

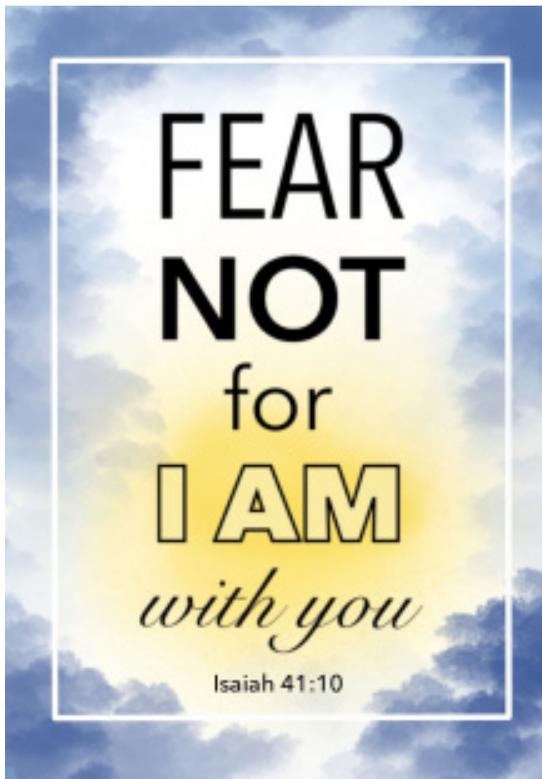
ST JAMES' CHURCH
Brownhills



Following Jesus

THE MUSTARD SEED

www.stjameschurchbrownhills.co.uk



50P

May 2022

*Our mission is to worship God
and to serve the community by sharing the love of Jesus*

Place 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. 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.

Grace, Truth & Life Groups

There are now five GTL Groups which are now 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.

Do more, learn more and be more.

Girls & boys aged 6 to 18.

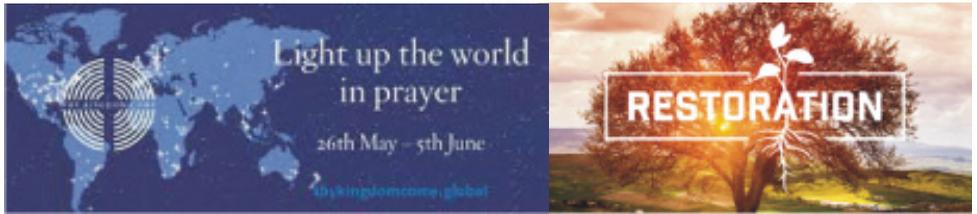
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For info: www.brownhills-scouts.org.uk

Call: Sue 01543 276953 or Mary 01543 453293



Resurrection Power & Restoration



As we begin May, we're still in the Easter season. Ascension Day will be 26th May, when we remember that Jesus ascended to reign eternally with God the Father on the 40th day after His Resurrection.

These days of Easter can be such wondrous days for us as followers of Jesus, since they are a chance to really take it in that YES: Jesus did die and He did rise again. As all kinds of experts will tell you, it is far harder to believe that Jesus *didn't* rise than it is to believe that He did. Choosing to consciously believe in this truth though is one thing. It's another to live our lives in the light of this truth that Jesus is the Lamb who overcame sin, evil and the grave forever.

We're living in a time called the 'now-and-the-not-yet' – that's to say that Jesus **CAME** and **OVERCAME** at the cross and by bursting out of that tomb. **BUT** there is still suffering and pain, brokenness and sadness, as we long after that time when the Kingdom will have come completely.

Nonetheless, as people who trust in Jesus today, we can know the reality of the power of the resurrection NOW – before our bodies are re-created in the new heaven and earth. Jesus made it clear, and we can read about it at the end of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John in the New Testament, that we carry His authority. We carry His authority, as we rely on Him and never on ourselves, to see His Kingdom break through into the here and now.

In Mark 16 we read these words: 'He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be

condemned. And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name **they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; ... they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well.**" Those verses are about all Christians – all followers of Jesus who have been in the past, who are now and who will be around in the future!

To give us the chance to find out from God more about ourselves and what He would like to tell us about how we can join in with His mission, as well as to receive any healing, encouragement or empowering, as a church we're taking part in a thing called **'Thy Kingdom Come'**. This is a global prayer movement that invites Christians around the world to pray for more people to come to know Jesus. It started in 2016, as an invitation from the Archbishops of Canterbury and York to the Church of England, and since then it's grown into an international call to prayer.

'Thy Kingdom Come' is always the 10 days between Ascension Day and Pentecost Sunday. As we were quite restricted last year, we took part through using the daily prayer booklets and journals produced for the days. This year, we'll still take Covid into account as we make more of this opportunity. Together with our staff team and anyone else among our church family who wants to take part, we'll be **designing and putting together an interactive prayer room space**, using the chancel area and side prayer room behind the main altar in church.

As we look forward to this time, that can be infinitely meaningful to us, I pray that we'll each realise that it's no mistake that we're here in Brownhills, in the families, schools, colleges, work-places or social groups that we are. The theme that God's laid on my heart for this year and our prayer room is that of **RESTORATION**. You don't need me to explain the many ways in which restoration is needed for us, our local community and the world right now. As we approach this special time, let's start thinking and praying about God's heart to restore, and how He alone brings about restoration.

With love, prayer and Easter blessings as we look forward to Ascension & Pentecost,

Rev'd Gayle



The Ascension

This month at Ascension Day, we remember Jesus ascending to 'God's right hand' (1 Peter 3:22). It's a somewhat neglected Christian festival, taking place on a Thursday, 40 days after Easter. However, this phrase is used in three different contexts in the New Testament.

Sitting at God's right hand

Jesus occupies a position of power and authority at the centre of the universe, 'exalted to the right hand of God' (Acts 2:33). This position was secured by His death and resurrection, enabling us to experience the life of heaven, including eternal life, forgiveness, healing and the power to transform lives and communities. Is this our expectation and experience?

Standing at God's right hand

Our experience of heaven is only partial because of the presence of suffering and disappointment in our lives. Stephen, the first Christian martyr, saw Jesus 'standing at the right hand of God' (Acts 7:56), when being stoned to death. Do we see that Jesus is on the throne and has a purpose for our lives, even when we are going through setbacks and difficulties? As a result of Stephen's death, the church grew and the apostle Paul was impacted. Where do we see the fruit of the suffering in our lives?

Praying at God's right hand

Finally, we are told that Jesus is 'interceding for us' at God's right hand (Romans 8:34 & Hebrews 7:25). Jesus is on our side at the heart of the universe and fully knows our needs when praying for us. He is for us, even when we feel defeated by the wrong things in our lives. How does this help us now?

So where has Jesus gone? Because He is in heaven, the Ascension opens up the possibility that we can experience the life of heaven, both now and in eternity.

It is not how much we have, but how much we enjoy, that makes happiness.- C H Spurgeon

War in Ukraine:

John Rutter pens new work after Ukraine invasion

John Rutter, the composer, has written a new choral work in response to the invasion of Ukraine.

Funds raised from 'A Prayer for Ukraine', are going to the Disasters Emergency Committee's Ukraine appeal.

Rutter explained: "How can a composer respond to a global tragedy? I suppose by writing music: like everybody I have been shocked and dismayed by the events of recent days.

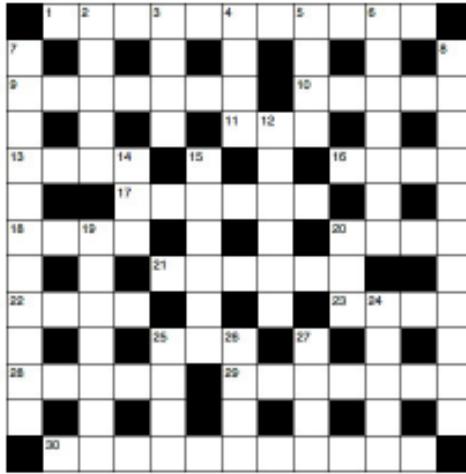
"The first thing I wanted to do was write music that would respond in my own way. I went to a late-night service in my old college chapel where they sang a setting of a lovely Ukrainian prayer, so having encountered the Ukrainian text, on Thursday I wrote my own music. I hope the meaning of the text will resonate in people's hearts."

The words of the piece, which are originally in Ukrainian, translate into English as: "Good Lord protect the Ukraine. Give her strength, courage, faith, and hope. Amen."

He added: "I hope it speaks in terms which reach out to the Ukrainian people in their hour of need."

Listen to the new work at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2bx4QFxfW2s>

You can become a Christian in a moment, but not a mature Christian. Christ can enter, cleanse, and forgive you in a matter of seconds, but it will take much longer for your character to be transformed and moulded to His will. It takes only a few minutes for a bridegroom and bride to be married, but in the rough-and-tumble of their home it may take many years for two strong wills to be dovetailed into one. So, when we receive Christ, a moment of commitment will lead to a lifetime of adjustment. - John Stott



Across

- 1 Overpowered (Deuteronomy 11:4) (11)
- 9 'The – are mantled with corn' (Psalm 65:13) (7)
- 10 'Each man – a sword to his side' (Exodus 32:27)(5)
- 11 On the death of Jesus the curtain in the temple was torn from – to bottom (Matthew 27:51) (3)
- 13 Stagger(Isaiah 28:7)(4)
- 16 'Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought – – and doesn't do it, sins' (James 4:17) (2,2)
- 17 Stir up or provoke (Acts13:50) (6)
- 18 Burden (Luke11:46) (4)
- 20 'As far as the east is from the –, so far has he removed our transgressions from us' (Psalm 103:12) (4)
- 21 Sign (Luke23:38) (6)
- 22 After that, Jesus poured water into a basin and began – to his disciples' feet' (John 13:5) (4)
- 23 The nature of the seven ears of corn which swallowed up the good ears in Pharaoh's dream (Genesis 41:23) (4)
- 25 Has (anag.) (3)
- 28 'This is the account of Shem,Ham and Japheth, – sons' (Genesis 10:1) (5)
- 29 'I will...make them drunk, so that they...sleep for – and – awake' (Jeremiah 51:39) (4,3)
- 30 Paul said of him, 'he often refreshes me and is not ashamed of my chains' (2 Timothy 1:16) (11)

Down

- 2 Worth (Matthew 13:46) (5)
- 3 'A bruised – he will not break' (Matthew 12:20) (4)
- 4 'Suddenly a great company of the heavenly – appeared with the angel' (Luke 2:13) (4)
- 5 Slip (anag.) (4)
- 6 'Take an awl and push it through his – – into the door, and he will become your servant for life' (Deuteronomy 15:17) (3,4)
- 7 Bountiful (2 Corinthians 8:2) (11)
- 8 'Therefore, as we have –, let us do good to all people' (Galatians 6:10) (11)
- 12 Acquire (2Timothy 2:10) (6)
- 14 Container cover (Numbers19:15) (3)
- 15 'He...became obedient to death,even death on – –!' (Philippians 2:8) (1,5)
- 19 Refrain (1Peter2:11) (7)
- 20 'She began to – his feet with her tears' (Luke7:38) (3)
- 24 One who worships Brahma,Vishnu or Shiva (5)
- 25 'Give to everyone who – you' (Luke 6:30) (4)
- 26 'I lift up my eyes to the hills; where does my – come from?' (Psalm 121:1) (4)
- 27 One of those whom the Lord said would be taken from Jerusalem and Judah as judgment on them (Isaiah 3:2) (4)

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 the church picnic

The Rectory
St. James the Least

My dear Nephew Darren

A Spring parish picnic is always a good idea – although you must bear some details in mind. First, whatever date you choose will turn out be the wettest of the year. English picnics are invariably eaten under umbrellas while wearing Wellingtons and the sort of determinedly cheerful look that defies anyone to admit they would rather be home in front of the fire.

Second, no matter how early in the year, wasps will emerge from hibernation in huge numbers, and terrorise Mrs Hornby with the picnic baskets. And thirdly, someone will bring along their (hungry) dog. Last time Colonel Psmith's spaniel outdid herself: she leapt up, head butted a piece of Madeira cake out of Mrs Horngirdle's hand – and ate the lot – before even a crumb could touch the ground. A good piece of field work, that.

Half-way through the afternoon, some over-excited member of the party will decide to arrange a game of rounders. (Mr Poppinjay

tried this one year, as in his youth he had been athletic. Fortunately, the ambulance got there quickly, and the ankle healed well.) Then the mothers who join in will completely ignore the ball sailing past them, while they discuss some burning topic of Mother's Union gossip.

In the meantime, the young choir members, who were the reason for arranging the game in the first place, will have drifted off to the lake to throw stones at the ducks while no one is looking.

For our annual picnic, I use my own car, making sure it is so full of clerical robes and church magazines that no one else can fit in. Throughout the day, I keep returning to it to make sure no one has broken in to steal the Communion wine and taking the opportunity to catch up on the cricket scores. By the middle of the afternoon, I usually remember that some urgent duty, such as blessing a traction engine, demands my departure.

The rest of the party, by now soaked, cold and knowing the coach to take them home is still several hours off, only wish they had such demanding work to tear them away.

Your loving uncle,

Eustace

Always remember . . .

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

Readings for May

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

1st May 2022 – Morning Service -
John 20 v 24–31

1st May 2022 – Evening Service -
Psalm 30 & 1 John 21 v 1–19

8th May 2022 – Morning Service -
Acts 2 v 37–end & Acts 3

8th May 2022 – Evening Service -
Psalm 23 & Acts 9 v 36–end

15th May 2022 – Morning Service -
Acts 4 & Acts 6

15th May 2022 – Evening Service -
Psalm 148 & Acts 11 v 1–18

22nd May 2022 – Morning Service -
Acts 11 & Acts 13

22nd May 2022 – Evening Service -
Psalm 67 & Acts 16 v 9–15

29th May 2022 – Morning Service -
Acts 1 v 1–11

29th May 2022 – Evening Service -
Psalm 97 & Acts 16 v 16–34

Christ's Legacy

There was no mourning when Christ's resurrection appearances came to an end. After the final occasion we are told the disciples 'worshipped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy'.

They had already experienced the onset of grief caused by His death, intensified because of the dreadful manner of it and the consequent crushing of their hopes. Then, with feelings combining bewilderment with elation, they were confronted by Christ alive and had to rethink everything they had understood until then about the certainty of death.

They became convinced that the Crucifixion and Resurrection signposted a new beginning, not an ending, and that it gave fresh purpose to humanity, past, present and future.

Why was Christ's final departure met by joy rather than gloom? Here are some reasons, which we might think of as His legacies.

First, He had said that He was going to prepare a place for His followers. It's worth pondering John Chapter 14, to see why Jesus' disciples were so confident after His Ascension.

Second, He taught them His departure was, actually, for their *benefit*. Only in this way would the 'Advocate' come. 'Advocate' is one translation of a word meaning 'called alongside' and is a description of the Holy Spirit's work in and for humanity, then and now.

Third, Christ continues to campaign for the human cause, though now out of sight. The writer of the letter to the Hebrews puts it bluntly: "He is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them." Paul writes something similar in his letter to the Romans. It means that Jesus prays for us nonstop, so when we pray it's like treading on a moving walkway taking us in the right direction.

Fourth, He came to show us what the unseen God is like. When one of His trainees asked, "Lord, show us the Father", the reply was, "Have I been with you all this time and you still do not know Me? Whoever has seen Me has seen the Father". So, the more we contemplate Jesus, the closer we get to the unseen God.

Coventry Cathedral – 60 years on

Sixty years ago, on 25th May 1962, the new Coventry Cathedral was consecrated. The previous one had been destroyed by German bombing during World War Two. The Queen had laid the foundation stone in 1956, and she was present for the consecration.

On the night of 14th November 1940, the old Cathedral – together with much of the centre of Coventry – was devastated by incendiary bombs, but the decision to rebuild it was taken the next morning. The Provost, Richard Howard, wanted to do so as a sign of faith, trust and hope, rather than as an act of defiance.

This rejection of bitterness and hatred led to the Cathedral's Ministry of Peace and Reconciliation, which continues to give spiritual and practical support in areas of conflict. It is symbolised now by the Cross of Nails, made from three nails found in the roof truss of the old cathedral and set in the centre of the altar cross.

The place now called Coventry Cathedral, on the site of a Benedictine monastery, is in fact two buildings – a joining of the old and the new. The older building, still hallowed ground, was originally a parish church, and then given cathedral status in 1918. Its 295ft (90m) spire, containing 181 stone steps, is the third highest in England, behind Salisbury and Norwich.

The 'new' Cathedral was an inspiration to many celebrated artists, most of them yet to become famous. Among those commissioned by the architect, Sir Basil Spence, were Graham Sutherland (iconic Christ in Glory tapestry), John Piper (baptistry window), Ralph Beyer, John Hutton, Elisabeth Frink and Jacob Epstein, who created the striking sculpture of St Michael defeating Lucifer.

The famous Charred Cross was created when the cathedral stonemason, Jock Forbes, saw two wooden beams lying in the shape of a cross after the bombing and tied them together.

Anxiety is an attempt to carry the burden of the future oneself; prayer is leaving it safely in the hands of God. - Anon

Community Fun Day

We are holding a Community Fun Day this year on Saturday 4th June, which ties in nicely with the Queen's Jubilee Celebrations.

There will be the usual stalls, cakes and barbecue. and it will all start at 10.30am.

There will also be a chance to see our interactive prayer wall in church (see Gayle's article), since we are still in the period for 'Thy Kingdom Come'.

Please encourage all your friends and family to come and join in the fun.

The following day is Pentecost Sunday and in the evening there will be a Confirmation Service at 6.30pm at which Bishop Jan, an assistant Bishop at Lichfield Cathedral, will lay hands on those being confirmed.

Once again this will be a great family occasion both for the candidates and for our own church family, as this is the first Confirmation Service we have held at St James for a good many years.

There, but for the grace of God, go I

This saying is attributed to John Bradford (1510-1555), who was one of the Protestant Reformers. When he saw criminals on their way to execution, Bradford would utter, "But for the grace of God, there goes John Bradford." It was his way of acknowledging that he depended every day on the mercy of God, despite his sins, which he considered were on a par with those of rogues.

Sadly, Bradford's freedom was to last only a short time, for he was convicted as a heretic, incarcerated, and finally burned at the stake, during the reign of Queen Mary. Renowned for his prayer life and preaching, Bradford had continued to proclaim the Gospel in prison. One of his biographers wrote, "He lived a long life in a short space of time."

Prayers & Poems

Ascension Day

'When Christ went up to Heaven the Apostles stayed'
Gazing at Heaven with souls and wills on fire,
Their hearts on flight along the track He made,
Winged by desire.

"Earth is one desert waste of banishment,
Life is one long-drawn anguish of decay.
Where Thou wert wont to go we also went:
Why not today?"

Nevertheless a cloud cut off their gaze:
They tarry to build up Jerusalem,
Watching for Him, while thro' the appointed days
He watches them.

They do His Will, and doing it rejoice,
Patiently glad to spend and to be spent:
Still He speaks to them, still they hear His Voice
And are content.

From a poem by Christina Rossetti

Prayer for May

Dear Father in Heaven,

As we thank you for May, this most beautiful of months, we are aware that not everything in your world is beautiful; not every attitude or action is beautiful, or kind, or just.

There is so much pain and suffering in the world that we can sometimes feel overwhelmed. Help us, Lord to remember that Jesus came to bring all this brokenness together, to bring reconciliation and wholeness. Thank you that by His life, death and resurrection Jesus overcame death for ever. Thank you that He ascended into heaven so that the Holy Spirit could come to live in believers, to give strength and power and resilience, so that Your work goes on.

Thank you that nothing in all creation - no evil attacks, no illness, no human powers, no circumstances at all - can ever separate us from Your love.

We will not be overwhelmed as we keep our eyes on You.

We may not always understand, but we acknowledge You to be the Lord, who reigns over all - and we are thankful.

In Jesus name. Amen.

By Daphne Kitching

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THE PARISH OF BROWNHILLS WITH OGLE HAY

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by sharing the love of Jesus

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