



St James
Church
TAUNTON

St James Church Magazine

June - August 2023



Letter from the Vicar

Rev Fabian Wuyts

Vicar of St James



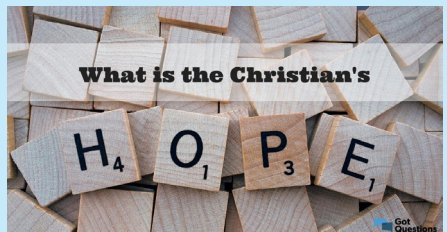
A hopeful people

One of the most loved chapters in all of Scriptures is 1 Corinthians 13 (a favourite reading at weddings!). The chapter ends with the famous phrase, 'And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.' While the themes of love and faith are ever-present in Christian talks and teachings, the concept of hope is often side-lined.



The Cambridge Dictionary defines the noun hope as 'something good that you want to happen in the future, or a confident feeling about what will happen in the future.' In this sense, the word hope expresses what we dream of or wish for in the future. For many today, there is a general hope that the current energy crisis will soon be alleviated, that the war in Ukraine will end and that the cost of living will stop rising. People dream of solutions to tackle global warming or have hopes for advances in medical sciences to combat cancer, Alzheimer's and dementia, to name just a few.

But what about our Christian hope? For too long, the Christian hope has been reduced to the idea of going to heaven when you die. However, close attention to the whole movement in Scriptures should have informed us that the Christian hope is not so much us going up to heaven in the future (although it includes that) as heaven coming down in the present. It is about God interacting with his creation through a nation (Israel) and ultimately through his Son (Emmanuel, God with us) who sets in motion the coming reign of God on earth (the kingdom of God) with his life, death and resurrection.



The Christian hope is therefore a present reality and we should be able to draw attention to the signs of that reality in our individual lives and our communal gatherings.

We are all called from time to time to pause, look back with gratitude, celebrate the signs of the Christian hope at work in us and through us and look to the future in faith, love and hope.

Let us be expectant, looking for God's signs of hope and encouraging each other to pray, discern and respond in faith and obedience to the promptings of God's Holy Spirit.

Prayer for Growth

Heavenly Father, increase in number your Church at St James as you deepen us as followers and learners of Christ.

Help us to show uninhibited reliance on your grace and power as we seek renewal of our lives, our church, our community and our world.

Give us courage, imagination and generosity in order that your kingdom may come and your abundant life be known by all.

We make this prayer in the name and to the glory of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Never forget
that you are made in God's image
He made you and he made you 'good'
You are beautiful and precious in his sight
You are valued more than you know
He has a plan and purpose for your life
He has given you gifts and talents
He will guide you in the best way to go although at times life is not easy
He wants the very best for you- he loves you more than you can think or
imagine
Stand tall, hold your head high - you are loved!

God Bless
Lilian

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Many thanks to all the contributors to this edition of the Magazine. If you have something to share for the September-November 2023 edition, do contact the Editor either directly or through the Church Office - details on page 36.

Deadline for copy is Tuesday 15th August 2023



Faith, hope and love...

Fabian's letter looks at hope while other articles in this edition of the Magazine look at faith and love in action.

Consider Ruth Praeter-Gillard's trip to Uganda, and read Andrew Wright's article about loving our neighbour.

What about the faith that held the women at the foot of the cross? Do read Fiona's article about her experience taking part in this Good Friday service.

And each of these three things plays out in practical, everyday living - feeding the hungry (Easter Banquet), taking the message to holiday makers (United Beach Missions), repairing the fabric of the church or arranging flowers (In the spotlight), supporting Christian charities (Children's Church Fund Raising).

And there's much more to read about in this edition - thank you to all who have contributed. If you have any comments about any articles in the magazine why not email the Editor - dancingdoyle@sky.com - I'd love to hear your views.

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

Ruth Praeter-Gillard
En route to Uganda
June 2023

Dear All at St James,
(individuals and the PCC)

I would like to share my heartfelt thanks and gratitude for your generosity which has been given through encouragement, interest, financial gifts and donations of medical aids, toys, glasses and shoes. All the gifts are being used to enable our group to share our skills and equipment with children and families with disabilities whose access to good healthcare and services is very limited. I feel the trip will be incredibly humbling and I hope to offer my professional support to Patience, who is also an Occupational Therapist employed by the charity in Uganda.

We depart on Sunday 18th June and return on Sunday 2nd July; I will look forward to the opportunity to share our experiences when we return.

If you'd like to donate financially, go to Just Giving (www.justgiving.com) then search for Ruth Praeter-Gillard.

Many thanks
Ruth



L - R: Amy (Neonatal Nurse) Viv (Midwife) Emmanuel (founder of charity) Ruth (Occupational Therapist) Margaret (Physiotherapist)



DIOCESE OF
Bath & Wells

Living the story. Telling the story.

Letter from Bishop Michael, Bishop of Bath and Wells

A commitment to serve

'Your Majesty, as children of the kingdom of God we welcome you in the name of the King of kings'. In reply to these opening words at his Coronation, King Charles III responded 'In his name and after his example I come not to be served but to serve.' This short exchange summed up what the service was about and what it intended to convey.

The King's commitment to service is not in any doubt. To give just a few examples, he has engaged with our most challenged communities far more than any politician, he called on us to care for the environment years before it became popular to do so and, of course, founded The Prince's Trust, which supports our most challenged younger people in so many ways.

He becomes king of a new era, the Carolean era. Our times see us face some big challenges. Our question is how to address them. I was immensely struck by all the agencies and charities present in the Abbey for the King's Coronation. Their participation spoke of the ways in which we're going to need to act differently in the years ahead to address the issues that confront us.

Because it's all too evident that the power of government, be that local or national, to respond to the problems we see is less now than it was when the late Queen began her reign. Our challenge in this era is of how we're going to come together, in service, to address the different challenges that lie before us, be that the climate, how we tackle poverty, how we respond to a troubled international situation. All of us will have a part to play.

Where to find the resource to act in the way that's going to be needed? As I stood beside the King at the Coronation what inspired me was to see the way he drew so much strength, purpose and resolve and assurance from his Christian faith for the service he's called to give. And in that we can follow him too.



Bishop Michael



An upside-down world

From the Ten Commandments to the Beatitudes God presents us with his view of life.

The Commandments ban some actions and commend other actions; for example, 'do not kill', 'do not steal', 'do not lie' and 'honour your parents' - Exodus 20:1-17.

The Beatitudes focus on the outcome of specific approaches to life. 'Happy are those who...' - Matt 5.

Jesus taught us that we are to love God wholeheartedly and then reflect that in loving our neighbour - Mark 12:31.

We all know from experience that life is generally about getting on, and people will tend to put themselves first, try to achieve positions that give them 'control'. The result is a divided society where the less able get walked over. Set against the Beatitudes or the statement by Jesus that we are to love our neighbour, there is a stark contrast.

For some years I knew a church minister who summed up the whole situation with the phrase 'God's world is an upside-down world'. The values of the Christian (individually and as a church) are not those of the world at large. Seeking positions of power and control is replaced by aiding the poor, whether that is poverty of money or poverty of ability.

Looking back at the development of modern society, we find Christians leading the way by challenging society's norm. So, slavery was abolished, orphans were housed and fed, workers' rights were championed. While some of the movers and shakers who brought about these changes were motivated by secular ideals, there were many who took their Christian faith out into the world around them and battled to change values.

There are, today, many Christians who work out their faith by supporting and working for organisations that challenge the 'me first' viewpoint and seek to help the poor and the underdog.

How upside down are your values?

Andrew Wright

Care to comment on this or any other article in the magazine? Email the Editor - dancingdoyle@sky.com

Live gently... ...on God's earth



To live gently on the earth is more than simply having a checklist of do's and don'ts. Not that we don't need to do those things, but rather it is having, at the heart of all we are, an attitude of love towards the earth and an acknowledgement of why we love. Nicky Gumbel put it this way:

"We should care for God's Creation – not out of fear about what is going to happen, but out of love ... So Christians should be at the forefront of the environmental cause and movement because in our care for Creation we reflect our love of the Creator."

In considering recent discussions in the national media, I have been struck as to one outworking of this. Too often the focus is not on actually solving the core problem but just providing a manufactured work-around. So, we hear far more about installing heat pumps than about insulation of our homes. Not that those aren't good things, but they're not the answer. Equally, the focus is on us buying electric cars rather than the availability of more people-friendly forms of transport within our communities. Most of the particulate pollution from road vehicles comes from wear to tyres and brakes so is unchanged by any switch to the fuel used.

Creation Care

One way to help us think about how we might approach living gently on God's earth would be to reflect what we currently do. As I mentioned in the last magazine, Creation Care (<https://creationcare.org.uk/>) provide a way for us to identify our impact on the world and so encourage us to make changes to care for God's earth.

If you do register, you can identify yourself as a member of St James. In their list it's shown as St James, Taunton.

Eco group

While we've always said the eco group here at St James is more an umbrella than an organisation it's good to meet up occasionally. We're therefore planning to get together in July before the holidays. Hopefully this can be a springboard for us to sort out a few further aspects of our church life and so be in a position to apply for an Eco Church Bronze award. See the bulletin soon for more details.

Gaia

Did you see the Gaia exhibit at the Minster? What did it say to you? I was struck by how much it says of the earth as a dynamic system with swirls of cloud across so much of the surface. It's just a pity it can't show how dynamic the ocean is as well. Seeing it like that also helps put so much in perspective.

Historically, one of the more significant images that gave us that sense of perspective, of our place in creation, is the one shown here – commonly known as Earth Rise. It was taken from Apollo 8 on 24 December 1968 by Bill Anders. This was the first manned mission to orbit the moon and so its crew the first to see this sight.

Wild Isles

And did you watch Wild Isles? As well as being an intriguing view of the wonders close to home, it also posed a fundamental question for our approach to the wellbeing of the whole world:

How can our remaining nature not just be protected, but actually renewed for future generations?

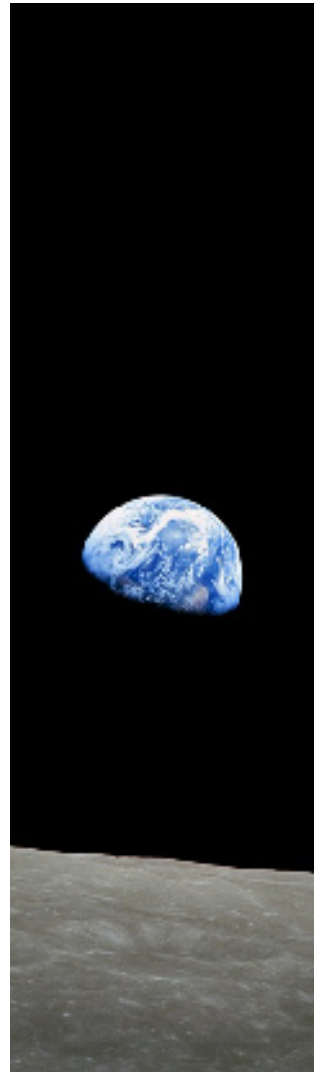
So, living gently on God's earth may require us to be a little less than 'gentle' in our actions at times as we strive to sustain and renew the life of the earth. As the creator of the series said:

"Never has there been a more important time to invest in our own wildlife, to try and set an example for the rest of the world and restore our once wild isles for future generations."

David Attenborough

Richard Carpenter

An interesting footnote: the original Earth Rise photo shows - simply due to the alignment of their orbit - the surface of the moon as a vertical line with the earth off to its left. It was flipped round by 90° for publication to better emphasise the element of rising.



Reflection on Pilgrimage to The Bishop's Palace in April.

The invitation to attend the Pilgrimage Day was, for me, a much needed day of quiet and reflection in what has been and is a very busy few months. Given the amount of rainy days we have had recently, it seemed God given that the sun would shine on the pilgrims from St James. I wanted to take the day as an opportunity to listen to what God wants to say to me, personally. What really touched me was this:

The theme of the day was water. In the afternoon, the reading from Mark was shared. 'Jesus Walks on the Water'. Three phrases leapt out at me: 'The wind was against them' 'He was about to pass them by' and 'Take courage! It is I! Don't be afraid.' After the reading, someone said that they had never noticed that Jesus was going to pass the disciples by. A bit later the Chaplain was talking to us and I looked up and there was a carving of Jesus with his arms outstretched. It felt like his arms were being outstretched to me. It was such an emotive moment, I will never forget that feeling. (Even more poignant for me personally, as it was a carving that my Dad had been commissioned to do for the former Bishop of Bath and Wells, George Carey in 1990, before he became Archbishop of Canterbury.)



Subsequently I have been reminded of a boat trip we took a couple of years ago in Cornwall. I was so determined to go on the trip because I've always wanted to see my favourite beaches from the sea. The captain warned us that the wind was building and the trip out would be fine but would be choppy coming back. I shrugged the warning off (even though I easily get sea sick). So, coming back the little boat was thrown all over the place and I felt so ill. All I could do was put my head down and shut my eyes. I feel this is a good metaphor for me and my Christian journey. I think when things get a bit rough, I shut my eyes and then miss Jesus and his outstretched arms. I feel the biggest message that I have taken from the pilgrimage day is God's request to keep my eyes (and ears? - Ed.) open to the words Jesus is saying, to have a personal relationship with him and allow him to stick with me through the rough times.

Thank you to Felicity and Lyn for organising the day, it was really valuable to have a day of rest dedicated to reflection, but also to meet new people from St James. I am looking forward to the next opportunity to help refresh and maintain that close relationship with Jesus.

Ruth Praeter-Gillard

Fathers' Day, a time to celebrate male role models

In the UK, USA and Canada, the third Sunday in June is Father's Day. It's usually a good time for sons and daughters to take their father to his favourite restaurant, or to watch a favoured sport, or whatever else he enjoys doing.

How will you celebrate it this year? If your own father cannot be with you, how about a Zoom meeting?

How do these special days ever get started, anyway? Well, Father's Day began because way back in 1909 there was a woman in Spokane, Washington, named Sonora Louise Smart Dodd. That year she heard a church sermon about the merits of setting aside a day to honour one's mother. Mother's Day was just beginning to gather widespread attention in the United States at this time. But Sonora Louise Smart Dodd knew that it was her father who had selflessly raised herself and her five siblings by himself after their mother had died in childbirth. So the sermon on mothers gave Sonora Louise the idea to petition for a day to honour fathers, and in particular, her own father, William Jackson Smart.

Sonora Louise soon set about planning the first Father's Day celebration in Spokane in 1910. With support from the Spokane Ministerial Association and the YMCA, her efforts paid off, and a 'Father's Day' was appointed. Sonora Louise had wanted Father's Day to be on the first Sunday in June (since that was her father's birthday), but the city council didn't have time to approve it until later in the month. And so on June 19th, 1910, the first Father's Day was celebrated in Spokane.

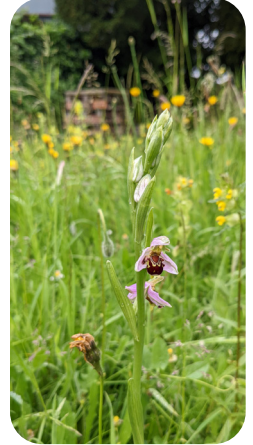
Gradually, other people in other cities caught on and started celebrating their fathers, too. The rose was selected as the official Father's Day flower. Some people began to wear a white rose to honour a father who was dead, and a red one to honour a father who was living. Finally, in 1972, President Richard Nixon signed a presidential proclamation declaring the third Sunday of June as Father's Day - a permanent, national holiday.

Wilder Churches



Our Church garden and grounds have been managed with a more eco-friendly approach for more than 3 years now. We have seen a greater diversity of plants especially in the meadow area...and this means that the wildlife is also more varied.

The Yellow rattle we sowed in late autumn has taken really well, and this will weaken the grass so that other plants can thrive. We had a lovely crop of cowslips in April and I'm waiting to see if our Bee orchid reappears!



Here is one the little Hazel trees now planted in the hedge area next to the meadow. This was one of those which was gifted by our Bishop Michael Beasley at his installation last year.

His name is perhaps more familiar, as he took an important role as Bishop Assistant to King Charles III at the Coronation in May. (see page 6)



It was good to be able to enjoy our shared celebratory Coronation service and lunch on May 7th. The rose 'Compassion' which we pruned hard in Autumn, flowered and joined in the celebrations!





Our friendly scythe-wielder will be scything the meadow in late July and we'll be needing some volunteers to do some raking up and removing the grass from site. Let me know if you'd be willing. Here's Jonny last year, showing the way!

On September 16th (date to be confirmed) we hope to have another wildlife survey when some local experts will be on hand to check out findings. More details nearer the time, but on this occasion we hope to open the survey to church members and the local community. Here are the surveyors who visited last June.



Meanwhile you might like to get involved in other surveys like the Big Butterfly Count: <https://bigbutterflycount.butterfly-conservation.org/>

Between **Friday 14th July and Sunday 6th August** choose a place to spot butterflies and moths. **Watch for 15 minutes** then record which species you see. I'll be checking out the butterflies in the church meadow, but your own garden, local park and the local waterways should also give you some opportunities to count.

'Butterflies are key biodiversity indicators for scientists as they react very quickly to changes in their environment. Therefore, if their numbers are falling, then nature is in trouble. So tracking numbers of butterflies is crucial in the fight to conserve our natural world. That's why taking part in this massive citizen science enterprise is of great importance not just for our butterflies but for the wider environment and biodiversity in general.'

butterfly-conservation.org

Can you identify these butterflies which have been seen in our church grounds?
(answers on page 15) Sue Carpenter



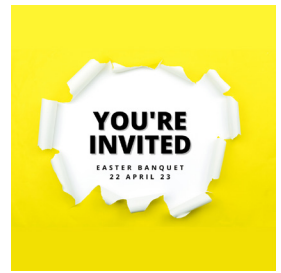
Easter Banquet



Matthew, a pub manager at the Cross Keys pub and father of my daughter's friend, approached me one day at a school pickup and asked if he could use our kitchen to do something

for the community. I was blown away by the offer.

This sparked off a series of meetings in which we hit upon the idea of a banquet for people in our community who might welcome a fun free meal. His enthusiasm was contagious and drew in a couple of other chefs at his pub who took holiday to chop, peel, roast and bake their way into a huge three course turkey roast dinner which served 70 people!



On Saturday the 22nd April we opened up our hall for families to come and join in a celebratory banquet. Between each course there were games, craft and challenges laid out in the halls and churchyard so that everyone could relax and enjoy their time together. We invited families from TLG, St James School, North Town School, Besom and Children's Church. It was a wonderful mix of people familiar to us and lots of new faces. We



were encouraged to share our stories with one another by completing a series of fun questions during the food and it lasted all afternoon with people enjoying themselves too much to leave. I am very grateful for the amazing team of volunteers from the church who helped to prep the food, set up the hall, be waitresses, supervise games and pot wash.

It took faith to create and run this event and I was constantly surprised by God's provision from people who belong to the church and those who responded to being invited or serve even though they had little knowledge of the church. It drew in resources from our TLG grant and local shops like Granny Smiths and Stillmans butchers who gave us great deals on the food. Although titled an 'Easter Banquet' it had the celebratory abundance often found at Christmas meals. A huge thank you to the team.

FATHER

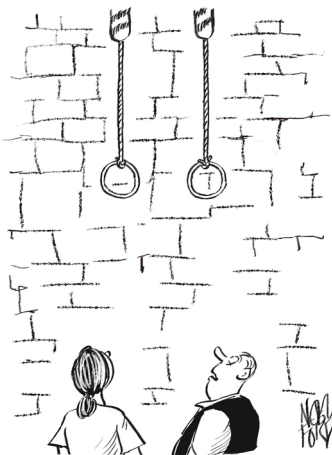
God - the Three in One

This June we celebrate Trinity Sunday. The doctrine of the Trinity is one of the most important of the Christian faith, for it goes to the very heart of what God is like. The Bible is quite clear: there is one God, but He is revealed in three 'persons' – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Have you ever wondered at what point in the Bible God is revealed as being more than one person? Well, you don't have to read very far: only to Genesis, where God (Elohim – a plural noun) says: Let US make man in OUR image. (Gen. 1:26)

The Bible reveals a pattern: God the Father lives in heaven and has never been seen. God the Son became the incarnate Jesus Christ, who made known to us the Father, and God the Holy Spirit, who is unseen, has been sent to live within and to equip His people, the Church.

The Trinity is basic to our salvation – for these three persons in the one Godhead have combined to save us from our sins: it is the WILL of the Father, the saving WORK of the Son, and the indwelling WITNESS of the Holy Spirit. (John 14:16, 23-26).



"Apparently, the new member of the bell-ringing team is a keen gymnast"

Butterflies...
A: Meadow Brown
B: Speckled Wood
C: Holly Blue
Did you know them all...?

In the spotlight...

At St James, there are many 'unsung heroes' who do lots behind the scenes. They tend to work quietly and don't often like to be in the spotlight but it's good to recognise them for all they do.

Here are just a couple of examples...

Can you identify the three people caught behind bars?

Martin K, Johnny and Lilian have spent several days during May (not always in the best of weathers) rubbing down the paintwork and painting the railings outside church. Thanks to them for smartening up our 'kerb appeal'!

Jenny Wakefield



As well as this and other 'one off' activities (although this took quite a time!) there are other groups who work 'behind the scenes'. One such is the Life Group of The Flower Team.

'It's been a while since we introduced ourselves and we hope you have enjoyed the many and varied floral arrangements since then. We've said a sad farewell to Debbie our leader when she moved away last year so would welcome new folk to join us. We are a small and friendly group who meet for a coffee and a chat and are there for each other throughout the year.





‘You don’t need experience, simply a love of flowers.

‘Some of the team are on a fortnightly rota where we choose, arrange and then keep them topped up for that time. The whole group come together to help at the regular Church Festivals throughout the year as well

as special events, most recently the Coronation and of course weddings when all hands are needed with extra pedestals and vases to fill, making tea and coffee, and of course clearing up!



‘If you would like to find out more, or perhaps you would like to donate some flowers for a special occasion please speak to any of the team who will be happy to help.’

Lyn Jones

These are just two examples. There are so many people in our church who are involved in the behind the scenes tasks that help to make our worship, community life and social events run smoothly. Most of the time we don’t even notice the ‘Somebodies’ who replenish the biscuits, change the lightbulbs, put out the rubbish, wash the tea towels, Hoover the carpets, open the doors, charge the batteries, practice the music, visit and telephone, perform technical wizardry, clean the drains, weed the carpark, create the power points, and yes, paint the railings and arrange the flowers... The list is endless and it all makes a difference in different ways.

So, THANKYOU to all the Behind the Sceners.

Good Friday Reflection – Were You There When They Crucified My Lord?

I have lived through more than 60 Good Fridays.

As a young child the church I attended joined with others in the town for the Good Friday March (today we would call it a Walk of Witness) and Open Air Service.

In my teenage years we lived in a house which had views, from my bedroom window, to some hills a couple of miles away. Each Good Friday a cross would be erected on the top of one of the hills and that evening and the following it would be illuminated.

Early in our marriage Geoff and I lived in Princes Risborough in Buckinghamshire. Again from a bedroom window we could see a cross, this time a permanent one carved into the chalk hillside at the top of the Chilterns above Monks Risborough.

The churches in Kenilworth, where Geoff and I lived for 30 years, also had a Walk of Witness each Good Friday when a wooden cross would be carried through the town, culminating on the brow of the Abbey Fields where it would be planted to the singing of 'There is a Green Hill', remaining there for the following week as a witness/reminder to all those passing in cars, buses and on foot.

Fast forward a few years to Good Friday 2023. Sue Doyle asked me to join with her, Vashti Smit and Ruth Crooks to play a part in the service by processing slowly to the front of the church, to the accompaniment of a section of Samuel Barber's 'Adagio for Strings', using two pieces of fabric as a representation of the carrying and placing of the Cross – how simple that sounded. We gathered, we prayed, we rehearsed. What I didn't know until the moment we took our places to begin our procession on Good Friday was that I would be overwhelmed by the occasion - as we began to walk I began to weep - I was grateful that I was able to shield my face with fabric once we were on the dias as I

continued to weep all the while Geoff was sharing the witness of Simon of Cyrene, as we draped the fabric on the wooden Cross, as we moved away.

A short time later in the service I read from Mark 15 - 'Some women were watching from a distance. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joseph, and Salome. In Galilee these women had followed him and cared for his needs. Many other women who had come up with him to Jerusalem were also there.'

Over the years I have taken part in a number of very powerful and meaningful acts of dance/interpretative worship, particularly associated with Holy Week – but I think this is the first time I have felt as if I was truly there on Good Friday... never underestimate the Power of the Cross to open your eyes and your heart anew.

Fiona Hope



*'The dance of the Cross' from the original
production of 'passioneaster2018'
clockwise from L: Sheila, Sue, Hannah and Ruth
(picture by Chris Buckman)*

A Summer Nativity...?

A summer nativity? Reflecting on the storylines of *Stable Manners*, it struck me that our traditional view of the nativity story seems to stray rather seriously away from the biblical words and the historical and cultural context of first century Israel. Firstly, as to the time of year...

Not winter

It's cold on the hills around Bethlehem in December, so it's unlikely that shepherds would be out there at that time of year. Also, knowing that Zechariah belonged to the priestly division of Abijah and with information we have on the cycles of priestly duty (1 Chronicles 24:7–19) one can deduce that John the Baptist was most likely born in March. As Luke (1:26) makes it clear that Jesus was conceived in the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, that would place Jesus' birth in September. A time of year when it would still be mild enough for the Shepherds to be out on the hills.

No inn

It would have been unthinkable in that time and place for a family member – however obscure – not to be offered hospitality within the family. Even if Joseph was only 'Matthew's third cousin', they would not have had to look elsewhere – beyond the family circle – for somewhere to stay. Also, the bible says nothing about Mary and Joseph arriving just before the birth; no one would set out on a lengthy journey with birth so imminent. Almost certainly, they had arrived in good time and then waited for the birth...

So, there was no inn. The original word (*kataluma*), somehow translated as 'inn', is only found in one other place in the gospels – as the room used for the Last Supper at the other end of Jesus ministry. In the domestic setting, it would be small guest room. All that's added by Luke is that someone else – grandparents perhaps – had occupied that quiet space already.

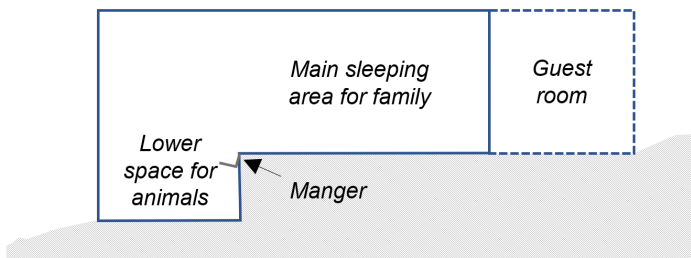
It's worth noting that when Luke does specifically talk about an 'inn' (10:34), he uses the more general term *pandocheion*, to describe the place the Good Samaritan took the injured man.

No stable

And as for a stable; that's out too I'm afraid, at least in our current concept of that term. Many smaller houses of the time were built as a single space on a

split level. Constructed on a slope there would have been a single door to the lower level with internal steps up to the family area. The guest room would probably have had its own separate entrance.

If we look at such a house in cross-section, then we would see something like this:



The normality of this one-room house is made clear in Matthew 5:15 where Jesus describes how a single lamp can give light to everyone in the house.

The animals would be brought in at night to sleep on the lower level, with the family occupying the higher level. Jesus' story about a man calling on his friend for help at night (see Luke 11:5-8) again gives the idea of how all the family would be squeezed together into that single space. A manger for feed could handily be placed at the top of the change in level – perhaps four feet or so up from the lower floor – and ready to use as a makeshift crib.

Such a setting places Jesus' birth within the family. What does remain the same though is the miracle of God coming into the world as one of us.

At the heart of community

Most importantly, this does mean that Jesus' birth is not some lonely affair, with him rejected by his own people from the very start of his life. Rather, he is born into the heart of a Jewish family, full of love and attention. It reinforces the message that the incarnation means Jesus becoming one of us; he is not different by birth, rather, his start in life is absolutely normal.

If you want to take a deeper look at all this, then you might like to follow up the thinking of Kenneth Bailey in his book *Jesus through middle-eastern eyes* or Ian Paul writing at www.psephizo.com

Richard Carpenter

...MISSION



Tear Fund was our mission focus in May – you may recall the excellent videos shown about their work in Burundi.

Tear Fund works with local churches and organisations in more than 50 countries to tackle the complex challenges of poverty. It is a Christian charity with over 50 years of experience in international development, which believes that poverty is not God's plan and that an end to extreme poverty is possible. It works in the following three ways:

- Humanitarian response: Responding quickly to disasters and conflicts and it is part of the Disaster Emergency Committee which coordinates international responses.
- Community development: Partnering with local churches and organisations, mobilising resources and empowering communities to lift themselves out of poverty.
- Advocacy and influencing: Challenging unjust policies and practices at a local, national and global level.

Find out more <https://www.tearfund.org/about-us/what-we-do>

Tear Fund produces an excellent magazine and prayer diary – for more information, talk to our Tear Fund representative, Sue Doyle.

See also page 35 for a special fund-raising activity for TEAR Fund by our Children's Church.

Taunton Area Debt Advice is our Mission Focus for June. TADA was founded about 10 years ago by Graham Reid, one of our church family. TADA is a Christian charity supported by a number of churches in the local area and their primary aim is to help people out with their debt problems. All those working for TADA are volunteers who want to help tackle this ever-growing problem.

Many people experience financial difficulties at some point in their lives but the earlier they tackle the problem, the easier the solution. Ignoring debt increases it and the impact on health and wellbeing can be very serious.

The advice offered is free and totally confidential to anyone in the Taunton area. TADA is affiliated to Community Money Advice (CMA). They aim to offer solutions to help people free themselves from the burden of debt. Their services are offered to all regardless of background, circumstances or belief.

Although Graham has stepped down from his role with TADA, he still remains our representative at St James, so do talk with Graham if you would like to know more.

TADA is based at St Mary's House, Magdalene Street, Taunton, TA1 1SB
Phone: 07921 526087 website: www.tada.org.uk/

In July we highlight the work of **Barnabas Fund**, which is an international aid agency for the persecuted Church, working in over 60 countries around the world where Christians are marginalised and persecuted because of their faith.

The main ministry of Barnabas Fund is to send financial support to projects which help Christians where they suffer discrimination, oppression and persecution as a consequence of their faith. The projects aim to strengthen Christian individuals, churches and their communities by providing material and spiritual support in response to needs identified by local Christian leaders.

Barnabas also aims to raise awareness of the persecution that exists and thereby to inform the prayers of its partner churches and also to work to contest injustice by appropriate means.

Active in many countries, here are some headlines from their latest magazine:

- New translation of Bible spreads God's Word in West Africa
- Help for Christian victims of Islamist violence in Nigeria
- 20 years of teaching Christian children at Bethlehem school
- Bible college in Sudan praises God for harvest blessing
- Aid gives 'light of hope' to Christians hit by floods in Pakistan
- Christians serving Kyrgyz Church given medical aid.

For more information about Barnabas there is a very informative website and online magazine: visit <https://barnabasfund.org/>.

Jenny Wakefield

United Beach Missions

Lilian Gill tells of her experience volunteering with them.

Last August the highlight of my summer was to serve on a Beach Team at Lyme Regis.

The truth is that we are familiar with the command to love God and our neighbour. But serving as a volunteer for most Christian organisations and/or events will use that as a basic team principle. There are many opportunities to serve and I believe that doing so is a very good way to grow in faith. Soul Survivor, Greenbelt and other festivals need stewards and more. Festivals are great but they do tend to be for the Christian community. The activities for families on a beach or outreach in a city, focus on reaching out to those that do not know our God and saviour.



United Beach Missions (UBM) provides a great opportunity for Christians to serve, whether old or young, extrovert or quiet. All that is required is a desire to share the Gospel. In a 'normal' year, UBM operates about 85 Beach Mission teams, 'Christian Answer' teams and International Student Outreach teams around the UK, Ireland and Continental Europe.

A commitment to be part of a team from Saturday to Saturday on a practical level does mean that we can be strangers at first but the friendships formed as we live and work together are very uplifting. It is communal living with girls sleeping on the floor in a church or hall, (take an air bed and sleeping bag!) and the lads in their own base at another chapel. There is teaching each day in Team time, times of prayer and the practical work of preparing for the morning games, then Bible story at midday and holiday special with songs and activities in the afternoon. We pack our own lunch and eat together on the beach between sessions. There was also a free book box. I find the games and afternoon programme such fun plus people are

relaxed. There are two evening events to prepare for; one involves a trail followed by a talk given by the leader and the other is ten family games on the beach, again followed by a talk. Then prizes are given to winning families.

Last August I was on a team of 18 with an age range of 50 years between us from teenagers to a retired banker - plus the leader is a dentist. On Monday the first tug-of-war of the week happened in the afternoon. Usually the boys win the first pull, change ends and the girls win the second and the boys the last (unless Mums join in). What was remarkable that first day was that the girls won the first pull! Becky got the girls to co-ordinate - one two three heave and it worked!!

We all have the team uniform; red shirts with our own navy shorts. But that helps as people do chat as the children enjoy activities. One man took a book about Mary Jones and her Bible from the book box for his daughter because of the artwork. He got into a long conversation and also took a John's gospel for himself.



As a team, whether quiet or outgoing, we all work together to provide the programme. It is very encouraging to be part of something where God draws people closer to himself. The things we do are appreciated. Some families have joined in over many years. Personally I feel that we need to be available to answer people's questions where they are while we have the freedom to speak. It is God who goes ahead of us, God that gives us the words to say and God the Holy Spirit that goes home with those holidaymakers.

If you'd like more information about the work or you might think about joining in, do see Lilian who would be happy to talk to you – or look on the UBM website for more information: www.ubm.org.uk/

Lilian Gill



St James Church School

School News



At Easter this year it really felt as if we were getting back to some sort of normality. Children from Reception to year 6 at St James school headed to church for their Easter service before breaking up for the holiday. Parents, carers and grandparents started arriving early to get the best seats so they could see the children sing their songs, show their art work and tell the special story of Easter. Well done to Ms Forbes and the Children's Ethos committee. (We even remembered to put the box in the lectern so the readers could be seen!)

Since returning after Easter, it's been a busy time especially for the Year 6's who are preparing for their SATs and for that big change that awaits them as they move on to their new senior schools. Please pray for all year 6's and especially those in our own congregation who are poised for this transition and for those still waiting to hear the results of appeals.

Fabian and Dave have enjoyed being involved in school assemblies, teaching children's groups in the church and, as Fabian mentioned at the Annual Meeting, opportunities to be involved in RE class learning. Our TLG mentoring team and reading mentors have also enjoyed the privilege of working with children and staff at the school. We thank God for the opportunities to serve our school and are grateful to headteacher, Nigel Johnson, and the staff for the welcome we receive.

Coming up in July will be the final service of the term when we have the opportunity to welcome the Year 6 leavers at church, as we wish them well for the future.

Please keep all the local schools, children, teachers, families and governors in your prayers.

St James School Phoenix Mural

A year ago May 2022 visitors to St James school were confronted by a stunning mural which appeared on the walls of St James school – on the facing page is an account of this very splendid artwork project by Mrs Georgina Yard, who painted the mural itself. A year on it still looks wonderful.

"I'm proud to present our new mural, which (is now) completed.

It was a project designed by our talented children at St James, whose ideas were merged to create this final piece. The children have had many different ideas about what the bird is meant to be. Some think it's a dove, others think it's a phoenix and a few think it's an angel.

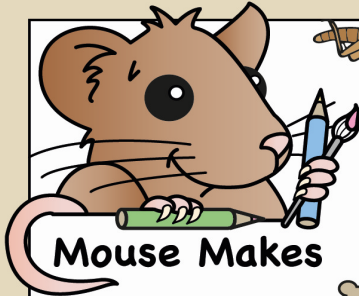
It is, indeed, a phoenix.

- The phoenix is a symbol of a lot of good virtues, such as grace, reliability and kindness. On ours, I've created lots of different colours for the feathers, to demonstrate the diversity of our school.
- The rainbow is symbolic of God's grace and mercy and His relationship with all living creatures on earth.
- The children, of course, represent our wonderful past, present and future pupils of St James.
- The world in our mural is a powerful message too as, for many children, Primary School is a huge part of their young world and in turn it is school that plays an important part in helping to prepare children for the future world.

Thanks to everyone for your kind words and support... an extra special thanks must also go to Mr Millard, who saved me from the rain."



Young Peoples' Pages



The Lord said to Moses,
*"Your brother Aaron shall tell Pharaoh
 to let the people of Israel go out of his land...
 The Egyptians shall know that I AM the Lord
 when I stretch out my hand against Egypt..."*
 As Pharaoh's heart was hardened against the
 Israelites, God sent ten plagues upon him...



1
Water turns to Blood
 Which water turned
 to blood?
Read - Exodus 7:19

2
A Swarm of Frogs
 In which
 places were the
 frogs found?
Read - Exodus 8:3-4

3
A Plague of Gnats
 When Aaron struck his
 staff on the ground
 what became Gnats?
Read - Exodus 8:16-17

4
Swarms of Flies
 In which land were the
 flies not found?
Read - Exodus 8:22

5
Death of Animals
 Which animals that belonged
 to the Egyptians died?
Read - Exodus 9:2

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

GOD • PLAGUES • MOSES • AARON
 WATER • BLOOD • STAFF • RIVER • NILE • FISH
 FROGS • SWARM • GNATS • DUST • FLIES
 GROUND • DEATH • ANIMALS • SOOT
 BOILS • PEOPLE • HAIL • THUNDER • FIRE
 MAN • BEAST • LOCUSTS • WIND • LAND
 DARKNESS • FIRSTBORN • MIDNIGHT

6
A Break out of Boils
 What did Moses throw into
 the air before boils appeared
 on people and animals?
Read - Exodus 9:10

7
A Rain of Hail
 What also rained
 down with the hail?
 Where did it not hail?
Read - Exodus 9:24-26

8
A Swarm of Locusts
 Where did the wind
 come from that brought
 the locusts to the land?
Read - Exodus 10:13

9
Darkness over the Land
 How many days did
 it remain dark?
Read - Exodus 10:21-22

10
Death of the Firstborn
 At what time would the
 firstborn in the land die?
Read - Exodus 11:4-6

The tale of the RICH FOOL



JESUS OFTEN TOLD
STORIES WITH
HIDDEN MEANINGS



ONE STORY WAS ABOUT A MAN
WHO HAD LOTS OF LAND WHICH
GREW WONDERFUL WHEAT.

I HAVEN'T ANYWHERE TO
KEEP ALL THIS FOOD



I KKNOW! I'LL PULL DOWN
MY BARN AND BUILD
BIGGER ONES



THE MAN DEMOLISHED HIS
OLD BARN...

...AND BEGAN TO BUILD
NEW ONES.



SOON I'LL BE THE RICHEST
MAN IN THE TOWN!



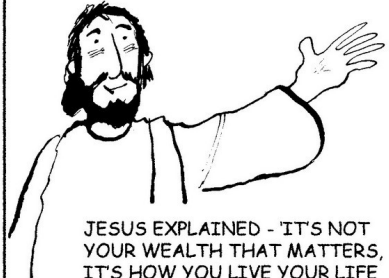
I'M SO LUCKY - I CAN
EAT, DRINK AND BE
MERRY!



BUT THAT VERY NIGHT,
THE MAN DIED!



WHAT GOOD WERE HIS
RICHES NOW?



JESUS EXPLAINED - 'IT'S NOT
YOUR WEALTH THAT MATTERS,
IT'S HOW YOU LIVE YOUR LIFE
THAT'S IMPORTANT

Crossword

Across

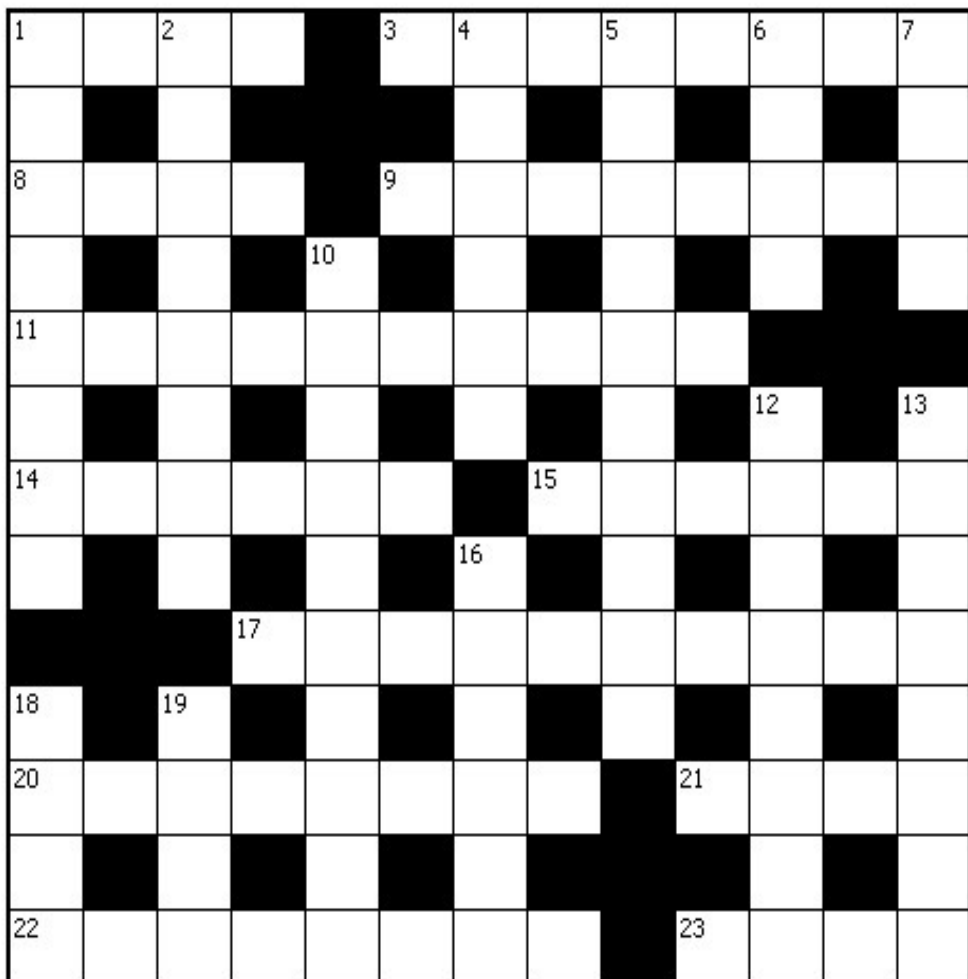
- 1 See 23 Across
- 3 Where the thief on the cross was told he would be, with Jesus (Luke 23:43) (8)
- 8 Invalid (4)
- 9 Blasphemed (Ezekiel 36:20) (8)
- 11 Adhering to the letter of the law rather than its spirit (Philippians 3:6) (10)
- 14 Shut (Ecclesiastes 12:4) (6)
- 15 'This is how it will be with anyone who — up things for himself but is not rich towards God' (Luke 12:21) (6)
- 17 Mary on Isis (anag.) (10)
- 20 Agreement (Hebrews 9:15) (8)
- 21 Native of, say, Bangkok (4)
- 22 Deaf fort (anag.) (5-3)
- 23 and 1 Across 'The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of — to work it and take — of it' (Genesis 2:15) (4,4)

Down

- 1 Struggle between opposing forces (Habakkuk 1:3) (8)
- 2 James defined this as 'looking after orphans and widows in their distress and keeping oneself from being polluted by the world' (James 1:27) (8)
- 4 'The one I kiss is the man; — him' (Matthew 26:48) (6)
- 5 'Be joyful in hope, patient in — , faithful in prayer' (Romans 12:12) (10)
- 6 St Columba's burial place (4)
- 7 Swirling current of water (4)
- 10 Loyalty (Isaiah 19:18) (10)
- 12 'God was pleased through the foolishness of what was — , to save those who believe' (1 Corinthians 1:21) (8)
- 13 Camp where the angel of the Lord slew 185,000 men one night (2 Kings 19:35) (8)
- 16 'There is still — — — Jonathan; he is crippled in both feet' (2 Samuel 9:3) (1,3,2)
- 18 David Livingstone was one (4)
- 19 Driver and Vehicle Licensing Authority (1,1,1,1)



Thursday Fellowship is a meeting on the 1st Thursday of the month for men and women in the church hall at 2pm.
For further details, contact Vicky Dykes 282507



Across
 1 care; 3 paradise; 8 null; 9 profaned; 11 legalistic; 14 closed; 15 stores; 17 missionary;
 20 covenant; 21 Thai; 22 trade-off; 23 Eden

Down
 1 conflict; 2 religion; 4 arrest; 5 affliction; 6 Iona; 7 Eddy; 10 allegiance; 12 preached; 13 Assyrian;
 16 a son of; 18 Scot; 19 DVLA

The PCC has been discussing...



Here's a summary of the main things the Parochial Church Council looked at in March and April, and of the Annual Meeting in May.

Annual Meeting

At the Annual Meeting on Tuesday 9th May, we re-elected Nigel Bright and Joycey Kirk as churchwardens, re-elected Richard Carpenter, Chris Rickard and Martin Wakefield as our Deanery Synod representatives, re-elected Marilyn Gibson and David Jordan to the PCC and elected new PCC members Fiona Hope and Johan Smit – welcome to them and thanks to all wardens and PCC members for the time and thought they give to their role. Thanks too to outgoing PCC member Sheila Marlow. The Annual Report and accounts are still available on the church website - www.stjamestaunton.org (pull down the menu from the orange square top right of the home page and choose 'Information' then 'Reports and Policies' and scroll down - Ed.). There is also a video of Fabian's review in the second part of the meeting.

At the short PCC meeting which followed, Nigel Bright was appointed as Vice Chairman, Richard Sainsbury as Treasurer and Martin Wakefield as Secretary. Chris Rickard continues as the ordinary member of Standing Committee. Sue Doyle continues as Electoral Roll Officer.

Finances

At the annual meeting, Richard Sainsbury presented the accounts for 2021, highlighting the following:

- The deficit of £15,560 is an improvement on 2021 where, after discounting a legacy, the shortfall on running costs had been £36k.
- Income from stewardship giving had increased, and while hall hire income was up on 2021, it is not yet back to pre-Covid levels.
- Expenditure was similar to that in 2021. Wages had increased due mainly to the cessation of furlough payments. Mission giving had been reduced to nearer our pledged 10% of Stewardship income, it having increased gradually over several years; this was implemented after reviewing the financial situation of our local mission partners.
- The main item of expenditure was the Parish Share. This had reached an unsustainable 70% of our income, so we notified the diocese that we will pay a minimum of 55% as part of our plan to break even in 2023 (paying more if we can afford it without incurring a deficit). We also need to take into account that our expenditure on gas and electricity will more than double due to the increase in prices.

Children and Families Worker

The PCC has resumed work on the appointment of a Children and Families Worker. The aims need to be revised in light of the difficulties we found in attracting candidates.

While there is a growing number of volunteers needing oversight, we need to develop a shared vision, re-engage church members, and fund the post for longer than previously planned. Children's work is key to our future, and not an addendum to church services.

A working group has been formed to take the project forward.

Outreach to New Housing Estates

At the Annual Meeting, Richard Carpenter reported on the development of plans by the Deanery to build faith communities in the numerous new housing estates being built around the outskirts of the town. Some 25,000 more people are projected to come to Taunton in the period 2010-2030.

We need to address this as a whole town issue rather than leave it to individual parishes. This means the deanery finding out what new communities need. The approach has to be one of releasing lay people to minister not only in the new housing estates but across the town as a whole, and not constrained to propping up existing churches.

Miscellaneous Matters

- *Evening Services*: there are outline plans to begin an evening service in a few months' time. This will be monthly to begin with.
- *Holy Communion*: the PCC agreed that real bread will be used instead of wafers, alcoholic wine will be offered as an alternative at the south side distribution point, and chairs will be moved away from the north side distribution point to give more space.
- *Attendance*: the October count showed that 158 adults and 20 children had attended at least once over the month (excluding visitors).
- *Training*: Watch out for invitations to attend fire training on 8 July, and for announcements about first aid and food hygiene training.
- *Safeguarding*: Jenny Wakefield reported to the March PCC meeting that we have almost completed the important action items flagged up by the diocesan 'Safeguarding Dashboard' system. But we all need to keep on top of the training!

Martin Wakefield

Current PCC Members

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



*Rev Fabian Wuyts
Vicar*



*Nigel Bright and Joyce Kirk
Church Wardens*



*Rev David Wilkie
Curate*



Martin Bluemel



Richard Carpenter



Roger Fenton



Marilyn Gibson



Fiona Hope



Lyn Jones



David Jordan



Sue Lucas



Chris Rickard



Richard Sainsbury



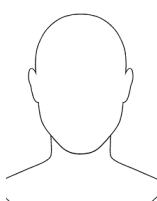
Johan Smit



Vashti Smit



Nic Tall



Vacancy



Jenny Wakefield



Martin Wakefield

Children's Church Fund-raising for Tear Fund

During April and May Children's Church have been learning about Tear Fund and the people that they help in other parts of the world.

Members of the CC decided to organise a sale to raise money, and they beavered away making beeswax candles, posters and finally some yummy cakes.

On Coronation Sunday they set up their stall at the back of church to sell their wares. This included the fabulous Union Jack cake you see here, decorated by Chiara, Lily (both seen here) and Tom, and mini cakes decorated by the rest of the Sunday club members, in addition to the decorated candles.



Thank you to everyone who supported the sale, which raised a tremendous **£212.13**.

WELL DONE Children's Church - that was amazing!!!

PARISH CONTACTS



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Curate: Rev. David Wilkie 01823 325496
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Church Office: 01823 272931
Administration Co-ordinator: Rachel Knowlman
email: info@stjamestaunton.co.uk

Church Wardens: Nigel Bright 07817 627326
Joyce Kirk 01823 971431

Children & Young People's Co-ordinator:
currently vacant

Discipleship & Home Groups Co-ordinator:
Roger Fenton 01823 412113 email: rogerifenton@gmail.com

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

Pastoral Care Co-ordinator: Annie Reid 07812 130619

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

Church Treasurer: Richard Sainsbury 01823 284688
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Parish Safeguarding Officer: Jenny Wakefield 01823 277318
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