

# THE MUSTARD SEED

The Parish magazine of the church of St James, Brownhills

*A Family Following Jesus*



The Lord made  
the storm be still,  
and the waves of the sea  
were hushed.  
Then they were glad  
because they had quiet,  
and he brought them  
to their desired haven.

Psalm 107. 29-30

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July 2024 50P

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# *Worship – A Spiritual Discipline?*



As we come towards the end of our Spiritual Tools/Disciplines series in the coming few weeks, we're looking at worship as a tool/discipline as well. "How great you are, Sovereign Lord! There is no one like you, and there is no God but you, as we have heard with our own ears." ~ 2 Samuel 7:22.

Richard Foster, whose book *'Celebration of Discipline'* we've been using to inspire our teaching writes: "To worship is to experience God's Reality, to touch Life. It is to know, to feel, to experience the resurrected Christ in the midst of the gathered community. It is a breaking down into the Shekinah (the glory or radiance of God dwelling in the midst of his people) of God, or better yet, being invaded by the Shekinah of God."

Think about Easter and hymns like "Jesus Christ the Lord has risen today! Hallelujah!" and if, as Richard Foster says, worship is the human response to what God has done for us, then our traditional Easter hymns have a unique way of inviting generations of Christians to respond. Hymns and songs invite us to respond collectively to Jesus' resurrection, causing us to embody what worship is really all about in a way not always, or even commonly, known in today's church.

To understand worship as a spiritual discipline is to first and foremost to understand that music is just one expression of worship. All too often, we associate the songs we sing on Sunday with worship and all too rarely do we stop and think about what worship truly is all about. It is also important to remember that we, as humans, can and do worship many things including other gods. As a result, it is important for us, as we talk about worship as a spiritual discipline, to always remember that the object of our worship, our God, matters.

True Christian worship is our response to the love we experience from the heart of God the Father. It is experienced with our entire being: mind, body, and soul. While one person may experience true worship in the context of

a highly liturgical, solemn prayer service, another will experience true worship in the midst of a crowd, singing along to the latest single released by a contemporary worship band. One of the greatest gifts we are given as disciples is that we are free to worship Jesus using whatever form of worship that most deepens the connection of our spirit to the Spirit of God.

When we limit our understanding of worship to the songs or hymns that we sing at church or even to a worship service at church, we miss the riches true worship, experiencing worship as a spiritual discipline, has to offer. A key feature of worship in the Bible is that people gathered expecting God to be in their midst. They knew that when they entered the Tabernacle in general, and specifically when they entered the Holy of Holies at the very centre, they were entering into the very presence of God.

A particularly powerful moment, which often gets lost in the midst of so much happening during Holy Week, is the moment on Good Friday when Jesus breathes his last and the curtain in the temple is torn in two. This curtain wasn't some flimsy piece of fabric that would blow easily in the wind. Rather, it was essentially a woven wall which took multiple grown men to move.

Additionally, this curtain is what physically separated the people from the full presence of God. For it to be torn apart meant that God's physical presence among His people was no longer contained, it meant that everyone now dwelled in the very presence of God, everyone could now enter the Holy of Holies.

The believers of the early church lived in this new, wondrous reality. They witnessed the power of God, the power of the Holy Spirit, the power of gathering together to worship the risen Christ in a very real and tangible way which is hard for us to fully understand today so many generations later.

So how can we deepen not only our understanding but also our experience of worship? We're invited by Jesus to live a lifestyle of worship. Listen for God's voice throughout each day, not just when you are at church or spending intentional time reading your Bible. The more you listen for God's voice, the more you will hear it. When you are going to church, seek to get there early so that your heart and mind can have time to leave behind the worries and stresses weighing it down and focus on the majesty, glory, and tenderness of God as revealed in Jesus. Look around you and ask God to reveal who needs someone to pray for them. You don't need to go up and have a conversation with them, unless God prompts you to - just start praying for them on the inside of you and then approach them after

the service, when there's more time available.

I want to end by reminding us all that yes, music is a form of worship. In fact, it is often a very powerful and effective form of worship. We cannot ignore this reality as we talk about the fullness of true worship and we wouldn't want to. But we also cannot hold it up as the only way in which to truly worship God. One of the ways in which to learn more about worship is to worship in many different ways. It seems obvious, yes, and yet how often do we limit our thinking about worship to what we experience on Sunday morning?

Here are some questions that we can all be thinking about as we consider worship as a spiritual tool/discipline to bring us closer to God: -

- † What is one way in which you could make worship part of your daily life?
- † In both the Old and New Testaments, we see God's people gathering for worship expecting God to be there in their midst. How often do you expect God to be in the presence of God? Why?
- † Can you think of a time where you, in the midst of worship, knew you were in the presence of God? If so, what made that worship experience different than others?

With love and prayers for us all as we seek to be increasingly eager to learn more of the Lord and to grow as His disciples each week of our lives,

Rev'd Gayle

## ***New Feature***

How did you get on last month?

Was it a medium level puzzle?

Did you enjoy solving it? Let me know.

This one is also classed as medium and the completed solution appears on page 17.

Enjoy. (But no cheating!)

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

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## ***Christians Against Poverty calls for more funding for free debt advice***

The free UK debt advice charity, Christians Against Poverty (CAP), has called for more funding for free debt advice, as demand is expected to rise further.

CAP's recently published annual report highlights how two years of high living costs have been crumbling the financial security of millions of households, and leading them into debt.

It reports that almost three in five of its new clients in debt had income below the poverty line; that 60% of survey respondents had to borrow money to pay household bills; that one in seven skipped meals and two in ten went without heating their home on a daily basis; and that almost three in five borrowed money to pay for food, clothing & other living costs.

CAP's Chief Executive Officer, Stewart McCulloch, says: "Imagine yourself struggling to find enough cash to buy a carton of milk. Shivering in an icy cold house. Your lights are off, curtains closed because you fear people knocking on your door demanding money you don't have. You're stuck in an endless cycle of borrowing to pay off another debt.

"This is what living in poverty looks like and this is the reality for many people living in your local community.

"Many charities and hundreds of local churches, supported by thousands of kind individuals, are going above and beyond to clear the wreckage of debt and poverty.

"Free debt advice is a vital service that millions of people need right now. At Christians Against Poverty, we helped 18% more people go debt free in 2023. We are aiming to scale up and double the amount of clients we help each month, but we can only achieve that with more donations and funding.

"We need you to join us in this fight against UK poverty so that millions can look forward to a full and fulfilled life, rather than just scraping by." If you would like to donate, please go to: [capuk.org/urgent](https://capuk.org/urgent)

***CAP is one of our Charity Partners here at St James.***

# *125 years of Gideons and Bibles*

It was 125 years ago, on 1st July 1899, that Gideons International was founded. The evangelical Christian association places free Bibles in hotel rooms, hospitals, schools, military bases and prisons around the world.

It started when two traveling salesmen from Wisconsin in the northern USA – John Nicholson of Janesville and Samuel Hill of Beloit – met in a room at the Central House Hotel in Boscobel, Wisconsin, to talk about forming an association to strengthen the faith of people they came into contact with by distributing free Bibles “through designated traffic lanes of life”.

Most people encounter Gideon Bibles through their placement in hotel rooms, and research by Gideons International shows that about 25 per cent of travellers read a Bible when there is one in their room. The Gideons are exclusively Protestant evangelical businessmen with a belief in the Bible as the inspired Word of God and Jesus Christ as the Son of God.

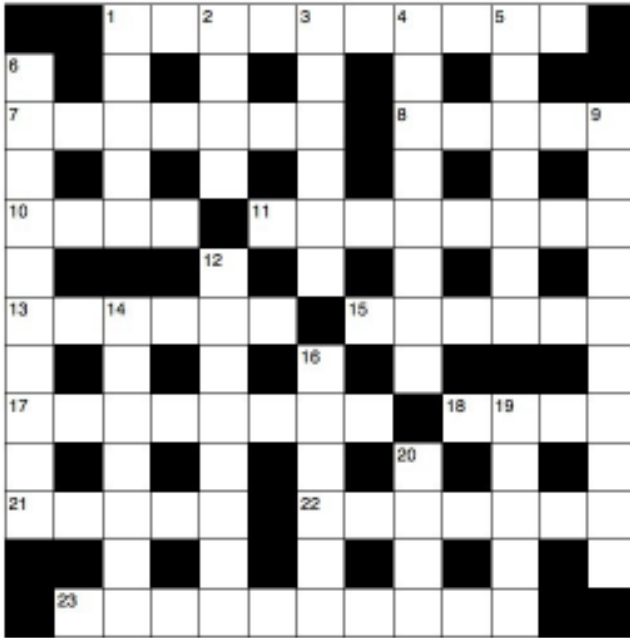
In 2018 the UK section of Gideons separated from Gideons International over the issue of women’s full membership, which is not allowed by the international organisation, but which received nearly 80 per cent support in a UK members’ vote. After losing a dispute about the use of the name GideonsUK, they are now known as Good News for Everyone! They have links with Gideons in Canada and Sweden who have made similar decisions.

A very small number of men in the UK still belong to Gideons International. They are known as The Gideons International in the UK, and still remain a men’s ministry.

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*I believe that there is no one lovelier, deeper, more sympathetic and more perfect than Jesus – not only is there no one else like Him, but there could never be anyone like Him. - Feodor Dostoevsky*





## Across

- 1 Relating to the Jewish day of rest (10)
- 7 Point of view (Matthew 22:17) (7)
- 8 20th-century Brethren philanthropist whose construction company became one of the UK's biggest, Sir John – (5)
- 10 Girl's name (4)
- 11 Peter was accused of being one in the courtyard of the high priest's house (Luke 22:59) (8)
- 13 The fifth of the 'seven churches' (Revelation 3:16) (6)
- 15 'Now the famine was – in Samaria' (1 Kings 18:2) (6)
- 17 Banned by the seventh Commandment (Exodus 20:14) (8)
- 18 Insect most closely associated with itching (1 Samuel 24:14) (4)
- 21 Bantu tribe which gives its name to tiny landlocked country in southern Africa (5)
- 22 Familiar material in churches that use an overhead projector (7)
- 23 Last book of the Bible (10)

## Down

- 1 The young David's favourite weapon (1 Samuel 17:40) (5)
- 2 'Your vats will – over with new wine' (Proverbs 3:10) (4)
- 3 Once yearly (Exodus 30:10) (6)
- 4 Milled it (anag.) (3-5)
- 5 Region north of Damascus of which Lysanias was tetrarch (Luke 3:1) (7)
- 6 Comes between Philippians and 1 Thessalonians (10)
- 9 Lake where the first disciples were called (Luke 5:1) (10)
- 12 Abusive outburst (8)
- 14 Are loud (anag.) (7)
- 16 Printing errors (6)
- 19 'Take my yoke upon you and from me' (Matthew 11:29) (5)
- 20 Jacob's third son (Genesis 29:34) (4)



# *Prayer for July 2024*

Father,

Thank you for summertime, when thoughts turn to holidays and relaxation.

July is a month of endings for many; the ending of the school or college year and for some a moving on to the next stage of education or work. Often, there is uncertainty or trepidation about the future.

Whatever stage of life we are at, whatever season of the year it is, we can feel uncertain and concerned in a world which seems increasingly secular and confusing.

Remind us Lord, of Your promise to be with us always, every step of every way, when we put our trust in You, through Jesus.

Thank you that in the ups and downs of life, You never change. You are the rock on which we stand securely, eternally. Help us to move forward confidently, trusting in that truth.

Thank you, Lord.

In Jesus' name. Amen.



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Historically, the Church of England has had its share of eccentric clergy. Even nowadays, hiding away in remote parishes, there are still some colourful clergy about. Clergy such as the elderly, Anglo-Catholic Uncle Eustace, who is incumbent in the small parish of St James-the-Least-of All, somewhere in Very Rural England. Eustace despairs of his nephew, Darren, who has become an Evangelical curate in a busy urban parish... and so he writes letters, to try and properly 'educate' Darren in parish life.

# On the perils of 'standing in' for another vicar

The Rectory  
St. James the Least

*My dear Nephew Darren*

*You should not complain about doing duty in other churches when their clergy are on holiday. It is only in other churches that you will be appreciated. Beatification only comes from your own church on the day you leave which is a way of firing a shot across the bows of your successor. I remember being greeted by a churchwarden on my first day here at St James the Least of All with the encouraging words: 'I've seen six Rectors of this parish; each one was worse than the last.' As the years have gone by, I am sure I will have entirely fulfilled his expectations.*

*No; when you visit another church, you will be told all the many defects of their own vicar, and whatever you do will be praised. Store up these memories for the day you return to your own patch when you will then be told how outstanding your own temporary replacement has been and how congregations thrived in your absence.*

*Naturally, this gives you the right to make similar remarks about your own congregation in the churches you visit. Unfavourable comparisons with the bell ringers, vergers and congregational singing in your home patch to the*

*superb standards in the church you're temporarily serving will be much appreciated. Just make sure that the church you are staffing is sufficiently far from your own that word will not get back to your home team.*

*It is a mistake I made only once. After filling in for a colleague, I happened to complement the choir on the singing of the anthem. Unknown to me, a tenor was the second cousin of my organist, who received a rather embellished story that I had compared my own choir back home unfavourably with theirs. On my return the following Sunday, all the hymns were played fortissimo and at double speed and the choir in rotation dropped hymn books throughout my sermon.*

*Inevitably, when you staff another church, you will be told: 'It's the normal Service.' It will be nothing of the sort. Hymns will appear in unexpected places, Sunday schools will enter and leave (and enter again) apparently at random, objects will be brought to you to be read from, placed on the altar or blessed - just as you were about to try and find the pulpit. In any case, wherever you are standing, you will find you should have been standing somewhere else. But not to worry - most mistakes will be forgiven provided your sermon is short.*

*So - enjoy your visits to other churches. And above all, make sure that your temporary replacement is so spectacularly incompetent that your own people will welcome you back with open arms on your return.*

*Your loving uncle,*

*Eustace*

***Always remember . . .***

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

# *Much more than just a cuppa*

Places of Welcome are a network of hospitality, safe spaces in the local community where people can connect, belong and participate. Registration to the national network is free, but the coffee morning or drop-in should fulfil five criteria to join. These are:

## **Place:**

An accessible and hospitable building, open at the same time every week.

## **People:**

Open to everyone regardless of their circumstances or situation, and usually staffed by volunteers.

## **Provision:**

Offering free refreshments (at least a drink and a biscuit) and basic local information.

## **Presence:**

A place where people actively listen to one another.

## **Participation:**

Recognises that every person coming to a Place of Welcome will bring talents, experiences and skills that they might be willing to share locally.

Places of Welcome are a place where everyone can go for a friendly conversation and free refreshments, if and when they need it, and although they all meet the five expectations they can all be very different reflecting the communities they are in and their experiences and interests.

In their simplest form, they provide conversation and companionship over a cuppa, but did you know that some of our Places of Welcome provide other activities and support services? Here is just a flavour of what our Places of Welcome communities offer: sewing, gardening, citizens advice, councillor surgeries, knitting, yoga, exercise, arts and craft, colouring, litter picking, debt advice, counselling, foodbanks,

*Continued on next page*



Carrie Blount

clothing banks, haircuts, quizzes, singing and games.

But whether it's chatting over a cuppa and biscuit, taking part in one of the many activities or just finding a bit of support – they are always welcoming and inclusive. Please do seek out your local Place of Welcome at [www.placesofwelcome.org.uk](http://www.placesofwelcome.org.uk) or contact Carrie Blount by email at [strengtheningcommunities@lichfield.anglican.org](mailto:strengtheningcommunities@lichfield.anglican.org)

Places of Welcome within Lichfield Diocese are supported by Carrie and her colleague, Lesley Bovington. To find your nearest Place of Welcome and read stories from visitors and volunteers, visit <https://www.lichfield.anglican.org/places-of-welcome>

***This is part of a mailing sent out by Lichfield Diocese about the value of Places of Welcome to the community and the part we can play. If you are interested in joining the team at St James, please have a word with either Joy, Den or Brenda.***

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## ***St James' Day – 25th July***

For many of us on the journey of faith the experience of James and John - and 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.

# ***Readings for July***

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

**7th July 2024** – Morning Service -  
Genesis 22 v 1–19 & 1 Peter 3 v 1–9

**7th July 2024** – Evening Service -  
Psalm 85 v 8–end & Mark 6 v 1–29

**14th July 2024** – Morning Service -  
Isaiah 59 v 1–9 & Luke 15 v 11–24

**14th July 2024** – Evening Service -  
Psalm 24 & Romans 15 v 14–29

**21st July 2024** – Morning Service -  
Revelation 5 v 6–14 & John 4 v 19–24

**21st July 2024** – Evening Service -  
Psalm 89 v 20–37 & Hebrews 2 v 5–end

**28th July 2024** – Morning Service -  
Hebrews 11 & John 14 v 1–14

**28th July 2024** – Evening Service -  
Psalm 14 & Hebrew 8

*The shortest distance between a problem and its solution is  
the distance between your knees and the floor. - Anon*

**CROSSWORD ANSWERS**  
ACROSS: 1, Sabbatical, 7, Opinion, 8, Laing, 10, Olga, 11, Galilean, 13, Sardis, 15, Severe, 17, Adultery, 18, Flea, 21, Swazi, 22, Acetate, 23, Revelation.  
DOWN: 1, Sling, 2, Brim, 3, Annual, 4, Ill-timed, 5, Abilene, 6, Colossians, 9, Gennesaret, 12, Diatribe, 14, Roulade, 16, Errata, 19, Learn, 20, Levi.

## ***1984 - the burning of York Minster***

Forty years ago, on 9th July 1984, York Minster was struck by lightning, which set fire to the roof and destroyed the south transept.

It was the most recent of five fires that have occurred there over the years: the causes have ranged from workmen burning coals (1753) through arson using torn-up hymnbooks (1829) to an unattended candle (1840) and a tarpaulin catching fire (1971). Although night lightning was the official explanation in 1984, some suggested that God might have been reacting to the very recent appointment as Bishop of Durham of the Rt Revd David Jenkins, a famously controversial cleric whose comments had seemed to cast doubt on the virgin birth and the Resurrection. He had been consecrated at York Minster three days earlier.

The Archbishop of York, Dr John Habgood, described that idea as "ridiculous", though some – including a few members of the fire service – felt that arson by objectors could not be ruled out. As many as 114 firefighters from over North Yorkshire were involved in tackling the blaze. Insurance cover on the Minster had just been increased by its treasury department: the damage to the south transept, with its wooden vaulted roof, amounted to £2.25 million.

York Minster is a huge landmark and tourist attraction in the city: many consider it to be one of Europe's most impressive Gothic buildings. The glass in its famous 16th century Rose Window, which had recently been renovated, cracked into 40,000 pieces, but the new lead edges held it all together.

Queen Elizabeth attended the rededication ceremony in October 1988. This year a new exhibition called *Out of the Ashes* tells the story of the blaze and marks its anniversary.

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*If we fail to feed the needy, we do not have God's love, no matter what we say. Regardless of what we do or say on a Sunday, affluent people who neglect the poor are not people of God. -Ronald Sider*





## *Here Be Dragons!*

Churchyards and cemeteries may seem strange places to look for animals which live in streams and ponds but actually they can be very good. Frogs, toads and newts all spend much of their lives out of the water and whilst dragonflies are aquatic during their larval stage it is the adult, flying insect that we see throughout the spring and summer. Whilst dragonflies will be returning to water to lay eggs, they can be seen cruising quite far away.

Dragonfly larvae may live for several years within water but for only a few weeks as a flying adult. It's not clear why they are called dragonflies, but other old names include Devil's Riding Horse and Devil's Darning Needle! They are an ancient type of insect with giant dragonflies found in the fossil record, dating from the Carboniferous era. Some fossilized dragonfly species would have had a wingspan of about 70cm.



Adult dragonflies eat smaller insects such as midges and mosquitoes. They can fly fast – reaching 25 to 30 mph with a loud buzzing sound and have excellent eyesight, using their compound eyes to find and catch prey as well as spot potential mates. You may see them basking on a churchyard wall or monument in order to warm up, wait for good weather or finish digesting. Flying takes a lot of energy so they spend much of their time sitting still. If you are both patient and lucky, you may also see predators of dragonflies or the smaller damselflies such as flycatchers and frogs.

One reason that burial grounds are good for dragonflies is that they can be havens for their food – small flying insects. Those managing churchyards, chapel yards and cemeteries rarely if ever use pesticides and there are often areas where these insects can breed, such as long tussocky grass, deadwood and woodland soils with old leaves, bark and hummus.

# *Do you need a new painkiller?*

Do you ever take pain killers? If so, do you take one for your shoulder, and another one for your knee? Of course not – once the painkiller enters your bloodstream, it goes everywhere, soothing and damping down the pain, and hitting all the right spots.

God works a bit like that on the pain in our lives. He has a prescription for ALL the problem areas of our lives. Most of us carry emotional scars, or a burden, or some heartache, around with us. It may be the trauma of loss, it may be anxiety for our family. It may be uncertainty over our jobs, and our futures.

Whatever it is, God offers us a prescription to help the pain. The psalmist writes: *“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.”* (Psalm 46:1) Jesus added: *“Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”* (Matthew 11:28)

This kind of help is real and immediate and there for the asking. We don't have to put up with our disease and struggle alone. God, our heavenly Father, is only a prayer away. Not just twice a day, after meals, but whenever we need Him.

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*You can learn more about human nature by reading the Bible than by living in New York. -William Lyon Phelps*

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## *Sudoku Solution*

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

## *Places of Welcome*

Place of Welcome is an open invitation to come and join us for a cup of tea or coffee and a friendly chat every Tuesday morning. You are equally welcome if you just want to spend a few moments of quiet in church alone.

We also have our Knit & Natter group at the same time – 10-12 noon every Tuesday.

## *Life Groups*

There are now six Life Groups which are meeting on a regular basis. It would be good to think we could increase the number meeting, so if you would like to be involved, please speak to Revd Gayle in the first instance.

## *Telephone Prayer*

If you would like any prayer ministry via the telephone, please contact Gayle on 07545 657 636, or Liz Corbett on 01543 370162.

## *Magazine Articles*

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

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# THE PARISH OF BROWNHILLS WITH OGLEY HAY

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

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## ***Community & Children's Worker:***

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