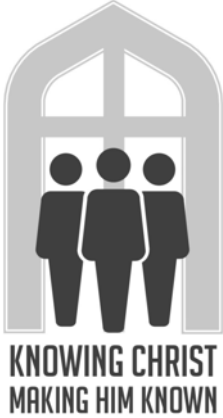


SHIRLEY PARISH



A PRAYER FOR THE PARISH

Give to us your people, living God,
 A renewed faith and a bold vision
 that we may proclaim
 the Good News of your Son
 with faith that your kingdom will come,
 with hope for our community
 and with love for Him
 who died and rose again
 to save us, Jesus Christ our Risen Lord
 Amen

OUR PRAYER FOR GROWTH

God of Mission, who alone brings growth to your Church,
 send your Holy Spirit to give vision to our planning,
 wisdom to our actions, and power to our witness.
 Help our church to grow in numbers, in spiritual commitment to you,
 and in service to our local community.
 Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen



The Friends of St James invite you to a

Coffee Morning

and Bric-a-Brac Sale with cakes, raffle, books etc.

Saturday 4th May 2019 at 10.30am in Church House

The Friends are now collecting Bric-a-Brac, books etc. for this event and would welcome your contributions, which may be left in the Parish Office. Also, we would welcome cakes for the cake stall on the day of the Coffee Morning, please.

*Don't forget to come along and support us on the day!
 See you there!*

IMPORTANT - PLEASE READ!

Sunday 12th May - Velo Birmingham

On Sunday 12th May many roads around Birmingham will be closed to traffic because of a 100 mile cycle race around the city.

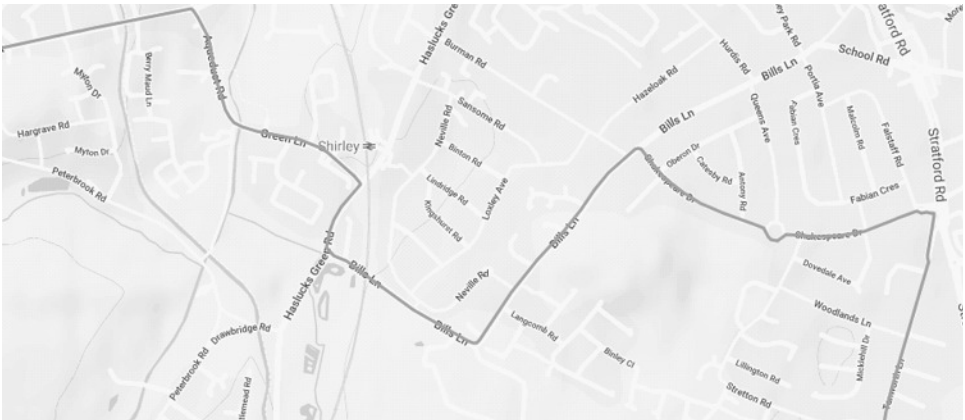


This will mean restrictions on movement in Shirley which will affect access to church as it will not be possible to cross the route by car. It is possible to walk across if guided by a marshal.

You will see the route in the map below. The website is vague about road closure times but suggests the roads in Shirley will be closed from 7.15am – 4.45pm. More details can be found on this link <https://www.velobirmingham.com/the-route/road-closures/>

Because of this we are planning to have a Saturday evening service of Communion at St John's Church at 6pm on 11th May and Sunday morning services as normal at St James (8am and 10am) and Christ the King (10.30am). There will be no morning service at St John's on 12th May.

Please plan ahead and attend the service which is most convenient and accessible for you!



OUR PROPOSED NEW WORSHIP PATTERN

On page 6 you will read an article by Paul, in which he summarises the responses to the recent questionnaire that was circulated, in which many of you responded with your thoughts on worship. One thing that came across was a nervousness about the future, and about change. What follows here is an attempt at reassurance. While introducing something new in the experience of many of us, I am remembering a comment made by a longstanding member of the congregation at St James's, who recalled that when she began worshipping there as a young person, the Eucharist was celebrated once a month!

John Henry Newman, once a leader of a great movement in prayer and worship in the Church of England and now well on the way to being declared a saint in the Roman Catholic Church once said that to live is to change and that to be perfect is to have changed often. And while it might be uncomfortable to acknowledge this, there is undoubtedly much truth in the first part of the statement – and a depth of hope in the second part.

After a great deal of prayer and discussion, the PCC have agreed to introduce a revised pattern of worship across the parish, the intention of which is to make change our friend and to express our hope that in God's providence, Shirley Parish will grow in numbers and faithfulness through a richer expression of worship and its possibilities. The table below shows just what is proposed:

	St John's Church at 9am	St James Church at 10am	Christ the King Church at 10.30am
1st Sunday	Joint Eucharist (venue alternates with CTK)	Choral Eucharist	Joint Eucharist (venue alternates with St John's)
2nd Sunday	Eucharist	Morning Worship	Eucharist
3rd Sunday	Morning Worship	Eucharist	Eucharist
4th Sunday	Eucharist	Eucharist	Morning Worship
5th Sunday*	Eucharist	Eucharist	Eucharist

... continued over the page

OUR PROPOSED NEW WORSHIP PATTERN continued

The first thing to note is that this pattern, along with the 8am celebration of the Eucharist every week at St James Church, ensures that the Eucharist remains at the heart of our worship as a parish.

The second thing to note is that on this foundation, we hope to offer a richer, more varied pattern of worship that will allow us to make even better use of the many gifts in prayer, worship that is a feature of Shirley Parish, and in doing so to welcome greater numbers of people and in a way that offers more for those who are continuing to search for forms of worship that will sustain and encourage them, whatever their age, background, family or other circumstances. We are putting into action our declared desire to be inclusive, welcoming and collaborative.

The precise details of how this will work in each of our three churches is still under discussion and once finalised, the new arrangements will gradually become a familiar part of our worship. However, to take the example of St James's, the Choral Eucharist will aim to make the most of the ministry of the augmented choir, with a renewed emphasis on the sung parts of the service. The Eucharist on the third and fourth Sundays will be in familiar forms. The second Sunday will be where the changes will be most noticeable, and this will vary from a relatively formal offering of Morning Prayer (in modern language) to forms of worship similar to the service on Mothering Sunday this year which I am assured most found to be uplifting.

At Christ the King the Morning Worship might be Morning Prayer but could alternatively be some kind of All Age service, perhaps even a café style like the Mothering Sunday service. Again, at St John's, the Morning Worship could take different formats, one of which could be in a Celtic Style like the Reflective Service.

*On fifth Sundays, occurring four times a year as they do, we will have opportunities to worship together **as a whole parish**, and to do so in a variety of ways appropriate to the season and any other occasion.

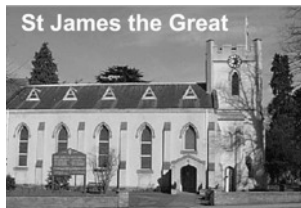
In all three churches, the emphasis has been on honouring the history of worship in all its forms and in doing so return to our roots in order to ensure that the future of Shirley Parish really is about knowing Christ and making Him known. It is also part of a larger project to ensure that we make the most of two of our greatest assets: ourselves and our buildings.

OUR PROPOSED NEW WORSHIP PATTERN continued

There are many ministries being offered in Shirley Parish and this new pattern offers us new ways to make the most of them. These ministries are offered in three very different sacred spaces and I look forward to seeing each of them being used to their fullest potential.

Please join with me, and those with whom I have been working, to bring about these changes, in praying for the Lord's blessing on these and all our other efforts to give glory to Him in our worship and our witness.

Reverend Peter Law-Jones



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OUR WORSHIP QUESTIONNAIRES

Do you remember those questionnaires that were handed out in church few weeks ago following a sermon about the church? They asked us questions about why we come to church, how we see the future of our churches and whether we should change anything we do.

The answers were many and varied, but we thought it would be useful to have a look at the responses we gave which came from people who attend each of our three churches.

We come to church for a whole host of different reasons

- to praise and worship God;
- for peace and reflection;
- to pray, to hear God speak, to participate in the communion;
- to thank God for what he has done for us;
- for spiritual help, reassurance and support;
- to be given new starts, to be challenged, uplifted and encouraged;
- to be with others, for companionship, for family;
- to remember loved ones and to maintain a link with the past.

And you can begin to see why it's so hard to please everyone with what we do on Sunday mornings when people come for so many worthy reasons – and probably different ones each week.

But the questionnaire went on and touched some of the themes about what the future looks like, and whether we should alter anything we do in our worship.

In answer to the question “How do you see the future of this church” many said that things were not looking good; some were quite clear that they believed the church (the church they attended – St James, Christ the King and St Johns) wouldn't be here in ten years' time unless something was done. Others felt that things had begun to happen, so the future wasn't entirely bleak. There was a general acceptance that we need to broaden our age profile – i.e. get some younger people in!



OUR WORSHIP QUESTIONNAIRES *continued*

The other questions that were asked looked at how we could make the church appeal to more people, were our services too complicated, should we change things and why.

Here there were a wide variety of responses.

Some said that, although they enjoyed and could follow the services, they could understand why those not used to them would find them hard. Keep it simple was an answer more than one person replied. Develop the music, sing more modern songs or those with uplifting tunes. Perhaps have more informal worship occasionally. Others asked about joy in worship and why it wasn't as obvious as it should be. More joyful songs and hymns. More smiles on our faces perhaps!

But there were some who despite saying the future was bleak, wanted things to remain as they are now. But how realistic is that as an idea? Does it hold out much of a future for the churches?

Reverend Paul Day



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TWELVE GOOD REASONS FOR COMING TO CHURCH

Christian values shape British laws and codes of behaviour. Twenty six Church of England bishops, including the Bishop of Birmingham, sit in parliament and try to ensure that Christian values are upheld in new legislation and in national and international affairs. The head of the Church of England is our monarch Queen Elizabeth, and she keeps a careful watch on the work of parliament and government as well as on church matters. Three great British institutions are:

The National Health Service. This strives to provide free care for the sick regardless of ethnicity and background in accordance with the principles of best practice, and these aims are consistent with Christian teachings notably the parable of the good Samaritan.

The Independent Judiciary. Judges and magistrates are expected to carry out their duties without bias and with honesty and integrity. These aims reflect Christian teachings including one of the Ten Commandments.

The Church of England. This, together with other Christian churches, is the conscience of the nation at international, national and local levels. **By regularly attending and supporting your local church, you become part of this great institution.** However, the Church of England is a lot more than the national conscience.

So, what are the other reasons for attending church?

The three churches in Parish of Shirley are committed to encouraging as many people as possible to learn about God's full revelation of himself to mankind. To acquire an understanding of Christian teachings and values usually takes people weeks or months. **For a person to realise that God exists and cares about him or her, is a truly wonderful experience. The most favourable situation for this to occur is within the environment of a church.**

The three churches provide services which usually include:

A welcome. Members of the congregation are warmly welcomed as they arrive for a service.

Selected Bible readings. An Old Testament passage from the Bible is read about some aspect of God's partial revelation of himself to the Israelites. Then two readings from the New Testament which deal with God's full revelation of himself in his three persons namely God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

TWELVE GOOD REASONS FOR COMING TO CHURCH

The quality of the writings is superb, and the sincerity of the New Testament authors who suffered hardship and were sometimes martyred for their beliefs, is very evident.

The sermon. This talk will often explain one of the readings as well as referring to issues of the day.

Several truly great hymns are sung which praise and thank God for all he has done.

The members of **the congregation will ask God to forgive their failings, and other prayers including the Lord's Prayer** are said.

Members of **the congregation then take part in a re-enactment of the Last Supper** in which they may receive bread and wine or a blessing.

Notices. The take-away leaflets handed out with the hymn books include the bible readings and details of parish events and activities. The congregation may also be given verbal information.

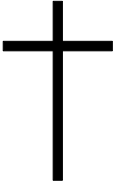
Refreshments and social time. An informal opportunity to meet the clergy and church members, and to discuss any personal or general issues.

The services and discussion groups take place in a relaxed atmosphere, and church newcomers will from time to time hear readings, sermons and prayers, and sing hymns which greatly help him or her to understand and believe that God did send his Son to save us from our sins and to offer us the prospect of eternal life.

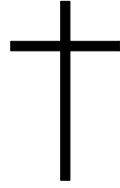
The Bible is like a jigsaw with very many pieces; it takes time to understand the significance of the pieces and how they fit together to form a magnificent and compelling picture. It is therefore worthwhile attending church regularly to allow the detailed picture of what Christianity is about to form in your mind. Many people at this juncture will, after careful consideration and discussion, make the 'leap of faith' and become Christians.

If you can help another person to acquire a Christian faith, that would be the most valuable gift that you could give to that person. Persuading other people including children to come to church with you would be a splendid move in that direction and an encouragement to your local church which is working hard to grow and serve more widely the community in Shirley in the Diocese of Birmingham.

David Paice



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THE EASTER JOURNEY 2019

We will tell you that this is about taking year 5 pupils on a journey through the events of Holy week, taking time to allow them to explore some aspects of the story in detail. In reality we all journey as we develop new skills and as individuals revise what we do to give the young people who visit us the best experience we can.

As for the Journey to the Stable, we revised the activities this year to make them more interactive. In addition to a meditation about the events of Good Friday and making palm crosses we have included more detail of the last supper and an encounter with Peter in the courtyard of the High Priest's house. We have also amended the end of the play to include the disciples meeting Jesus on the beach after the Resurrection. With the appropriate props this has made a more visual end to the story.

It is a great privilege for us to welcome so many local schools to our church and to share the big story of our faith with them. The knowledge that they bring with them varies between those for whom this is a story most of which is new to them to those who know more than us! Different challenges to keep us on our toes. In total we have met with over 400 ten-year olds.

None of this would be possible without our helpers – some giving up the whole week to act, lead and assist with activities. It is a wonderful experience but also exhausting so a massive 'thank you' to them all.

This year we journeyed literally to one school unable to come to us, and with another when insufficient parents were available to walk with them and some of us stepped in.

I don't suppose that Reverend Paul really knew what he had let himself in for when he undertook to lead the Journeys, but we are grateful for his guidance



in moving us forward to a new level.

Sarah Penfold

Mothers' UNION

Christian care for families

Diocese of Birmingham

The members of the Mothers' Union and friends tested their intelligence in March with a 'Quiz and Nibbles' evening. This was our first evening meeting of the year and it was good to be back and catch up with one another.

During Lent we have not had an afternoon meeting because we have supported the Parish Lent Groups each week and we are looking forward to resuming our programme on

Thursday 16th May at 7.30pm when **Reverend Paul Nash** will be our speaker. He is the Senior Chaplain at Birmingham Children's Hospital, who you may have seen on the TV series.



All are welcome - you do not have to be a member of Mothers' Union to attend our meetings.

Liz Yates



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Whilst dating items I find it fascinating to see what people have chosen to give; baked beans always seem to be present, as does tomato soup, and at the moment we have a bit of a run of jars of capers – these perhaps not at the top of our clients' lists. The lists we use are designed to give good combinations of foodstuffs, e.g. tinned fruit or sometimes sponge puddings to go with the custard, sauces to go with pasta or rice, milk to go with the breakfast cereal and hot drinks, and both savoury and sweet snacks. We are so grateful for all contributions, particularly for the regularity of your donations week after week.



Then, if I am making up food parcels, I often think about the hungry people who have to carry them home. Each parcel is designed to provide its recipient(s) with food for three days and this means tins and jars feature heavily (literally). For this reason, powdered dried milk is a useful addition to the cartons and, for example, packets of instant custard are appreciated rather than tins, instant mash rather than tinned potatoes. Also, whilst donors are generously giving us large packets of, say, cornflakes, it is sometimes helpful to have smaller packets which are enough for a one person parcel. In any case, we can always double up. We also appreciate smaller packets of teabags, so that we do not have to open the larger packs (with our fingers crossed) in the hope that there are smaller packs inside. Adding packets of instant pasta or noodles, I imagine the recipient's pleasure at getting home and having something hot almost straight away, before they need to do any preparation other than boil a kettle.

We heard recently of a pensioner aged seventy who had had money fraudulently diverted from his Post Office Account. As a result, he had not received his pension for a number of months and was 'sofa surfing' after losing his accommodation. Thanks to the Food Bank staff, and to the work of the Narthex Money Advice team, he was able to regain access to his account and have his pension reinstated. The foodbank was able to support him throughout the several months which it took to achieve this, sometimes with a food parcel or sometimes just with small quantities of food sufficient for his needs.



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'ALL MUMS SHOULD LIVE'

Sierra Leone is the world's most dangerous place to become a mum. Every day ten women die from giving birth. In Sawula district, the community struggle with a clinic which has no electricity and only two delivery beds.

Jebbeh is heavily pregnant but as her baby grows, it's not joy that fills her heart, but fear. When Jebbeh's sister Fatmata went in to labour, there were so few ambulances that Fatmata had no choice but to walk for three hours under the baking sun, to the nearest hospital. The journey was long and with every step Fatmata struggled to keep walking.



Jebbeh told us: 'My sister was crying out with hunger. She died on the side of the road. She never gave birth.'

This Christian Aid Week, together, we can make childbirth safe for mums and babies. Through our gifts and prayers, we can help give the world's poorest mums a chance to live.

If our churches raised £300, it could help provide a new delivery bed so more mums like Jebbeh can deliver their babies safely.

You can find out more on <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/Christian-Aid-Week>

**Wednesday 8th May
at 2pm
in Church House**

Rachel Christopher, whose husband suffered with dementia for many years, will be sharing her experiences.

All are welcome

(refreshments will be provided)

Let's talk
about
dementia

OUR PARISH DIARY FOR MAY 2019

- 1st PHILIP & JAMES, APOSTLES
10.45am: Swallows Meadow Holy Communion
7pm: Holy Communion and Guild of St Raphael at St James Church
- 4th 10.30am: The Friends of St James Coffee Morning at Church House
- 5th The Third Sunday of Easter**
9am: St John's & Christ the King Joint Service at St John's Church
7pm: Reflective Evening Worship at St John's Church
- 7th 11am: Pegasus Court Holy Communion
2pm: Tuesday Café at Church House
7.30pm: Operations Committee Meeting
- 8th 10.30am: Coffee Morning at St John's Church
11.00am: Greenhill Way Holy Communion
2pm: Dementia Talk at Church House
- 11th 6pm: Holy Communion Service at St John's Church (see page 2)
- 12th The Fourth Sunday of Easter**
Velo Birmingham Cycle Ride – Roads closed around Shirley
Christian Aid Week
11.30am: The Friends of St James Walking Group
- 13th 10am: Portershill Drive Holy Communion
11am: Elizabeth House Holy Communion
12.05pm: MU Prayers at Birmingham Cathedral
- 14th MATTHIAS THE APOSTLE
12noon: Ploughman's Lunch at Church House
- 15th 10.45am: Swallows Meadow Holy Communion
7.30pm: Pastoral Committee Meeting
- 16th 3.30pm: Messy Church at Widney School
7.30pm: Mothers' Union (see page 12)
- 18th 10am: Messy Church at Church House
- 19th The Fifth Sunday of Easter**
- 21st 10.30am: Mason House Holy Communion
2pm: Tuesday Café at Church House
- 22nd 4pm: Standing Committee Meeting

OUR PARISH DIARY FOR MAY 2019 continued

- 26th** **The Sixth Sunday of Easter**
ROGATION SUNDAY
- 28th 12noon: Ploughman's Lunch at Church House
- 29th 10.45am: Swallows Meadow Holy Communion
 4pm: Contemplative Prayer at St James Church
- 30th** **ASCENSION DAY**
Services at 10.30am at St James Church & 7.30pm at St John's Church
- 31st** THE VISIT OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY TO ELIZABETH

(Please check the weekly pew slips or the website for any changes and additions to the above)

St John's Church
 Tilehouse Lane
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Wednesday
8th May



Coffee
and
CRAFTS
10.30am

All are welcome to come and share something that you have made or are making - and to see what others have been doing ...

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 2pm - 3.30pm

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14th and 28th May

12 noon

Ploughman's Lunches



JUNE 2019 PARISH MAGAZINE

DEADLINE FOR INFORMATION & ARTICLES - Sunday 12th May
PUBLICATION DATE - Saturday 25th May




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THY KINGDOM COME

What is it?

Thy Kingdom Come began in 2016 as an invitation from the Archbishops of Canterbury and York to the Church of England to use the ten days between Ascension and Pentecost to pray for our families, friends and communities. The idea has grown enormously, and this year over 65 denominations in 114 countries around the world will be taking part.

What has it got to do with me?

You may remember that we held some events in the Parish last year and we will be doing so again this time. The dates this year are **Thursday 30th May to Sunday 9th June**. We hope that even more people will get involved this year.

'THY KINGDOM COME 2019' continued

What is everyone praying about?

Praying is about spending time with God, so there is no limit on what can be prayed for. However, the main focus of Thy Kingdom Come is praying that more people will hear the Good News of God's love for them through Jesus Christ and will respond to that love. You can pray on your own, as part of a small group, or as part of a church-wide event. The setting doesn't matter – it's all about the praying.

What's happening in Shirley Parish?

We will be providing resources and opportunities for everyone to pray in ways which they feel that they can. This will include prayers for you to use at home, and opportunities to pray in church – and maybe in some other places too. Some activities will be very familiar, some, like using objects or doing things specifically to help you to pray, may be less so. It's up to you to choose what you want to do. Maybe you will find a new way to pray that really resonates with you – who knows!

How can I find out more?

Keep an eye on the pew slip and look out for more details in next month's magazine. Alternatively, please speak to Kate or Paul Day (0121 537 9672).

We will also post information on the Shirley Parish website

<https://shirleyparishb90.wixsite.com/live>

You can also find out more on the Thy Kingdom Come website

<https://www.thykingdomcome.global>



DISTURB US, LORD

Disturb us, Lord, when we are too well pleased with ourselves,
 When our dreams have come true
 Because we have dreamed too little,
 When we arrived safely
 Because we sailed too close to the shore.

Disturb us, Lord, when
 With the abundance of things we possess
 We have lost our thirst
 For the waters of life;
 Having fallen in love with life,
 We have ceased to dream of eternity
 And in our efforts to build a new earth,
 We have allowed our vision
 Of the new Heaven to dim.

Disturb us, Lord, to dare more boldly,
 To venture on wider seas
 Where storms will show Your mastery;
 Where losing sight of land,
 We shall find the stars.
 We ask You to push back
 The horizons of our hopes;
 And to push into the future
 In strength, courage, hope, and love.

(attributed to Sir Francis Drake - 1577)



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THE TRUTH OF THE ASCENSION (30th MAY)

'While He was blessing them, Jesus left them and was taken up into heaven.'
(Luke Chapter 24 verse 51).

The Ascension is a hugely neglected festival, which deserves to have a bigger place in our church life. How do we understand it?

The Ascension tells us that Jesus is in control: 'Jesus has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand' (1 Peter Chapter 3 verse 22).

Jesus occupies the top spot in the universe; the control of our world is in the safe, scarred hands of Jesus. We can offer Him our worship and allegiance, knowing that His plans are better than those of any Prime Minister or President.

The Ascension tells us that God is committed to His world: 'And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with Him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus' (Ephesians Chapter 2 verse 6).

Jesus did not leave His humanity behind when He ascended, for we are raised with Christ to heaven. Therefore, God is bound to His world and we can trust Him to fulfil His purpose for our lives and world.

The Ascension gives us a job to do: 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations' (Matthew Chapter 28 verses 18 and 19).

God's primary means of working in the world is now through us. He commissions for this task at Ascension and equips us at Pentecost. We are called to make disciples, starting in our workplace, family and community.



'Christ has no body now but yours. No hands, no feet on earth but yours. Yours are the eyes through which He looks compassion on this world. Yours are the feet with which He walks to do good. Yours are the hands through which He blesses all the world.' (Teresa of Avila).

Reverend Paul Hardingham

Our Ascension Day services are at 10.30am at St James Church & 7.30pm at St John's Church

SIGNS & SYMBOLS : KNEELING WITH BODY, MIND AND SOUL

Some of us prefer to kneel for just about everything in church. People around us might sit - but we are kneelers!

Time may have taken its toll though, and sadly the knees may not be what they were. But if you visit different churches, you will find that not all of them have furniture designed to help you kneel.

Some have the wooden support so close to the pew back that you are 'forced' to perch your rear on the seat in order to physically fit. Others have the gap so wide you cannot reach the seat, so you have to kneel with a straight back. Some don't have anything to kneel on at all.

But why do we kneel in church? In church we're continuing the actions of those in the Bible - both at worship and when addressing Jesus. Just think of all those who knelt before Him to ask forgiveness or healing, or, like the single leper, to give thanksgiving.



In the conscious presence of Almighty God, as we come before Him in worship and supplication, what can we do but we kneel with our body, mind and soul?

Reverend Dr Jo White

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Weatherman's Hymn.....
There Shall Be Showers of Blessings

Contractor's Hymn.....
The Church's One Foundation

Tailor's Hymn.....
Holy, Holy, Holy

Golfer's Hymn.....
There is a Green Hill Far Away



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Saturday 15th June

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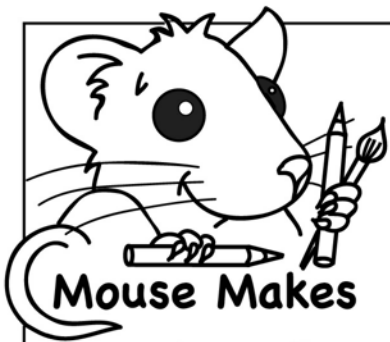
Activities Songs Food

Messy CHURCH

Crafts Games Stories

Thursday 16th May - 3.30pm - Widney Junior School B91 3LQ

Saturday 18th May - 10am - Church House B90 2AX




You may have read the Bible story of Daniel in the **lions' den**, but have you ever read the whole book of Daniel? Take your time and read a little each day and find out about the **vegetables**, the **statue**, the **gold idol**, the **furnace**, the **tree**, the **writing on the wall**, the **lions**, the **four animals**, the **ram** and the **goat**, and the **man**.



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




Ashpenaz changed Daniel and his friends names. Look up **Daniel 1:7** to see what he changed them to.

Can you find these words from the book of Daniel in the wordsearch?
KING • NEBUCHADNEZZER • DANIEL • DARIUS • ASPHENAZ
HANANIAH • MISHAEL • AZARIAH • DREAM • STATUE
IDOL • FURNACE • TREE • WRITING • WALL • LAW • LIONS
DEN • PRAYER • LORD • GOD • TRUST • RESCUE • ANGEL

WORDSEARCH

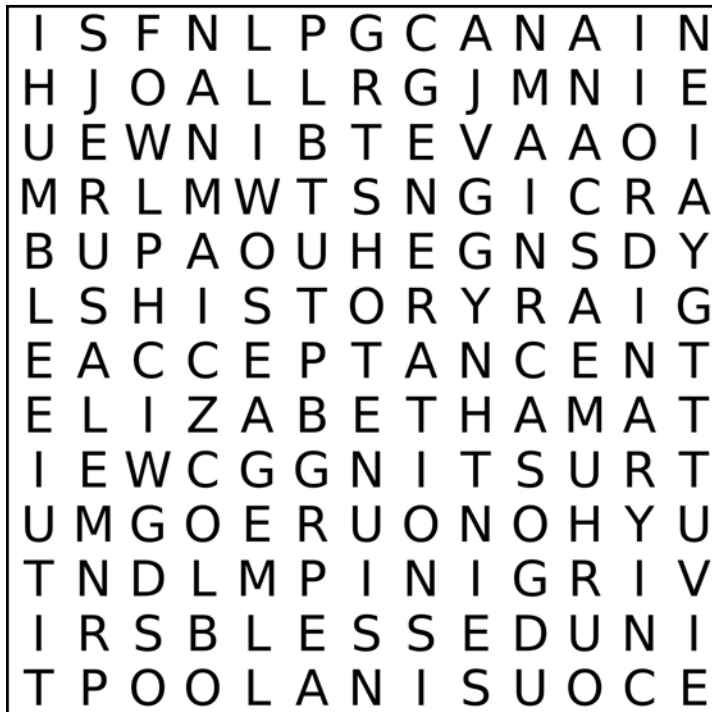
This month (31st May) the Church remembers the visit of the virgin Mary to her cousin Elizabeth. Both were pregnant, and the visit gives us a poignant glimpse of two humble, ordinary women, caught up in a great event that would shape world history. Their trusting faith in God and total acceptance of His will, shine through.

After Jesus is born, Mary fades into the background, and makes few appearances: when she loses her Son in Jerusalem, when she urges Him to help the wedding party in Cana; and when Jesus gives her into the keeping of the beloved disciple when He is on the cross.

Mary, chosen to be the mother of Jesus Christ, one who is both God and Man, holds a unique place in the history of mankind. Down the centuries that have followed, the Church has paid special honour to Mary – and well deserved it is.

“All generations shall call me blessed...”

Answers are on page 29



ACCEPTANCE
 BLESSED
 CANA
 COUSIN
 ELIZABETH
 FAITH
 GENERATIONS
 GLIMPSE
 GOD
 GREAT
 HISTORY
 HONOUR
 HUMBLE
 JERUSALEM
 JESUS
 MARY
 ORDINARY
 PREGNANT
 SPECIAL
 TRUSTING
 VIRGIN
 VISIT
 WILL
 WOMEN

CROSSWORD & SUDOKU

Across

- 1 Infant (Luke 2:12) (4)
- 3 Luis must (anag.) (8)
- 8 What Jesus called the devil (John 8:44) (4)
- 9 'My God, my God, why have you — me?' (Matthew 27:46) (8)
- 11 Anglican form of church government (10)
- 14 'Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like — ' (Isaiah 40:31) (6)
- 15 Ministers of religion (6)
- 17 Make stronger (1 Thessalonians 3:13) (10)
- 20 Devoutness (1 Timothy 2:2) (8)
- 21 The father of Jesse (Ruth 4:22) (4)
- 22 Pool where Jesus healed a man who had been an invalid for 38 years (John 5:2) (8)
- 23 '[Jesus] said to them, " — here and keep watch"' (Mark 14:34) (4)

Down

- 1 Follower of Christ (Acts 16:1) (8)
- 2 One of the punishments endured by Paul (2 Corinthians 6:5) (8)
- 4 Soldiers (Exodus 14:9) (6)
- 5 Scholarly study of melody, harmony and rhythm (10)
- 6 'I am God, and there is none — me' (Isaiah 46:9) (4)
- 7 'And how can they preach unless they are — ?' (Romans 10:15) (4)
- 10 Favourable reception (1 Timothy 1:15) (10)
- 12 Hip orbit (anag.) (8)
- 13 End of life (Isaiah 22:14) (5,3)
- 16 'About midnight the sailors — they were approaching land' (Acts 27:27) (6)
- 18 He married Jezebel (1 Kings 16:30–31) (4)
- 19 'According to your great compassion — out my transgressions' (Psalm 51:1) (4)

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Answers are on page 29

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14th MAY - MATTHIAS THE APOSTLE

Have you ever happened to be in the right place at the right time, with certain qualifications, and suddenly realise that God is singling you out for a special task? If so, Matthias is a good patron saint for you!

In Acts Chapter 1 (verses 15 – 26) the apostles had a task to do: Judas had committed suicide, and a new apostle needed to be chosen. He had to have been a follower of Christ from the Baptism to the Ascension, and also a witness of the Resurrection in order to qualify. In the event, the choice fell to one of two: Joseph Barsabas and Matthias.

Lots were drawn, and Matthias was chosen. How confident he must have felt in his calling: what encouragement that would be when the going got rough in later years! Matthias is thought to have ministered in Cappadocia and even Ethiopia. His emblem is usually an axe or halberd, regarded as the instrument of his martyrdom. His supposed relics were translated from Jerusalem to Rome by the empress Helena.



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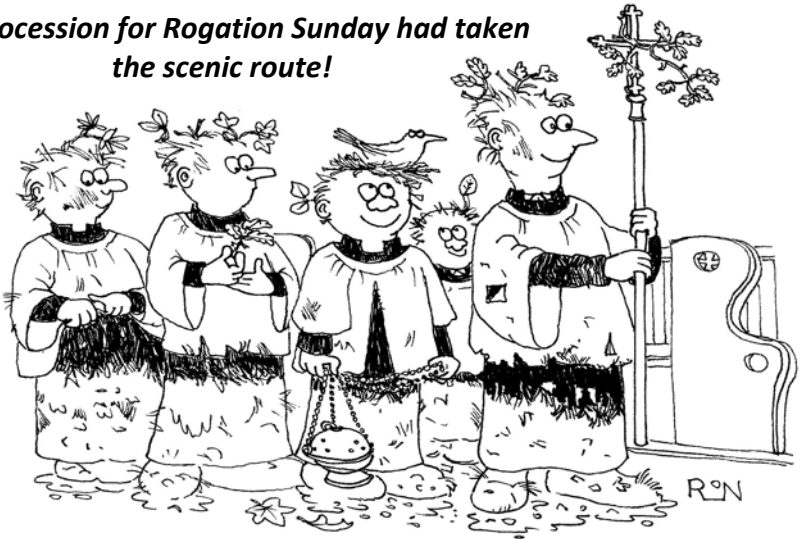
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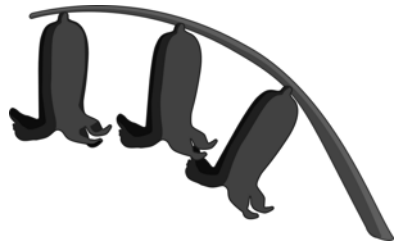
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8	6	3	4	2	1	7	9	5
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PUZZLE ANSWERS



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THE BEATITUDES : 'BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO MOURN'

The Beatitudes, at the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew Chapter 5 verses 1-12), present the values of the kingdom of God. In *'Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted'* (5:4), Jesus appears to be saying 'Happy are the unhappy'!!

It's not wrong for Christians to be sad or grieve, as we can still experience God's blessing (*'blessed'*). Jesus promises God's comfort for our loss, mourning, pain and hurt. This is the work of the Holy Spirit into our lives. He is described as the *'Comforter'* (John 14:16) ie *'the one who comes alongside us to help'* (lit). He assures us of Jesus' presence to share our sadness, make us aware of His love and strengthen us in our sorrows. Jesus has been in this place Himself, when He shed at the tomb of His close friend Lazarus (John Chapter 11 verse 35).

There is also a godly grief which the Spirit brings into our lives, as we reflect on our messy lives. Peter wept bitterly after denying that he knew Jesus (Matthew Chapter 26 verse 75). He makes us aware of our spiritual poverty, including our failures and shortcomings when it comes to loving and serving God. The Holy Spirit is also alongside to assure us of God's forgiveness and cleansing as God's children (Romans Chapter 8 verse 16).

The Spirit also helps us to share the Father's broken heart for our suffering world and for the communities of which we are part. Jesus Himself wept over Jerusalem, because its inhabitants failed to see what was happening in their midst (Luke Chapter 19 verse 41).

We can live under God's blessing in sadness, as He is able to turn our tears to joy, even though our comfort will only truly be complete in heaven. *'God comforts the disturbed and disturbs the comfortable.'*

Reverend Paul Hardingham

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Printed by Prontaprint, Solihull : 0121 705 9988