

ST JAMES' CHURCH  
Brownhills



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*Following Jesus*

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# THE MUSTARD SEED



[www.stjameschurchbrownhills.co.uk](http://www.stjameschurchbrownhills.co.uk)

*May 2021* **50P**

*Our mission is to worship God  
and to serve the community by sharing the love of Jesus*

# Upstairs Downstairs

Cleaning Services

*Proprietor: Helen Downes*

Household Cleaning of the Highest Standard

Daytime: 07855 253562 – Evening: 01543 452501



## *Grace, Truth & Life Groups*

There are now five GTL Groups which are now meeting on a regular basis. It would be good to think we could increase the number meeting, so if you would like to be involved, please speak to Revd Gayle in the first instance.

## *Telephone Prayer*

If you would like any prayer ministry via the telephone, please contact Gayle on 07545 657 636, or Liz Corbett on 01543 370162.

## *From the Registers*

*The families of the following have asked for continuing prayer after funerals at St James' Church*

Michael John Poole of Warren Place

Margaret Griffiths of Mill Road

**Do more, learn more and be more.**

Girls & boys aged 6 to 18.

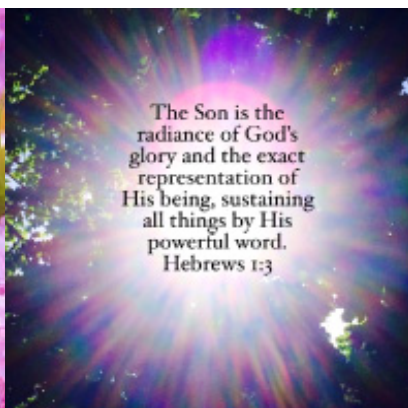
Based at Group HQ, Barnetts Lane, WS8 6HZ

For info: [www.brownhills-scouts.org.uk](http://www.brownhills-scouts.org.uk)

Call: Sue 01543 276953 or Mary 01543 453293



# *May - a month of radiance*



This time last year I was getting ready to leave my curacy church and start serving in ministry here in Brownhills. In a few weeks it'll be the same time of year as when I first met members of our leadership teams in the Vicarage garden, where there were beautiful May flower trees in full bloom – just as there are now!

We were in the pandemic, and then, just as now, those glorious flowers were a reminder to me that no matter how much sadness, trauma and pain is present in the world because of the pandemic, God is still Creator, Sovereign, and Lord of all creation. Looking at trees like these Hawthorns doesn't deny the world's suffering, but it does help to turn our focus onto their radiance, and so ultimately, onto how majestic and beautiful Jesus is.

So where are we now? In my article for last month's magazine I wrote about our calling to prioritise connecting more meaningfully with those making up our church family as the lockdown restrictions ease. With the beauty of creation displayed all around us I pray that we'll all make it a first priority to keep on planning our visits to each other's gardens and to go on walks with one another. Our focus is to keep connecting well making up for lost time.

I pray you'll also be encouraged, though, to take notice of all the different Hawthorns that you can see. I'm amazed that there's such an

expansive range colours of Hawthorn trees' flowers – various shades of pink, to red, orange, and white! They are all so beautiful – both as they approach flowering fully and in full bloom. Allow God to speak to you through His creativity in making all of these trees. You might find that the Holy Spirit speaks to you about the fruitfulness that's already present in your life, and all the gifts you have to be thankful to Him for. You might find that He speaks to you about His desire for you to be more like these trees, standing tall, completely unashamedly for the glory of God. Or you might find that He speaks to you through these trees about the radiance of Jesus' beauty and power to sustain.

If you have any days when you don't feel like going for a walk, go for it anyway. Why? Because the beauty of May is everywhere, the Lord is always ready to bless you with it, and it might just be that through that walk you discover a numinous moment. 'A what?' you might say. Well I mean a moment where God gives you a whole new perspective on a problem, a situation you're facing, or on yourself.

These times have caused many to question life's meaning and to struggle in different ways. That's why our wellbeing journey has been so much of a support to many of us during these months. So why not get out there and be open to numinous moments, where God transports you beyond yourself and into a fuller awareness of the Spirit's creative and beautiful power that can fill your life?

With love and prayers as we look forward to celebrating Pentecost,  
Rev'd Gayle



## *Millions join worship online during the pandemic*

The Church of England's national online services alone have attracted more than 3.7 million views since the first restrictions on gatherings for public worship to limit the spread of Covid-19 were introduced.

Clips and content from the services have been seen 40 million times on social media channels.

The figures for the online services are thought to be just the tip of the iceberg, as churches' response to the pandemic triggered a major change in the way Christians worship and reach out to their neighbours.

At least 20,000 services and other online events are now listed on the Church of England's 'church-finder' website AChurchNearYou. 15 months ago, there were none.

As churches look ahead, many are assessing how to incorporate the lessons of the last year into their regular patterns of worship and outreach after the pandemic.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, said: "The last year has been a time of loss, separation and pain for everyone. Not always being able to meet together for prayer and worship has made that even more difficult and I long for the day when we can gather together before God's face.

"Yet amid all of this, God has been with us and has done something new which we could not have imagined a year ago. We have sung the Lord's song in a virtual foreign land. As we look and plan ahead it's not a question of either online worship or meeting in-person, but of how we will be shaped by the experience and commitments of the last year, to try new things, to value the things we perhaps took for granted before, and to reach out to more people with the invitation to participate in the good news of Jesus Christ."

The Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell said: "I think there has been a digital coming of age. Many of those attending online services were worshipping for the first time".

Amaris Cole, the Church of England's Head of Digital, said: "The last year has shown the incredible creativity of our local churches, which have worked quickly to engage with their communities, despite restrictions. It's been incredible to hear the stories of those being reached through these online services."

# Remedy Foot Care

Keeping your feet happy and healthy is so important. Poor foot health can make doing even the simplest things uncomfortable or even painful.

As a qualified foot health practitioner, I can help identify and treat a range of foot conditions, allowing you to get back to living your life. From my Brownhills-based clinic, I offer remedial treatment, and long-term care advice, keeping your feet happy for years to come.

At the Remedy clinic, I offer treatment for the following foot related problems -

- |                  |                                   |
|------------------|-----------------------------------|
| * Corns          | * Thickened toenails              |
| * Callus         | * Toenail trimming                |
| * Cracked heels  | * Diabetic foot care              |
| * Verrucas       | * Ingrowing toenails              |
| * Fungal toenail | * Safe application of gel polish. |
| * Athletes foot  |                                   |

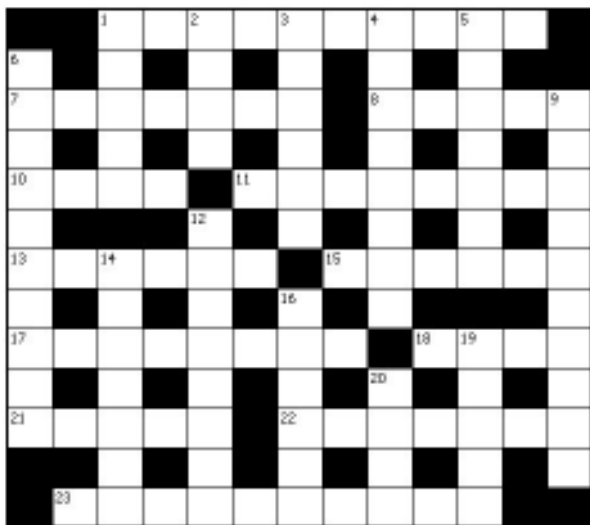
We are still operating and business as usual in this horrible time due to coming under a medical purpose.

We do have a website [www.remedyfootcare.com](http://www.remedyfootcare.com) with coronavirus updates on also.

If you are interested please ring Isobel on 07399 615433. We can also be found on Facebook or appointments can be made through our website. *If you mention that you found us in the Parish Magazine, you will get a 20% discount on your first treatment.*

We are a completely Covid safe clinic following all regulations.

*A Christian may not always be conscious of the Holy Spirit's presence, but he would not even be a Christian in his absence. -  
John Blanchard*



## Across

- 1 Sense of right and wrong (1 Corinthians 8:7) (10)
- 7 Coming (John 11:17) (7)
- 8 'All I have is – , and all you have is mine' (John 17:10) (5)
- 10 Smarten (Acts 9:34) (4)
- 11 Hold back (Job 9:13) (8)
- 13 Member of the Society of Friends (6)
- 15 At ague (anag.) (6)
- 17 Citizen of the Greek capital (8)
- 18 So be it (Galatians 6:18) (4)
- 21 Twentieth-century poet and dramatist who wrote Murder in the Cathedral, T.S. – (5)
- 22 Empowers (Philippians 3:21) (7)
- 23 Imposing (1 Samuel 9:2) (10)

## Down

- 1 Healed (Luke 7:21) (5)
- 2 Central space in a church (4)
- 3 Co-founder of Spring Harvest and General Secretary of the Evangelical Alliance 1983-97, Clive – (6)
- 4 Moses killed one when he saw him beating a Hebrew labourer (Exodus 2:12) (8)
- 5 Bravery (Acts 4:13) (7)
- 6 It interrupted Paul and Silas singing hymns in a Philippian jail (Acts 16:26) (10)
- 9 Transgression (Psalm 36:1) (10)
- 12 Irish province in which Dublin is situated (8)
- 14 Same hit (anag.) (7)
- 16 'The Spirit of God was hovering over the –' (Genesis 1:2) (6)
- 19 Author of the immortal stories of Winnie the Pooh, A.A. – (5)
- 20 Cab (4)

Historically, the Church of England has had its share of eccentric clergy. Even nowadays, hiding away in remote parishes, there are still some colourful clergy about. Clergy such as the elderly, Anglo-Catholic Uncle Eustace, who is incumbent in the small parish of St James-the-Least-of All, somewhere in Very Rural England. Eustace despairs of his nephew, Darren, who has become an Evangelical curate in a busy urban parish... and so he writes letters, to try and properly 'educate' Darren in parish life.

# On the perils of holding a Rose Queen celebration

The Rectory  
St. James the Least

*My dear Nephew Darren*

*On reflection, inviting your parishioners to join in our annual Rose Queen celebrations may not have been entirely wise. It was cheering to see that your people arrived on carnival floats, although it was less happy that some of them should have chosen to dress up as coronavirus bugs, full of those nasty spike proteins – that startled some of the timid residents in our community.*

*Once the procession started, your drivers did not seem to have grasped the fact that the vehicles were expected to tour the village slowly, for the benefit of spectators, instead of treating it as a competitive race. I noticed that numbers on your floats gradually diminished as they were flung off while careering round corners. Those who had a walk of several miles back home while dressed as pirates and ballerinas had my sympathy. Our tea ladies, however, were less sympathetic when one of your hay bales was spun off on a tight corner and went through our Women's Guild like a row of skittles.*

*The local police normally use the afternoon to do a little gentle point*



*duty while drinking gallons of sweet tea; this year, the number of tickets issued for speeding, and not social distancing, should boost our constabulary's figures for the next 12 months.*

*I must concede that the group who decided to make a papier maché swan for one of your floats showed great imagination. It was such a pity that they did not know a 15-foot-high swan would be driven under a 12-foot bridge. The drama of its emergence, headless, was only exceeded by the following float which appeared to have a group of Brownies being savaged by a demented, bodiless, vulture.*

*I am sure that some of your people's offers to help this year's Princesses campaign for election for Rose Queen next year were well-meant. However, I don't think our parish really wants a full-blown social media campaign for next year's Rose Queen, and so we will have to decline your offer.*

*The crowning of the Rose Queen is always a high point to the afternoon, but could I point out that the 'gold' crown is only metal foil, and the 'diamond' sceptre is only a piece of glass? So, whoever it was in your crowd who walked off with them, please may we have them back before next year?*

*Your loving uncle,*

*Eustace*

***Always remember . . .***

There are no strangers in our church –  
just friends you haven't met

# ***Readings for May***

*The readings are the ones we will use in church and online.*

**2nd May 2021** – Morning Service -  
Genesis 2 v 4–25 & Mark 3 v 13–19

**2nd May 2021** – Evening Service -  
Psalm 22 v 25–end & John 15 v 1–8

**9th May 2021** – Morning Service -  
Proverbs 12 v 18–25 & Matthew 18 v 21–35

**9th May 2021** – Evening Service -  
Psalm 98 & John 15 v 9–17

**16th May 2021** – Morning Service -  
Psalm 24 & Matthew 6 v 25–34

**16th May 2021** – Evening Service -  
Psalm 147 & John 17 v 6–19

**23rd May 2021** – Morning Service -  
Acts 2 v 1–21 & John 15 v 26–27

**23rd May 2021** – Evening Service -  
Ezekiel 37 v 1–14 & John 20 v 19–23

**30th May 2021** – Morning Service -  
Proverbs 13 v 7–20 & Mark 10 v 17–31

**30th May 2021** – Evening Service -  
Psalm 104 & Romans 8 v 12–17

# ***Pentecost***

The celebration of Pentecost this month could be described as a birthday party for the Church, as we remember the gift of the Holy Spirit to the first disciples (Acts 2:1-13). What are we celebrating?

## **God's Promise:**

The disciples obeyed Jesus' instructions as they gathered in the Upper Room: *'Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised'* (1:4). They met expectantly in prayer for God's promised gift. Just as we look forward to birthday presents, how eager are we to receive more of the Spirit in our lives?

## **God's Power:**

*'All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit'*. The disciples needed the power of the Spirit to be different: not fearfully gathered behind locked doors, but energised to make Christ known. The Spirit can transform our lives into the likeness of Jesus and give gifts to equip our witness. Although the disciples' experience of this power was overwhelming, it was essentially an encounter with God's love. For us, this can be equally emotional or quiet, but all are included, and nobody is excluded from this experience.

## **God's Purpose:**

The disciples *'began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them'*. The Spirit empowered their witness, so that everyone heard them speaking in their own *'native language'* (lit: dialect, v8). We all have a story to tell of God's activity in our lives and it's the Spirit who translates our words and actions into a language that those around can understand! At Pentecost, 3,000 people were added to the church in one day! What do we expect of the Spirit in our day?

*'Let the Church return to Pentecost, and Pentecost will return to her. The Spirit of God cannot take possession of believers beyond their capacity of receiving Him'* (Andrew Murray).

*Many people will be surprised when Jesus comes again – but nobody will be mistaken. - Anon*

# *Prayers & Poems*

## **Ascension**

*(Luke 24:44-53)*

Scriptures fulfilled,  
Minds opened,  
We followed Him to Bethany.  
And there was joy in the blessing  
Of our risen Lord,  
Jesus, God on earth.

And in the blessing  
Was the leaving,  
And in the leaving  
Was the blessing  
His Spirit of life and power  
To witness to the world  
Of our ascended Lord,  
Jesus, man in heaven.

*By Daphne Kitching*

## **Prayer for Pentecost**

Loving Father God,  
Thank you for sending your Holy Spirit;  
Your Spirit who knows no restrictions or barriers;  
Your Spirit who can reach us and be with us and in us, wherever we are, whatever our circumstances;  
Your Spirit who comforts and heals and empowers us to live with confidence that, ultimately, all shall be well;  
Your Spirit who connects us, through the life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus.  
Because of Jesus' victory over death we have hope and life forever.  
Thank you, loving Father, Son and Holy Spirit.  
Amen.

*By Daphne Kitching*

*Thy Kingdom Come is a global prayer movement inviting Christians around the world to pray for more people to know Jesus. 170 countries and 65 denominations take part. Light up the World with Prayer this year is 13th to 23rd May. Please join us.*

## PENTECOST: TAKING THE CHURCH OUTDOORS



Theories abound as to why the Christian church grew so quickly in the centuries immediately following Jesus' resurrection. Amongst many interwoven possibilities, three specifically relate to *Thy Kingdom Come*:

**1. The empowering work of the Holy Spirit** – no growth is possible without God but when God opens a door, the impossible becomes possible;

**2. The boldness of the people of God** – filled with the Spirit, Christians grew in courageous confidence, even amidst and sometimes even because of persecution, knowing God's hope not in human power but weakness, fragility and vulnerability;

**3. The visibility of the difference God makes to the ordinary things of life** – faith was visible in the, often outdoor, meeting places of life, and even when meeting in homes to worship as so many churches did, the lack of glazing meant worship, preaching and testimony to God's transforming power was audible to the rest of the neighbourhood! Christianity embraced the twin theologies of temple and of household, with a faith expressed in yeast and salt, farming and fishing. In a world searching for meaning and genuine transformation amongst triviality, Christianity shone out as the least trivial calling ever.

It is no accident that *Thy Kingdom Come* culminates in the feast of Pentecost, these three strands above run through *Thy Kingdom Come*, like writing through a stick of rock.

So, how do we encourage our gathered worship on Pentecost Sunday to fully embrace these three strands and might the unwelcome challenges of Covid maybe even allow us to embrace all three in even deeper ways?

Pentecost is the festival of faith breaking down the doors of fear and hiddenness and moving outdoors. It was in the streets not the temples where the first followers of Jesus, empowered by his Spirit, testified to God's love and calling, and in ways that each person could receive. One way to reflect this is to move our gathered worship outdoors, to take the step of faith which the first disciples needed to.

Common Worship (Times and Seasons) gives a range of excellent liturgical resources to help us. A range of supporting resources from partner organisations like Messy Church are easily sourced online. *Thy Kingdom Come* has prepared a special Pentecost service based on approved liturgy with space to reflect on the themes and callings of Pentecost and *Thy Kingdom Come*. A copy can be downloaded for local adaptation:

But as well as considering what, maybe we might take a lesson from the Christenings Project on how, who, when interviewing people on what was most memorable or important in the Christening service found church leaders reflecting on specific wording and families of those being Christened recalling the height from which the water was poured, or the imagery of light. Sometimes the how is as important as the what.

At Pentecost we are reminded that Jesus uses imagery to convey the fullness of the Kingdom of God which cannot be contained in words alone. The symbolism of wind and fire, the emotion of watching, waiting and joyful fulfilment, the power of personal testimony. Each community is different so each church will have its own way of reflecting this symbolism, emotion and story, and there are a wide range of *Thy Kingdom Come* resources to help, but why not take the church outdoors as one way of embodying the three strands above, looking at each aspect of the service through the eyes of one who knows nothing of our story and culture and asking how it best connects (so that people only need make one conversion: to Christ, not one to Christ and one to church culture).

And then after planning, why not look at each aspect of the service and ask, **is it daring enough?**

How could we go up one more gear mark on expecting the empowering of the Spirit, living out a bold faith and being visible to the wider community?

## ***Hiding, waiting, hoping – FREE!***

After many long months during the Covid pandemic we are at last beginning to be able to come together again. Some countries and some areas of some countries will be more open than others and we can only hope, pray and wait for all of us to be able to be 'free' again.

May, in the Church's calendar, is supremely the month of freedom.

During the first few weeks we continue to celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus and reflect on the Bible stories of those who met Him after His crucifixion and resurrection.

Then we celebrate His Ascension – Jesus' return to His Father.

And finally, we celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit on the apostles and all those locked in that Upper Room – with the subsequent birth of His Church.

### ***Freedom indeed!***

This last year has for most of us felt like a waiting time to see and hold friends and family again. We have some understanding of fear and the hope within us.

What a celebration there must have been when Jesus returned to His Father – and what a celebration also when the Holy Spirit so powerfully descended.

It is the story of those 'simple' men who were scared and hiding one day and the next day bold and outspoken that speaks to me of something outstanding happening.

As I received my anti-Covid vaccination I felt that same freedom from fear. Not that I would be 100% safe and never ill again, but rather that whatever happened now would be manageable.

Have a think this month about fears that you may have held inside you in this past year and how you have been able to manage them. Have you known the Spirit of Our Lord by your side as you have walked these roads? I hope so, and I hope also that together we can help others to know His reassurance from fear. Freedom indeed.

*Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of all people and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created, and you shall renew the face of the earth.*

# *John Short & Son*

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# THE PARISH OF BROWNHILLS WITH OGLEY HAY

Our mission is to worship God and to serve the community  
by sharing the love of Jesus

## **Vicar:**

Revd Gayle Greenway 07545 657636

## **Lay Ministers:**

Pete Biggs 01922 692163

Liz Corbett 01543 370162

Graham Sutherland 01543 671020

## **Children & Family Worker:**

Mel Pearce 07794 753210

## **OFFICERS**

### *Wardens:*

Margaret Powell 01543 371396

Roger Corbett 01543 370162

### *Lay Chair:*

Dennis Powell 01543 820513

### *Secretary:*

Brenda Stanford 01543 373063

### *Treasurer:*

Joy Powell 01543 820513

### *Deanery Synod Representatives:*

Roger Corbett 01543 370162

Joy Powell 01543 820513

Dennis Powell 01543 820513

### *Organist and Worship Leader:*

Pete Biggs, BEd(Hons), AMusCAM 01922 692163

### *Brownies:*

Jenny Judson