

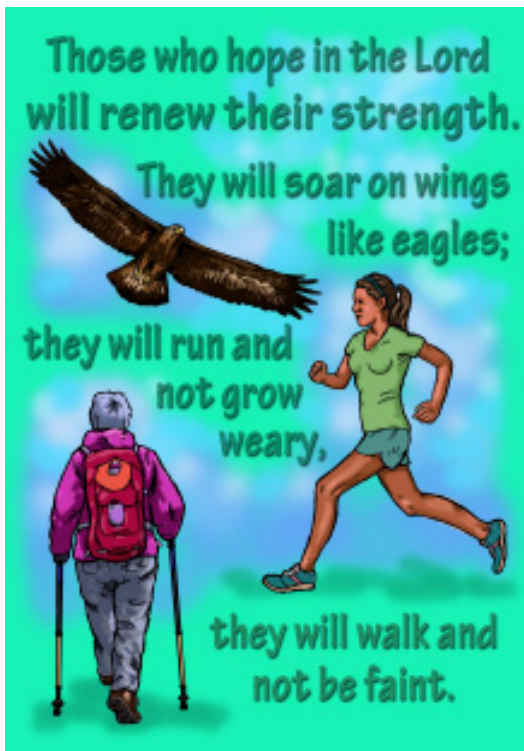
ST JAMES' CHURCH
Brownhills



Following Jesus

THE MUSTARD SEED

www.stjameschurchbrownhills.co.uk



50P

September 2021

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



Upstairs Downstairs

Cleaning Services

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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.

Magazine Articles

If, in your reading, you find an article that you think bears repeating in the parish magazine, please let us know and we will try our best to include it in a future issue.

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

Call: Sue 01543 276953 or Mary 01543 453293



Back to School for us all



The start of September is such an exciting time for young children starting reception and primary school, for those at the verge of becoming young people who are starting secondary school, and for those starting college or university. But whatever our stage of life, this can be an exciting time because we're all going back to school in a sense or maybe for some of us for the very first time.

What do I mean by this? Here at St James' we're starting a significant time of journeying through the whole of the Bible. There will be lots that we can all learn, and those among us who already have a sound knowledge of the Bible's makeup can experience their discipleship being stretched as they explain God's word to others in our fellowship, so as to help it to be applied more to their everyday lives. For those of us who might feel a little apprehensive about this, have no fear! It will all be broken down into understandable sections so that it won't feel like that much of a marathon!

As I've been praying about this, I've become excited for us all, because we'll be getting the opportunity to LEARN and experience many 'light bulb' moments as pennies drop, as we see together 'ah that's what that's all about!' at different points along the way. It'll also be an opportunity to UNLEARN things that we may have got mixed up in the past. On this point about unlearning, Pastor and author Mark Batterson writes that "unlearning is twice as hard as learning, and it often takes twice as long. It's harder to get old thoughts out of your

mind than to get new thoughts into your mind.” Aware of this, I pray that we can each approach each Sunday morning and mid-week Grace, Truth and Life group session with open minds and hearts to learn more of God’s word and how it can apply to life.

I’ve heard so many times people saying: ‘The Bible contradicts itself’, and I respond: ‘really? Where have you found that it does that?’ As I’ve explored the questions and doubts in conversation, I’ve had the privilege of being able to share where they haven’t got it quite right, it’s been a joy to see understanding arise for the other person. It’s God’s heart for us all to experience this: to have our confidence placed firmly not in ourselves, that we should think we’re good, but firmly placed in Him.

Reflecting on the worth of the Bible, please, please be encouraged to see that whatever your current understanding of it is, you can grow in this area. It’s going to help us all more than we can currently realise. It will help us personally to be more nourished when we read God’s word. It will help us to remember particularly important parts of God’s word, as we meditate on them, so that just in the moments when we most need it, those verses will come flooding back into our minds thus affecting our hearts as well.

Let’s resolve throughout this year to feast on God’s word together, and in so doing discover that He will minister to us healing and restoration from the impact of the pandemic, and much more than that: bless us with an increasing passion for His love and power to overflow into the lives of those we connect with in Brownhills and Clayhanger in the coming months.

With love and every blessing,

Rev’d Gayle.

BIBLE TIMELINE

OLD TESTAMENT



CREATION PATRIARCH EXODUS CONQUEST JUDGES KINGDOM EXILE RETURN SILENCE

NEW TESTAMENT



GOSPELS CHURCH MISSIONS FUTURE

Learning lessons from a graveyard

If you're looking for a quiet oasis away from the bustle and busyness of everyday life, there's a place where nature, heritage and the life histories of hundreds of local people are on peaceful display.

Take a walk in your local cemetery.

The chances are it's a place where nature abounds, where socially-distant peace can be found, and you can meditate on the deeper issues of life.

It's true that graveyards seldom feature in most people's favourite places to visit. Many find them morbid, reminding them of their own mortality.

Or they can prompt memories of loved ones no longer with us, and the sadness overcomes the happy memories of the life shared together. Others simply rush past cemeteries or graveyards, without even noticing that they are there.

But walk among the gravestones, read the inscriptions and you find the stories of people's lives.

Samuel Ryder, the Hertfordshire seed merchant who devised the United States v Europe Ryder Cup golf tournament, is buried in the cemetery opposite the church where I minister. When I visited recently, someone had left golf balls on his grave.

In the same cemetery, there are more than 200 plain white graves of local and Commonwealth service people who died during the two world wars, and a memorial to the many local soldiers who died in the First World War.

To wander around any cemetery or graveyard is to enter into the lives of generations of families. To see the grave of the still-born baby close to the child who died in infancy, both near to the grandmother who died in her nineties. The husband and wife who died within months of

Continued on next page

each other, are alongside the wife who outlived her spouse by decades.

I'm always struck by how people are described. Most are defined by their family relationships – beloved grandfather, grandmother, father, mother, wife, husband, son or daughter.

Others are described by their roles in life – actress, golf professional or for the war graves, by their ranks. How long, I wonder, had the young men and women been in uniform before meeting their deaths – and being remembered ever after as soldiers? In some cases, it may have been just a few months.

What, I find myself asking, would I like to have written on my gravestone? How would each of us like to be remembered? How can long lives be summed up in the few words you can fit on a gravestone?

And what is it that we are doing in life that will be of lasting value? Cemeteries are places that can make you consider your own life and think about what is important in it.

Many Christian funerals begin with the words of Jesus Christ, *'I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.'*

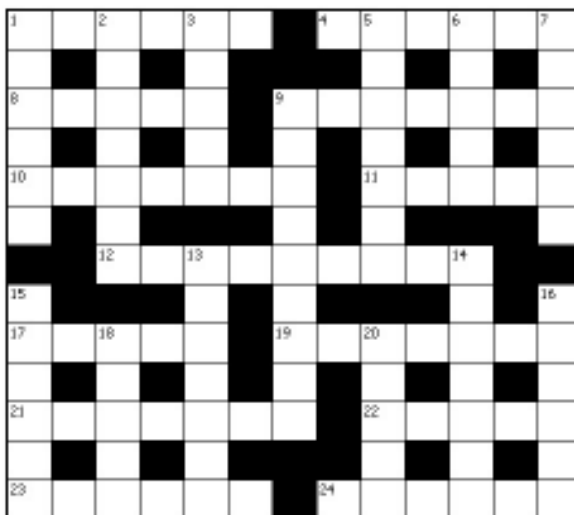
It is a promise I hold to as I walk the paths around the graves.

Anxious neighbour?

If you have elderly neighbours who are on their own, it is worth bearing in mind that many of them will have been hit by pandemic anxiety. They may feel frightened to leave their homes.

Such is the finding of a recent study by the University of Cambridge and Imperial College London into the effects of the pandemic on the elderly.

So, any act of neighbourly kindness on your part may be most welcome. Helpful jobs such as tidying the garden, doing some shopping, running errands, and simply sitting outside with them over a cup of tea might be greatly appreciated.



Across

- 1 'Through [Christ] we have gained – by faith into this grace' (Romans 5:2) (6)
- 4 Deprives of sight (Deuteronomy 16:19) (6)
- 8 The words of a hymn do this (mostly) (5)
- 9 Faithful allegiance (1 Chronicles 12:33) (7)
- 10 Belgium's chief port (7)
- 11 Where John was baptizing 'because there was plenty of water' (John 3:23) (5)
- 12 Imposing height (Psalm 48:2) (9)
- 17 Jesus' tempter in the wilderness (Mark 1:13) (5)
- 19 Comes between Amos and Jonah (7)
- 21 'Your will be done – – as it is in heaven' (Matthew 6:10) (2,5)
- 22 Gale (Matthew 8:24) (5)
- 23 Axle, eh? (anag.) (6)
- 24 'Out of the – I cry to you, O Lord' (Psalm 130:1) (6)

Clues Down

- 1 Popular Christian author and humorist, – Plass (6)
- 2 Transparent ice-like mineral (Revelation 4:6) (7)
- 3 Method of compelling surrender by surrounding target of attack (2 Chronicles 32:1) (5)
- 5 Expose (Isaiah 52:10) (3,4)
- 6 Lonny (anag.) (5)
- 7 Utterance (1 Timothy 1:15) (6)
- 9 Husband of Deborah, the prophetess (Judges 4:4) (9)
- 13 Burial service (Jeremiah 34:5) (7)
- 14 What Christ threatened to do to the lukewarm church in Laodicea (Revelation 3:16) (4,3)
- 15 Simon Peter climbed aboard and dragged the net (John 21:11) (6)
- 16 His response to Jesus' decision to return to Judea was 'Let us also go, that we may die with him' (John 11:16) (6)
- 18 There will be weeping and gnashing of – (Matthew 8:12) (5)
- 20 Walkway between rows of pews in a church (5)

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 taking a wedding

The Rectory
St. James the Least

My dear Nephew Darren

As with many of your ideas, your intentions are admirable; it is just that they don't work.

So it was with the recent wedding in your church, where you allowed the happy but quite mad young couple to try and imitate the marriage of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge. It was kind of them to want to celebrate Will and Kate's recent 10th wedding anniversary, but it did not seem to occur to anybody that your church, converted from a 1960s warehouse, is fractionally less impressive than Westminster Abbey. And I feel that a backdrop of a car park and canal make a poor substitute for the Houses of Parliament and the Thames. Finally, even 43 very enthusiastic young people can hardly pretend they are a congregation of several thousand.

However, I do applaud your decision to invite me to take it, in

order to impart a degree of gravitas to the proceedings, though of course I would not presume to upstage the Archbishop of Canterbury. (Although were he to ask my advice on how to run the Anglican Church, I have several helpful suggestions to hand.) But even I struggled to keep things on a proper course when the bride, lacking a horse-drawn carriage, simply walked up the lane with her ancient pony. (Which then tried to bite me at the church door!)

Her arrival was greeted with music. I will pass no comment on this, as the Bible says we are to make a joyful noise, not necessarily music, unto the Lord. I am sure that drums and kazooos and guitars all have their place somewhere or other.

It was a pity that the groom, unlike Prince William, had not thought to get to the church on time – or indeed, at all. It was fortunate that the bride's mother found him in that pub nearby, or really, we would have struggled to complete the wedding.

Your loving uncle,

Eustace

Always remember . . .

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

Readings for September

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

5th September 2021 – Morning Service -

Mark 7 v 24–end & James 2 v 1–9

5th September 2021 – Evening Service -

Exodus 14 v 5–end & Matthew 6 v 1–18

12th September 2021 – Morning Service -

Mark 8 v 27–end & James 3 v 1–12

12th September 2021 – Evening Service -

Exodus 18 v 13–26 & Matthew 7 v 1–14

19th September 2021 – Morning Service -

2 Timothy 3 v 16–17 & John 13 v 1–16

19th September 2021 – Evening Service -

Exodus 19 v 10–end & Matthew 8 v 23–end

26th September 2021 – Morning Service -

Genesis 1 v 1–31 & Genesis 3 v 1–24

26th September 2021 – Evening Service -

Exodus 24 & Matthew 9 v 1–8

*A church is a hospital for sinners, not a
museum for saints.*



The Staffordshire Historic Churches Trust was founded in 1953 with the aim of helping churches with the cost of repairs. Ride and Stride is the annual sponsored even in aid of county Historic Churches trusts all over England. It takes place this year on Saturday 11th September.

Participants are sponsored by family and friends to visit as many churches as they can between 10am and 6pm. In 2019, 113 churches took part in Staffordshire, 46 of them sent out cyclists, walkers and drivers. Last year the event was much reduced but nevertheless £7,830 was raised. Gift Aid will increase this amount. The money is used to make grants to churches for repairs and essential maintenance. Half the money raised by each cyclist/walker is returned to their home church.

If cycling or walking are too strenuous for you, you can still take part travelling by public transport or car.

As well as having the aim of raising funds for churches in need of help, Ride and Stride Day gives the opportunity to get out and about and admire our wonderful heritage of churches, many of which are normally closed, apart from times of worship, of course. A trophy is awarded each year to a participant; this year it will be to the cyclist or walker who visits most participating churches.

It is also a special day of fellowship for all those taking part – whether you are coming visitors to *your* church or going out on your bike or on foot to visit other churches. It is a very practical way to remind ourselves that we are part of something much bigger than our own building and our own congregation.

So please think about taking part – as a cyclist, walker, welcomer, sponsor – and enjoy the day!

For more information see our church rep Claire Llewellyn.

Prayers & Poems

Night Sanctification

Father, bless me and my body keep,
Father, bless me in my soul;
Father, bless me through this night of sleep,
In my body and my soul.

Father, bless me as I live my days,
Father, bless me in my creed;
Father, bless me in my binding ways,
To my life and to my creed.

Father, sanctify to me my speech,
Father, sanctify my heart;
Father, sanctify my portion each,
In my speech and in my heart.

From Poems of the Western Highlanders

Name above all Names

Name above all Names, what's in a name?
Jesus, Messiah, He's coming again,
Alpha, Omega, Beginning and End,
Apostle and High Priest, the sinners Friend.

Walking on water, calming the storm,
God incarnate calling us home
Creator, the I Am, nailed to a tree
Lion of Judah dying for me.

Risen, the Victor, conquering King
Coming with clouds redemption to bring
To gather His bride for heaven above
To reign with the Lamb whose name is Love.

By Megan Carter

September Prayer

Dear Lord,

September – the month of new beginnings for many, as summer fades and school and college terms start.
After such a strange time of restrictions, hopes of freedom, with warnings to be cautious, it is hard to know what to expect this September.

We can't know what lies ahead, Lord, but we can trust you to see us through whatever it turns out to be.
Thank you for your promise, I will never leave you or forsake you...(Hebrews 13:5)
Help us to hold fast to that promise, to keep trusting you - and to be thankful for each September day.

In Jesus' name. Amen.

By Daphne Kitching

Fortnightly July-September 2021

PARISH PRAYER WALKS

Thursdays during the Summer 7.15 - 8.45 pm

Each of the following dates we will meet in the entrance area of church, be briefed about where we'll park in the vicinity of the area being focussed on that evening, and open the evening with a short prayer before reaching each location...

1. 1st July
2. 15th July
3. 29th July
4. 19th August
5. 2nd September
6. 16th September



SO I SAY TO YOU, ASK, AND IT
WILL BE GIVEN TO YOU; SEEK,
AND YOU WILL FIND; KNOCK,
AND IT WILL BE OPENED TO YOU.

Dead Sea Scrolls brought to light 30 years ago

Thirty years ago, on 22nd September 1991, photographs and transcripts of the Dead Sea Scrolls were made available to scholars generally for the first time.

The Scrolls – ancient, mostly Hebrew or Aramaic manuscripts of leather, papyrus, and copper – were first found in 1947 near the shore of the Dead Sea. They come from various sites and date from the third century BC to the second century AD.

Last year the Museum of the Bible, in Washington DC, confirmed that all 16 of the fragments it owns are modern forgeries.

Let Jesus Christ find you

Jesus said, 'Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling-places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also.' John 14:1-6

We come to church regularly to meet God. But actually, God comes to meet us. He comes to us personally though His Word; and in Holy Communion, Jesus arrives under cover of bread and wine, saying 'this is My body; this is My blood'.

The whole Bible is the story of God searching for us, not the other way round. It begins with Adam and Eve running away and hiding, and that's how it continues to this day. But it ends with a dramatic vision of reunion.

In the meantime, humanity is invited to stop, turn round, and face God who is in pursuit. 'Turning round' is what 'repentance' means.

Becoming a Christian is letting Christ find us; being a Christian is becoming an apprentice in His workforce.

Not long before His crucifixion, Jesus taught His apprentices about His death - and theirs. *"I'm going to prepare a place for you, and I will come again and take you to myself, so that where I am you may be also."*

When we contemplate dying, it may seem like a journey into the dark. But we will not go alone. Never alone. As we reach out into the darkness, Christ is reaching out to us. Just as He has been reaching out to us throughout our lives, so He is there to grasp us as we breathe our last. *"I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also."*

For the disciple, death is a union - a reunion with Christ. It's the most natural thing in the world. So, we pray that at our end, we may reach out into the darkness, to find we are grasped by the One who has already prepared a place for us.

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THE PARISH OF BROWNHILLS WITH OGLEY HAY

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by sharing the love of Jesus

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Lay Ministers:

Pete Biggs 01922 692163

Liz Corbett 01543 370162

Graham Sutherland (Reader with Permission to Officiate) 01543 671020

Community & Children's Worker:

Mel Pearce 07710 811893

OFFICERS

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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

Memorials Application Administrator:

Roger Corbett 01543 370162

Church Hall Bookings Co-ordinator:

Margaret Powell 01543 371396