and HfG Champion. **www.homeforgood.org.uk/**.

WATCH - a local charity based in Chard, but also working in Taunton to provide peer group mentoring and training for people who have experienced difficulties with their mental health. For more information have a chat with Ruth Crooks or have a look on their website **watchproject.org.uk**

Jenny Wakefield

Children's Pages



Mouse Makes

The _____ fell,
The floods came and the
_____ blew.

Matthew 7:25



On what did he build
his house?

Matthew 7:24



Everyone who
hears Jesus'
words and **does**
them will
be like a



Everyone who
hears Jesus'
words and does
not do them will
be like a



Matthew 7:24-27
and
Luke 6:46-49

What
happened
to the
houses?

Read
Matthew
7:25 and 27

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



What was
the reaction
of the crowd
to Jesus'
teaching?

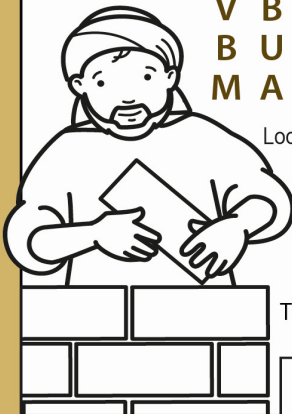
Read
Matthew
7:28-29

Look up the Bible references to find the missing
words then look for them and the words
below in the word search

JESUS • HEAR • LISTEN • WORDS
DOES • BUILT • FOUNDATION • MAN
DUG • DEEP • SOLID • GROUND
STREAM • RIVER • BURST • FLOODS
TORRENT • HOUSE • FELL • COLLAPSED
RUIN • DESTROYED

How many other words can you make from the word

FOUNDATIONS



Sep22 © deborah noble

Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in
Mt. 13: 3-8, Mk 4: 1-9, Lk 8: 4-8

Crowds of people now came to hear Jesus, so he used stories to teach them; those who really wanted to learn would work out the meaning.

A farmer went out to sow a field of corn.



Some seed fell on the path



and some on to rocks.

Some fell among thorn plants and

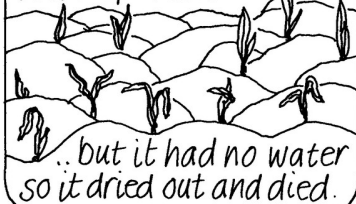


some fell on good soil.



The seed on the path was eaten by birds

The seed that fell on the rocks sprouted...



...but it had no water so it dried out and died.

The seed that fell among the thorns grew well to start with,



then it was outgrown by the thorn plants.



But in the good soil the seed grew well and gave a fantastic harvest!

Jesus explained to his disciples what it meant.



Some people don't even listen to what he says.

For some it is the best thing ever!



But soon they move on to another 'best thing.'

Some listen gladly...



but then worries and busyness take over.

But some hear what Jesus says and learn from it.



and that makes all the difference!

CROSSWORD

Across

- 1 'Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders — in vain' (Psalm 127:1) (6)
4 Season of the year (Psalm 84:6) (6)
7 'My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. — here and keep watch with me' (Matthew 26:38) (4)
8 It came over the whole land from the sixth to the ninth hour on the first Good Friday (Luke 23:44) (8)
9 Paul invariably did this in the synagogues he visited on his missionary journeys (Acts 17:2) (8)
13 'It is God who works in you to will and to — according to his good purpose' (Philippians 2:13) (3)
16 Members of the Church of Scotland (13)
17 'Now when he saw the crowds, he went up on a mountain side and — down' (Matthew 5:1) (3)
19 Mock(Luke14:29)(8)
24 Disgrace(Psalm44:13)(8)
25 First month of the Hebrew calendar (Exodus13:4)(4)
26 Christianity of the Britons before Augustine arrived from Rome(6)
27 Mean (Numbers 35:23)(6)

Down

- 1 'Whoever finds his life will — it' (Matthew 10:39) (4)
2 'My lord the king, let the — — on me and on my father's family, and let the king and his throne be without guilt' (2 Samuel 14:9) (5,4)
3 O raid (anag.) (5)
4 'If two of you on earth — about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven' (Matthew 18:19) (5)
5 Take care of (1 Samuel 17:15) (4)
6 What the older son heard as he came near the house the day his prodigal brother came home (Luke 15:25) (5)
10 'Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with — judgment' (Romans 12:3) (5)
11 Do ten(anag.)(5)
12 Architectural style first used in Greek temples in the sixth century BC (5)
13 Capable of being used(1Kings7:36)(9)
14 'Each one should — his own actions'(Galatians6:4)(4)
15 Among the items imported by Solomon's fleet of trading ships (1 Kings 10:22) (4)
18 'But I am afraid that just — was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray' (2 Corinthians 11:3) (2,3)



The PCC has been discussing...

Here's a summary of the main things the Parochial Church Council looked at in June and July (there is no meeting in August).

Recruitment

- There is a vacancy on PCC for a one-year term. Might this be you? It's an opportunity to try it out! Martin Wakefield will tell you more.
- Richard Sainsbury is wanting to step down as treasurer after many happy years in the role. If you have a mind for figures and are reasonably organised, why not have a chat with him?
- St James Church School would like us to expand our one-to-one mentoring scheme. Please speak to Jenny Wakefield or David Jordan if this is something you feel called towards. (The school would also welcome a return of our after-school club.)
- "It's behind you!" The PCC was pleased to give its blessing to a proposal from St James Players to put on a 'panto style' musical play, with a focus on faith content. It's now being written, so now's the time to join the gang and make sure there's a part for you!

Finances

- Richard Sainsbury's July finance report showed that while some aspects of our finances are recovering, hall hire income is still below pre-pandemic levels. The net expenditure so far this year is smaller than expected, and the deficit at the end of the year is now projected to be a little over £30,000 (which will be covered by reserves).
- The annual statistical return to the diocese records that 145 people are attending worship regularly and/or giving under the Stewardship Scheme, including new members. This compares to 198 pre-Covid.
- It is not yet known if Bath & Wells Diocese will receive any of the support money being released by the Church Commissioners.

Children and Young People

Children's Ministry: David Wilkie summarised the work of this area over the academic year:

- Children's church restarted with 4 leaders/volunteers. The average number attending is 10, with a maximum of 16.
- Additional events included the Jubilee Funday, an amazing church effort with over 400 in attendance; well-attended Christmas Crib and Christingle service.
- We do not have anyone at present to run something for teenagers.

- Fabian and Dave run a weekly assembly at St James Church School. North Town School has invited us to provide occasional assemblies.

Toddlers: Planning is in hand to restart the group – watch this space!

Mentoring: David Jordan reported on the mentoring carried out at St James Church School by the four volunteers working under the auspices of the Early Intervention program from Transforming Lives for Good. The teaching staff all saw the difference it made to their pupils. The school has many more children who would like to join the program.

The Big Picture

At each meeting, the PCC steps away from the detail to look at an aspect of the bigger picture of how we as a church fulfil God's mission. In July, the focus was on prayer, which led to various thoughts about our connections with the community, including the following:

- We need to be a church without walls – i.e. referring to the people, not the building. We need to remove the walls we put up, through inappropriate actions or expectations.
- The churchyard could be used more, such as for an area for contemplation; the Christmas and Easter trails had proved popular.
- Can we develop a place of sanctuary (e.g. the Side Chapel)?
- Can we be a 'go to' place for people living locally?
- We need to make the most of the contacts we have already.

All food for thought.

Miscellaneous Matters

Safeguarding: PCC members are undertaking domestic abuse awareness training. It was noted that it would be useful also to offer this course to those with pastoral responsibilities.

Length of services: The PCC had noted that morning services in the early part of summer had been getting longer. The Ministry Team confirmed that the intention is for non-communion services to be kept to 60-70 minutes long, with an additional 10 minutes allowed for communion.

Policies, Policies, Policies! The PCC has an annual cycle for reviewing policy documents. In this period, it looked at the PCC Standing Orders, and the Data Protection Policy and its associated Data Catalogue.

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



Lyn Jones



David Jordan



Julie Kimber



Sue Lucas



Sheila Marlow



Chris Rickard



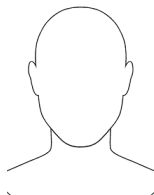
Richard Sainsbury



Vashti Smit



Nic Tall



Vacancy



Jenny Wakefield



Martin Wakefield

Have you ever seen an angel...?

Have you ever met one? They appear when you least expect them and they may not stay long but what they do or say is immensely powerful.

Abraham met angels – see Genesis 18, and in Matthew 4:11 we read that angels came and attended Jesus after his temptation by the devil. There are numerous other references to angels in the Bible. But what or who are they? How would you know one? I don't have an answer to that but I do have experience of an angel...

At the end of January, I was in A&E after suffering a minor heart attack. Following various tests, a doctor sat me down to confirm the diagnosis but to say there were no beds available on the cardiac unit so if I would, "...just go and sit in the waiting area again, someone will come and see to you later." I'd been there about four hours already, waves of crushing chest pain sweeping over me. Wait some more? I wondered what the outcome would be...

After a while, another doctor appeared in front of me. I'd noticed him from a distance a couple of times but hadn't met him and certainly didn't see him approach. I was transfixed by his piercing gaze that seemed to look right inside me.

"The doctor you saw earlier has gone off duty," he said. "I'm here now and I'm not concerned with lack of beds in cardio. I'm here to make you feel better and make you well again, and that's what we're going to do, ok?"

I don't remember seeing him go, but within moments a nurse was administering soluble aspirin and two other drugs. Someone came with a wheel chair and whisked me to the 'holding area' of A&E to be monitored until a bed was free. The night passed with two lovely nurses looking after me, and the next day I saw a string of doctors, had an echocardiogram, an angiogram and had a stent fitted. I was sent home on the Thursday with my heart mended!

I never saw that doctor again and I don't know his name. But, from the moment he held me with his gaze and he'd said those words, I knew things were going to be alright. In spite of the pain, a calm settled on me and I just knew. I'm convinced I met an angel that night – an angel with a message just for me.

You may not have met an angel face to face...yet, but they are out there. They're not all doctors and nurses, and they're certainly not all shimmering white with golden wings. They come in many different guises and often in a way and at a time we least expect. Be ready to meet one. Like Abraham, you might not recognise them straight away, but I think you'll know; maybe not until afterwards, but you'll know. So be ready.

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email: info@stjamestaunton.co.uk

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Joyce Kirk 01823 971431

Children & Young People's Co-ordinator:

currently vacant

Discipleship & Home Groups Co-ordinator:

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01823 277318 email: martin@scoopscoop.co.uk

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