

## ST JAMES CHURCH TAUNTON

### WORLD WAR I MEMORIAL PROJECT

# Sermon Preached on the Outbreak of War

The *Taunton Courier* printed on 12th August 1914 included descriptions of the services held in the main churches in the town. For St James' Church it included the following:

At St. James's Church a list of men who had volunteered their services from the congregation and parish was read aloud before the intercessory prayers. Each service was concluded by the singing of the hymn "Holy Father in Thy Mercy" and the National Anthem.

The Rev. T.S. Dawson, in the course of his sermon at the morning service, said the present was a time of grave anxiety, but it was not a feeling caused by fear. They were not hopeless and afraid. "Would to God that the world outside would look at the more serious side of warfare!" There was a class they had seen that week which, through weakness of intellect, or sheer carelessness and empty bravado, looked upon the gloomy spectacle as a kind of play, or as an opportunity to give a blow to some arrogant foe, but regardless of the pain and suffering, misery and wretchedness, poverty and perplexity, which such a war as this must bring in its train. It might be that war was the least hurtful thing that could happen to this nation. It might be that it was profitable: for only thus might a nation that was to a great extent steeped in luxury, self-indulgence, and materialism, be brought back to the foot of the throne of the King of Kings. God's purpose was to bring the highest good to the world, but they did not know the method: that method might be war. There were worse things than war for nations. There was the gradual sinking into indulgence, luxury, sloth and materialism. These had all been very prominent in their midst. God alone knew how England would best be brought to life to its highest self. One lesson to be learnt was neighbourly consideration towards all overtaken by financial embarrassment. The withdrawal of great numbers of wage-earners and rapid enlistment would, it was hoped, mitigate unemployment, but there would still be need for employers to do their best to continue the wages of men and women. Then, again, it was really wrong to hoard food. While such things were being done, what was happening to the poor who could not afford to buy large quantities of provisions? On the contrary, they should be careful and give up much unnecessary luxury.