

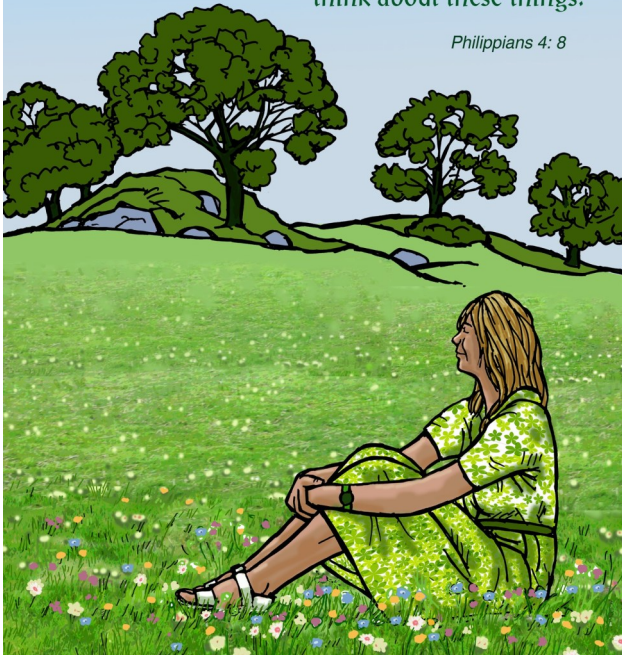
The Mustard Seed

The Parish magazine of the church of St James, Brownhills

A Family Following Jesus

Finally, beloved, whatever is true,
whatever is honourable, whatever is just,
whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing,
whatever is commendable,
if there is any excellence
and if there is anything worthy of praise,
think about these things.

Philippians 4: 8



www.stjameschurchbrownhills.co.uk

July 2026

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



Taking a look at Hoverflies

Why not take time out on a sunny, calm July day and sit down in your local churchyard, chapel yard or cemetery next to a flowering plant such as hogweed, yarrow or knapweed. After a while you may notice that there is a wealth of variety amongst the various bee-like insects

who are visiting the flowers. Whilst bees meander from flower to flower at a fairly constant speed, you'll also spot another group of insects, similarly banded in yellow and black, which dart quickly and then hover, staying quite still, like a miniature hummingbird. These are hoverflies and there are an amazing 280 different species in the UK, found in a wide range of habitats.

Hoverflies often look quite like bees or wasps, with stripey, sometimes furry bodies. They do not sting however but this mimicry discourages predators as the yellow and black stripes spell danger! Look closely and you'll see two large eyes and a single pair of wings, characteristics of flies (bees and wasps have two pairs of wings). The hoverfly beats these wings up and down several hundred times per second to stay stationary.

Hoverflies are a true friend to the gardener, the adults are important pollinators and nearly half of our hoverfly larvae feed on aphids and other plant sap-suckers. Others eat fungi, yeasts, micro-organism and general detritus found in the soil, in deadwood and in stagnant water. They are key decomposers and recyclers. Many gardeners encourage hoverflies by planting suitable flowers for them. Open flowers such as alyssums, yarrows, daisies and marjoram will all provide a good source of nectar. Many of the wildflowers found in churchyards are great for hoverflies too, do you have cow parsley, chervil or wild carrot (or any of the umbel family), how about daisies, yarrow, dandelions and hawkweeds? Hoverflies have mouthparts that dab at the flowers rather like a sponge so choose flat, open flowers.

Hoverflies are an example of an insect group which is often overlooked, easily passed off as a bee until you look more closely. They are an important part of our ecosystem however and, like butterflies, are sensitive indicators of environmental change. As well letting some grassland grow long so the wildflowers can bloom, how about planting suitable flowers if you have beds or planters? Creating a deadwood pile in a shady spot is great for hoverflies as well as so many other species and leaving some leaf litter and woody debris under tree canopies supports pupae or, in some cases, overwintering adults, ready to emerge in the spring.

So have a look for hoverflies this summer and, if you are patient, photograph them hovering and feeding. This can help to identify what you have seen.

All the best, Harriet

Harriet Carty, *Diocesan Churchyard Environmental Advisor*, harriet@cfga.org.uk,

What's going on in the churchyard?



As you are all, hopefully aware, work has been going on in the north side churchyard by our Eco team.

The up-to-date picture is that we now have a flower garden square, surrounded by a walkway covered in wood chippings with a seat if you need a rest, or just a quiet time to reflect on God's amazing creation.

A lot of hard work has been put into this by both the Eco team and the volunteers who have happily turned up on our 'maintenance' days.

The photo above shows most of the work team from last Saturday who attacked the pile of wood chippings and got everything ship-shape.

The Eco team would like to thank everyone who has been involved, whether in the planning or volunteering, for their hard work over the last few months.

Looking forward, we will be having a work party on 31st October, when we hope to be planting spring bulbs to match those planted last year. If you would like to donate daffodils or other spring flowers, please speak to one of the team.

Micah's Message

Why is the news so full of depressing stories? Why can't they report some good news for a change? Indeed, our world is always full of troubles, and we may wonder if better times will ever come.

Similar comments might have been directed at many of the Old Testament prophets who nearly always said negative and gloomy things. The people of Micah's day had many problems. They were surrounded by warring nations and peace in their time was unlikely.

It was Micah's task, as God's messenger, to tell the people how it was and how it was going to be, no matter how painful the facts. Micah was deeply concerned with the social ills of his day and spoke out against false prophets who were leading the people into contrived hopes and errors.

Micah was quite forthright. He announced that God would punish the people for their sinfulness and their enemies would overcome them. Micah came with bad news and there seemed no end to his reprimands and denouncements.

But in the desert was an oasis. Amidst his descriptions of imminent pain and suffering, Micah looked forward to a time of peace with freedom from injustice, fear and war. Micah delivered God's promise that from Bethlehem there would come a ruler to free them from their oppression. Their Saviour would come. (Micah 5:2)

Of course, Micah's hearers did not understand about the Babe at Bethlehem but were told to stand firm in their faith no matter what troubles or disasters would befall them. They were to look forward to their deliverance whenever that would be.

Amidst Micah's attack on the deplorable actions of leaders and the nation's wrong values and behaviour, he gave hope that God was with them in the failures and difficulties. Only God could take them through their troubles to a place of peace.

Micah's message still stands for us today. God wants us to mend our wilful ways; to correct bad attitudes and behaviour; to strive for heaven's values of justice, peace, equality, love and harmony.

As we approach a new year, we would do well to respond to Micah's words: *What does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.* (Micah 6:8)

IT'S NOT JUST POLICY, IT'S PERSONAL

Building confidence in reporting
safeguarding concerns

*"Act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with
your God."*

- Micah 6:8

We know that
reporting
safeguarding
concerns can feel
difficult

Scan here for
[resources to help
you](#)



When someone shares a concern, it is important they are listened to and taken seriously. You are not expected to investigate. Keeping people safe and ensuring concerns are recorded and referred appropriately is all of our responsibility.



Recognise

Be alert to signs or disclosures
of abuse.



Respond

Listen carefully and take
what is being said
seriously.



Record

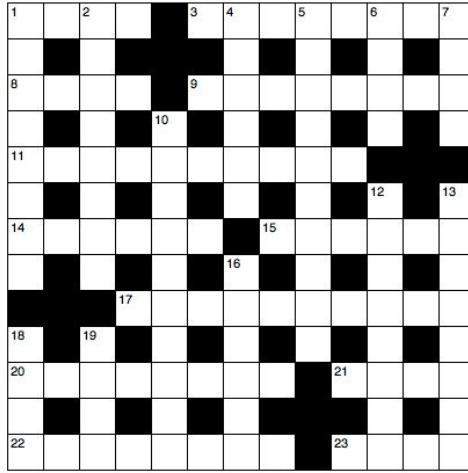
Make a written record of
what has been shared.



Refer

Share the concern with the
Safeguarding Officer and
relevant authorities.

July



Crossword

Across

- 1 Proverbs describes her as being 'of noble character' (Proverbs 31:10) (4)
 3 'Shall we go up again — — against the Benjamites, our brothers?' (Judges 20:23) (2,6)
 8 A descendant of Shem (Genesis 10:28) (4)
 9 'Anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my — ' (Luke 14:27) (8)
 11 Resentment (Ephesians 4:31)(10)
 14 In Cain (anag.)(6)
 15 'Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to—' (Psalm 139:6) (6)
 17 Intense (1 Thessalonians 4:5)(10)
 20 Third Order of the Roman Catholic Church(8)
 21 'At midnight the cry rang out, "Here's the bridegroom! Come out to — him"' (Matthew 25:6) (4)
 22 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in — ' (2 Corinthians 12:9) (8)
 23 'As the — pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God' (Psalm 42:1) (4)

Down

- 1 Nickname of popular First World War chaplain, the Revd G.A. Studdert Kennedy, — Willie (8)
 2 Occasion of religious joy (Lamentations 2:22) (5,3)
 4 'We three kings of — are' (6)
 5 Allegation or charge (Jude 9) (10)
 6 Kind (1 Chronicles 12:33) (4)
 7 'Open your — and look at the fields!' (John 4:35) (4)
 10 Also known as the Feast of Lights (John 10:22)(10)
 12 Area that saw the healing of two demon - possessed men and a herd of pigs stampeding to their deaths (Matthew 8:28) (8)
 13 Forebear (James 2:21)(8)
 16 Name given to the first two books of the Apocrypha(6)
 18 Esau sold his birthright for this (Genesis 25:34)(4)
 19 Rear (anag.)(4)

World Cup

Many across the world are united in watching the World Cup in the United States, Mexico and Canada. However, football is more than just a game; it can illustrate some key points about the Christian life. As Paul writes: *‘But one thing I do: forgetting what is behind and straining towards what is ahead, I press on towards the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenwards in Christ Jesus.’* (Philippians 3:13b,14).

A prize to be won: The dream of every player in the competition is to be able to hold up the World Cup themselves. Christians grasp to the prize of eternal life, God’s gift to us of relationship with Jesus for now and eternity. However, there’s an important difference between football and the Christian faith. To win the World Cup you have to be good enough, while Christ’s love for us is underserved and not dependent on how well we’ve done.

Training to be undertaken: If a team is going to win the World Cup, training is vital! Our training, as Christians, starts the moment we accept the gift of God’s life. On a daily basis, we train ourselves to say *no* to the wrong things in our lives. As we build up our *godly muscles* we are better able to choose to do what is right in God’s eyes. To enable us to do all this we need to engage in the spiritual disciplines of prayer, studying the Bible and being part of a church and small group. How is your training going?

The former Liverpool Manager Bill Shankly famously said, *‘Some people believe football is a matter of life and death, I am very disappointed with that attitude. I can assure you it is much, much more important than that!’*

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

So Doku

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

Enjoy.

Solution elsewhere!

On war between parishes

The Rectory
St James the Least

My dear Nephew Darren

So, now you have enjoyed your first Summer Fete. Don't say I didn't warn you. It may be small consolation but remember that they only happen once a year - although in your case, you still have another 30 to endure before retirement.

I negotiated our own last week. As usual, the band from our neighbouring parish of St Eusebius played. There has been much bad blood in the past between our two villages. The trouble started on the day that St James the Least of All never told St Eusebius that the Vikings were coming up the river. We may have long since buried the hatchet, but both sides remember where they put it.

Tension between the two communities down the centuries has moved on from occasional slaughter to something a little more refined. Just as I began my opening speech to crown the Rose Queen, the band struck up with the National Anthem. When the hog roast started, they played "smoke gets in your eyes" and when it came to the necessary music for the maypole dancing, they all disappeared into the beer tent.

With great Christian charity, we shall bide our time. In September we have the annual football match between the two churches' Servers. Last year, in addition to winning the match, the St James'

boys sent three of their side off with concussion. Naturally, I visited them in hospital.

Miss Prendergast, as always, played Gypsy Rose Lee. If the tall, dark, dear lady tells me one more time that I am about to find romance with a tall dark lady, while she flutters her eyelashes at me, I swear I shall throttle her with a bell rope. Besides, I already have a beautiful dark lady in my life - and my Labrador is devoted to me.

The only real hiccough came when I bought 12 packets of fudge from Mrs Masheder to present to our choirboys. Yet again, she had misread salt for sugar in the recipe. After I presented the packets at Mattins the following day, a formal complaint was rapidly made by a parent to the police that the Rector was attempting to poison their son. But as I explained to the officer, if I had intended to poison anyone, I would have done it far more discreetly - and infinitely more efficiently.

Your loving uncle,

Eustace

So Doku solution

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

Keep on keeping on

In the church year, we've now come to that long season- it seems to go on forever- variously called 'Trinity' or 'Ordinary time'. Each of those labels tells us something about the approximately six months between Pentecost and Advent Sunday. 'Trinity' reminds us that with Pentecost, God has made himself known to us in all his fullness (or at least as much as we can bear) as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. 'Ordinary time' tells us that this is the season where, now armed with the insights and power of the Holy Spirit, we can revisit the life of Jesus with new eyes, new heart, see new things in the faith, see new opportunities to serve God.

This is the time when those words of Jesus (John 15 v15) 'I have made known to you everything I have learned from the Father' come into play. It may seem a long season, it may feel like the drudgery of 'Keep on keeping on' without the excitement of Christmas, Easter and Pentecost to lift our spirits, but it is ordinary time charged with the knowledge that we have everything we need in the resources of God. The love of the Father, the words and works of the Son, the power of the Spirit will energise us as we 'keep on keeping on' through this long season.

This long season up to the end of November is a reminder that working out our love for God in our community is probably more about perspiration than inspiration. Few are called to be heroes of the faith, but all are called to faithfulness, and somehow or other, with the transforming power of the Spirit, we are all able to keep on keeping on, doing little things with great love.

Here's a lovely prayer I learned from our son's godmother which captures some of the mindset of the Trinity season/Ordinary time; it may help you 'keep on keeping on' through the months ahead;

Let not our soul be busy inns that have not room for thee and thine, but quiet homes of prayer and praise where thou mayest find fit company; where the needful cares of life are wisely ordered and put away, and wide sweet space is kept for thee.

Amen to that. Ordinary- but challenging!

Christians are the only people in the world who have anything to be happy about. - Billy Graham

Best hand writing please!

*See how large a letter I have written unto you with my own hand.
(Galatians 6 v 11)*

I am sat in a train and most of my fellow passengers are preparing for their important days by typing away on laptops and checking their phones. I am probably only person who has a notebook open beside them with a list of things to do, written in pencil. A couple of weeks ago I was waiting for a train and a member of staff noted I was writing a letter with “one of those things,” meaning a fountain pen.

Being a lawyer I am supposed to be traditional and old fashioned. I still like writing letters and receiving postcards. Notes written in pencil work when there is a good signal or none. I was often told at school not to use pencil as it faded over time. I remember reading official war diaries written in the trenches in pencil that crystal clear after eighty years, so Nerr, teacher, you were wrong!

Paul had a secretary to write for him. Perhaps his eyesight was failing or his handwriting had got worse with time as it does for most of us. Several times, St Paul ends his letters by taking the pen from his secretary and writing himself. He did it to emphasise a point or to add a human touch.

The world we live in needs clear, bold words and the Church must write them.

Holiday soothies

For dealing with motion sickness, ginger capsules are your new friend. Available from any health store, they do a wonderful job in calming upset tummies.

For banning mosquitoes & insomnia, take some essential oil of lavender. Mosquitoes hate the smell, so if you put a few drops around your pillow at night, you can help keep them at bay – and help yourself drift off to sleep.

Tips for a cooler house

If the summer heat is getting to you, you might consider the following:

Close your curtains and blinds during the day. Block out the sunlight. That may be hard to do in a country where we don't see the sun as often as we'd like, but sadly that sunlight pouring through your windows will not only brighten but also heat up your house.

At night, aim to create a breeze that flows through your house. This is easy to do - simply open windows on opposite walls or at opposite sides of your home. Let the air circulate as much as possible.

Try to reduce heat from your appliances. Your stove, television, dishwasher, hairdryer, fridge and freezer all generate some heat. Can you do without any of these during the daytime?

Aim for cool flooring. Try and use wood flooring and ceramic or porcelain tiles in that is why we like them in the winter.

Consider using breathable fabrics over your sofa and chairs. Sitting on natural fabrics such as cotton or linen throws is cooler than sitting on man-made fabrics.

If all else fails, *try an electric fan*, placed on the floor in front of a bowl of ice water, and aimed at the opposite wall of your room. But they are expensive to run, and do not cool the air. They merely increase the velocity of it, so that it feels cooler.

*Let us make God the beginning and end of our love,
for He is the fountain from which all good things flow
and into Him alone they flow back. Let Him there-
fore be the beginning of our love. - Richard Rolle*

A compliment is verbal sunshine. - R Orben

St James the Great, following Him

Jesus, fresh from His baptism and fired with His new calling, bursts into Galilee. Coming upon four fishermen working on the shore of the lake, He says to them, 'Follow Me'.

Without further ado or even a second thought, they abandon what they're doing (and in the case of two of them, James and John, leave their poor old father alone in the boat with the hired crew), and set off with Jesus, they know not where. That is how Mark's Gospel records the recruitment of four of the apostles of Jesus. Talk about a sudden change of life!

All our understanding of human behaviour tells us that this is not how people normally respond to such a peremptory invitation: no questions, no explanation. Take it or leave it. Just 'Follow me'.

That however is on a superficial reading of the text. In fact, because we have four Gospels rather than just three, we know from John that one pair of brothers, James and John, and the other two called on the same day, had been disciples of John the Baptist, who had pointed Jesus out to them as the 'Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world'.

Subsequently two of them had sought Him out and spent some time with Him in the Jordan area. This was not quite the instant 'conversion' described by Matthew and Mark, though undoubtedly it evoked an instant response.

For many of us on the journey of faith the experience of James and John - and the other two, Peter and Andrew - mirrors our own experience. First, we know about Jesus, perhaps as children at Sunday school, or later as adults. Then we begin to ask questions and look for answers. Finally, there may come a time when we hear His voice, as it were, calling us to accompany Him on a life of love, service and commitment.

For James (whose feast day falls this month) this moment was to turn his whole life upside down. He became a leader of the church in Jerusalem after the resurrection and was the first apostle to be martyred, being put to the sword by Herod Agrippa in 44AD. His brother John, in contrast, lived on as a senior figure in the life of the emerging Church.

For all four who were called by the lake that day, nothing would ever be quite the same again. But then all those who set out to follow Jesus wherever He leads them are usually in for a few surprises.

Readings for July

Sunday 5th July

10am	We need a rhythm of work and rest	Mark 2 v 23-ch 3 v 6
6.15pm	The habit of silence	Matthew 6 v 19-24

Sunday 12th July

10am	Week 7 of Genesis	Genesis 7	Matthew 24 v 36-44
6.15pm	Living lightly	Proverbs 27 v 1-19	James 4 v 13-17

Sunday 19th July

10am	Week 8 of Genesis	Genesis 8	Mark 4 v 35-41
6.15pm	Living a Spirit directed life	Psalms 63	Acts 8 v 26-40

Sunday 26th July

10am	The Kingdom seeds	Psalms 128	Matthew 13 v 31-33, 44-52
6.15pm	More than enough	Matthew 14 v 13-21	Romans 9 v 1-5

Please note that the early morning Holy Communion Service on Sunday July 26th will be at 8.30am and NOT 8.00am.

Time Prayer

Father,

We are all so busy. We rush here and there, trying to meet deadlines, trying to fit more and more into our already full days. So often we seem to run out of energy and time. Sometimes we wonder what it's all about.

Help us, Lord to recognise that we *have* time. You have given us every day of our lives. Help us to choose wisely how we use our life time. Help us to spend time with you first; to learn your ways; to encounter the living Jesus in the Bible and in prayer. And everything else will fall into place. In Jesus' name, Amen.

By Daphne Kitching



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oven, hob, extractor or

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THE PARISH OF BROWNHILLS WITH OGLEY HAY

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Liz Corbett	01543 370162
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Victoria Whitehouse

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