

# Around the Spire

**Saint James & Saint  
Mary Magdalene  
Quedgeley & Kingsway**

**September 2021**



**Issue 73**

## *Your Editor Fr. Hugh*



### “WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?”

I have been asked by several people recently, how soon are we to get a new Rector?

This is a fair question – so here is an attempt to answer it!

Such appointments in the Church are of course great importance for any parish church

As it seeks to go forward in God’s will with all that this means.

Those who have a say in church appointments are two-fold:

First are the Bishop and Archdeacon, possibly also the Area Dean. Second of course is the part of the parish concerned.

Here the Churchwardens and Church Council have an important part to play. Through them a Parish Profile is drawn up which is a description of the parish and area and the needs of the church as they see it.

This Profile for the Parish of St James is nearing completion as I write and when approved will play an important part in the presentation and subsequent publicity to seek interest both from within the Diocese and further afield.

The actual appointment is of course by the Bishop of the Diocese supported by all concerned.

Now the obvious question from all this is WHEN?

This depends on the length of the process and response to the way in which interests in the post emerge. It does seem likely to be early in the New Year although an earlier appointment cannot be ruled out.

MEANWHILE – the parish has living within it five retired priests, each of them has experience of being a parish priest in the past, knowing about the process and take a share that during the interim period the life and witness will continue to flourish.

IN CONCLUSION – please, will all who read this article in any means, PRAY THAT THE RIGHT PERSON CAN BE FOUND TO BE OUR NEW PARISH PRIEST!

FR HUGH -- EDITOR

### **Sunday Lunch in August**

A fantastic lunch, with great company took place on Sunday 22nd August. More than 50 tickets were sold. A huge **“Thank You”** to Val Harris and her team who made it possible. The total amount raised was £1,100. Thank you too, to those who supported the event including Tesco Stores at Quedgeley



“What is that called?” and  
“What is it for?”

**By Revd. Fr. Ian Robb**

*a new series, answering some of your questions about things you see in church.*



**The Altar** : The word used to describe the table at which the Eucharist is celebrated. The earliest altars were made of wood, being the tables in private houses where the Church family met. By the 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> centuries the tradition of celebrating the Eucharist on the tombs of martyrs caused the custom of stone altars to come in. Many churches enclosed the relics of patron saints and martyrs within their altars, a practice which still happens today. Altars made from stone also remind us that the Eucharist is a “sacrifice” - an offering to God; a gift which is costly to us (in terms of time and commitment). The original altar in the church is the “High Altar” and the altar which stands nearer to the congregation, at the head of the nave, is called the “Nave Altar”.



The altar is ornamented with a **Cross and Candles** . The cross is the supreme Christian symbol, recalling the crucifixion of Jesus – his own sacrifice so that we might have new life in him. The empty cross is a reminder of his victory over death. The candles were obviously, in time past, there to provide light; but more importantly they are there to remind us of one of the ways in which Jesus described his life and ministry: “I am the Light of the World”.

**The Tabernacle:** Look at the high altar and see a covered receptacle in the centre on which the cross is standing. This is where the Blessed Sacrament is kept, from which Holy Communion is given to people who are unable to come to church. The word “tabernacle” comes from the Latin for “tent”, and you will see that the tabernacle is draped in a tent-shaped cover. The white light which burns beside the tabernacle is a reminder to us that our Lord himself is present with us in church, veiled in the form of the consecrated bread or “host”. It is customary to acknowledge His presence with a gesture of reverence when passing in front of the altar.

When the Bible is read in church the readers stand at the **Lectern** – yet another Latin word: “lectio” - I read. You may often see the lectern in the form of a carved eagle: reputedly the highest-flying bird and therefore the most qualified to carry the Word of God around the world.

The lectern has a partner, called the **Pulpit** - an elevated stand of wood or stone, often with a sounding-board above it, for the preaching of the sermon. Sometimes the artwork of the pulpit can be very ornate, reflecting the importance attached to the preaching of the word. It is unusual to find the pulpit on the south side of the nave (as in St James Quedgeley), though why the north side was preferred has escaped my research! Regular worshippers at St James will note that we tend not to use the pulpit for our sermons; simply because it is a very restricted space. Clergy were obviously smaller in size when our church was built!



When we administer the sacrament of Baptism, we do so at the **Font**. Yet another Latin word: “fons” - a spring of water (as in fount or fountain). It is a vessel, usually of stone, though more recent versions are made from wood with a metal bowl, in which the baptismal water is kept. Traditionally the font was created near to the door of the church building; as we enter the church building through the door, so we enter the church family through the rite of Baptism. Sometimes the font stands in its own Baptistry chapel; sometimes the font has an elaborate lid or cover – to preserve the purity of the baptismal water and prevent it being profaned by mischief-makers. The original font at St James is in a very impractical position, hence our use of a smaller, portable version which gives easier access for everyone.



*Original font*

On the south side of the church (to your right as you enter) is the **Lady Chapel** with its own altar. The Lady in question is of course the Blessed Virgin Mary, who was called by God to take such an important part in the plan of salvation. The altar stands there in thanksgiving for her positive response and in gratitude for her life and work. Many churches have such an altar, which will be usually be used in midweek, when congregations are smaller and a more intimate setting is appropriate.



To the left of the Lady Chapel altar is a niche in which stands a statue reminding us of Mary, in front of which is a **Pricket Stand** containing **Votive candles**. The pricket is a wooden rack designed to hold candles safely when lit and which have been left by people who wish to make a specific or “votive” request in prayer - a request which is known only to them, and which will probably not be made by anyone leading public prayers. The candle again reminds us of Christ the light of the world – a light that shines on in the darkness, just as our private prayer remains with God even when we have left the church building.



*To be continued...Who (or what?) are the clergy? What do we wear, and why?....  
and anything else you care to ask me!*

**Fr. Ian**



**Harvest Thanksgiving**

**Details to follow...**

## *The Faith We Sing*

*By Revd. Canon Michael Garland*



Let me introduce you to a woman hymn-writer who, in one of her compositions, has left us with a fine hymn which we can make our very own because of its subjective, personal style. The woman in question is Charlotte Elliott, who was born in 1789. Her father was an Anglican clergyman, serving in Clapham where Charlotte was to live for the first 32 years of her life. Then, in 1821 – exactly two hundred years ago – she suffered a severe illness which rendered her an almost complete invalid for the rest of her life. The illness also caused a deep spiritual crisis in Charlotte’s life, but her faith returned following a chance conversation with an evangelist, who happened to be a close friend of her father. Charlotte felt unworthy of God’s love and sensed that she could never be ready to fully turn to Christ. The evangelist said that she should lay these thoughts aside and encouraged her by saying, ‘come to Christ, just as you are.’ Accepting this advice, she found peace of mind and began to write poems and essays which were deeply devotional. Mindful of the timely advice she received which lifted her from a feeling of unworthiness to a knowledge of God’s acceptance and love, she wrote a hymn which preserves the advice of her evangelist friend in the first line of each verse:

Just as I am, without one plea  
but that thy blood was shed for me,  
and that thou bidst me come to thee,  
O Lamb of God, I come.



One of the striking features of this hymn is the way in which the author uses repeated phrases. Each verse begins with those four words which were so important to Charlotte – ‘Just as I am’. Each verse ends with a personal act of commitment – ‘O Lamb of God, I come’. We might recall how we often use this same pattern of words, first spoken by John the Baptist who, when pointing his disciples to Jesus, gave him this meaningful title: *‘Here is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world’* (John 1.29). In our Eucharist, week by week we sing the *Agnus Dei* (Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us). Here we remind ourselves that the Lamb is a symbol of sacrifice, and that Jesus is ‘the Lamb of God’, who gave himself for us in his death on the cross, to bear away our sin.

The doubts and uncertainties that Charlotte Elliott experienced in her life apply to us all and make our singing of the thoughts conveyed in her verses so relevant.

Just as I am, though tossed about  
with many a conflict, many a doubt,  
fightings and fears within, without,  
O Lamb of God, I come.

But despite these times of difficulty, there is the wonderful knowledge of God waiting for our return just like the loving father in the parable of the prodigal son.

Just as I am, thou wilt receive,  
wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve:  
because thy promise I believe,  
O Lamb of God, I come.

In the final verse, we are reminded of the rich vein of scripture which is embodied in Charlotte Elliott's hymn. In his letter to the Ephesians, St Paul wonderfully describes the wonder of God's love freely available to us all: *I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. (Ephesians 3.18)*. In her final verse, Charlotte sums up this great truth succinctly:

Just as I am, of that free love  
the breadth, length, depth, and height to  
prove  
here for a season, then above,  
O Lamb of God, I come.

When Charlotte Elliott died in 1871, more than a thousand letters had been written to her in appreciation of her verses. Despite some of the dated language used, it remains a much-loved and frequently sung hymn and one which has surely captured our feelings and given voiced to our thankfulness.

You can hear the hymn <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gvpJMBzEPp8>

## **SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 19 th - A GREAT DAY IN THE LIFE OF OUR CHURCH!**

On this Sunday we look forward very much to welcoming our Diocesan Bishop, Right Revd Rachel Treweek who will celebrate and preach at our Parish Eucharist at the usual time - 10.30a.m.

It is always a great occasion in the life of a parish when the Diocesan Bishop comes to a parish and lead us in our worship.

It is also an occasion for us to show just how lively our worship is as a real part of the life church here.

Do please come along and join us in our worship on that day!

## Where are we this month?



A clue this month is: *In this part of the country the jam goes on top! River Yealm is key - answers next month*

# Theresa takes to the sky!



Theresa Fisher Community Champion at Tesco Quedgeley and good friend to Saint James Church, took to the sky six months later than planned in aid of **Heart Heroes** a children's charity. The skydive took place at Honiton Devon. Theresa said "It was an incredible experience and I got to do it with some amazing people". Many of us at Saint James' sponsored Theresa for this incredible event and we are pleased the event went well. Congratulations and well done Theresa!



# Holiday Playscheme at Saint James'



Once again the Quedgeley Community came together. This time to help organise and support a holiday play scheme for youngsters aged between 3 –16 years. The activities were held outdoors with a free lunch! Those who attended really enjoyed themselves.





# Trouble tree

I hired a plumber to help me restore an old farmhouse, and after he had just finished a rough first day on the job: a flat tyre made him lose an hour of work, his electric drill quit and his ancient one ton truck refused to start.

While I drove him home, he sat in stony silence. On arriving, he invited me in to meet his family. As we walked toward the front door, he paused briefly at a small tree, touching the tips of the branches with both hands.

When opening the door he underwent an amazing transformation.. His face was wreathed in smiles and he hugged his two small children and gave his wife a kiss. Afterward he walked me to the car. We passed the tree and my curiosity got the better of me. I asked him about what I had seen him do earlier.

'Oh, that's my trouble tree,' he replied 'I know I can't help having troubles on the job, but one thing's for sure, those troubles don't belong in the house with my wife and the children.. So I just hang them up on the tree every night when I come home and ask God to take care of them. Then in the morning I pick them up again.' 'Funny thing is,' he smiled, 'when I come out in the morning to pick 'em up, there aren't nearly as many as I remember hanging up the night before.'



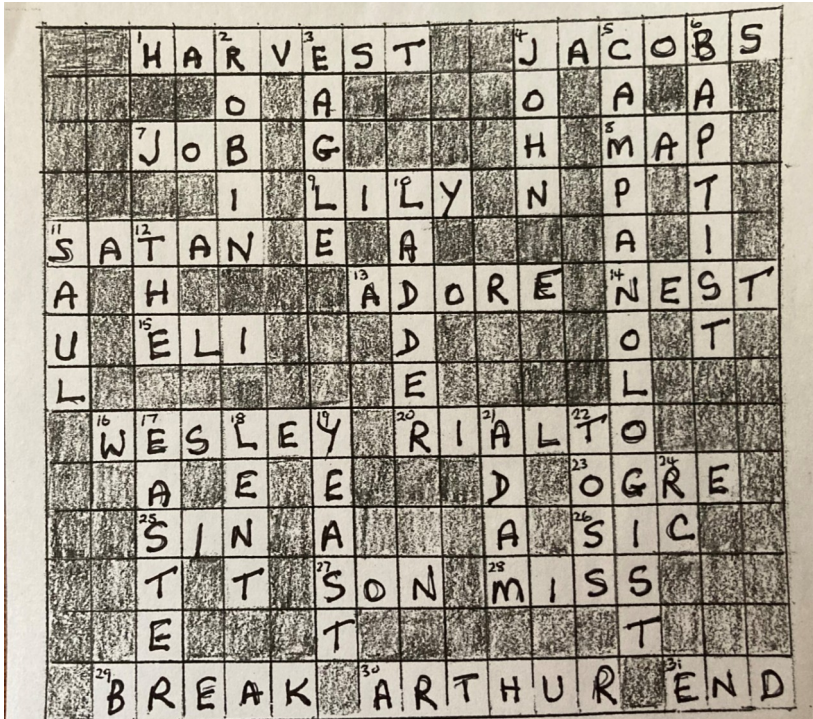
## ***THIS ONE IS WORTH SENDING ON.***

Life may not be the party we hoped for, but while we are here we might as well dance. We all need a Tree!

Article submitted by Andrew Wakely

Answers last month's photo quiz 1. Whitby 2. Wells 3. Truro  
 4. Glastonbury Tor

Answers from Last month's crossword



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