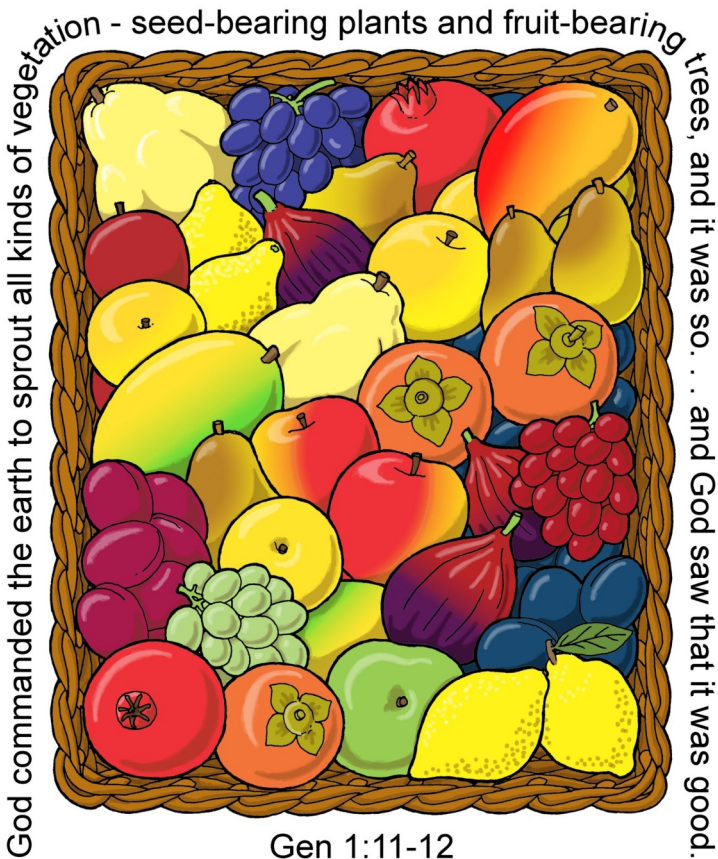


The Mustard Seed

The Parish magazine of the church of St James, Brownhills

A Family Following Jesus

www.stjameschurchbrownhills.co.uk



October 2026

*Called by name & empowered by the Holy Spirit to share
God's love with words and actions*



Why Waxcaps?

Imagine yourself in a gorgeous churchyard on the turn of Summer into Autumn. The days shorten, the air chills, the leaves crunch underfoot. Taking a deep breath, you smell the damp earth and rich soil beneath your feet. You walk through the grass and stumble across something small yet mighty, a sign that the meadow you're in is doing wonderful things to help safeguard species-rich grasslands for the future. You're looking at a Waxcap and we need your help to find them and record them!

Our friends at Plantlife are running their annual Waxcap Watch, a citizen science programme asking you to record what fungi you see in grasslands this Autumn. Among lots of other wondrous flora, Waxcaps are often found in churchyards and burial grounds. They favour low nutrient soils that are regularly managed for species rich grassland. The loss of traditional management elsewhere has meant that these pockets in managed churchyards are even more important for the survival of waxcaps.

Many of our grassland fungi species are common in the UK but are highly threatened globally. Some are even classed as vulnerable on the IUCN Red List; the same threat level as Giant Pandas and Snow leopards. There are around 50 species of waxcap, and the majority are recognisable for their bright colours, but are often small and can get lost in the sward.

So, how do you get involved in this year's Waxcap Watch survey?

The survey season takes place between Sept and Nov, when all the fungi should be out and easily visible. You don't need any fungi ID skills or specialism to take part in these surveys. All you need is a smartphone or access to a computer. Find out more on the Plantlife website with full [instructions](#).

You can survey any grassy area open to the public (or site you have gained permission to access). The best way to start is by walking over an area in a slow zig-zag pattern so you give yourself time to spot the fungi. Some species can be small and elusive, so it might take you a while to get your eye in!

It's vital we protect these important species and their delicate but beautiful habitat. Where waxcaps live, continued traditional management will help conserve them. Things like scything and removing the grass cuttings are fantastic methods of keeping grasslands fungi friendly. Feeds and fertilisers should be avoided at all cost!

If you visit a local churchyard to complete your Waxcap watch, we'd love to hear from you. Please take lots of photos of what you find. We'd love to see what's being found and hear how you've got on in your local burial ground.

175th Anniversary celebrations

This October is a busy month for us at St James, as we look to celebrate 175 years since the building was consecrated.

Much has happened since 1851, some of which is on display in the Fellowship Room, so lovingly put together by Ann Wilkins. Thank you Ann.

You will also have noticed the banner in the corner of the Fellowship Room which has been put together by Brenda Timmins, Shirley Rolinson and Ann Wilkins. Much hard work and thought went into the banner and we are thankful that it looks brilliant. Once again, thank you to all involved.

A team have been working together since the end of January to put together a programme of events for all to enjoy. To this end we have had two coffee mornings and a concert, with raffles, in order to raise enough money for the weekend ahead without having to dip into church funds. Thank you to everyone who has supported this and for those who donated raffle prizes.

Looking at the events still to come, there is a service of celebration on Thursday 15th October at 7pm, which is the actual date of the church's consecration in 1851. This will be a service of history, readings and worship through the years, which will start in candlelight, just as the first evening services would have done.

On Saturday 17th October, there will be coffee morning for everyone to attend, when those who haven't seen our exhibition can come and have a close look at it.

In the afternoon we will be in the High Street, telling everyone about our church and giving the children a small bag of goodies.

In the evening, starting at 7pm, we are showing *Mamma Mia!*, the Abba film, with the words on screen so that everyone can have a good old sing song and we can let our hair down after a busy day. After all, everybody loves

Abba, and knows the songs. This will be a free event, but we would ask for a donation if you have enjoyed yourself.



The day after, Sunday 18th October, is the day when Bishop Tim Wambunya, Bishop of Wolverhampton, will be presiding at our 10am morning service, and all our guests will arrive. Please make them welcome. Some you may know, some you may not, but please speak to them—you may find out something interesting!

We are hoping that all our regular church family members will be attending, so that we can give Bishop Tim a really warm welcome.

After the service has ended, everyone is invited over to the church hall for a free buffet lunch, when we get a chance

to chat with friends and strangers alike.

Between the service ending and the buffet starting, we are planting four trees in the churchyard and also a time capsule which Carol Glass has kindly put together for us.

Please publicise this weekend as much as you can, so that everyone can join with us to thank God for 175 years of a Christian presence in Brownhills.

We need our community to be aware that we are still here, serving their needs, even after 175 years, so please tell as many as possible about our celebrations and invite them to join with us as this time.

Made with AI

Down the Generations

Celebrating 175 Years

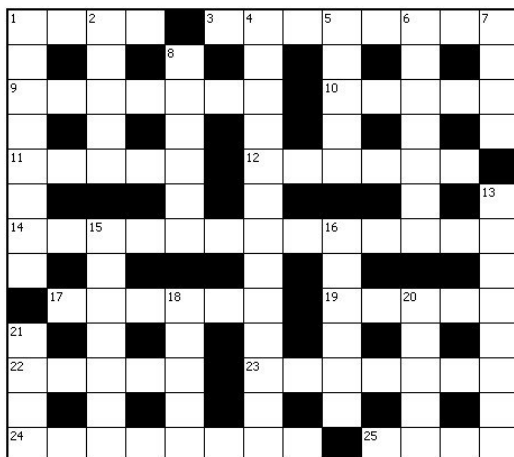
*Join us for an evening of history,
readings and worship as we honour
the legacy of our community
and church family.*

Thursday 15th October

St James Church, Brownhills

7.00pm

*All are welcome to share
in this special milestone.*



Across

- 1 "Those who were standing near Paul said, "You — to insult God's high priest?" (Acts 23:4) (4)
- 3 They were assigned to guard the tree of life (Genesis 3:24) (8)
- 9 'Elkanah son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the — of — , the son of Zuph, an Ephraim-ite' (1 Samuel 1:1) (3,4)
- 10 Surrender (Joshua 24:23) (5)
- 11 Where American livestock can be reared (5)
- 12 Listen (anag.) (6)
- 14 Alternative name for Kiriath Jearim (2 Samuel 6:2) (6,2,5)
- 17 He founded Westminster Abbey, — the Confessor (6)
- 19 Hebrew word for the place of the dead (5)
- 22 Allies of Persia in the fifth century BC (Esther 1:3) (5)
- 23 Where John Wesley was forced to preach a lot (4,3)
- 24 Rebellion against God; abandonment of religious belief (8)
- 25 Note (anag.) (4)

Down

- 1 Give an account of (Mark 4:30) (8)
- 2 'I — — the path of your commands, for you have set my heart free' (Psalm 119:32) (3,2)
- 4 'He took the ephod, the other — — and the carved image' (Judges 18:20) (9,4)
- 5 'You are a chosen people, a — priesthood' (1 Peter 2:9) (5)
- 6 The meek, the merciful and the mourners are all this (Matthew 5:4-5, 7) (7)
- 7 Musical Instrument Digital Interface (1,1,1,1)
- 8 He was the son of Nun (Deuteronomy 34:9) (6)
- 13 'Let the little — come to me' (Matthew 19:14) (8)
- 15 'About three thousand were — — their number that day' (Acts 2:41) (5,2)
- 16 In John's vision, the wall of the new Jerusalem was made of this (Revelation 21:18) (6)
- 18 'Our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly — a Saviour from there, the Lord Jesus Christ' (Philippians 3:20) (5)
- 20 'Glorify the Lord with me: let us — his name together' (Psalm 34:3) (5)
- 21 Young Men's Christian Association (1,1,1,1)

23rd Psalm for the Workplace

The Lord is my real boss and I shall not want.
He gives me peace, when chaos is all around me.
He gently reminds me to pray before I speak and to do all things without
murmuring and complaining.

He reminds me that He is my Source and not my job.
He restores my sanity every day and guides my decisions that I might honour
Him in everything I do.

Even though I face absurd amounts of emails, system crashes, unrealistic
deadlines, budget cutbacks, gossiping co-workers, discriminating
supervisors, and an aging body that doesn't cooperate every morning,
I will not stop -- for He is with me!

His presence, His peace, and His power will see me through.
He raises me up, even when they fail to promote me.
He claims me as His own, even when the company threatens to let me go.

His faithfulness and love are better than any bonus cheque.
His retirement plan beats every 401K there is.
When it's all said and done, I'll be working for Him a whole lot longer
and for that, I bless His Name.

	1		6		7			
		8			5		9	
				3			5	
5				1		7		8
3		6		7				4
	2			4				
			5			6		
			9		3		2	

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So Doku

Nobody's said they don't like
it, so here's another.

Enjoy.

Solution elsewhere!

On how long a sermon should last

The Rectory
St James the Least

My dear Nephew Darren

I am afraid we will never agree about the appropriate length of sermons. Your 50-minute exposition on the theology of St Paul concerning women wearing hats in church is, I am sure, of real interest to you. But as your sermon slowly unfolds, I suspect it will prompt quite a different concern among your congregation. Have they set the oven timer to come on too early?

Whenever I even hint that a matter of theological importance may be about to appear in one of my sermons, an expression of benign incomprehension comes over my congregation. You know the look – you see it on golden Labradors whenever they try and work out what their owners are telling them.

There are certain sure signs that should warn you when you have preached for long enough. One is when members of the congregation reach for their prayer books to try to work out for the umpteenth time how the date for Easter is calculated. The organist turning on the blower when you say “and finally” is another.

Most members of the congregation will count the number of dead flies on the windowsills during your sermon. But when you can see members of the congregation counting the numbers in the

congregation counting the numbers of dead flies, that is absolute proof that it is time to stop.

There has only been one occasion when I preached for longer than my standard eight minutes. Our former organist was in the habit of taking his dog for a walk during the sermon. I knew I had to carry on preaching until I heard the latch on the vestry door for the second time. That meant he was back, and ready to play the last hymn. Unfortunately, one Sunday, his dog ran away.

While he searched for it over every field in the parish, I spent the intervening two hours reading the greater part of Leviticus, discussing the food laws set forth in Deuteronomy, and arguing for a Deutero-Isaiah. I was headed for the Babylonian exile when we all heard the vestry door re-open.

After the Service, the congregation left looking as though they had just been rescued from a major shipwreck. And at the next church council meeting, we unanimously voted to buy our organist a stronger lead.

Your loving uncle,

Eustace

So Doku solution

2	1	5	6	9	7	8	4	3
7	3	8	4	2	5	1	9	6
9	6	4	1	3	8	2	5	7
5	9	2	3	1	4	7	6	8
4	7	1	8	5	6	9	3	2
3	8	6	2	7	9	5	1	4
6	2	9	7	4	1	3	8	5
1	4	3	5	8	2	6	7	9
8	5	7	9	6	3	4	2	1

Season of Creation

In the church year the *Season of Creation* (September 1st - October 4th) is an opportunity for us to reflect on our responsibility to care for the planet. As the season draws to an end for this year, have you considered:

The world is not ours:

'The earth is the Lord's and everything in it' (Psalm 24:1). The world is not ours, but God's! This means we have a responsibility of caring for God's world: *'The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.'* (Genesis 2:15). Clearly, we have not done the best job! The effects of global warming have been all too obvious this summer. And 2025 ranked as the third warmest year on record globally, 1.3°C to 1.44°C above pre-industrial levels. This follows the historic peak in 2024, driven by ongoing fossil fuel emissions and high ocean surface temperatures.

Our hope is found in Jesus:

Any hope for the future lies in Jesus Himself. He is the one who sustains creation and will bring everything to completion: *'all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.'* (Colossians 1:16,17). God's plan is *'to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.'* (Ephesians 1:10). We can look forward to the climax of history when God through Christ will restore our broken world and make everything new.

In the present, we are empowered by Christ to take our proper place as stewards of the earth. Simple everyday actions can help to sustain our planet, including recycling of waste, energy saving, choosing reusable options, careful diet and a commitment to simple living can help the planet.

However difficult the climate crisis gets, as Christians, we can engage it with faith and not fatalism!

Be thankful for grandparents

Everyone seems to have their 'special day' these days, and this month brings us Grandparents' Day, on the 4th October.

If your grandchildren are still young, why not keep at your house:

1. A dressing up box – of fairytale clothes, plastic crowns and cardboard swords. These will keep them busy for hours. Charity shops can be a great source of cheap costumes – and also tablecloths/sheets that can be turned into costumes. (Or you can help the church by getting to work on some early nativity costumes!)
2. A craft supply box – egg boxes, old magazines full of pictures, cardboard, cardboard tubes, a bit of glue, bits of ribbon and wool, some paper and scissors can work wonders.
3. Colouring supplies - crayons and any kind of paper – even the back of envelopes – will do fine.

If all else fails, you can always sit down for a rest and let them play 'musical statues', where the only rule is that whenever the music stops, they must 'freeze' in position.

There are lots of resources you can download for the special day – just go to: <http://www.activityvillage.co.uk/grandparents-day>

*The Christian is suspended between blessings received
and blessings hoped for, so he should always give
thanks. - M R Vincent*

Crossword Answers
ACROSS
1 dare; 3 cherubim; 9 son Tohu; 10 yield; 11 ranch; 12 enlist; 14 Baalah of Judah; 17 Edward; 19 Sheol;
22 media; 23 open air; 24 apostasy; 25 Eton
DOWN
1 Jasper; 18 await; 20 exalt; 21 YMCA
2 run in; 4 household gods; 5 royal; 6 blessed; 7 MID; 8 Joshua; 13 children; 15 added to; 16

Samuel - the exceptional man who put the crown on David's head

The Bible contains descriptions of many kinds of leaders. These men (and sometimes women) were responsible for the well-being of groups of people. Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt. Joshua led the wilderness wanderers into the Promised Land. Gideon, Ezra and Nehemiah led people to fight against their enemies and improved their moral and spiritual lives.

While these people may be familiar to us, the Bible also mentions other individuals who had different leadership responsibilities. Some fulfilled their positions readily while others, like Joseph and Esther, gradually became aware of their roles and achieved the purposes God had for them.

As a baby, Samuel was dedicated to the service of God. While a young boy, God spoke directly to him. Samuel grew up gaining favour with both God and men. At an early age, God was with Samuel and made everything that Samuel said come true.

Samuel became the ruler of Israel. His style of leadership was based on godliness, fairness and good organisation. He settled disputes, served as a judge and banned pagan gods from the land.

When Samuel became old, the people became restless. They demanded to have a king to rule over them. God reluctantly agreed. Under God's guidance, Samuel chose Saul. Unfortunately, Saul failed to lead the people in the way of God. So, Samuel was directed by God to anoint David - to be the next king of Israel.

Samuel, it appears, was acutely aware of his responsibility to be a good leader. He was a man of good reputation but his obedience to God brought about difficulty, uncertainty and hardship. He wanted Saul to be a good leader, but Saul failed to live up to his high calling. Samuel was deeply upset and departed from the king's presence. He knew that a bad leader would bring about the nation's downfall.

Nevertheless, Samuel treated Saul with respect and courtesy. He understood the principle of submission to God-ordained authority. He was loyal to Saul, even though he turned out to be a bad leader.

Samuel's grief over Saul's failure is a reminder for us to pray for our leaders on a regular basis (whether or not they fall short in their official capacity!) We need God to provide us with leaders who are trustworthy and honourable. Let's pray for good leaders that they may enhance truth, peace and justice throughout the world.

New report explores young adult journeys to faith in the Church of England

Young adults are coming to faith in a range of different ways, some very different from previous generations, according to a new report.

New research commissioned by the Church of England uncovers how growing spiritual curiosity among young adults has led to a range of unexpected routes by which they are discovering Christian faith and finding community in Church of England churches.

‘Understanding Young Adult Journeys to Faith in the Church of England’ draws on in-depth interviews with 30 young adults aged 18 to 30 who began attending Church of England churches for the first time within the five years following the Covid-19 pandemic.

Conducted by Theos think tank and recently published, the research explores how Generation Z is engaging with Christianity in new ways amongst a changing cultural context.

The report identifies several recurring themes in their paths to interaction with faith and the Church of England.

Social media often served as an initial point of contact, introducing young adults to Christian ideas through podcasts, testimonies, debates, influencers and online content.

For many, this led to deeper exploration through reading the Bible, engaging with theology and asking wider questions about meaning, purpose and truth, often before attending church for the first time.

Personal relationships were consistently found to play a significant role, with encouragement, invitations or stories from teachers, chaplains, friends, partners, clergy and church members often helping young people move from curiosity to attending church.

Community and a sense of belonging also emerged as a common experience of church, with many participants citing this as one of the reasons they continued attending and became more involved.

Young people interviewed as part of the research were drawn to a wide range of Anglican traditions, including cathedrals, Anglo-Catholic and contemporary evangelical churches.

Across traditions, they reported being engaged by the “authenticity” and “seriousness” of worship, and valuing “confidence, consistency and depth” in the churches they had chosen to attend.

Made with AI

Mamma Mia!

Sing-along-a-

ABBA



★ **17th October • 7PM** ★

St James Church, Brownhills

★ **Dance! Sing! Have the Time of Your Life!** ★

Come and let your hair down as we show the film 'Mama Mia' complete with the words so we can all sing along and enjoy

Prayer for harvest

Dear Lord,

As we give thanks for the harvest and pray for the farmers who have struggled through the summer's drought and heatwaves, we also give thanks and pray for those who work to share the good news of Your kingdom, to bring in Your harvest of people who are searching for You.

May we, who know You, join those workers and share the good news that Jesus brings. So many people are lost and without hope or direction. Help us to reach out to them, maybe with an invitation, or simply a smile, or an act of kindness. May they see Your love reflected in us and turn to You.

May they put their trust in Jesus, who alone is the answer to all life's great questions.

Lord, may we be workers in the harvest field where You have placed us, for Your glory.

In Jesus' name. Amen.

By Daphne Kitching



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THE PARISH OF BROWNHILLS WITH OGLEY HAY

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