


# The Mustard Seed

The Parish magazine of the church of St James, Brownhills

*A Family Following Jesus*

**Hosanna!**  
**Crucify him!**  
**Finished!**  
**He is risen!**  
**Alleluia!**



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

*April 2026*

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



## Early butterflies

April is a lovely month to start searching for butterflies as quite a few of those which are often seen in churchyards, chapel yards or cemeteries are on the wing by now. Some species emerge from overwintering as adults, often looking a bit faded and battered, you'll need to wait until summer to see the newly emerged, resplendent adults. You may find Peacocks and Red Admirals, feeding on flowers prior to egg-laying. Both of these spectacular butterflies lay eggs on nettles.

Look for the Comma, with its distinctive wing shape, its upper wings coloured orange with black markings whilst its underwings, visible when closed, are well camouflaged to disappear amongst dead leaves. Comma caterpillars also feed on nettles. Another butterfly that overwinters is the Brimstone, the male showing a characteristic yellow colour, the female more of a pale greenish yellow. It is thought the name butterfly comes from this species – a butter-coloured fly!

Other butterflies start emerging from pupation in April. These will look smart compared to those that have over-wintered, with bright colours and their wings unbattered at least at first. Have a look for the Holly Blue, known as the churchyard butterfly. This delicate blue butterfly will be seen in tree canopies, so you'll need to look up! Four species from the same family, the Whites and Yellows can be seen, green-veined white, large white, small white and orange tip. Both small and large whites are nicknamed 'cabbage whites' by gardeners as their caterpillars can devour both brassicas and nasturtiums. The green-veined white is less of a villain for gardeners, it's caterpillars, like that of the Orange Tip, feed on a variety of wild plants including cuckoo-flower, hedge mustard and garlic mustard.

Burial grounds are usually a mix of shady woodland areas and sunny grassland, and the butterflies found reflect both habitats and in particular, the scrubby edges between them containing coarse grasses, shrubs, nettles and brambles. Look for Speckled Wood emerging in April, its caterpillars feed on coarse grasses.

If you'd like to encourage butterflies then leave some nettles in full sun, whilst you may not wish to encourage nettles is there a place where they already occur? When planting trees, shrubs or flowers please use native species and include buckthorn or alder buckthorn, both food plants of the Brimstone. Perhaps most importantly, allow some areas to be a little bit scruffy particularly over winter. Leave some rough vegetation and dead stems as well as piles of autumn leaves, until all creatures that have been sheltering, hibernating and pupating have emerged into the spring sunshine.

As always, we'd love to hear about any butterflies you see.

All the best, Harriet Carty, *Diocesan Churchyard Environmental Advisor*, [harriet@cpga.org.uk](mailto:harriet@cpga.org.uk),

# God is good – all the time!



One of the worst prisons in the world is in Lusaka, Zambia. The prison was built in 1950 for 250 men. Today it holds over 1,300. The cells, which were built to hold 50, are now home to over 150 men. They are locked in these cells from eight o'clock at night until eight o'clock in the morning. There isn't enough room for all of them to lie down at the same time. They have to take it in turns. The stench and the heat in those cells must be almost unbearable. If the prisoners do not have AIDS or tuberculosis when they enter the prison, they are likely to become infected soon after.

The cells surround a courtyard, which is at the centre of the prison. I heard Nicky Gumble speak about when he and some fellow Christians led a service there. Maybe because there was nothing else to do, virtually every one of the inmates attended. The service was led by a man who had been awaiting trial for four years. He was a Christian pastor who was accused of some minor offence (for which the penalty in England would probably have been a small fine, had he been convicted). Though he may well have been innocent, this man had been languishing in a prison for four years, unconvicted, without trial, not knowing when he would be

released – if ever.

Nicky Gumble said that he will never forget his opening words as he began to lead the service: ‘God is good – all the time.’ Here was a man who had absolute confidence in the goodness of God, not because of his circumstances but in spite of them. He knew and had experienced the goodness of God in the midst of great suffering. As a result, even though he found himself in the appalling conditions of this prison, he followed Jesus’ example and ‘went around doing good’ (Acts 10:38).

As John Wesley said, ‘Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can.’ And God being good is a dominant theme in Psalm 35. In all things God works for our good. Let’s be honest. Not everyone is good. Some people hate without reason and act maliciously (v.19).

There is a great contrast running through this passage between the difficulties that the author of Psalm 35, David was facing from those around him, and the goodness of God. The Message version brings out this contrast by using the word ‘good’ four times, but in very different contexts: -

**1. Beware the ‘no good’ crowd:** There will be times in your life and in the life of your community when you come under attack from those who are ‘cooking up gossip’ (v.20, MSG). ‘They do not speak peaceably, but devise false accusations’ (v.20). David says, ‘No good is going to come from that crowd’ (v.20, MSG).

**2. Having a ‘good time’ is not always good:** David speaks of this crowd’s ‘good time’ (v.24, MSG). These people are having ‘a party at [David’s] expense’ (v.19, MSG). They hate him for no reason: ‘winking and rolling their eyes’ (v.19, MSG). They think they are having ‘a good time’ but, actually, what they are doing is not good.

**3. God works everything for good:** 'God is great – everything works together for good for his servant' (v.27, MSG). God takes even the bad things that are done to you and are said about you and uses them for good: 'In all things God works for the good of those who love him' (Romans 8:28).

**4. Tell the world how good God is:** David ends this psalm by celebrating God's goodness. He writes, 'I'll tell the world how great and good you are, I'll shout Hallelujah all day, every day' (Psalm 35:28, MSG).

This Easter time, as we celebrate our new life in Jesus because He died and rose again for our sake, may the prayer of our hearts be: 'Lord, help me to remember your goodness and trust in the 'good things' you have stored up for me in the eternal Kingdom'.

As we prepare for our witness to Jesus power happening in the Civic Square in Brownhills on Sat 16<sup>th</sup> May, we can also pray, saying: 'I praise you, Lord God, for all your goodness to me – for the good news of Jesus, for your forgiveness, for your love for me, for the Holy Spirit and the love of God poured into my heart, for the fact that you delight in me and rescue me. Thank you, Lord, for all your blessings, for your provision, freedom, friends, family and every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms.

For our True and Living 'God is good – all the time.'

With love and many prayers,

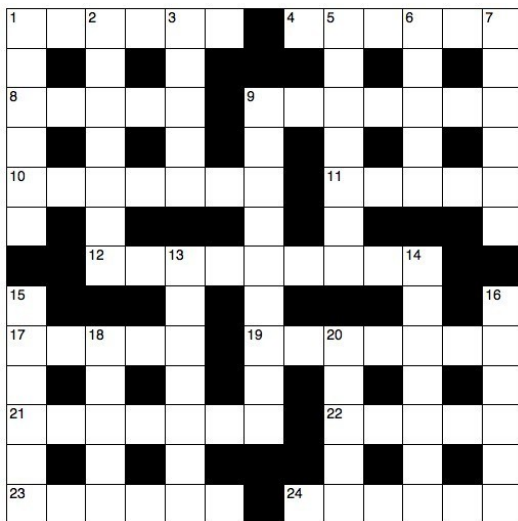
Rev'd Gayle



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*Exercise daily - walk with the Lord. - Anon*

# April



# Crossword

## Across

- 1 Relating to the whole universe (6)  
4 The disciple who made the remark in 8 Across (John 20:24) (6)  
8 'Unless I see the nail marks — — hands, I will not believe it' (John 20:25) (2,3)  
9 He urged King Jehoiakim not to burn the scroll containing Jeremiah's message (Jeremiah 36:25) (7)  
10 Baptist minister and controversial founder of America's Moral Majority, Jerry — (7)  
11 'Look, here is — . Why shouldn't I be baptized?' (Acts 8:36) (5)  
12 Repossessed (Genesis 14:16) (9)  
17 Port from which Paul sailed on his last journey to Rome (Acts 27:3-4) (5)  
19 'Moses was not aware that his face was — because he had spoken with the Lord' (Exodus 34:29) (7)  
21 Roonwit, C.S. Lewis's half-man, half-horse (7)  
22 Grill (Luke 24:42) (5)  
23 'The lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the — apostles' (Acts 1:26) (6)  
24 'I was sick and you looked after me, I was in — and you came to visit me' (Matthew 25:36) (6)

## Down

- 1 Coastal rockfaces (Psalm 141:6) (6)  
2 Academic (1 Corinthians 1:20) (7)  
3 Publish (Daniel 6:26) (5)  
5 For example, the Crusades (4,3)  
6 11 Across is certainly this (5)  
7 He reps (anag.) (6)  
9 Liberator (Psalm 18:2) (9)  
13 Man who asked the question in 11 Across was in charge of all her treasury (Acts 8:27) (7)  
14 They must be 'worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine' (1 Timothy 3:8) (7)  
15 The human mind or soul (6)  
16 'O Lord, while precious children starve, the tools of war increase; their bread is — ' (Graham Kendrick) (6)  
18 'We played the flute for you, and you did not — ' (Matthew 11:17) (5)  
20 Bared (anag.) (5)

# What home gadgets do you regret buying?

You know what they are: those things you never knew you needed until you saw one in an advert. Then suddenly you felt that life would never be complete without one.

And so, you brought home the spiraliser that makes vegetables look like spaghetti. And the pasta maker that you can't quite figure out how to use. And the ice-cream maker that makes everything sticky and helped you put on another three pounds. And the robot vacuum which terrorises the cat. As for the bread maker, well at least it makes a good shelf on the kitchen counter.

If this is you, you are not alone. A recent survey by Saga has found that 65% of us have experienced 'gadget regret'. It occurs when we buy something and then wonder why we ever bothered, because who needs it anyway?

Top of the list of regrets is the spiralizer – 62% of us woke up one morning to realise that no one needs vegetables to look like spaghetti. Second place belongs to digital picture frames, which 52% of us regret buying. After that comes the pasta maker (45%), the ice-cream maker (42%), VR headsets (35%), the bread maker (31%), the internet-connected exercise equipment (31%) and finally, the robot vacuum (29%).

What do we do with all this stuff? 46% of us keep it, even when we don't want it. 15% of us try and sell the things, while a desperate 14% of us simply throw them away. And 19% of us grimly hang on to them for a year or so, before passing them on to an unsuspecting friend.

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

## So Doku

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

Enjoy.

Solution elsewhere!

# On the perils of small study groups

The Rectory  
St James the Least

*My dear Nephew Darren*

*So, you are about to run an Alpha course in your parish; I am sure your bishop will be delighted. I remember him from my Oxford days. He was just starting his course as a gangly undergraduate when I was finishing my doctorate on Eusebius.*

*I recall him as a keen rugby player who took early morning dips in the Isis, who led intense discussions on Saint Paul's theology of 'the body' over cups of cocoa in the evenings in his rooms and who spent his holidays laying paths for the National Trust in the Lake District while lodging in Youth Hostels. He's exactly the sort of person who will empathise with your ministry – hearty, enthusiastic and overflowing with compassionate intensity. We were not close friends.*

*We tend not to go in for those sort of things, here at St James the Least of All, preferring matters a little more relaxed and understated. If we ever do hold discussion groups (and they are a regrettable necessity during Lent), they always start with a good lunch, finishing with coffee and one of Mrs French's excellent Madeira cakes. Once we have removed from the table, those who manage to stay awake will start to tackle the chosen topic.*

*However, we always seem to veer off to discussing more interesting*

*matters, such as why Colonel Chorley is never allowed to sing solos in the choir anymore, or who moved Mrs Cholmondeley's flower arrangement from the font the previous week. Apparently, she has given notice that her weekly contributions on the plate will be much reduced unless an appropriate apology is received.*

*These matters may not seem as important to you as deciding what the 'white stone' in Revelation 4 is all about, but let me assure you that to members of our congregation, knowing why the second verse of the National Anthem is no longer sung at our Remembrance Services is of pivotal importance.*

*At 2.30pm we wake up those who have enjoyed an hour's slumber and totter off home, knowing we have once again done our bit for faith in the parish.*

*I am sure your own group will also return home after your sessions - even if a digestive biscuit and weak tea is all that has been offered - invigorated and braced to tackle the heathen in the parish. We all take our pleasures in different ways.*

*Your loving uncle,*

*Eustace*

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

**So Doku solution**

# The Cross of Jesus

*The cross is a picture of violence, yet the key to peace;  
a picture of suffering, yet the key to healing;  
a picture of death, yet the key to life;  
a picture of utter weakness, yet the key to power;  
a picture of capital punishment, yet the key to mercy and forgiveness;  
a picture of vicious hatred, yet the key to love;  
a picture of supreme shame, yet the Christian's supreme boast.*

The cross really is the key to everything! Although a horrifying instrument of torture and death, it is also a symbol of God's love and peace. On the cross Jesus died to deal with the problem of our sin and defeat the powers of death and evil. He identified with our sufferings and set us an example of self-sacrificial love.

As Peter writes, *'He himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by His wounds you have been healed'* (1Peter 2:24). Jesus died in our place on the cross and took away our guilt, to pay the full penalty for our sin. Access to God's presence is now open to all, symbolised by the Temple curtain being torn in two from top to bottom. The barrier between us and God was torn down in order *'to bring us to God'* (1 Peter 3:18).

The idea of substitution lies at the heart of understanding what Jesus did on the cross: *'For the essence of sin is man substituting himself for God, while the essence of salvation is God substituting Himself for man. Man asserts himself against God and puts himself where only God deserves to be; God sacrifices Himself for man and puts Himself where only man deserves to be.'* (John Stott).

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*Prayer is more than meditation. In meditation the source of strength is one's self. When one prays he goes to a source of strength greater than his own. - Anon*

# ***Holy Week and Easter at St James***

**Monday 30th March**

**'The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe'**

To be shown at 2.30pm. Cost of £2 per child

**Wednesday 1st April**

Holy Communion at 12.30pm

**Thursday 2nd April (Maundy Thursday)**

Holy Communion with hand & feet washing at 7.30pm

**Friday 3rd April (Good Friday)**

Act of Witness outside Cancer Research shop at 11am

Hour of the Cross in church at 2pm

Reflective Service in church at 7pm

**Sunday 5th April (EASTER DAY)**

**Holy Communion at 8am and 10am**

**Prayer & Praise at 6.15pm**

*Just because two people argue, it doesn't mean they  
don't love each other and just because they don't  
argue, it doesn't mean they do. - Anon*

**Crossword Answers**

**ACROSS:** 1, Cosmic; 4, Thomas; 8, In his; 9, Delilah; 10, Falwell; 11, Water; 12, Recovered; 17, Sidon; 19, Radiant; 21, Centaur; 22, Broil; 23, Eleven; 24, Prison.

**DOWN:** 1, Cliffs; 2, Scholar; 3, Issue; 5, Holy war; 6, Moist; 7, Sphere; 9, Deliverer; 13, andace; 14, Deacons; 15, Psyche; 16, Stolen; 18, Dance; 20, Debar.

# Never Far Away

We can only imagine how the two travellers to Emmaus felt, knowing that Jesus had died. Gone were their hopes for a bright future. They thought God had let them down. They had suffered a cruel blow and were bewildered and upset.

In their grief, the risen Jesus came alongside them and spoke with them at length, but somehow, they didn't recognise Him. Why was this, and why did Jesus intend to leave them at Emmaus without first revealing who He was?

The answers may be found by looking back at the encounters Jesus had with people. He never forced His true nature onto anyone. Every individual had to make up their own mind as to who He was, and to decide if the things He said were true.

Today, Jesus does not 'gate-crash' into our lives. In a number of ways, He gently and persuasively reveals Himself. So, the story of the walk to Emmaus should encourage us each time we feel His absence; at those times when we thought He would step in and immediately solve our problems! On *our* journey of life, we can have times of sadness, and it can seem as though God is far away.

But while we are thinking that Jesus has left us alone, He is actually with us. He knows where we are and what we are feeling. He can quietly draw alongside us. Surprisingly, it can sometimes be in situations of sadness and solitude that Jesus 'speaks' to us more clearly.

We don't have to go off in search of some 'religious experience' or to a special 'holy place'. He is present in the here and now. Jesus is the unseen companion on every journey and the unseen guest at every meal. In His way and in His time, our Lord reveals Himself to us in different situations. We may be aware of His presence in surprising circumstances and on unexpected occasions. How important it is that we stay alert.

There will be times when we will be like those two men on the Emmaus Road, searching for answers. We will earnestly desire clear and direct answers to our questions and the knowledge, understanding or revelation may be slow to come. But, with Jesus, there are many lessons to be learnt along *our* Emmaus Road that would not have been discovered any other way.

*Further reading: Luke 24:13-35*

# Could stained glass have a role in modern-day mission?

Millions of people visit cathedrals and historic churches in the UK and around the world every year. St Paul's Cathedral and Westminster Abbey are among London's most popular tourist attractions.

In many English cities, it's the cathedral that tops the TripAdvisor list for ratings and reviews. Local churches that remain open through the week often find visitors drawn to them – to look around, pray, reflect, or simply pause amid busy lives.

When the Bible Society's Quiet Revival report was published last year, the headlines rightly focussed on the numbers of young people being drawn to church.

But, within the report's pages was another, perhaps surprising, finding. It was that one of the top three places for people with no religion, or non-practising Christians to encounter the Bible was while sightseeing in a cathedral or church.

This underlines the importance of churches making available good, printed material and displays explaining the Christian gospel.

Yet it also may show the importance of a form of Christian communication that many modern-day evangelists may have ignored. The enduring appeal of stained glass.

Historian Janet Gough has recently produced 'Divine Light,' a survey of some of the best stained glass in England's cathedrals. She explained, "The stained-glass windows of England's cathedrals illuminate interior spaces, communicate religious, historical and political messages, and perhaps offer us a glimpse of heaven."

Earlier examples of stained glass often depicted biblical scenes, illustrating scripture for those unable to read the accounts themselves.

In today's society, dominated as it is by the visual image – from Instagram to YouTube, TikTok and Facebook – these colourful windows could help introduce contemporary people to Bible narratives and gospel truths.

There is much biblical truth to be found in stained glass windows for those who look with an inquiring mind. In many cases, some knowledge of scripture may help decipher the stories being told. In others, the viewer is invited into an encounter with the divine: to look in awe and wonder at the artistry, and to feel an emotional – perhaps spiritual – response to what they see.

In our supremely visual age, these works of art – both ancient and modern – can capture the attention and imagination of the millions who are drawn to our cathedrals and historic churches.

# Readings for April

## Sunday 5th April

10am	Hallelujah Jesus is alive!	Acts 10 v 34-43	John 20 v 1-18
6.15pm	We follow a Risen Saviour!	Matthew 28 v 1-10	1 Corinthians 15 v 19-26

## Sunday 12th April

10am	Jesus appears to us!	Acts 2 v 22-32	John 20 v 19-31
6.15pm	The stone had gone!	Daniel 6 v 1-23	Mark 15 v 46-ch 16 v 8

## Sunday 19th April

10am	The Emmaus discoveries	Psalms 143 v 1-11	Luke 24 v 13-33
6.15pm	You are God's temple	Psalms 48	1 Corinthians 3 v 10-17

## Sunday 26th April

10am	Life in abundance!	Acts 2 v 42-47	John 10 v 1-10
6.15pm	All reconciled through Christ!	Ezra 3 v 1-13	Ephesians 2 v 11 -22

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## Peaceful mind in Eastertide

*Easter is a time of rejoicing over what Christ has done for us. The following may be helpful.*

This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. - *1 John 4:9*

You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. <sup>8</sup>But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. - *Romans 5:6-8*

But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of His Spirit who lives in you. - *Romans 8:10,11*

# Resurrection Prayer

Loving Father,

Thank you for Jesus; for His life and death, but most of all for His resurrection, which makes all things new and possible.

Thank you for the reality that He defeated death by His work on the Cross and offers life forever with Him to all who believe in Him and receive Him into their lives as Lord and Saviour. Thank you for that incomprehensible but very real resurrection peace that we can know even in our darkest times by the presence of your Holy Spirit in us.

In joy and thankfulness, we praise and honour you this Eastertime.

In Jesus' name. Amen.

*By Daphne Kitching*



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*Lay Ministers:*

Pete Biggs

Liz Corbett 01543 370162

Graham Sutherland (Reader with Permission to Officiate) 01543 671020

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Roger Corbett 01543 370162

*Lay Chair:*

Liz Corbett 01543 370162

*Secretary:*

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*Treasurer:*

Alan Wiley 07823 884061

*Deanery Synod Representative:*

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Gareth Glass

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Pete Biggs, BEd(Hons), AMusCAM

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