



St James
Church
TAUNTON

St James Church Magazine

March - May 2023

Letter from the Vicar

Rev Fabian Wuyts

Vicar of St James



Talking Jesus

From early January through mid-February, church members meeting at home, in the church or online have been encouraged, equipped and challenged by the practical video-based teaching sessions of the 'Talking Jesus' course. There were many inspirational testimonies of normal people sharing their faith with friends, neighbours, colleagues and family members.



Now, sharing our faith is not something that comes naturally to most of us. That is why, in the talking Jesus course, we have been learning to think about our own faith story and how we could share that intentionally with our friends. We have also learned the power of prayer! Each one was asked to pray for up to five people and to believe that God would open opportunities. Many of you have invited those on your prayer list to 'Stable Manners'. Your faithfulness in inviting your friends was so remarkable that the three evenings were sold out and a few extra tickets were put on offer each night! God steps in when we take a step of faith.

Another highlight for me was to hear the story of God's grace and faithfulness in the lives of the members on the online group. A member of the group came back to me saying how easy it was to share what God had done and how the course was empowering him to be more confident with his story. I myself have been praying for a friend I regularly meet at the swimming pool, or more precisely in the sauna (swimming and talking is a little bit of a challenge!). He came to 'Stable Manners' and thoroughly enjoyed the evening. He knows that I am the Vicar of St James, but more importantly he knows that we share some common painful realities about our upbringings. I was able to share in a simple way how God had been using other Christians to bring healing and hope to me and the difference God has made in my life.

We all have incredible stories that can potentially change the course of someone's life. Not only that, but we have in us the Spirit of the Living God who will be using our words to accomplish his good purposes in the lives of our friends. We can relax as we grow more confident in sharing Jesus around us. It is Jesus' work to change the heart, not ours, but he is making his appeal through us. We are his witnesses, sharing with others what he has done and continues to do in our lives.



I see the 'Talking Jesus' course as a stepping stone in the life of St James and I want to challenge you all:

- to continue to pray regularly for your friends,
- to think intentionally about what God has done in your life, what difference he has made and what happened to make you turn to God,
- to use the opportunities God will give you to share the wonderful gift that is 'your story' and the story of God's love and faithfulness.

"For God was in Christ, restoring the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them but blotting them out. This is the wonderful message he has given us to tell others."

2 Corinthians 5:19



TRAIDCRAFT
Fighting poverty through trade

Traidcraft goes into administration

Traidcraft PLC – a Christian group that has spent years campaigning for fair trade – has gone into administration.

The stands were familiar to many churchgoers, with almost 3,000 churches in the country selling Traidcraft products at some point in their 40-year history.

The brand cited the coronavirus pandemic, the war in Ukraine and soaring energy prices as the reasons behind the severe financial difficulties.

What's in the Magazine...?

Page 2	Vicar's Letter	Page 20	CofE Vision - Faith everywhere
Page 5	When Jesus came to Taunton	Page 22	Focus on Mission
Page 6	Letter from the Bishop	Page 24	There is a green hill far away
Page 7	Where does this leave God...?	Page 26	School News
Page 8	Eco Church	Page 27	Christmas lethargy and Bell Ring for the King
Page 10	Prayer Ministry at St James	Page 28	Time
Page 12	Wilder Churches	Page 30	Young People's Pages
Page 14	Mothering Sunday	Page 32	Crossword
Page 15	Wanted - Treasure(r)	Page 34	PCC Notes
Page 16	The power of one	Page 36	Contacts
Page 18	Stable Manners - a review		

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



Ash Wednesday was February 22nd when we moved into the church season of Lent, the 40 days leading up to Easter. (Our cover picture features the empty tomb, a symbol of Jesus' resurrection on Easter Day.) During Lent, some people make a point of 'giving something up', but maybe it should be a time of taking something up? Maybe a book we've been meaning to read or a course of bible study - remember Delia Smith's '*A Feast for Lent*' many years ago?

The CofE's Lent theme for 2023 is '*Dust and Glory: A Lent journey of faith, failure and forgiveness*'. This year's resources are informed and inspired by the Archbishop of Canterbury's 2023 Lent Book, '*Failure: What Jesus said about sin, mistakes and messing stuff up*' (SPCK) by Bishop Emma Ineson, who has also co-written the daily reflections booklet for adults (CHP). See the CofE Lent resources page: <https://www.churchofengland.org/our-faith/what-we-believe/lent-holy-week-and-easter/dust-and-glory-resources-lent-2023>. Maybe something you might like to look at this Lent?

I'm keen to get your feedback on the articles in the Magazine. I had several people talk to me about a couple of pieces in the previous edition - notably John Henden's article about how we address our young people, and also Shona's reflection, 'Here I am Lord'. I'm happy to set up a 'Letters to the Editor' page. Do write/email me with your thoughts or comments about items you read in this and future editions - dancingdoyle@sky.com

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.co.uk

The views expressed within the magazine may not necessarily represent those of St James Church

WHEN JESUS CAME TO TAUNTON

When Jesus came to Golgotha, they
hanged Him on a tree,
They drove great nails through hands and
feet, and made a Calvary;
They crowned Him with a crown of thorns,
red were His wounds and deep,
For those were crude and cruel days, and
human flesh was cheap.

When Jesus came to Taunton they simply
passed Him by,
They never hurt a hair of Him, they only let
Him die;
For men had grown more tender, and they
would not give Him pain,
They only just passed down the street, and
left Him in the rain.

Still Jesus cried, "Forgive them, for they
know not what they do,"
And still it rained the wintry rain that
drenched Him through and through;
The crowds went home, and left the streets
without a soul to see,
And Jesus crouched against a wall and
cried for Calvary.

*From: 'The Unutterable Beauty', the collected poetry of the Revd G.A. Studdert
Kennedy, Anglican priest and army chaplain during the 1914-8 war, known as
'Woodbine Willie' because he always had a cigarette to offer.
Published by Hodder & Stoughton, 1927.*

*(His poem was entitled 'When Jesus came to Birmingham' but Taunton has been
substituted for Birmingham in this rendition)*



DIOCESE OF
Bath & Wells

Living the story. Telling the story.

Letter from Bishop Michael, Bishop of Bath and Wells

‘When we hoe a field’

‘When we hoe a field, we all start in this corner and we go this way’ is my favourite Zambian proverb. I’ve been sharing its words with people from our parishes, schools and chaplaincies as a way of inviting us all to think about how our diocesan vision can be refreshed and developed to help us look towards the future with confidence and joy.

Our vision calls us to ‘live and tell the story of Jesus’. It speaks of faith in action. It makes clear that all we do is in the name of Jesus. And it’s full of aspiration; living out its words is a life-long task.

But what might our vision mean in terms of what we’d like to focus on specifically? This is where my Zambian proverb comes in. For my sense is that in our common life we would be strengthened if we had a greater focus of what we’re all working towards together.

To help us think about this, I’m suggesting four themes that I hope we can all get behind. The aim is not to generate a new initiative, rather it’s to identify priorities for our common life upon which we can all focus. Our diverse communities of course mean that anything we do needs to fit local contexts. But I hope the four themes can provide a common framework that will help us all.

Under our overall vision of ‘living and telling the story of Jesus’, the themes are:

- (1) Valuing and cherishing the people we already have,
- (2) Offering worship and sharing our faith together in new and different ways,
- (3) Developing our own faith and the faith of others,
- (4) Sharing in ministry and leadership.

I’m inviting everyone to have their say about how these could be developed, adapted or altered. Please do speak with each other and your local church, school and chaplaincy leaders about how this can happen where you are. More information to enable feedback is available at bathandwells.org.uk/vision.

Please be part of the conversation! Your insights, thoughts and experience are invaluable in helping us think together what it means to ‘live and tell the story of Jesus’.

Bishop Michael

Do also read Richard Carpenter’s article on page 20 that highlights in more detail some of Bishop Michael’s vision - Ed.



**‘Where does this
leave God?’
‘Exactly
where
he was
yesterday’**

Prof John Polkinghorne left Cambridge University after a successful career as a theoretical physicist and trained for the Anglican ministry. He remained active in public life being a member of several national committees working on ethical issues as well as being a parish minister and then returning to Cambridge as President of Queen's College. He was knighted for his public service.

When NASA announced that it had detected ripples in the Cosmic Microwave Background Radiation in the universe, Sir John knew it was a very significant announcement. First, the detection of the microwave radiation in the universe ‘killed’ the Steady State theory of the universe, put forward by Prof Fred Hoyle and other atheists, in an attempt to get a theory of the development of the universe that didn't allow room for a creator. Second, the announcement confirmed many things predicted by George Lamaitre's Primeval Atom Theory (now known as the Big Bang Theory). This theory, as developed over many years of thinking and calculating, predicted the radiation would exist, it would be in the microwave wavelengths of radiation,

it would be at a very low energy level, it would be everywhere in the universe and would be uneven in density.

Sir John was asked to appear on a lunchtime broadcast to discuss NASA's announcement. When the interviewer turned from talking to another scientist about the news, he asked Sir John (as a church minister and theologian) where this finding left God. The implication of the question was, as an irrelevant idea.

Sir John's reply was a thoughtful and wise answer. The interviewer had made the common error of assuming that God only knows as much about science as we do. Sir John understood that if God created the physical world then he had to devise the science that makes the universe work. What was new and very significant news to us has been known to God since he created the physical world.

God is not demeaned, reduced or threatened by our new scientific discoveries. He knows already whatever humanity has just discovered.

Is the potter threatened by the pot they make? No, neither is God threatened as we explore and develop our understanding of the science he devised.

Andrew Wright

This is the first of a series of thought provoking articles Andrew has planned. Care to comment on this or any other article in the magazine? Email the Editor - dancingdoyle@sky.com

Listen to the voice of creation



So, what did 2022's COPs do for us? Not much apparently: analysis from the United Nations shows that progress towards reduction in CO₂ emissions has been, in their words, "*woefully inadequate*". So much so that with current policies, and plans for the next few years, we'll see global temperatures increasing by around 2.5°C by 2030: a level that could lead to catastrophically extreme weather around the world.

The UN's environment agency goes so far as to say that nothing short of a "*rapid transformation of societies*" can limit the worst impacts of the climate crisis. Antonio Guterres (UN secretary general) seemed to sum it all up in some of his opening words at COP27, "*We are on a highway to climate hell.*" Speaking later, Al Gore described our current approach as a "*culture of death*".

It will be important then that the church is not just a passive onlooker to all this. How we care for those caught up in the strains placed on society will say much about the church in the coming years. Justin Welby was clear in his words to a faith gathering in the run up to COP26 in 2021:

"To live out my Christian faith is to follow Jesus. That must include standing alongside the most vulnerable and marginalized on the frontlines of the climate emergency... Now is the time for action."

Providing some of the necessary foundations for such action, the CofE's environmental team looked at the theology behind our response to the climate emergency in one of their recent webinars. Among the points made were:

- **Climate change is a context not an issue.** We shouldn't make a neat package of environmental concern; rather it should permeate all our thinking and theology.
- **The ecological crisis is also a humanitarian one.** As CS Lewis put it, "*What we call Man's (sic) power over nature turns out to be a power exercised by some men over other men with nature as its instrument.*"
- **Individual lifestyle changes and 'getting our house in order' can only be part of our response.** While consumer changes can make a difference, we mustn't let business and government allow the consumer-choice

approach to deflect from the need for systemic change as well. Equally, we must remember that not all are in a position to choose.

The things we can do ourselves do of course remain important; just as long as we remember that they're not everything. Nor should we let industry and government make us feel it's all our fault in the first place.

You might want to think about:

- undertaking a personal carbon footprint audit
- your local journeys: could you walk or cycle; perhaps car-share for coming to church services...
- adhering to the principles of reduce, re-use, recycle
- using Fairtrade and/or ethically sourced goods
- ethical investment of personal savings

If you'd like to look through these issues in more detail, then here are a few sources which may help:

Green Christian have produced an A4 leaflet called [Nine Ways of living gently on the Earth](#) which looks at ways we can live in a way that respects what God has made¹.

If you're looking to think through the impact your lifestyle has on the poor and on the planet then Arocha have produced a useful introduction – [Auditing your lifestyle](#)². A key recommendation here is for us to use the Creation Care website to carry through a detailed audit of what we do. This uses categories and questions based on those in the Eco Church survey, but directly related to our personal lives. You can find it at <https://creationcare.org.uk/>.

Finally, for those with some spare time, you may like to listen to some of the talks from the *Sustaining Church* conference run last year by Hazelnut Community Farm³ up in Bristol. This looked at reimagining communities of faith in climate crisis and the talks can be found on their YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/c/HazelnutCommunity>.

Richard Carpenter

¹On <https://greenchristian.org.uk> – follow Resources / All resources / Leaflets to find it. As we reflect on the outcomes of COP15 you may also find it useful to look through their Biodiversity leaflet.

²From <https://arocha.org.uk/> click on Eco Church and then Explore our Resources. The leaflet is in the Lifestyle section.

³<https://hazelnutcommunityfarm.com>

Prayer Ministry at St James

As most things appear to have changed since the pandemic, so has the prayer ministry team and the way we deliver prayer ministry to our church family.

In May last year, the prayer ministry team completed a day's training led by Alison and Roger Morgan. Alison reminded us that the two pillars of prayer ministry are the Holy Spirit and the word of God. Looking at stories from the Bible, we observed different types of healing such as physical, spiritual, mental and emotional as well as the healing of the land. We discovered that healing was an extension of God's 'shalom' – his desire to bring about peace and wholeness to his creation.

In September, the prayer ministry team was commissioned and prayer is now available after morning worship service and during each communion service.

As a church, prayer underpins what we do and say. For this reason, we meet before the morning worship service, pray for the service listening to the Holy Spirit's guidance and revelation of any specific needs/insights. As a team, we plan to meet three times a year to pray, receive further training and safeguarding updates as well as review how the prayer ministry is developing.

At a recent meeting, we encouraged

one another, shared our experiences and studied 1Corinthians 12 verses 4-11 which lists the gifts of the spirit of wisdom, knowledge, faith, healings, miracles, prophecy, discernment of spirits, tongues, and interpretation of tongues. These gifts not permanent possession, but manifestations of God's presence and generosity. Therefore, we want to open up to God's working and his gifts as we pray for and with each other.

As a team we have been considering the most suitable space within the church to undertake prayer ministry which is both confidential but remains visible to the church. We are trying out the area near the pulpit and in front of the small chapel. This is away from the coffee and sofa area and thus will be difficult for others to overhear conversations. You will note that there are different coloured chairs (lilac) to designate prayer ministry and chairs available for waiting against the wall. There will also be a new banner marking the area as well.

We would like to encourage everyone who comes to St James', church family and visitors, to feel comfortable to ask for prayer. God wants to bless and move 'mountains-like' situations in our life. No matter how impossible our circumstances may seem to us, the prayer ministry team is there to bring those 'mountains-like' situations to God.

Coming for prayer can be a little bit daunting, so we want to reassure you that the team has been trained in matters of confidentiality and safeguarding. We are committed to listen to you with the highest respect and sensitivity.

Sue Lucas and Vicky Dykes lead the prayer ministry team and are supported by Anne Tuckley.

The Prayer Chain is also part of the prayer ministry that the church provides for those that need urgent prayer for a specific occurrence, such as a hospital admission, operation, those at the end of life and any other important events. Please use: St James Prayer

prayer@stjamestaunton.co.uk

to leave any messages you would like prayer for. Messages are picked up daily and an anonymous email is sent to all in the prayer chain. Again, confidentiality is maintained through the whole process.

Anne Tuckley supported by Sue Lucas oversees the prayer chain ministry.

These are just two of the many ways people of St James pray together.

Anne Tuckley



Wilder Churches

Spring is here and there are lots of green things to see if you take a few moments to observe. Birds and squirrels are busy in the church grounds, and there are two new hazel trees which, in time, will feed a variety of wildlife.

The hazel saplings were given to churches across the Diocese on the occasion of the new Bishop's installation in November. Bishop Michael, who is a bee-keeper and co-owner of a small wood, has a keen interest in the environment!



Scientific name: *Corylus avellana*

Family: Betulaceae Origin: native

Hazel is often coppiced but when left to grow, trees can reach a height of 12m and live for up to 80 years (if coppiced, hazel can live for several hundred years). It has a smooth, grey-brown, bark, which peels with age, and bendy, hairy stems. Leaf buds are oval, blunt and hairy.

(Coppicing is a traditional method of woodland management which exploits the capacity of many species of trees to put out new shoots from their stump or roots if cut down. In a coppiced wood, which is called a copse, young tree stems are repeatedly cut down to near ground level, resulting in a stool. New growth emerges, and after a number of years, the coppiced tree is harvested, and the cycle begins anew. Pollarding is a similar process carried out at a higher level on the tree in order to prevent grazing animals from eating new shoots.)

Look out for: leaves which are soft to the touch as a result of the downy hairs on the underside. Identified in winter by its nuts, which are each held in a short, leafy husk which encloses about three quarters of the nut. Small, green catkins can be present in autumn.

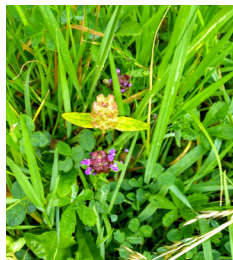
Grass Cutting

The mowing team from Somerset West and Taunton Council will be continuing the new grass cutting regime. A variety of grass lengths can encourage our wildlife. The area where we planted the honeysuckle now has posts to delineate it, and is protected from the mower!

Other than the flat tablet memorials, to which they will give a low cut, the rest of the area will be cut slightly higher, so that more grass will be present on site, however this will all be cut and collected.

The small front grass areas on the South side will be left for a period of the cutting season, having received its first or second cut (depending on how early they start cutting) from the start of May through to mid-July, when it will be cut down and

collected. We will mow paths through this and the meadow area in order to encourage exploration (by you and anyone else interested!). The grass cutting season runs from mid-March/early April through to mid/late October (depending on the season) and the grass is cut once a month.



Short grass

This helps ground feeding birds such as thrushes and wagtails. It may contain wild flowers close to the ground (wild thyme or self-heal for example) and it can have rare grassland fungi which are able to push through the short grass.

Prunella vulgaris, the common self-heal, heal-all, woundwort, is an herbaceous plant in the mint family.
(Photo from the church grounds last June)

Medium grass...

...may contain some low-flowering plants such as clover, bird's-foot trefoil, self-heal. Flowers attract insects (bees in particular if clovers are present), other invertebrates, small mammals and reptiles such as slow worms... (I don't think we have slow worms!)

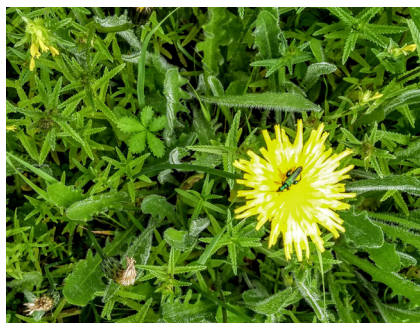
Long grass

This is likely to contain more plant and animal life than medium grass and far more than short grass. It allows plants to flower and set seed. If the site contains unimproved, old grassland then the range of flowers may be spectacular. It contains a wealth of animal life: bees and butterflies are attracted to flowers whilst beetles, grasshoppers and bumblebees use long grass for cover. Amphibians, reptiles and small mammals hunt for food in long grass.

You may like to consider having a 'No Mow May', 'Let it Bloom June' and a 'Knee High July' in part of your garden, or grow some annual flowers for pollinators, perhaps in a pot? You could try Love in a mist (*Nigella*), nasturtiums or marigolds. Seed mixes are easy to find.

Look out for early bees and butterflies in the church meadow area. Our bug hotel and hedge will have provided good winter homes for these.

Our resown meadow area will be showing Yellow Rattle plants clearly by mid Spring. You can see their pointy leaves in this photo from early summer. I wonder if you can identify 2 other plants and the beetle?



Sue Carpenter

Mothering Sunday - 19th March (fourth Sunday in Lent)

Mothering Sunday is a day of mixed emotions. For many it's a happy, joyous day, but for others it's one of pain and grief. A day to celebrate love, while acknowledging those who cannot have children or have lost them and those who have no relationship with their mother.

In the dying moments of His life, Jesus honored Mary his mother by showing her love and care. He entrusted His mother to John's protection: 'When Jesus saw His mother there, and the disciple whom He loved standing nearby, He said to her, 'Woman, here is your son,' and to the disciple, 'Here is your mother.' From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.' (John 19:26,27). While affirming the importance of mothers, Jesus reminds us that the love we show on Mothering Sunday is just a token of our continuous appreciation of them.

Jesus also creates a new way of being family, marking the beginnings of the church. In the past, people would go back to their 'mother' church on this Sunday, to acknowledge its importance in their lives. Jesus invites us into this new family of love and mutual belonging, where we can find a place, irrespective of our own family circumstances.

Church is not always an easy place to be, because we are shaped by our own experience of mothering. We may find it hard to give or receive love without ourselves getting in the way. However, God's help is available to change things, 'because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.' (Romans 5:5)

The mother of three difficult youngsters was asked whether she'd have children if she had it to do over again. 'Yes,' she replied. 'But not the same ones.'

Canon Paul Hardingham



Remember -

clocks spring forward at
1am Sunday 26th March



Wanted - Treasure(r)



Having worn several different hats over the years at St James, one role I had never envisaged was becoming the Church Treasurer. Since 2013, I have had the privilege of looking after the church finances, and having had this role for approaching 10 years, feel it is time to pass this on to someone new. Previously the role was more extensive, but the posts of Gift Aid/Stewardship officer and payroll were made separate. I still work closely with them, but it makes the job a lot more manageable.

Firstly, it is important to say that no financial/accounting background is required, and I would be able to assist in getting you up to speed over the first year, during the handover. My only accounting experience, before taking on the post, was keeping basic income/expenditure records as a self-employed photographer. An understanding of the mystery of spreadsheets is helpful but not essential.



The system hasn't changed much over the past 20+ years and I am still using the same software and spreadsheets passed on to me by Les and Tina Andrews who had done a fantastic job for 13 years previously.

The time commitment over a month is usually around 10-12 hours although this does increase at year end for the preparation of the yearly accounts and presentation of the Annual Report.

The following is an overview of the role:

- Payment of invoices received from contractors and claims from church members.
- Banking of cash and cheques, mainly from weekly collections, and setting up occasional direct debits etc.
- Recording all income and expenditure into Quicken Software.
- Preparation of a bi-monthly finance report for PCC and yearly accounts for auditing.
- Keeping a watchful eye over income and expenditure and general health of church finances.

Being a Treasurer is a very satisfying role and it is great to be involved in the day-to-day practical running of the church. God is full of surprises, and I would never have seen this as part of my giving to St. James.

If you feel God is prompting you to find out more, or you know someone who may be interested, come and have a chat with me.

Richard Sainsbury

THE POWER OF ONE

Once upon a time, there was an old man who used to go down to the sea in the early morning. He walked along the beach before he started his work as a writer. One day, he was going along the shore after a big storm and found the vast beach littered with starfish as far as the eye could see, stretching in both directions.

In the distance, the old man noticed a young boy approaching. As the boy walked, he paused every so often, and as he grew closer, the man could see he was occasionally bending down to pick something up and throw it into the sea. “Good morning,” he said to the boy. “May I ask what you are doing?”

The boy paused, looked up and said, “Throwing starfish into the sea. The tide has washed them up onto the beach and they can’t return to the water themselves. When the sun gets up, they will die unless I throw them back.”



The old man replied, “But there must be tens of thousands of starfish on this beach. I’m afraid you won’t really be able to make much of a difference.”

The boy bent down, picked up yet another starfish and threw it as far as he could into the sea. Then he turned, smiled, and said, “I made a difference to that one.”

(Adapted from The Star Thrower by Lora Eiseley)



Some years ago, a member of a previous church homegroup taught me something which I’ve never forgotten. He was supporting a friend who was terminally ill, giving them lots of his time by visiting and providing practical help. He told me that even if he was only making a difference to just one person, it was worth doing.

In John’s gospel, a crowd of over 5,000 people gathered on a mountainside to hear Jesus speak. There was a problem. The crowd had nothing to eat. Then a boy offered his lunch to the anxious disciples. I don’t suppose he thought

that he would make any difference at all, but Jesus performed a miracle and produced enough food to feed everyone. You might say that's the potential power of one + one when we are blessed by Jesus.

I have read about the effects which a Sunday School teacher can have on the lives of young people they have taught. (Let's give grateful thanks for those who do this work at our church). One of those young people may grow up to become a great evangelist, sharing the Good News of Jesus to millions of people. But, what if the rest of us only make a difference to just one person? Is that any less worthy in God's eyes? I don't think so. We live in a world which seems to emphasise the importance of bigger numbers of things (exam pass rates, the economy, church attendances, etc). However, quantity and value don't always mean the same thing. In the parable of the lost sheep, Jesus talked about his joy when 1 lost sheep returns to the fold and how much greater pleasure that gives him compared to the 99 others who hadn't strayed.

Jesus said that we are the salt of the earth, and how we should let our light shine before us so people can see our good work. And, in my opinion, so that people can see what makes us really tick. You may be the only Christian in your family, in your workplace, in your school, or in your care home. But you may have been put there by God to make a difference to someone. How simply awesome and life-affirming is that!

Anton Chekhov was a Russian writer and playwright who lived in the early 20th century. He was also a devotedly public-spirited person. He worked as a doctor to the poor, often without pay, and built four schools for peasant children from his own funds. He also publicised the atrocious conditions which prisoners had to endure on the Pacific island of Sakhalin. On one occasion, he wrote to a friend, 'If every man did what he could on his little patch of soil, how marvellous our world would be.'

That's the power of one man, woman or child. After that, God will do whatever multiplication is necessary.

Andy Hall

St James' Players

Stable Manners

...not a Nativity play

At the end of January, we turned St James Church into a theatre for a new musical comedy written and directed by Chris Doyle. It took a sideways look at events of Christmas and Epiphany from the point of view of ordinary people who were there 2000 years ago...and some who were not! These feedback quotes seem to say it all.

"What an enjoyable evening we had! The best 'amateur' production we have ever seen. Congratulations to Chris for his creativity with the script, the direction and the humour which all worked together to produce a cohesive and very entertaining play. I was impressed by the way each scene merged into the next so effortlessly and by the clever use of Church space. The 'modern' employment of screens with carefully selected images was also effective. A very talented all singing and all dancing cast and a great opportunity for your talented youngsters to develop their natural skills. And last but not least well done Sue with the choreography - so professional! We will look forward to the next production. God has surely blessed you in the making of this production and I hope and pray that the original intention for evangelism in your community will be realised.

*With love in Christ,"
Jacqui*

"Well done to you and your cast for a very enjoyable show last night. Sue and I both thought it was very well written and we particularly liked the projected backdrops, especially the three camels; you obviously have some good technical people to help." - John A



Photos: Chris Buckman - thank you, Chris! Ed.



"We came to see it last night and it was spectacular and Very Professional! So much so that if it was on at the Brewhouse we wouldn't mind seeing it there! My daughter loved the sheep and the songs too." (M&S)



"Well done! What an amazing production from beginning to end. My brother and daughter didn't stop talking about it all the way home". (Lyn)

*"Oh no, no, no...that's not the end...that's just the beginning..."
- an angel*

The Director, cast and crew are very grateful to the lovely and very generous audiences - around 400 people came to see the show over three nights. Ticket sales and donations raised £1682 which will be shared between Taunton Food Bank and ACT (Uganda), a charity working directly with children with disabilities in Uganda.

STOP PRESS: We've just heard that in June this year Ruth Preater Gillard is going with a team of 6 to help with the ACTS /Alleviate project in Uganda. She's been thinking and praying about this for a while. Watch out for further news.

Faith everywhere



For our final thoughts on the CofE's vision we look at the final pair of their *bold outcomes* mentioned in earlier articles.

One of the great strengths (and opportunities) of the CofE is its ubiquity. So, among these hoped-for outcomes, we find the church seeking for ways in which everyone can find their way into an expression of church that is accessible and relevant for them. It is felt that this would require:

- **A parish system revitalised for mission** so churches can reach and serve everyone in their community
- **Creating ten thousand new Christian communities** across the four areas of home, work/education, social and digital.

Beyond these structural changes there remains the need for each of us to take our faith everywhere we go and so ensure that the gospel can reach everyone, everywhere.

It has to be recognised that the overwhelming majority of Christian communities today are based in/on a now fast disappearing world; one of stable communities whose horizon was often just that – only as far as one could see. One where you had your place – now we realise that each of us has more than just one identity and so live within several different communities. These can be far reaching and even virtual with membership across the world. We need to explore how Christian presence can be established in each one.

A second key factor is that our service occurs in the others' community, not in ours. We are called to leave our safe bubble and be within the world. The church is not some ring-fenced body lobbing grenades into the communities around it; it must sit firmly within its context and walk with those sharing its space.

As he looks to revitalise the diocesan vision, Bishop Michael has identified four key areas where he sees development as a prerequisite if we are to see the church in Bath & Wells truly "*living and telling the story of Jesus*". Among them is the need to build *new worshipping communities*.



He notes that: “... *the ways in which our traditional congregations worship doesn’t seem to be so attractive to people of younger generations. We’re all conscious that most of our traditional congregations are aging. Yet we see that when we provide ways to express faith in ways that are different from the usual Sunday offering, people who’d never normally come on a Sunday morning seem keen to get involved – especially children, young people and families.*”

He goes on to pose two questions for us: “...*I want to hear how we are experiencing offering the substance of our faith but in new forms. Across the diocese – how are we forming new worshipping communities in our different contexts?*”

Many of these will be nothing like the thing we call ‘church’ today – there will be different settings, structures, forms, times, etc. The aim though is to enable a sustainable presence in every neighbourhood and see communities of faith in all contexts, both online and in-person.

In another strand¹ the Bishop describes the need to develop *shared local ministry*. He notes the failure and fallacy of the current – late-Victorian (if not medieval) – model of ministry as it wastes so many people’s talents, gifts and passions while causing burn-out in others. This will require the recognition that each of us has a calling that will be ‘equal but different’.

This is an ongoing process and the thoughts and stories of all are sought – for further information see <https://www.bathandwells.org.uk/how-are-we-living-and-telling-the-story-of-jesus.php>

As we travel this road, I end this series with a prayer of a previous Bishop of Bath and Wells (Jim Thompson):

“Lord God, you are the journey and the journey’s end. Be with us in our pilgrimage together as hand in hand, step by step, we seek your truth. Keep us on the right path, your path, so that when the noise of the everyday world crowds in we can keep listening for your loving voice, safe in the knowledge that you are with us always. Amen.”

Richard Carpenter

¹*The two other strands identified by Bishop Michael are: valuing and cherishing the people we already have and developing our faith.*

...MISSION



Street Pastors will be the focus in one of our March services. Street Pastors are part of a national team first pioneered in 2003, and continue to grow throughout the UK and across the world. Street Pastors are trained volunteers from local churches who care about our community.



They are led by a local coordinator and also have support from local churches and community groups in partnership with the police, local council and other statutory agencies. There are teams involved in the community during the daytime too, involved with residents, taking part in local litter picks and offering a genuinely caring and listening presence.

Post-Covid, Street Pastors' patrols are back in operation in Taunton, Wellington and Bridgwater, where the night entertainment scene is now more active.

If you want to know more talk to Chris Buckman, Sue Doyle, Vivian Turner, Tessa Smith, Ruth Dunn or Hannah Buckman (our youngest Somerset trained Street Pastor). Have a look at the Street Pastors video, you may see some faces you recognise! <https://streetpastors.org/locations/taunton/>

Our April focus is on **The Besom** which has been serving in Taunton since 2005. It aims to be a bridge between members and groups from local churches in the Taunton/Wellington areas who want to give and those who are in need. In the current difficult financial circumstances, Besom is receiving more and varied referrals from the many social working agencies with whom they work but all that Besom provides and does is free of charge to both recipient and referring agencies. Besom is solely funded by churches and individual donations.



This includes providing:

- furniture and household items that have been donated
- starter packs of basic kitchen and household items – for those moving into accommodation with virtually nothing
- crisis food boxes
- help with gardening, decorating and small DIY projects

To support or get involved with Besom you can:

- Pray – you can sign up to receive a monthly prayer letter
- Give your time –
 - On the van team, collecting and delivering furniture and starter packs
 - On the crisis food box teams delivering the boxes
 - On a project team, helping with gardening, decorating and DIY
 - On the warehouse team on a Tuesday or Thursday morning, sorting and cleaning donated items, preparing and co-ordinating the starter pack deliveries
 - Supporting the behind-the-scenes administration
- Give your good quality, unwanted furniture and household items
- Give non-perishable food supplies for the crisis food boxes
- Give financially

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

tauntonbesom.org.uk or call 07432 629444.

In May, we will be focusing on **WEC (World Evangelisation for Christ)** and we hope David and Margie Whitehorn will visit us at some point in 2023.



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 retiring this year as Area Directors for Africa where with two other colleagues their 'patch' has included Central, West, East and South Africa. They are currently paying their final visits to the African bases to hand over to new colleagues, Silvian and Tamar and take part in various conferences and training opportunities. Their final visit will be to Mozambique in August. They will continue their involvement in WEC on a part time basis and are currently seeking God's leading as to what he has in store for them, both in WEC and in their local community in Sheffield, where they are involved in a multi-ethnic community project called Galeed.

Please pray for them during this period of discernment and in the time of ending for what has been for them a period of ministry that has extended for over three decades. Please pray too for their wider family, Ruth and Mark and their family who are working for Betel an Allied WEC ministry and for Esther.

David and Margie send us regular news in the newsletter which is posted on our website pages <http://stjamestaunton.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Whitehorns-December-2022.pdf>

Jenny Wakefield

There is a Green Hill Far Away

'There is a Green Hill Far Away' was written by Cecil Frances Alexander who lived from 1818-1895. She drew inspiration from the Apostles Creed, especially the line, 'suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried'.

It is believed to have been written at the bedside of a sick, young person. Cecil Alexander gives substance and answer to those who inquire why Jesus died. She talks about God's forgiveness. She speaks of how man can reclaim his original close relationship with God and suggests the only possible response is the total giving of a loving self.

I have reflected on the footfall that this hill must have held over the centuries and it has been the inspiration for my thoughts of a hill I know so well.

Bridget Hall



There is a Green Hill that I hold dear,
Known as Common Hill on the outskirts of Beer.
Deeply embedded with memories of the feet trodden here,
Pulsing with gladness, pleasure, panic, sadness, joy and fear.

From Early Man who prized the black flint for tool making;
A refuge for the villagers escaping the plague;
Smugglers, who on moonless nights stole this way with their loot;
Quarrymen, stone deaf, working in the caves below;
The cliffside where a young man took his life in 2019;
Samples of Beer Greensand sent into space to prove that the living
organisms within the rock could survive and did grow there.

This too is a 'Green Hill' that has felt the footsteps of all time and through
all ages.

The light scamper of excited children on holiday, the daily tramp of dog
walkers, the churning feet of cows and sheep that graze the hill, the
light touch from birds and butterflies, the velvet pad of paw and claw, the
dallying steps of lovers, the purposeful stride of the ramblers, the jogging
feet of runners, the dragging feet of the weary, the furtive steps of the
guilty, the tentative steps of the fearful, the panicked feet rushing from
danger, the vigilant steps of the coastguards are all impressed deep into
the soil here.

So blessed am I to tread the ground lightly, becoming part of the rich
history that spills from the earth, the rocks, the plants, the air, the
changing light in the sky above this very dear and special place.

I return now, to think of those last days of Jesus before his crucifixion
and resurrection, so wonderfully expressed in Cecil Alexander's hymn.
I think of the feet of the disciples that Jesus washed, a gesture of such
all-encompassing, overwhelming and humbling love.

I think of the slow, staggering footsteps of Jesus as he made his painful
walk to the hill on the outskirts of Jerusalem.

I think of the quickened steps of the women at the empty tomb, as they
ran elated to spread the word,

'He is risen, He is risen!'

School News

Christmas seems a long time away now and, with the start of the new term, the school is looking more towards Easter. For the year 6 children there will be the challenge of their SATs and preparations for moving on to senior school.

However, it's good to look back to that very special time of year when parents and children were remembering or learning anew about the familiar story of Christmas and coming to services in the church. It's quite an exhausting time for teachers and children as they prepare their class contribution, practise their singing and for those in the Ethos Group, help to mastermind the services with the help of Ms. Forbes. At St James our tech team has to adapt the church's system to the needs of the classes, and Ian has to arrange and rearrange the chairs for rehearsals, whole school performances, and Christingle. But chaos is kept at bay and all is well, and nothing much left behind – except the manger... they borrowed ours!

It is a real joy for Fabian, Dave and those involved with the school to meet and greet the children and the parents, and of course we get to see the Nativity from rehearsal to final performance. Well done Mrs. Yarde and thank you for the picture.



As with any community, change is a constant and schools face the unending challenge of new policies and ideas as they seek to remain places of security and safety where children can learn despite the ups and down of life. Looking at the January Chatterbox Newsletter, I was struck by the comment:

*Kindness is the golden thread running
through St James Church School*

In your prayers please do remember the children, parents, head, senior leaders, teachers, support staff, governors and volunteers who are involved in the school and all the schools in our parish and Taunton.

- Pray that that the children will learn not only about things academic but also how to live lives that are kind and considerate. Pray especially for those moving on this year, that they will be prepared well for their future.
- Pray for teachers and staff that they will have the energy, resilience and patience that they need.
- Pray for parents, especially those who are struggling with economic and other uncertainties.
- Pray for Governors that they will make wise and informed decisions that support the school in its complex entirety.



Christmas Lethargy

Over the Christmas period I picked up the fluey, bug virus that seemed to be going around. It started Sunday 18 December, I had a slight sore throat and was at the 10.30 service then rang for the Carol service and was on duty.

From then on, my health deteriorated and I was not fully over this until 27 December. I did keep away from church as I did not want to spread this, but it was not Covid.

I am ashamed to say that I did not practise what I preached in the last magazine, giving the day to the Lord, praying and reading my bible. I was in a dark place, unwell and feeling sorry for myself – I had not even picked my bible up. I did pray but were these lukewarm prayers?

Thursday 29 December I returned to work and rang bells for the wedding at St James in my lunchbreak.

That night I picked up my bible, started reading, using my UCB Word For Today bible notes and catching up. 18 December – ‘Pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us’ Psalm 62:8

I certainly felt better just having started to get back on track. We cannot manage alone, times will still be tough. I/we will have our dark days but we do not need to be alone. We can pray anywhere day or night, read our bible and study notes – some days they are like they have just been written for me or my situation.

The lighter evenings are on their way but we give thanks for all the blessing of creation.

Joycey

Learn to bell-ring for King's Coronation!

The Coronation of the King and the Queen Consort will be held in Westminster Abbey on Saturday 6th May, conducted by the Archbishop of Canterbury. A Palace statement says it will “reflect the monarch’s role today and look towards the future while being rooted in longstanding traditions and pageantry.”

Meanwhile, in preparation for the Coronation, a national call has been made to recruit thousands of new bell ringers to ring in the new King in May. A new website, Ring for the King, (ringforthe king.org) has been set up for this purpose by The Central Council of Church Bell Ringers, especially hoping to encourage young people to try their hand.

Bellringing is “an activity like no other – a unique mix of physical exercise with mental agility...a deep part of our history but still practised and evolving today.” After ten to 15 hours of one-to-one tuition, a beginner can learn and begin to ring with others.

There are about 38,000 church bells, but only 30,000 ringers in the UK. The Central Council has said that a swell of new recruits in time for the Coronation would be ‘fantastic’.

If you're interested, talk to Marian Gentile, Tower Captain at St James.

Time



*I don't know about you
but since Covid began
to ebb, and we lost
those facemasks, and
started getting back*

*to 'normal', life seems to have
got busier and more frenetic and then
Christmas approached. HELP!*

*Then I was reminded of a poem I had
read in my late teens by Abbe Michel
Quoist called:*

Lord I have Time

**"All men complain that they
haven't enough time. They look at
their lives from too human a point
of view. There is always time to do
what God wants us to do, but we
must put ourselves completely into
each moment that he offers us.**

I went out, Lord.
People were coming and going,
Walking and running.
Everything was rushing:
Cars, trucks, the street, the whole
town.
People were rushing not to waste
time.
They were rushing after time,
To catch up with time.
To gain time.

Good-bye, Sir, excuse me, I
haven't time.

I'll come back. I can't wait. I
haven't time.

I must end this letter – I haven't
time.

I'd love to help you, but I haven't
time.

I can't accept, having no time.

I can't think, I can't read, I'm
swamped, I haven't time.

I'd like to pray, but I haven't time.

You understand, Lord,
They simply haven't the time.

The child is playing,
He hasn't time right now...Later
on...

The schoolboy has his homework
to do,

He hasn't time...Later on...

The student has his courses,
And so much work...Later on...

The young married man has his
new house;

He has to fix it up...He hasn't
time...Later on...

The grandparents have their
grandchildren.

They haven't time...Later on...

They are ill, they have their
treatments,

They haven't time...Later on...

They are dying, they have no...

Too late!...They have no more
time!

And so all people run after time,
Lord.

They pass through life running—
Hurried, jostled, overburdened,
frantic,

And they never get there. They
haven't time.

In spite of all their efforts
They're still short of time,
Of a great deal of time.

Lord, you must have made a
mistake in your calculations,
There is a big mistake somewhere.
The hours are too short.
Our lives are too short.

You who are beyond time, Lord,
You smile to see us fighting it.
And you know what you are doing.
You make no mistakes in your
distribution of time to men.

You give each one time to do what
you want him to do.

But we must not lose time,
waste time,
kill time,

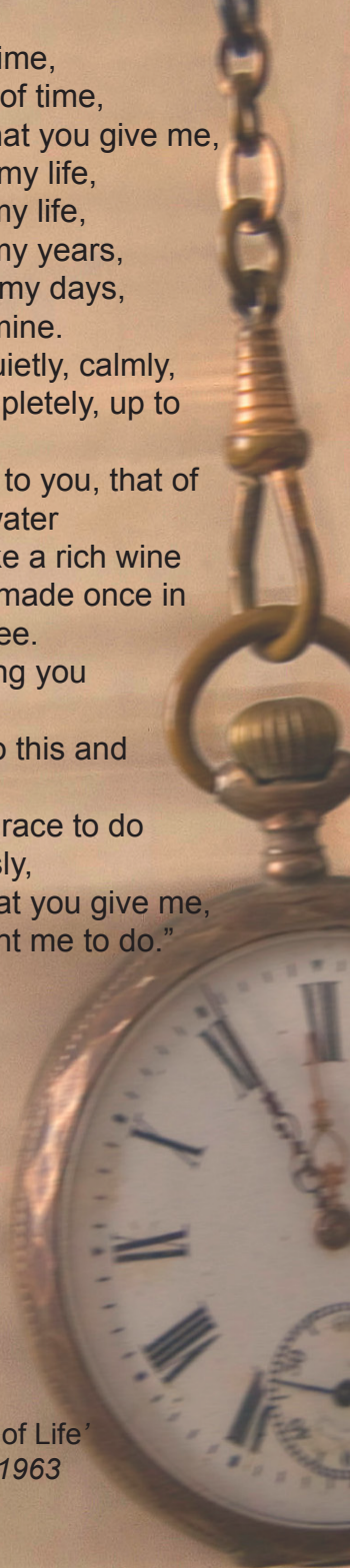
For it is a gift that you give us,
But a perishable gift,
A gift that does not keep.

Lord, I have time,
I have plenty of time,
All the time that you give me,
The years of my life,
The days of my life,
The days of my years,
The hours of my days,
They are all mine.

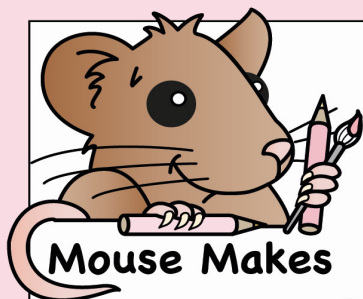
Mine to fill, quietly, calmly,
But to fill completely, up to the
brim,
To offer them to you, that of
their insipid water
You may make a rich wine
Such as you made once in
Cana of Galilee.

I am not asking you
tonight, Lord,
For time to do this and
then that,
But for your grace to do
conscientiously,
In the time that you give me,
What you want me to do."

*From 'Prayers of Life'
Michel Quoist 1963*



Young Peoples' Pages



WHO IS MY MOTHER?

CAIN	ELIZABETH
ISAAC	HANNAH
JESUS	RACHEL
JACOB	REBEKAH
TIMOTHY	EVE
JOSEPH	MARY
SAMUEL	SARAH
JOHN	EUNICE

Look up the Bible verses then find the answers and the names below in the word search



REBEKAH
ELIZABETH
EUNICE
RUTH
MARY
RACHEL
LEAH
ZILPAH
MOTHER
MUM

BIBLE MOTHERS

Who had two sons called Cain and Abel?

— — — — —
Genesis 4:1-2

Who was 90 years old when she had her son Isaac?

— — — — —
Genesis 17:19

Whose prayers for a child were answered by God?

— — — — —
1 Samuel 1:20

Who was Ruth's Mother-in-Law?

— — — — —
Ruth 1:1-5

Eunice was Timothy's mother, but who was her mother?

— — — — —
2 Timothy 1:5

Who saved her baby by putting him in a basket in the river?

— — — — —
Exodus 6:20

Look up the Bible verses and find out who the Bible mothers are.



M — — — — —
Matt 1:16

O — — — — —
2 Tim 1:5

T — — — — —
1 Kings 1:11

H — — — — —
1 Sam 1:20

E — — — — —
Gen 34:1

R — — — — —
Gen 30:22

How many other words can you make from:

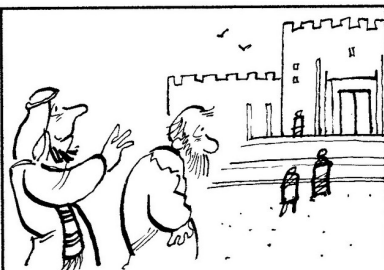
MOTHERING SUNDAY



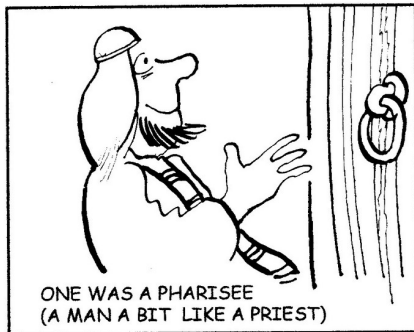
E E L O I S Z I L A M J H
U V N Z M A R Y Z U O Z R
N E A D U R U T H L T I A
I J O C H A B E D E H L C
C I M B J H M U M A E P H
E L I Z A B E T H H R A E
R E B E K A H A N N A H L

The
Tale of the
**TWO MEN
SAYING
THEIR
PRAYERS**

**JESUS OFTEN TOLD
STORIES WITH
HIDDEN MEANINGS**



**ONE WAS ABOUT TWO MEN WHO
WENT TO THE TEMPLE TO PRAY**



**ONE WAS A PHARISEE
(A MAN A BIT LIKE A PRIEST)**

**THE OTHER WAS A TAX
COLLECTOR. (NOT A POPULAR
MAN IN JESUS' DAY!).**



**THE PHARISEE BEGAN
TO PRAY**



**WHAT A GREAT CHAP I
AM! I NEVER DO
ANYTHING WRONG!!**



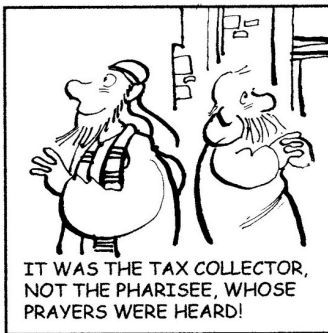
**I AM SO PLEASED WITH MYSELF,
ESPECIALLY AS I AM NOT A SCOUNDREL,
LIKE THIS TAX COLLECTOR!**



**BUT THE TAX
COLLECTOR COULDN'T
EVEN RAISE HIS HEAD**



**DEAR GOD... I AM VERY SORRY!
PLEASE FORGIVE ME FOR
ALL THE WRONG THINGS
I HAVE DONE.**



**IT WAS THE TAX COLLECTOR,
NOT THE PHARISEE, WHOSE
PRAYERS WERE HEARD!**



**JESUS EXPLAINED -
'DON'T BE PROUD WHEN YOU
PRAY - INSTEAD BE HUMBLE!'**

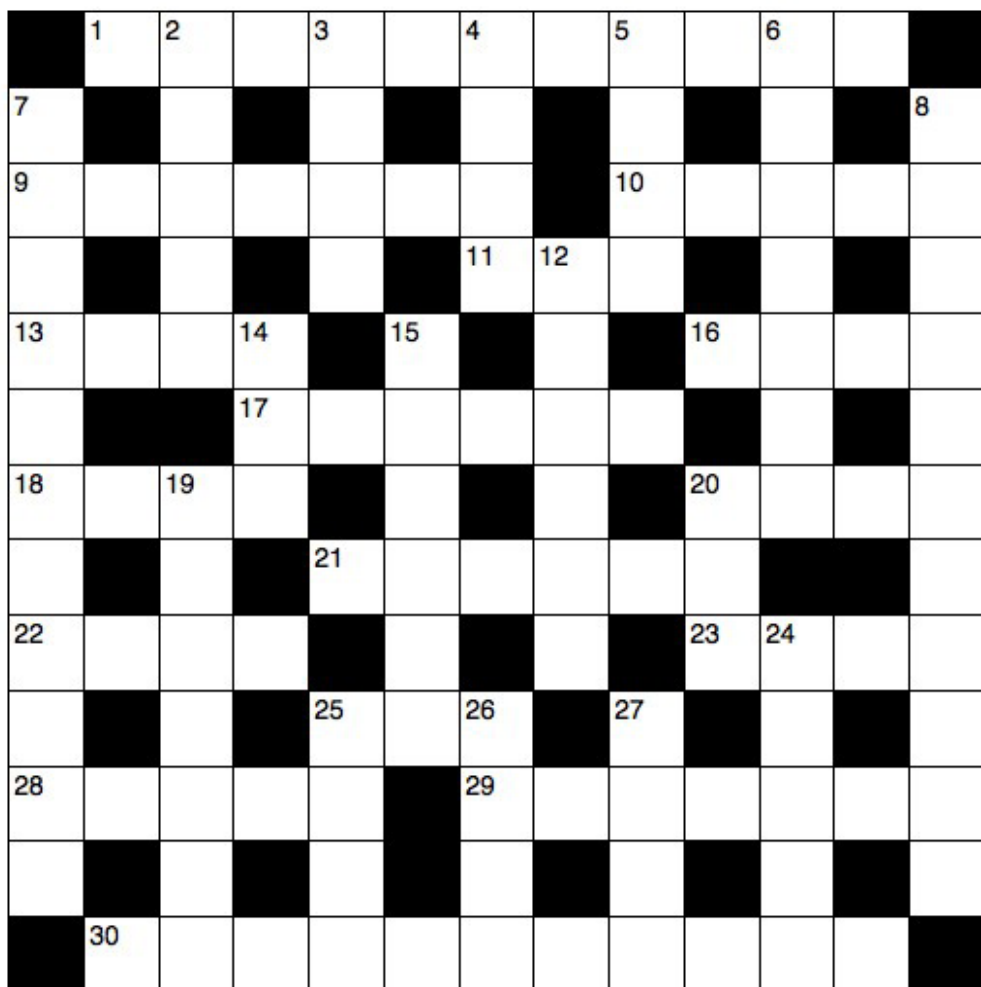
Crossword

Across

- 1 These letters come between Romans and Galatians (11)
- 9 'You will not — me to the grave' (Psalm 16:10) (7)
- 10 King of Moab to whom the Israelites were subject for 18 years (Judges 3:14) (5)
- 11 Town possessing mineral spring (3)
- 13 Mede (anag.) (4)
- 16 High-fidelity (abbrev.) (4)
- 17 He succeeded his father Rehoboam as king of Judah (1 Kings 14:31) (6)
- 18 A son of Simeon (Genesis 46:10) (4)
- 20 Controversial religious book of the 1970s, The — of God Incarnate (4)
- 21 'He has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you — — and hear' (Acts 2:33) (3,3)
- 22 'You — me together in my mother's womb' (Psalm 139:13) (4)
- 23 Edit (anag.) (4)
- 25 'Who has believed our message and to whom has the — of the Lord been revealed?' (Isaiah 53:1) (3)
- 28 Abraham's brother (Genesis 22:23) (5)
- 29 'When Mordecai learned of — that had been — , he tore his clothes' (Esther 4:1) (3,4)
- 30 Sympathetic (Proverbs 11:16) (4-7)

Down

- 2 'That was why his parents said, "He is — —; ask him"' (John 9:23) (2,3)
- 3 Integrated Services Digital Network (1,1,1,1) 4
- 4 'Saul has slain his thousands, and David his — of thousands' (1 Samuel 18:7) (4)
- 5 Concept (John 8:14) (4)
- 6 'Do we, then, — the law by this faith? Not at all! Rather, we uphold the law' (Romans 3:31) (7)
- 7 Industrious (2 Timothy 2:6) (11)
- 8 'I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be — in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you (Ephesians 1:18) (11)
- 12 'Out of the same mouth come — and cursing' (James 3:10) (6)
- 14 This was how many of the Jewish leaders described Jesus (John 10:20) (3)
- 15 Vitality (Job 20:11) (6)
- 19 He urged David to kill Saul at Hakilah (1 Samuel 26:8) (7)
- 20 'So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul — with the church and taught great numbers of people' (Acts 11:26) (3)
- 24 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord — — ' (Deuteronomy 6:4) (2,3)
- 25 Parched (Matthew 12:43) (4)
- 26 'In the image of God he created him; — and female he created them' (Genesis 1:27) (4)
- 27 Disparagement (Psalm 15:3) (4)



Sound familiar...?

A teenager was always asking his father if he could borrow the family car. Pushed to the limit, the father asked his son why he thought that God had given him two feet. Without hesitation, the son replied, "That's easy, one for the clutch and one for the accelerator."

Ard. 26, Male. 27, Slur.

Enlightened. 12, Praise. 14, Mad. 15, Vigour. 19, Abishai. 20, Met. 24, Is one. 25, DOWN: 2, Of age. 3, ISDN. 4, Tens. 5, Idea. 6, Nullify. 7, Hardworking. 8,

29, All done. 30, Kind-hearted.

ACROSS: 1, Corinthians. 9, Abandon. 10, Eglon. 11, Spa. 13, Deem. 16, Hi-fi. 17, Abijah. 18, Ohad. 20, Myth. 21, Now see. 22, Knit. 23, Tide. 25, Arm. 28, Nahor.



The PCC has been discussing...

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

Finances

Each December, Richard Sainsbury presents his forecast of income and expenditure for the following year. For 2023 the projected deficit is £28,860, but this is a worst-case scenario.

The deficit for 2022 will be about £15,000, which is an improvement from the original estimate. This is because of an increase in stewardship and hiring receipts.

The largest item of expenditure is the Parish Share, over which we have little control in setting the amount. The PCC reviewed this and noted that we could be paying over 70% of our income to the diocese, which is unsustainable. Accordingly, the PCC wrote to the diocese saying that we would have to reduce our contribution to avoid draining our reserves, but would commit to a maximum of 55% if our finances improved sufficiently. The diocese has acknowledged our situation, but does not show any signs yet of putting a cap on parishes' contributions.

Holy Communion

With the current 'coming out of Covid' practice of serving Holy Communion now established, the PCC reviewed how well this is working and what changes might need to be made. Here is a summary of the discussion:

- There is no reason not to return to using real bread.
- Given the continuing prevalence of Covid and other viruses, we see no hurry to return to using a 'common cup'.
- The continuing use of the present plastic cups is not intended to be permanent, but replacing them needs careful consideration.
- The occasional congestion around distribution stations is noted and more space can be allowed for this.
- There is no reason that alcoholic wine could not be reintroduced for those requesting it.

Facilities

An application has been made to the diocese to replace the 1975-vintage main church lights with modern LED fittings (the same as the back light in the nave). These lights will be dimmable. We have obtained additional staging units at a very reasonable price. This will make our staging more flexible in how we can set it out.

Mission Review

The annual review of mission giving recommended to continue with the same mission partners, but to reduce the giving selectively so that we minimise the draw on our reserves. Having identified the local organisations that would be adversely affected by this, we have contacted our other partners to advise them of what we are having to do. The planned total giving is a little under our 10% minimum, which leaves us with a contingency sum for short-notice requests.

Evangelical Alliance

The PCC is continuing to review our membership of the EA. The main issue continues to be the pastorally insensitive approach to certain matters when they are conducting lobbying. The PCC agreed that, if we continue to be members, we should take a closer interest in what the EA is doing in our name.

Miscellaneous Matters

- A lunch is being arranged for families with whom we had contact during lockdown. The staff at the Cross Keys pub are doing the cooking!
- Safeguarding – watch out for a letter about refreshing your training.
- The church will continue to be open when there is someone present on the premises.
- A cream tea is being considered for the weekend of the coronation.
- The date of the Annual Meeting has been deferred one day to Tuesday 9 May to clear the coronation bank holiday.
- Watch out for details of Creation Care: “encouraging households to care for God’s world”, which will link to our Eco Church activities.
- There have been enquiries about holding a pet service! Nothing planned yet. If held it would be outdoors and not at 1030 on Sunday.
- The Deanery is looking at how we can minister to the numerous new housing estates appearing across the town.

Martin Wakefield

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