

St James' Church Magazine
September - November 2026

Letter from the Churchwarden

Nigel Bright



WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?



At times in our lives this question can be triggered by something read, seen or experienced. In our summer series at St James', we have looked at the lives of people in the early part of the Old Testament – Abram, Isaac, Esau and Jacob. Who were they? What was their character? What motivated them? We found that all through their ups and downs, through all their flaws and their wrong turns, God stayed faithful to his promise to them.

At the time of writing this, we are watching episodes of the BBC programme 'Who do you think you are?' This is a fascinating series investigating the historical threads of different celebrities' lives. What often comes up are characteristics, skills or interests of the celebrity that can be found in a previous generation often centuries ago. Unless someone is historically famous important details of their life and legacy are lost. I always feel it is a shame that it is often only at funerals we find out details of a person. Unless something is recorded perhaps in writing, photographs or audio recordings, we can lose aspects of a person's life so quickly. Although not really a writer in any sense, I am so grateful that my father decided to write down events from his life. We managed to gather these together and make them into a printed book for his 80th birthday. I am also grateful that we managed to record my mother reading some of her poetry, so we still have her voice. These written and audio records are now available not only for us but also for future generations.

Through both of the aspects above, we can sometimes get an inkling as to what motivates a person to do certain things in their life. We do get a strong sense in Genesis of God's hand leading and motivating the characters we have studied even when they seemed to go off track a bit. Sometimes in the BBC programme or in the lives of people we know we can get some insight into what motivates them but not always or in any depth. What we have set out for us is often the 'what' of someone's life not the 'why'.

It is the 'why' that really makes 'Who we are'. There is an American Christian comedian who sets this out well. His 'why' is to help make people's lives more purposeful and he uses his comedy (his 'what') to support this.

With an understanding of your 'why', individuals can redefine their 'what' for a more impactful and purposeful life. Michael Jr.

I would recommend watching some of his YouTube clips as they powerfully and humorously show how he is working purposefully in his life and using his skills to impact people from all walks of life.

This is the title of an excellent clip on YouTube -
Michael Jr. / Walking In Your "WHY"
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E2T7BacFpOo>)

Sometimes, and probably more often than we realise, we can get focussed on the 'what' in our church, Christian, family and working lives. As Christians, we have our relationship and understanding of Christ to be our 'why'.

A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. John 13: 34-35 NIV

Michael Jr's life is rooted in his Christian faith, but his work has a specific 'why'. He states that his why 'is to inspire people to walk in purpose.'

Our series on Genesis has been really insightful and helpful. In this time of end of summer and moving into autumn we can perhaps take the lessons further by reflecting on our specific 'why' that will make our 'what' more impactful and purposeful.

Nigel Bright
Churchwarden

What's in the Magazine...?

Page 2 Churchwarden's Letter	Page 20 Moving On - Update
Page 3 Bishop's Letter	Page 21 Autumn Planting
Page 5 Heritage Open Days	Page 22-24 Simply Pray
Page 6 Human flourishing for all	Page 26 Thanking God for our blessings
Page 8 School News	Page 28-29 Creationtide
Page 10 Impact!	Page 30 All in a day's walk
Page 12 Jimmy and the playground	Page 32 ACTS AGM Notice
Page 14 Ezekiel (part 2...!)	Page 33 Church - a way to connect...
Page 16 Focus on Mission	Page 34-37 Crossword and Young Peeps
Page 17 My time with OM	Page 38 Children and Youth Reports
Page 18 Parish Giving Scheme	Page 40 PCC Round-up
Page 19 Parable of the Rich Fool	Page 43 Concerts

Many thanks to all the contributors to the Magazine. If you have something to share for the December 2026 - February 2027 edition, do contact the Editor - details on page 44.

Deadline for copy - Tuesday 17 November 2026



Well...did you go out and watch the partial eclipse in August? Sue Doyle's front cover picture reminds us of what a scorching summer we've just experienced.

It's given us pause for thought about how we look after our world. Several of the articles in this edition focus on different aspects of that as well as our thankfulness for what the earth gives us at harvest time. This is also reflected in a group of articles about Simply Pray, meetings where one can spend some time in quiet contemplation and prayer.

Andy Hall makes us think about the impact we can have on other people's lives – quite a responsibility – while Chris Rickard tells us about her time working with OM (read the article to find out what that means!). Richard Sainsbury and David Smith look, from different angles, at how we use our finances and Mike Gillingham wraps up the book of Ezekiel. Also find out what the children and young people have been up to over the year – they are our future!

There is so much more in this edition. Do read through and be challenged, uplifted and edified. Thanks again to all the contributors. Perhaps there is something you could add for the next edition...

Ed.

Once you've read the magazine, do feel free to give it to someone who otherwise might not get to see it. The magazine is also published online. Please let friends and neighbours know how they can access this and previous editions through the St James' website: www.stjamestaunton.org

The views expressed in the magazine may not necessarily represent those of the Editor or those of St James' Church



DIOCESE OF
Bath & Wells

Living the story. Telling the story.

**Letter from Michael Beasley
Bishop of Bath and Wells**

Called to care for God's earth

Then God said, 'Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.' (Genesis 1:26).

These words come from the account of creation found in Genesis Chapter 1. I'm often asked about this text. Is it true? How do I square its words with my understanding of science? Do I believe this is how the world was made?

I don't think Genesis 1 is a literal account, a description offered in the style of a David Attenborough documentary. Rather I suggest that this account is so stuffed with truth that it's hard for us to deal with. Truth that's not about factual deception but that's about meaning, purpose and value. Genesis 1 asks 'How do we understand the world?' and 'How should we live in it?'

Take for example the words 'have dominion' to be found in Genesis 1:26 given above. These words, an interpretation of the Hebrew word *radah*, have been understood very differently.

Some would say that 'have dominion', *radah*, has been understood as harsh domination, treading down, and using raw force; a justification for treating the non-human world as an expendable resource for human consumption that has led to our destruction of so much of the natural world around us.

Others suggest that the true meaning of *radah* is service and care. This sees 'have dominion' as a call not to crush, but to protect, nurture, and provide justice. This view sees humankind invited to act as deputies for God, called to cultivate the earth responsibly while preserving its health and flourishing.

Arguments about the interpretation of a Hebrew word may seem specialist. But how we read one of the most important passages of the Bible can shape our whole world view. Service and care or domination and destruction? These differing ideas lie at the very heart of the arguments we have about how humankind should treat our earthly home that God has gifted us. What steps will we take, however small, to protect it?

Michael Beasley
Bishop of Bath and Wells



St James is taking part in the



**Soldiers, sailors, tinkers, tailors
sextons, sweeps, rebels, and lots more**

**Come and find out about the everyday people,
young and old; who have shaped our 850 year
old story**

Saturdays 12th & 19th September

10am-4pm

St James Church Taunton, St James Street (next to the Somerset cricket ground) TA1 1JS

#HODs



www.heritageopendays.org.uk

***Ever wondered what the people who
worshipped in our church years ago were like?***

This year the theme of the Heritage Open Days is 'Everyday Histories of Everyday People', which gives lots of scope for delving into some of the interesting characters from our parish past. As the Magazine goes to print, plans are still evolving and we are looking out some more tales from the archives.

If you're over 8 there are great views from the top of the tower; Tom the weathervane is still bright and shiny and would love to see you. The Bell Tower team will be there on 19th to show you the ropes and let you have a go. If you can't climb, there will be virtual tower tours to 'take you to the top' to see the view. We also hope to have a 'look up archives' section.

So do come along, bring your friends, explore the tower and find out more about our fascinating and eccentric past.

Jenny Wakefield

The following is Bishop Michael's letter from the July edition of Manna. It gives a good background to church schools, like St James Church School here in our parish, and reflects the ethos and vision of these establishments - Ed.

Human flourishing for all

By Michael Beasley, Bishop of Bath and Wells

'Tell me about your school days' is a deeply illuminating question to ask. Our experience of school shapes us deeply our whole lives long. Schools mould our character and values. They develop our skills and expectations. They influence our relationships and our life chances.

Rooted in our understanding of the Bible, Christians have been involved in schooling for many centuries. In the nineteenth century, the Church of England's National Society set up thousands of schools all around our country, established principally for the benefit of the poor. It is largely out of this heritage that our Diocese of Bath and Wells continues to have a stake in so many of Somerset's schools today. We have 180 Church Schools, the majority of which are for primary aged children, with nine middle, upper or secondary schools and one specialist provision. Big and small, and found in all kinds of communities, our schools educate around 60% of Somerset's primary school children.

Our schools are Church Schools, they are not faith schools. We are open to everyone, of all faiths and none. Our schools are guided by our Christian ethos, manifested in their engagement with the Bible and worship, in prayer and Christian ethics. More recently, this is expressed most fully in the Church of England's Vision for Education. This understands our schools' mission to be 'deeply Christian, serving the Common Good'. Our vision embraces the spiritual, physical, intellectual, emotional, moral and social development of children and young people. Our vision is of human flourishing for all.

As bishop, I am privileged to spend lots of time in our Church Schools. The most fun I have is being grilled by young people who pose me questions about ethics and doctrine, our Church's life and faith. I'm certainly kept on my toes! What I value most is seeing played out in our young people the four main elements of our Church's vision - wisdom, hope, community and dignity. These commitments are reflected in the stories told in this edition of Manna. I hope you'll enjoy reading them as they illustrate our vision for education in the schools of our diocese.



School News

St James' Church School

Teamwork is a very important aspect of our involvement with our church school. There is always a lot going on a regular basis with those who volunteer at St James School – leading collective worship, helping with readers or mentoring individual children. But it couldn't happen without the active support and collaboration from the school and our links with the key people like senior staff, the RE Coordinator and individual teachers. So, a BIG THANKYOU to all of them for their ongoing support.

Teamwork was also a big feature of our traditional end of term Leavers' Service, when we welcomed one of the largest year groups at St James for a long while – three classes in fact – Willow, Walnut and Yew – comprising just over 70 children.

Advance calculations and consultations were involved. Was a group of 12 plus adults OK for going up the tower? How many badge blanks would we need? How many sandwiches, cakes, fruit and bags of crisps...? And most importantly did we have enough adults to cover the activity groups? YES we did! Thanks to an enthusiastic response we had 24 volunteers in all. A huge thank you to them for their involvement.



The day started with a slight panic when the school arrived for a 9.30 am start rather than the 10.00 that was anticipated. However, with a bit of creative tweaking we managed to get back on track. The service as ever was great with shared memories from the children and the photo PowerPoint montage from early years to the present. They sang with enthusiasm and gusto and 'My Lighthouse' nearly raised the roof. Afterwards parents were able to take photos and although there were some tears, there was lots of laughter too.

The day progressed with trips to the bell chamber and tower, with very few not feeling up to the challenge. Rick, Geoff, Natalie, Grace and

Shona showed them the ropes and Martin, Sue, Martin K and Norman charged up and down the stairs with walkie talkies making sure everyone was safe at the top. (Apparently some people in the offices over the road were a little alarmed at seeing children on the tower!) Down below, Dave, Sue and Lilian put the organ through its paces and Sue had the groups chatting away with an ad hoc game.



David and Tom ran a Badge Factory, churning out badges by the score. Chris oversaw the Chillout Zone for any children who needed a bit of quieter activity. Meanwhile in the halls Steve, Mike, Karen and Johnny refereed a busy games session with snooker, table tennis, chess, jenga and even dobbie. Next door Rachel and Steve/Mike conducted a more reflective and literally ‘laid back’ session talking about the next steps and moving on.

In the kitchen Ruth and her team – Sue, Maureen and Louise – were beavering away preparing a lovely lunch for a hundred hungry people. Everything went!

And so, another year draws to a close and now preparations will be being made for next year. Let’s pray for a restful holiday for all and a positive and happy 2026/27, especially for those 70 plus children heading for secondary school.



Jenny Wakefield
(aka White Rabbit)



St James Church School 2026 - Leavers

We live in a world where image and impact seem more important than ever: how we look, whether our product will have an impact in the marketplace...etc, etc. As a Christian, you may ask yourself, 'Am I able to make a difference for someone?' or 'Have I been able to give someone hope when none existed before?'

Faith is not a passive thing to be kept to ourselves, so it's important to be mindful of our impact on others.



Sometimes God prompts us to act; at the time, it can feel instinct takes over. The quote by Smith Wigglesworth on page 15 encourages us to 'Live Ready' to make an impact, because if we have to 'Get Ready' it may be too late. Like me, you may have had situations when you realised afterwards that an opportunity has passed you by, which could have helped someone if only you'd spoken about your faith.

You don't necessarily make an impact by using grand gestures. In Pembrokeshire, I saw a quote by St David, a 6th century monk and patron saint of Wales. He established a monastery and built a church where the present cathedral, which bears his name, stands today. In his last sermon, he encouraged his congregation by saying, "Brothers and sisters, be cheerful, keep your faith and belief, and do the little things that you have heard and seen through me."

Should we be bashful about the impact we make as Christians? Jesus didn't seem to think so. He said, "You are the light of the world – like a city on a mountain glowing in the night for all to see. Don't hide your light...let it shine for all." (Matthew 5 v14-15)

We can encourage one another by sharing stories about the impact of our faith. Paul wrote to the Thessalonians that they should 'Encourage each other and build each other up'.

Can our impact as Christians be measured? Although we can help to sow seeds of faith, the impact (or outcome) on someone's life may be unseen by us. Ultimately, those eternal matters lie in God's hands. Also, we may encounter someone only briefly during our lives. Does this mean we shouldn't bother with them? Surely not; they are as precious to Jesus as anyone else.

I'm sure we can recall a person we may have known only briefly, but who had a strong impact on our faith.

Organisations such as churches and Christian charities realise that measurement of impact is important for judging their effectiveness. Clearly, a church would want to know how effective they are at communicating the Gospel and the difference it makes. Good outcomes encourage leaders and members, and help to attract new believers. However, measurement of impact, particularly in numerical terms, is not easy as I know from my experience with a local Christian charity. Some of the measures used are not ideal. For example, the number of people on the church electoral roll is more an expression of the level of activity as compared to the impact it has.

In larger businesses today, it is common to find a voluntary wellbeing coordinator whose job it is to help staff with personal problems which affect their work, including mental health issues. Those businesses may measure the worth of these wellbeing roles in productivity levels, sickness levels or staff retention.



I volunteer for Taunton Team Chaplaincy which is generously supported by St James'. We collect stories of significant encounters from our chaplains and Rail Responders. The stories remain anonymous to preserve confidentiality, but are a good way of showing impact. This is an example from last month:

'Had a long chat to A about his son who keeps calling him in the night wanting him to come and get him. A is bedridden. Son is an addict. Conversation turned to forgiveness and hope and I was able to share the gospel, promising to pray for both. A says my visits are highlights of the week as I have something good to share and he always feels better after our chats.'

We should always be mindful of the impact we can have. Whether we are an organisation or an individual Christian, sharing the impact of our faith can encourage us all. When we hear personal testimonies in church, they can be extremely effective.

God causes everything to work together for good for those who love him. We are all part of his master plan. As a former vicar here once said, "There is no Plan B."

Food for thought...

Andy Hall

During one of the Young Church sessions, Jenny was discussing with the young people aspects of the Lord's Prayer. One of the activities involved a graphic story (comic strip). This is Emma's perceptive work on a section of the prayer...Thanks, Emma!

(Published here with Emma's permission - Ed.)



JIMMY And the playground

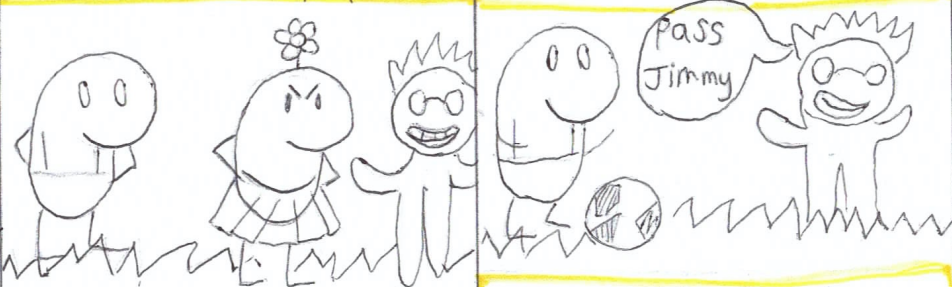
Jimmy felt sad and he couldn't do any work...



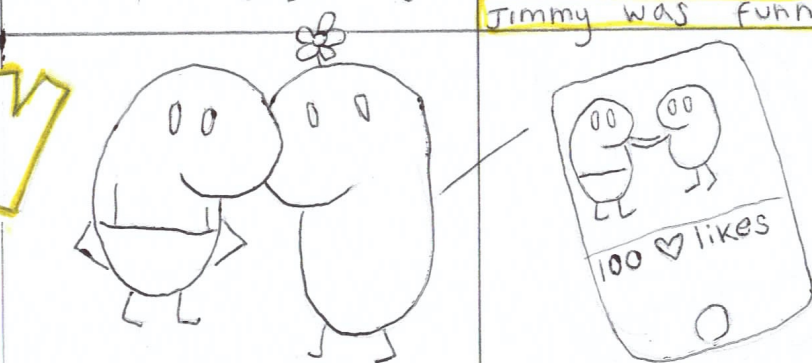
The teachers became worried



She even stood up for him and the bullies realized



Jimmy was funny



By Emma Johnson
age 12

Ezekiel (part 2...!)

You will remember that the first part of Ezekiel's message was to tell the captives that the whole of Israel was to suffer because they had turned away from God. You may also remember that Ezekiel was unable to speak. At the final moment when Jerusalem and the Temple is destroyed, Ezekiel's wife dies. As God's precious place on earth is destroyed, so Ezekiel's life acts as a sign. He tells the people they should not mourn, but learn the lesson. Yes, he tells them, for he can now speak.

The message does not end there though. He again sees the Lord, who now says, "Therefore say: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will gather you from the nations and bring you back from the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you back the land of Israel again.'

"They will return to it and remove all its vile images and detestable idols. I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh. Then they will follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. They will be my people, and I will be their God..." (Ezekiel 11:17-20)

He then echoes Psalm 23



"For this is what the Sovereign LORD says: 'I myself will search for my sheep and look after them. As a shepherd looks after his scattered flock when he is with them, so will I look after my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places where they were scattered on a day of clouds and darkness. I will bring them out from the nations and gather them from the countries, and I will bring them into their own land. I will pasture them on the mountains of Israel, in the ravines and in all the settlements in the land. I will tend them in a good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel will be their grazing land. There

they will lie down in good grazing land, and there they will feed in a rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. I myself will tend my sheep and have them lie down, declares the Sovereign LORD.' (Ezekiel 34:11-15)

Ezekiel has a vision, a dream or an amazing experience. He is taken to a valley where there has been a massacre, there are dry bones, 'very dry', everywhere. Ezekiel says, 'He asked me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" I said, "Sovereign LORD, you alone know."' He is told to prophecy to the bones. First they knit together then flesh appears and finally breath enters them and 'they came to life and stood up on their feet – a vast army.' A stunning picture of what God can do.



Then the promise comes.

"My servant David will be king over them, and they will all have one shepherd. They will follow my laws and be careful to keep my decrees. They will live in the land I gave to my servant Jacob, the land where your ancestors lived. They and their children and their children's children will live there forever, and David my servant will be their prince forever."

His final visions are a tour round the new Temple, amazingly detailed; the promise of restoration.

So Ezekiel's message to the complacent is that God will judge and his message to the repentant sorrowing, is that God will restore.

Mike Gillingham

LIVE READY

By Smith Wigglesworth

Live ready. If you have to get ready when the opportunity comes your way, you'll be too late. Opportunity doesn't wait, not even while you pray. You must not have to 'get ready', you must live ready at all times.

Be filled by the Spirit; that is, be soaked with the Spirit. Be so soaked that every thread in the fabric of your life will have received the requisite rule of the Spirit – then when you are misused and squeezed to the wall, all that will ooze out of you will be the nature of Christ.



...MISSION

Reviewing our Mission Giving

As you may have read, the PCC has been reviewing our missions' support; something we do each year. If you have any views, please feed them back to the Mission Review group – Richard Carpenter, Mike Gillingham and Jenny Wakefield.

In the meantime, over the next three months our focus centres on three organisations which aim to put our Christian love into action.

In September we look at the work of **Samaritan's Purse** – their 'Shoebox' campaign is well known for sending physical gifts of love to children who are caught up in the trauma of war, natural disaster or general need. Sending those gifts with love and prayer can be powerful for the recipients. On the wider front, their US-based parent is committed to providing humanitarian aid on a global scale. Their website provides information as to the scope of their actions, and Roger Fenton is always happy to tell you what they are doing.

For October we turn to our local area and the work of **Open Door**, the charity that serves those who, for all sorts of reasons, have become homeless or roofless and are needing care and support to help them get back on their feet. The increase of people sleeping in tents in the town is very noticeable and the dilemma of how to help is a difficult one. Open Door provides very practical help – meals, washing and laundry facilities and, most importantly, a friendly non-judgmental space where anyone can get support to talk over the next step towards getting back on track. Providing these services requires a lot of input. Do check out their website or talk to Susie Peeler or Jonathan Sladden (both trustees of the charity) for more up to date information.

Our focus for November is **Tearfund**. This organisation works in over 50 countries worldwide to tackle extreme poverty and injustice. They aim to provide humanitarian support, not just for the emergencies but by helping communities become more sustainable. Employment programmes and safe water provision can make huge difference to people's lives, bringing hope in the midst of hopelessness. Do pick up a prayer diary and/or magazine, which are always available at the back of the church. Check out their website for the latest news and developments, or ask Sue Doyle, she'd love to tell you about their work. In November Tearfund runs the BIG QUIZ nationally, their annual fundraising event.

Jenny Wakefield

My time with Operation Mobilisation

During the pantomime run earlier this year, someone asked me, “What’s this OM that I keep hearing about?”



This is an attempt to answer that question.

In my teens I attended a youth group. There I heard about Operation Mobilisation (OM) from people who joined on a month’s summer programme and who sometimes went on to spend a couple of years with them. They would be involved in evangelism and often would specifically reach out to a particular group, such as students. In my early twenties I decided it was my time.

September 1976 saw me in Belgium for a month-long conference with hundreds of others where decisions were made about where we would go. This could range from Europe, Iran, India or aboard one of two ships. People from all over the world were involved and so each presentation was translated into the major languages of those attending.



I joined a team working in the Flemish part of Belgium. OM specialised in literature distribution. So, as a way of outreach, we opened up a small bookshop selling Christian material – ‘The Hiding Place’ by Corrie Ten Boom was a best seller.

We came to know a lady learning English at night school. She invited the two English speakers in the team to come as guests one evening. This gave people the opportunity to talk to native English speakers. The first question to us was, “What does Jesus mean to you personally?” What an opportunity!!

At the end of two years it was time for me to move on. Some people that I worked with went on to work in India and the ships. One went on to train to become a pastor. Me? I came back to the UK to my own ministry of being a light pointing to Jesus in my work, church and family life.

Chris Rickard

(You can find out more about OM and the work they do on their website - <https://www.uk.om.org> or talk to Chris who will be happy to tell you more – Ed.)



Parish giving scheme

A message from your Treasurer

Hopefully, you have read my finance article in the last church magazine, and I wanted to expand on the Parish Giving Scheme (PGS) that I made mention to. St James' has now signed up to this, and I hope that many of you will consider moving your direct debits to this scheme although I must stress, only if you feel it is right for you. You can opt in or out whenever you want to so the length of commitment is entirely up to you.

How does it work?

In simple terms, you move your monthly standing order to the PGS, which will be taken on the 1st of the month. This will then appear in our church account on the 10th of the month and then the good bit, the Gift Aid (assuming you are a taxpayer) is claimed on our behalf by PGS and received into our account later that month.

How will this help?

This will then:

- Help improve our cash flow situation, as the Gift Aid is not normally claimed until the end of the year
- Be less administrative work for our overworked Treasurer and Gift Aid Officer
- Give an annual reminder to increase your gift in line with inflation, should you wish to

I reiterate that this will not be for everyone and I will fully understand if you wish to continue your regular giving directly to St James. But please feel free to ask me or Chris Rickard for further details and if you would like any help in signing up to the scheme.

Further information is available on the Regular Giving leaflet at the back of church.

Ways to join the scheme

1. Scan the QR code which will take you direct to the St James sign-up page
2. Visit the PGS website – <https://www.parishgiving.org.uk/>
3. Telephone 0333 002 1271 where someone will guide you through the set-up
4. Complete a paper Gift Form (again, see me or Chris)



Richard Sainsbury – St James' Church Treasurer

The Parable of the Rich Fool

(Luke 12:13-21)

Jesus recounted this parable in answer to a heckler in the crowd who demanded that He settle an inheritance dispute he had with his brother. Jesus perceived that this question was provoked by greed and stated he had no brief to settle family disputes; that life was more than the pursuit of excess possessions.

Jesus used this familiar theme to construct the parable. Everyone knows a rich fool! The audience may even have had someone in mind? The story turned on the notion that having already amassed sufficient wealth for his immediate needs, a man should contemplate tearing his barns down then rebuild to accommodate even more wealth; a behaviour Jesus found particularly repellent.

We live in a society with attitudes not unlike those of biblical times. One measure of success is the amount of wealth that has been accumulated to secure a comfortable retirement. Few people want to become a burden on family, friends or society, but the pursuit of financial security can sometimes go too far. Unfortunately some people feel entitled to more than they need, amassing excessive, tax-efficient pensions and other reserves and employing clever lawyers and accountants to maximise profit.

Is this the modern equivalent of tearing down barns to build bigger ones – preserving wealth far beyond our needs while serving no useful purpose? Jesus makes clear that abundant wealth should be used for God's work. Elsewhere He advises storing treasure in Heaven safe from 'moth and rust' as the ultimate life goal.

The story ends with the protagonist dying suddenly after a lifetime of labour, leaving one question unanswered: who will benefit from all his effort? Not him, the wealth stored in his larger barns is left behind, leaving his balance in Heaven 'in the red'.

One lesson for our time is that we should use our surplus wealth joyfully and modestly to help those with less happier lives. I believe Jesus would approve.

David Smith



Moving On - Update

My last St James' Magazine article was published in 2005, it was titled 'Moving On'. Now, 21 years later, I have returned to St James' and I wanted to give you an update on how I feel I have been led by the Lord during the intervening time.

Back in 2003, having completed my Lay Ministry training, I was Deputy Church Warden. I did not feel the calling to be a Reader so, with Peter Banister's encouragement (the Vicar at that time), my ministry took a different direction.

I was then a member of Musgrove Park Hospital team chaplaincy, led by a Baptist Minister, where I was involved in leading live radio broadcasting for Sunday morning Chapel services (never preaching). I also held a Bishop's license to give communion to staff, patients and their family members, and was involved in other roles for 9 years, now as a member of the Baptist Church. My ministry subsequently took off in totally unexpected directions.

With the Lord's leading and equipping, in 2008 I was involved in setting up Taunton Street Pastors (TSP) and until 2024 was also very active within TSP and the Ascension Trust (AT), the holding charity. During this time Taunton Team Chaplaincy was set up and again I was actively involved as a trustee, Safeguarding Lead, and in formulating policies and procedures. Alongside this, I was busy in various ministry roles in the UK and Africa on mission trips. I also served as a Deacon with three different Baptist Ministers.



I am currently still an active TTC member, a Police Emergency Faith Responder, having done active service, and am currently a Chaplain with West Somerset Railway giving pastoral and spiritual support as needed to all.

I returned to St James' over a year ago along with my wife, Rosie. I am now on the PCC to serve as the Lord leads me for whatever his calling and equipping within the church.



Mike Newberry

(Mike has been a busy chap! Some of you will remember when Mike was here at St James' all that time ago, but this summary of his calling over the last 21 years shows that one can be led to undertake various roles, some of which we perhaps didn't see for ourselves. Maybe this is an encouragement to us all that there is work to be done for the Lord. Do we always listen and follow? Are we hesitant and maybe feel we are not ready for the task or don't have the skills? How can we be sure it is the Lord's calling?)

It's sometimes difficult for us to discern these things. I've asked Mike to write more articles for future editions to give examples of how he has been led to work for these various organisations, what he does, who has helped him make the decision to get involved and how he has gained the skills to equip him for the various roles he has undertaken. Ed.)

Autumn Planting

Lord, plant me
where you would have me
bloom & bear fruit;

make me stonecrop, to cling
in crevices, your words plumping
each leaf,
your hope in my yellow petals;

make me campanula, to glow
in unloved corners, my clusters to be
shelter
for fragile beings;

help me turn from dry paths, my
roots
to choose nourishment, to tap into
your truth,
for I am world-weary;

while others see only old seed,
bring me to fruition in your sweet
way,
for I know you love me;

turn my face to seek your shining,
open my leaves to receive your
blessing,
my heart to bearers of your word;

make me buddleia or sea holly, lime
or nettle;
night-scented stock, lichen, bramble
& bay, all have
your maker's mark, our purpose to
live & give;

as surely as the bees seek nectar,
& the bean & morning glory twine
towards light,
so may I follow your Spirit into love:

Lord, give me courage to grow
by rain & sun, that I may tell your
story,
feed others with your glorious grace.

Philippa Johnson



Simply Pray Summer Prayer Walk

Simply Pray like to invite everyone to try different ways to spend time with God. This summer we were pleased to be joined in fellowship on a prayer walk at the Bishop's Palace Gardens in Wells. Fiona has kindly agreed to share her thoughts on this.

**'You shall be like a watered garden,
like a spring whose waters never fail'**

Isaiah 58 v11

To wander through the Bishop's Palace Gardens in Wells is a celebration of the wonders of nature, regardless of what time of year it is. Our Waterside Prayer Walk was on a beautiful summer's day.

Man-made in its formality of structure but nature-made in content -
trees in full leaf providing a canopy of shelter for all the creatures living within and humans seeking shade, on a warm summer's day, beneath -
flowers in bloom providing a full palette of colour and scent, insects and gardeners at work within the borders -
still and moving water providing reflection and sound -
sculptures dotted around as conversation pieces -
the backdrop of the Palace and Cathedral reminding us that this has been a place of life and worship for over 800 years.

As we travelled and paused to hear scripture, reflections and prayer, sharing our own thoughts and experiences, we became richer in so many ways. From the openness of the Gardens we moved into the Palace Chapel for midday service, the names and dates of centuries of bishops along the walls serving as a reminder of the many people, of both higher and lower rank, who have gathered within that intimate space, hearing and repeating familiar or fresh words, feeling again the presence of God, leaving with His blessing.

Thank you, Felicity and Lyn, for continuing to find and share different ways to Simply Pray

Fiona Hope



Simply Pray Gatherings

We normally meet each month in the side chapel for informal gatherings on a variety of themes. We plan to meet again on:

Thursday 3rd September at 7pm

October - no meeting

Thursday 5th November at 10:30am



***Thursday 3rd December
at 7pm***

*when we shall be entering
Advent by candlelight*

Everyone is very welcome to come and try us out



Simply pray meets each month to do 'exactly what is says on the tin' – to spend some time in quiet contemplation and prayer. The time is led, with a Bible reading, a time of reflection, a guided meditation, 5 minutes of silence to meditate or pray; then a written poem or piece of prose is read. It is very informal and undemanding. Drinks are available. We sit in a circle in the side chapel, sometimes using a candle as a focus, often with a piece of artwork to provoke thought and prayer.

In August we looked at the Parable of the Sower using a Van Gogh painting and a wonderfully simple yet powerful poem by Malcolm Guite (see opposite).

Those who come are mainly members of St James', but others who come into church and wish to sit quietly and pray also join if they wish.

It is a chance to be still in God's presence, to be quiet, and to listen. I have really enjoyed the times of quiet. I enjoy visuals, so the art-work is often helpful, and I have loved listening to the poetry or prose, usually by authors unknown to me. I found the poem by Guite both powerful and thought provoking, with the referencing and connection to the Parable of the Sower.

I encourage you to come; to experience and enjoy this wonderful, peaceful time each month.

Sue Doyle



'Good Ground'

*I love your simple story of the Sower,
With all its close attention to the soil,
Its movement from the knowledge to the knower,
Its take on the tenacity of the toil.*

*I feel the fall of seed a Sower scatters,
So equally available to all,
Your story takes me straight to all that matters,
Yet understands the reason why I fall.*

*Oh deepen me where I am thin and shallow,
Uproot in me the thistle and the thorn,
Keep far from me that swiftly snatching shadow,
That seizes on your seed to mock and scorn.*

*O break me open, Jesus, set me free,
Then find and keep your own good ground in me.*

Malcolm Guite



Thanking God for our blessings

At this time of year, here in Somerset you will see the signs of harvest - after the summer we've had, a little earlier than usual! Huge combine harvesters will be at work in the fields, reaping the golden wheat and barley, baling the straw and gathering the grain. Although this year's pickings might be a little thinner than usual, for farmers it is the high point of their year, and a moment celebrated with thanksgiving in churches throughout the land.

Alistair Birkett wrote the following a year or two ago and describes his experience of harvest then and reflects on what he (and we) can learn from it.

Our winter barley ripened quickly this year, and soon the combine harvesters were rolling here on the Northumberland / Scottish Border.

As the first trailer load of grain came into the shed, I ran my hands through the golden grains, offering a short prayer of thankfulness as I savoured the smell of fresh cut barley. It was a good harvest.

I've often reflected on the Old Testament festival of the Firstfruits, where the Israelites offered the very first sheaf of the spring harvest to God (Leviticus 23:9-14). I think this act required great faith, as they trusted God for a fruitful harvest to come, something that was far from certain, given their utter dependence on the weather.

I'm not sure about you, but I'm always up for giving thanks after the event. I'll sing 'Come ye thankful people come' and rejoice that "all is safely gathered in", but am I able to trust with anticipation for what is yet to come?

The festival of the Firstfruits reminded God's people that everything they had came from Him. I am reminded that I must learn (and relearn) to trust in God, who has proven His faithfulness to me, over and over again.

Perhaps right now as a church community or an individual you're waiting for a certain event, standing on the cusp of a new initiative, praying for a certain outcome or anticipating a long-held vision becoming reality. Let's all keep trusting that whatever the challenge, however things turn out, irrespective of what we anticipate, God is going before us and has secured the Firstfruits of an even greater harvest through Jesus, as He rose from the dead.

Just as the grain offering to God in the Old Testament anticipated a harvest to come, Paul reminds us that Jesus' victory anticipates an even greater bodily resurrection and eternal peace (1 Corinthians 15:20-22).

As we continue our journey with Jesus through the challenges of each day, let's do so with a deepening faith and trust. In the meantime, bring on the harvest - I'll see you on the other side!

Alistair Birkett,
Director of Rural Ministries for Scotland and Northern England

Open Door will benefit from the offerings at our Harvest Festival in October. If you're considering bringing items to church on Harvest Festival Sunday, here are some of the foods they will be happy to accept:

- **Tins** of baked beans, mushrooms, beef, ham, custard
 - **Basics** such as cereals, salt/pepper, flour, margarine/spread, cooking oil, sugar
 - **Drinks** like fruit juice, squash, coffee, long life milk, hot chocolate
 - **Treats** – biscuits, cakes, sweets, crisps, cereal bars, pot noodles
 - **Sauces and Condiments** – mayonnaise, ketchup, brown sauce
- (At the time of writing this, they have enough pasta, tuna, tea, tinned soup and porridge)

They would also like **non-food items** such as washing powder, roll-on deodorant, large rucksacks, carrier bags, sleeping bags and roll mats

You can find out more about Open Door at their website:

<https://www.tauntonopendoor.org.uk>

Taunton Food Bank is also helping local people in crisis. Again, at the time of writing they urgently need the following food items

- pasta/spaghetti
- hot meats (tinned/jars - meatballs, hotdogs)
- tinned fruit and veg
- rice 500g
- pasta sauce (jar)
- toiletries and toilet rolls
- clean, strong carrier bags and bags for life

For more information about their work, their website address is:

<https://taunton.foodbank.org.uk>

Psalm 8 – and the wonders of Creation

by Revd Paul Hardingham

In this harvest season, the created universe can inspire our worship, as it did for David:

‘Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!’ (Psalm 8 v1).

What did David see?

‘When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place’ (v3).

David was moved to worship as he meditated on the night sky and saw the moon and stars pointing to their Maker. His words point to the work of a great artist, whose art reflects the character of the artist Himself. How vast is the universe in which we live! It speaks of a creation shot through with meaning and purpose, demonstrating the tremendous wisdom and power of God. As creation speaks of the greatness of God, it demands our allegiance and loyalty to Him in all aspects of our lives.

What did David feel?

‘what is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them?’ (v4).

In the light of creation’s vastness, we can feel a little insignificant! Why do human beings exist on this tiny planet in such a vast universe?

However, David goes on to answer his own question:

‘You have made them a little lower than the angels and crowned them with glory and honour.’ (v5).

Human beings have a unique relationship to God, because we are created in His image. We are the means by which the invisible God is made visible to His creation. We are called to be partners with God in doing His work in the world, to care for the earth rather than exploiting it. It is a precious resource, along with the creatures it contains!

‘The glory of God is the human person fully alive’ (Irenaeus of Lyons).

Creationtide

The following prayer is taken from the Church of England website page about Creationtide, or the Season of Creation. This season, the period in the annual church calendar from 1st September to 4th October, is dedicated to God as Creator and Sustainer of all life.

(It seems to fit so well with Psalm 8 - Ed.)

You can find more resources by following this link:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/about/environment-and-climate-change/creationtide/creationtide-resources>

Sue Carpenter

A Prayer of Praise

Let us praise God!

With the roaring of the winds
And silence of the deepest sea;
With the blazing sun and the shining of the stars.

Let us praise God!

With all that is created, and all things beautiful and good;
from desert plains to fruitful lands,
with plants and creatures in all their kinds.

Let us praise God!

With one another today,
For love of all that God has made,
in wonder at a world of beauty and reverence for a holy creation.

Let us praise God!

O God, our creator, who, in Jesus Christ,
Walked the earth, bless us with your Holy Spirit this day,
that our worship and our walking, our prayers and our politics,
may give you glory and honour creation.

Amen



All In A Day's Walk

Bill Cowley was a Cambridge graduate, former Indian Civil Servant, author and a Yorkshire tyke. At Cambridge he founded the Yorkshire Society. In later life, he was an active member and Honorary Secretary of the Yorkshire Dialect Society. He wrote

many articles for Yorkshire based newspapers and magazines. He died in 1994, but he left a lasting memory.

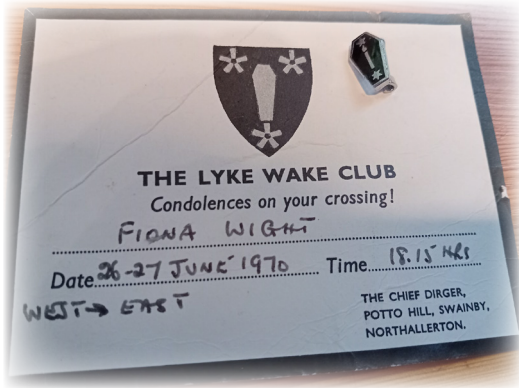
In the last issue of this magazine, Fiona Hope wrote her churchwarden's article and made a mention of doing the Lyke Wake Walk in 1970 at a very young age. The same day her brother did the same walk in reverse. So, they are two of the 10,000 who did the walk that year. As of 2025 several people have done the walk over 200 times and being 80 years old when you complete the trek is not a rare event. The name reflects folk memories of old coffin routes and of tumuli scattered over the moors.

Bill Cowley wrote in an article in August 1955 about the possibility of crossing the North Yorkshire Moors from Osmotherly to Ravenscar, a distance of 40 miles (65km). It is a heather covered moorland rising to 1489ft (454m). Much of the heather is 3ft (1m) tall (if you need a rest you can sleep under it!) and there was no footpath or right of way. There are boggy areas, except in summer, and the steep edge to the moor means that water drains into the valleys within hours, so you need to carry your own water - there are no farms or houses for mile after mile after mile...

The first attempt to cross eastwards was made on 1-2nd October 1955. 11 men and 3 women set off and 13 of them finished in 23 hours. One lady was injured and had to stop the walk. It is a walk used by Scouts, Guides, Police and Army as a 'toughener-up' of character. It's not hard but it challenges your 'stickability'.

The initial climb from Cod Beck reservoir (now the starting point to avoid late starters waking the residents of Osmotherly) gains you the high ground that you can stick to for over 25 miles. This was where, during the climb, I saw in the torchlight of the person behind me a green beetle. Up to that point I had assumed that all were black. I was not popular with those behind me when I stopped to examine it and shepherd it to safety. After about 25 miles you descend gently at first then increasingly steeply to the North York Moors railway and then have many 100's of feet of steep climbing back out of the valley, only to face a similar descent into the valley of a beck. If you are fortunate you may find a farm track or a WW2 army road to ease some of the last miles.

You really can't get lost, the red light atop the Blisdale TV transmitter is a companion for the first half of the walk. The faint yellow light in the northern sky comes from the towns of Teeside and the RAF radar station at Fylingdales is a landmark towards the end of the walk.



And what do you get if you complete the walk? A black edged card of condolence and, at a price, a lapel badge or a Lyke Wake tie. The LWW club badge is a coffin with the Ordnance Survey symbol for a tumulus at each end. And whether you complete the walk or not – a memory for life of a good walk, a tough challenge. So, if you are under 90 years of age...

Andrew Wright

Glossary

Lyke = coffin or body

Wake = death watch over a coffin

Tumuli = prehistoric burial mounds



...I take it our local supermarket has a rather good offer on tinned peas at the moment!



ACTIONS FOR CHILDREN'S TRUST
Registered Charity No. 1206746

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



BRINGING VALUE AND DIGNITY



DATE

Friday 4 Sept 2026



TIME

07.30 PM



LOCATION

St James Church Hall
St James Street, Taunton, TA1 1JS

Join us as we reflect on the past year, celebrate what God has done, receive reports and look ahead to the future of the charity.

More Information:

actionsuk@gmail.com

www.acts-uk.org

If you can, do come along and find out more about the work of ACTS and how you can help them

Church – a way to connect to God and each other

Technology has advanced so that we can connect through video calls and streaming services. There is a choice of worship to watch online. St James' streams the service and a 'tidied up' version is available on YouTube. This can be a positive help to remain connected when people are not physically able to reach the church building.

But is it enough? What are the advantages of making the effort and taking the time to come through the doors in person? There is an epidemic of loneliness in society and I think we as a church can help with that.

It may be that a person drags themselves out and life is a struggle; but being with others can lift the spirits. We are made up of the physical, emotions and spirit, which are all connected. It is worth the effort to connect by being in the church building, enjoying the live music and feeling the atmosphere. His presence is there in power among his people.

It is easier to worship or listen to a talk and give our undivided attention when a space is made for that. There may not be a spiritual experience or sense of God speaking, but his presence is there in power among his people. We can meet God and be refreshed. As we love God we also love those around us.

It says something about our love for each other that even some time after the end of worship the churchwardens can struggle to get people out of the building to lock up!

If you enjoy the worship online, please consider joining in person. Remember the value of being with people face to face. We read body language, there can be a gentle touch if wanted and appropriate, plus a listening ear. The church can offer support and prayer. If you are in need of a person to talk to in confidence, we do have a prayer team. These are approachable people who will listen, talk and talk to God. His love is the best love but he does channel that love through his people.

If you come each week, don't forget how much we can encourage each other with a 'hello' and a chat. We are a community and a body where each person is valued.

Lilian



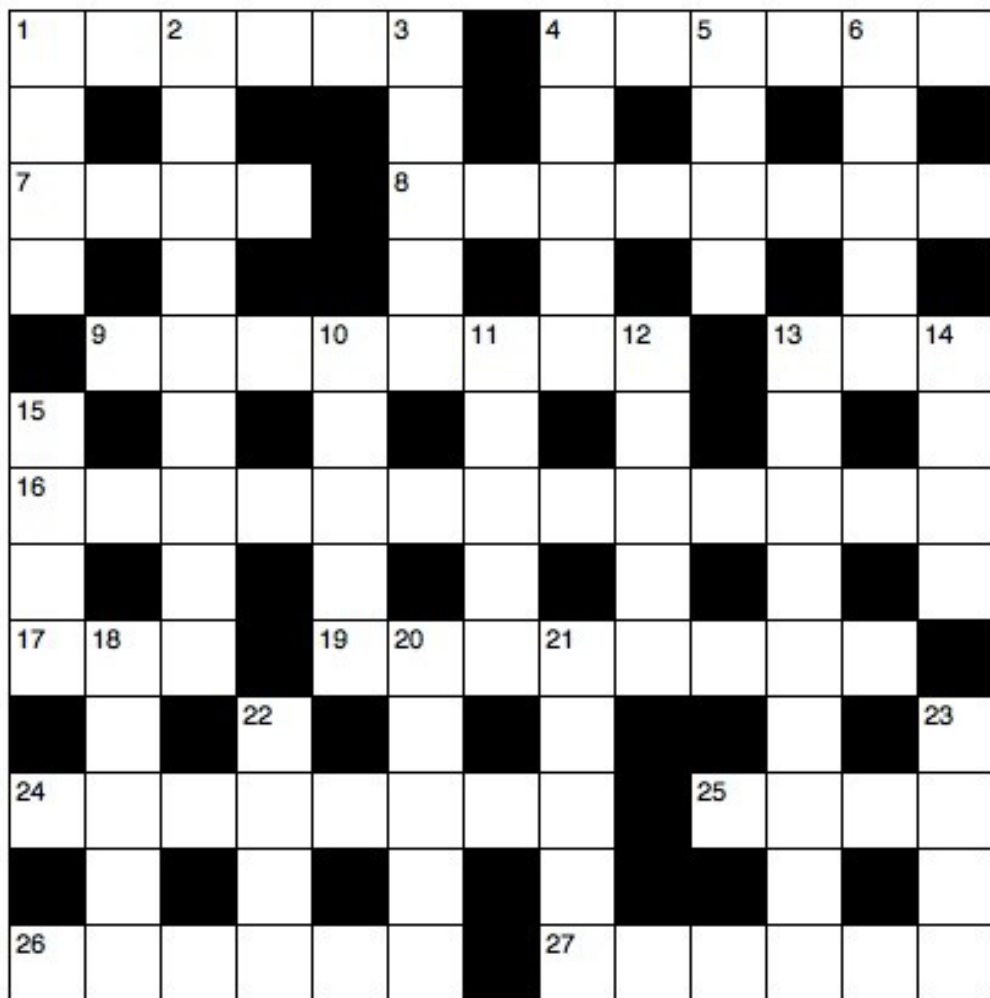
Crossword

Across

- 1 'Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders — in vain' (Psalm 127:1) (6)
- 4 Season of the year (Psalm 84:6) (6)
- 7 'My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. — here and keep watch with me' (Matthew 26:38) (4)
- 8 It came over the whole land from the sixth to the ninth hour on the first Good Friday (Luke 23:44) (8)
- 9 Paul invariably did this in the synagogues he visited on his missionary journeys (Acts 17:2) (8)
- 13 'It is God who works in you to will and to — according to his good purpose' (Philippians 2:13) (3)
- 16 Members of the Church of Scotland (13)
- 17 'Now when he saw the crowds, he went up on a mountain side and — down' (Matthew 5:1) (3)
- 19 Mock (Luke 14:29) (8)
- 24 Disgrace (Psalm 44:13) (8)
- 25 First month of the Hebrew calendar (Exodus 13:4) (4)
- 26 Christianity of the Britons before Augustine arrived from Rome (6)
- 27 Mean (Numbers 35:23) (6)

Down

- 1 'Whoever finds his life will — it' (Matthew 10:39) (4)
- 2 'My lord the king, let the — — on me and on my father's family, and let the king and his throne be without guilt' (2 Samuel 14:9) (5,4)
- 3 O raid (anag.) (5)
- 4 'If two of you on earth — about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven' (Matthew 18:19) (5)
- 5 Take care of (1 Samuel 17:15) (4)
- 6 What the older son heard as he came near the house the day his prodigal brother came home (Luke 15:25) (5)
- 10 'Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with — judgment' (Romans 12:3) (5)
- 11 Do ten (anag.) (5)
- 12 Architectural style first used in Greek temples in the sixth century BC (5)
- 13 Capable of being used (1 Kings 7:36) (9)
- 14 'Each one should — his own actions' (Galatians 6:4) (4)
- 15 Among the items imported by Solomon's fleet of trading ships (1 Kings 10:22) (4)



18 'But I am afraid that just ——— was deceived by the serpent's cunning,
your minds may somehow be led astray' (2 Corinthians 11:3) (2,3)

20 Outstanding 18th-century hymn writer, — Watts(5)

21 One of the four sons of Asher(Genesis46:17)(5)

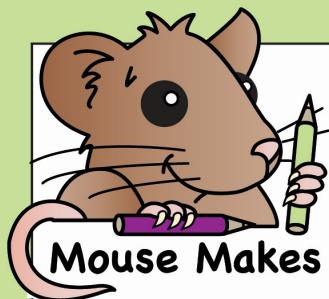
22 Be distressed(Proverbs24:19)(4)

23 He was the father of Gaal, who threatened rebellion against Abimelech
(Judges 9:28) (4)

DOWN: 1, Lose. 2, Blame. 3, Radio. 4, Agree. 5, Tend. 6, Music. 10, Sober. 11, Noted. 12, Doric. 13, Available. 14, Test. 15, Apes. 18, As Eve. 20, Isaac. 21, Ishvi. 22, Fret. 23, Ebed.

ACROSS: 1, Labour. 4, Autumn. 7, Stay. 8, Darkness. 9, Reasoned. 13, Act. 16, Presbyterian. 17, Sat. 19, Ridicule. 24, Reproach. 25, Abib. 26, Celtic. 27, Intend.

Young People's Pages



Mouse Makes



READ
John 15:1-17

THE TRUE VINE

Who is the vine?

John 15:1

What does Jesus
ask us to do?

"Go and bear

John 15:16

What happens
to the branches
that do not remain
in the vine?

Thrown into the

and

How many
times does Jesus
command us
to LOVE
one another?

What does
Jesus command?

To _____
one another.
John 15:12,17

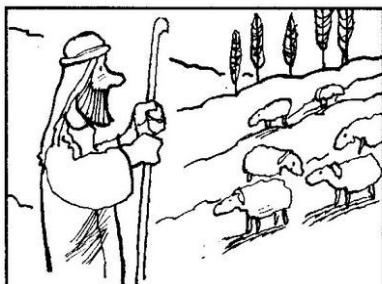
H T H R O W N A W A Y
I R A B I D E W I S B
D U F R U I T F U L U
N E R A J S I A M J R
C V U N F C U T V P N
L J I C W I T H E R S
E O T H O P J E S U S
A Y V W R L C R O N V
N G A R D E N E R E I
O S F J E S I S W S N
E R E M A I N F I R E

JESUS • I AM • TRUE • VINE • FATHER
GARDENER • FRUIT • FRUITFUL
BRANCH • PRUNES • CUT • WITHERS
CLEAN • THROWN AWAY • FIRE • BURNS
REMAIN • ABIDE • DISCIPLES • JOY

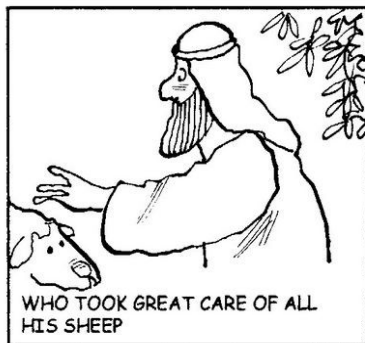
The tale of the Lost Sheep



JESUS OFTEN TOLD STORIES WITH HIDDEN MEANINGS



ONE STORY WAS ALL ABOUT A GOOD SHEPHERD.



WHO TOOK GREAT CARE OF ALL HIS SHEEP

THE SHEPHERD WOULD ALWAYS MAKE SURE EACH SHEEP WAS SAFE.



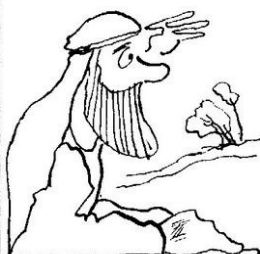
HE WOULD COUNT THEM AT THE END OF EVERY DAY

BUT ONE NIGHT HE REALIZED A SHEEP HAD GONE MISSING

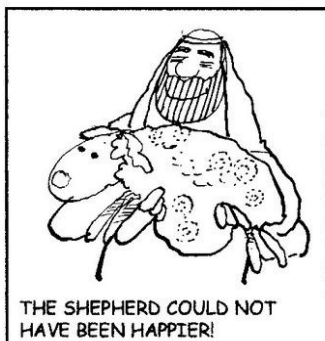


THE SHEPHERD SET OUT TO SEARCH FOR THE LOST SHEEP

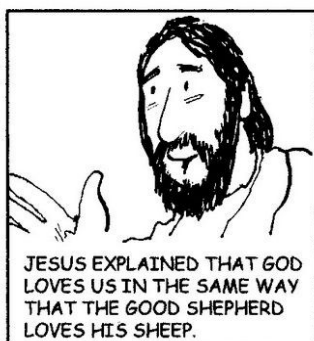
HE SEARCHED HIGH AND LOW



AT LAST THE LOST SHEEP WAS FOUND!



THE SHEPHERD COULD NOT HAVE BEEN HAPPIER!



JESUS EXPLAINED THAT GOD LOVES US IN THE SAME WAY THAT THE GOOD SHEPHERD LOVES HIS SHEEP.

Children and Youth 2025-2026

Another school year is over and our dedicated teams of leaders and helpers at Children's Church, Youth Church and those doing mentoring, reading and assemblies at St James Church School can take a break. (Well, some of them – a lot of effort has gone into August's all-age services!) This roundup has been drawn from their respective reports to the PCC.

Martin Wakefield

Children's Church

From Rachel Haddell's report:

We have had another good year with new families joining and many who used to come infrequently becoming much more regular worshippers.

A highlight of the year was our new year Family Event when 50 of us gathered for breakfast and worship. Family social events are really appreciated, so we are planning a park meet and some Lego clubs in the summer holidays. In September, there will be an away day at Great Wood, in October a Light party and at Christmas another movie afternoon.

We continue to enjoy our mixed-age sessions in the hall with stories, songs, games, crafts, snacks and prayer. We use the outside space whenever we can. We provide a supportive, welcoming environment for our families, but don't have enough leaders to support lots of young children for parents to stay in church without them.



Next year, we are hoping to gather our year 5 and 6 children, slightly separately, for a short time to play a game together, study a bible passage and build those friendships before they transition up to Youth Church.

Rachel is very grateful for the diverse and gifted team of volunteers. But we are often pushed to our limits planning, setting up and delivering our sessions and need more support and leaders. We'd appreciate hearing from anyone who feels led to help us in any way in this ministry.

Youth Church

From Karen Sancto's report:

Highlights this year have included group members introducing friends, Youth Alpha, and one member of the group being baptised. We currently have 18 young people, and have outgrown the lounge!

We meet twice a month on Sundays and enjoy fellowship, looking at faith and Bible exploration, and playing games. We work closely with Children's Church as a team and join together one Sunday a month. We have had six socials over the year, including some youth club style evenings in the church hall, as well as trips to Flip Out and Hollywood Bowl.



Looking ahead, we are praying that a youth pastor will be appointed to continue and grow what God is doing with Youth Church. We look forward to continuing as volunteers, and to growing the team.

'Serve Sunday' is being developed to integrate with the adult congregation in the fourth Sunday service each month.

Coaches & Readers in St James Church School

From David Jordan's report:

We are a team of six mentors working with children from Years 5 and 6. The school is seeing the benefits this brings and wants children to get help as early as possible, so this year we have also supported Year 4.

We also have Readers who enjoy 1:1 time with children who do not get anyone to read with at home. They really enjoy someone who gives them 10 minutes of individual time, to chat and help them with their reading skills. We mustn't forget Fabian and Mike leading assemblies, and we all turn out to welcome the school at their seasonal events in the church.

Could you spare a little time each week? St James School children would love to see you and give you a very happy welcome.



The PCC has been discussing...

Here's a summary of the main things the Parochial Church Council looked at in June and July (the PCC does not meet in August).

Pastoral Support

We considered a report from the Pastoral Support Review Group, which summarised the present provision, the potential support from groups and teams, and gaps that needed to be addressed. The main areas of concern were being aware of which church members are not in a group or team where they would be missed, especially newcomers who were not yet well-known; and how to arrange support for those in hospital.

The Review Group is going to examine the church membership list to get a better idea of where the gaps may be, and will also look at co-ordination between the various teams and groups. The patchwork nature of this type of pastoral support indicates the ongoing need for a co-ordinator.

Mission Support

The PCC continued its review of our 'portfolio' of mission partners. We looked at the percentage of each of their income that comes from us. This varies from 24.8% for Taunton Area Debt Advice to 0.001% for Tear Fund. Most of the local partners are dependent on our financial support.

We took note of the investigation by the Charity Commission into historic accounting and safeguarding shortcomings within Barnabas Aid. We don't think they are affecting current operations, but we are keeping an eye on developments. Another partner we are trying to monitor is Samaritan's Purse where there are concerns about its main US operation, which has strong US Christian Nationalist links, but we don't know if such things are affecting the UK operations.

We have yet to look at proposals to support Sat7, the Middle East Christian Broadcaster (with which we have a direct link), and A Rocha, the Christian Environmental charity.

Deanery Matters

The Deanery Mission and Pastoral Group has been looking at the adjustments needed as the number of full-time clergy reduces in the years ahead to take account of falling attendance. It has also been considering church planting in areas of new housing. There is a growing awareness that some form of lay leadership may be required to revitalise parishes.

Safeguarding

Everyone is encouraged to have a look at the poster on display about the Church of

England's '*It's not just policy, it's personal*' campaign. This focuses on helping people to know how to report a concern.

Jenny and Jacqui will shortly be commencing the periodic audit of how well each team understands safeguarding principles.

Communion

Weekly communion: prior to Covid, we had been alternating communion services between morning and evening Sunday services, but the evening ones have not resumed. Previously, there had also been an early morning communion and mid-week services, but attendance had fallen to minimal numbers. The PCC noted that it would support the resumption of weekly services if there was a call from parishioners. Alternatively, being in a town-centre situation, services are available at several other churches every week within walking distance.

Distribution of communion: the PCC reviewed the practice of using individual glasses for distributing the wine, which has been our practice since services resumed after Covid. After a detailed exploration of the recommended options, the PCC agreed that there was no justification to move away from our present practice.

Miscellaneous Matters

Youth Church Pastor: we are waiting to see what response there may be to our advertisement for a Youth Church Pastor.

End of academic year: the PCC was pleased to receive end-of-year reports from Children's Church, Youth Church and the team of volunteers at St James Church School.

Displays at the back of church: these have largely now been refreshed. The main 'Welcome' poster is in hand, as is the 'Contacts' display. The 'History' display will be a separate, follow-on project.

Heating: We have received an estimate for the replacement of the heating systems in the Halls. The initial plan is to put electric heaters in the Lounge and Small Hall before this winter. The Large Hall requires an air conditioning system in order to move away from fossil fuels, but we need to find out what grants may be available for this.

Policies: The PCC continues to keep its policy documents under review. In this period, we looked at the Data Protection Policy.

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 Fiona Hope
Church Wardens*



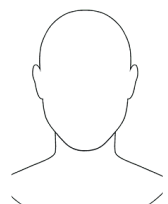
Richard Carpenter



Roger Fenton



Mike Gillingham



Vacancy



Lyn Jones



David Jordan



Ruth Preater-Gillard



Mike Newberry



Chris Rickard



Richard Sainsbury



Johan Smit



David Smith



Jenny Wakefield



Martin Wakefield



Celia Wojcik

photos: Richard Sainsbury

Concerts at St James

Many choirs and orchestras use St James' Church to stage their performances. The church is a wonderful concert venue with flexible seating, a good acoustic and facilities. Each concert has a steward from the church and quite often a member of the 'tech' team to provide p/a. And some members of the church sing with Taunton Choral Society and Voce, so you would know some of the faces in the choirs

Meeting the audience at some of these concerts is a really good way of connecting with people who may not ordinarily attend church - a chance to talk to them about the building and about what we, as Christians, stand for. Here are some of the concerts coming up soon. Why not get your tickets and show the face of St James' to a wider audience!



Saturday 7th November 2026
St James Church, Taunton
7.30pm

Butterworth: The Banks of Green Willow
Tchaikovsky: Swan Lake Suite

Vaughan Williams: Pastoral Symphony

and... **Tuesday 8th December 2026**
St James Church, Taunton 7.30pm
Programme to be confirmed



Voce
Step into Christmas

JOIN US FOR
FESTIVE CHORAL
MUSIC, CAROLS
& WINTER
READINGS TO
KICK START
YOUR ADVENT
COUNTDOWN

4PM
SATURDAY
28TH
NOVEMBER
TEMPLE
METHODIST
CHURCH
TAUNTON

£10 ADULTS, £5 CHILDREN
TICKETS INCLUDE DRINKS AND NIBBLES
AFTER THE SHOW

infovoce16@yahoo.com www.ticketsource.co.uk/voce-chamber-choir

Not strictly at St James', but you'll know Rachel and Chris who sing with Voce... and you'll enjoy the music!



**Rolling
Harmony**

EARTH KEEPS TURNING

SONGS INSPIRED BY NATURE
INCLUDING CHORAL ARRANGEMENTS OF



SUNDAY 1 NOVEMBER

4:30 - 5:30pm

ST JAMES CHURCH, TAUNTON

TICKETS £10 | Under 18s £5
songways.co.uk/rolling-harmony



Rolling Harmony is a vocal ensemble from the South West of England performing a rich variety of music rooted in English and American harmony singing traditions.

Earth keeps Turning is inspired by The Lost Words and Spell Songs

Nature-inspired contemporary choral music from England, Scotland, Ireland & the US | Choral arrangements of Spell Songs

MOZART

REQUIEM
(abridged)

GIBBS - THE TURNING YEAR

- Saturday
5th December
- St. James' Church
Taunton
- 7:30 pm



TICKETS & INFORMATION
TAUNTONCHORALSOCIETY.ORG

PARISH CONTACTS



Vicar: Rev. Fabian Wuyts 01823 333194
email: vicar@stjamestaunton.co.uk



Church Administrator: Glenys Hanlon
Church Office: 01823 272931
email: info@stjamestaunton.co.uk

Church Wardens:
Nigel Bright 07817 627326
Fiona Hope 07743 917478

Children's Church Pastor: Rachel Haddell
email: rachel@stjamestaunton.org

Discipleship & Home Groups Co-ordinator:
Roger Fenton 07960 672321
email: rogerifenton@gmail.com

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

Pastoral Care Co-ordinator:
currently vacant

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

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

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

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