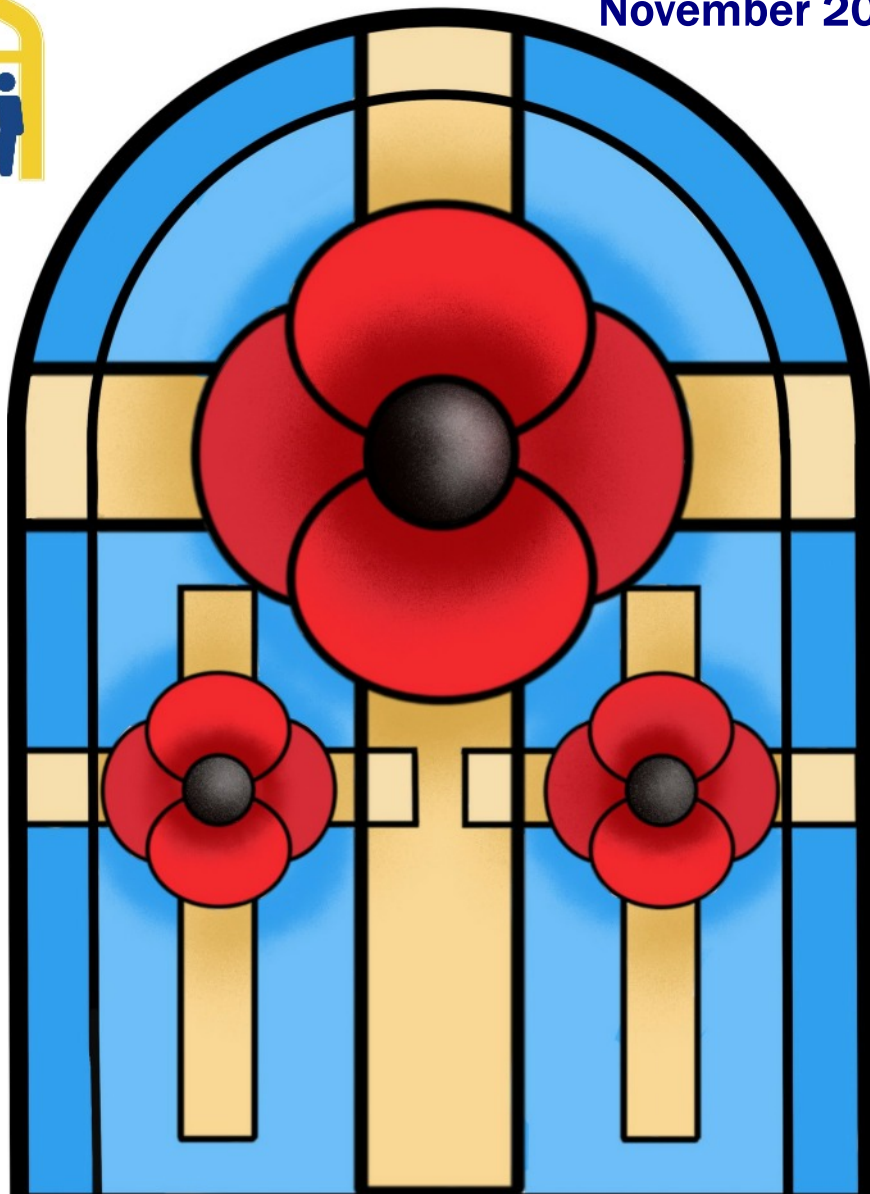


Shirley Parish Magazine

November 2023



LEST WE FORGET

SHIRLEY PARISH GUIDE (see also inside the back cover)

CLERGY

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facebook.com/@AdventureinFaithB90

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@shirleyparish5736>

Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4904334906>



CHURCH HOUSE (opposite St James Church), Church Road, Shirley B90 2AX

ST JAMES THE GREAT CHURCH, Church Road, Shirley B90 2AX

CHRIST THE KING CHURCH, Widney Junior School, Clifton Crescent, Solihull B91 3LQ

ST JOHN THE DIVINE CHURCH, Tilehouse Lane, Tidbury Green, Shirley B90 1PW

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Deadline for information and articles for next month's magazine: 12th of the month

Whilst every care is taken to ensure that the contents of the magazine are correct, the Parish cannot be responsible for any errors that may occur in the editorial or advertisements, nor for the actions of the advertisers.

Registered Charity number 1131912

OUR SERVICES IN NOVEMBER

Date	Time	Service	Venue
Thursday 2nd	10.30am	Holy Communion	St James Church
Sunday 5th	10.30am	Parish Communion	St James Church
	3.30pm	Reflective Worship	St James Church
Thursday 9th	10.30am	Holy Communion	St James Church
Sunday 12th Remembrance Sunday	8am	Holy Communion	St James Church
	9am	Holy Communion	St John's Church
	9.30am	Morning Worship	St James Church
Thursday 16th	10.30am	Holy Communion	St James Church
Saturday 18th	10am	Messy Church	St James Church
Sunday 19th	9am	Morning Worship	St John's Church
	10.30am	Holy Communion	St James Church
	10.30am	Morning Worship	Christ the King Church
Thursday 23rd	10.30am	Holy Communion	St James Church
Sunday 26th	8am	Holy Communion	St James Church
	9am	Holy Communion	St John's Church
	10.30am	Worship 4 Everyone	St James Church
	10.30am	Patronal Service	Christ the King Church
Thursday 30th	10.30am	Holy Communion	St James Church

**PLEASE CHECK FOR ANY CHANGES ON THE WEEKLY NOTICE SHEET, SOCIAL MEDIA
OR ON OUR WEBSITE <https://www.shirleyparishb90.co.uk>**

*Copies of the sermons can be found on our website -
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REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY PARADE



ROYAL BRITISH LEGION

APPROXIMATE TIMINGS:

Parade Fall in: 10.10am (entrance to Parkgate)

Fall in the Officers and Standards: 10.15am

Parade to march off: 10.20am

Service outside St James Church: 10.40am

Parade to march back: 11.30am

Parade to fall out: 11.45am

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KATE & PAUL'S WEE WALL WALK DIARY

So, we had a crazy idea of walking the Hadrian's Wall Path for our holiday and an even crazier idea of doing it as a sponsor event for the Pod Project. As we did so we wrote a 'blog' – a kind of online diary. This is a summary of the blog.

Monday September 18th – Shirley to Carlisle

We arrived in Carlisle, got settled in our B&B and decided to explore the city before we had our evening meal. Unfortunately, our exploration of the city, including its cathedral and castle, was cut short by a spectacular downpour - but we've chosen to accept the rainbow which followed as a positive sign.

Tuesday September 19th - Bowness on Solway to Carlisle

We began with a taxi ride out to Bowness on Solway – the start of the walk – and then walked the 15 miles or so back to Carlisle. Quite a long way, but at least it was flat. And the weather forecast was improving all the time ... (to be honest, it couldn't have got much worse!)

On the way we walked alongside the Solway Firth (having carefully checked the tide tables as the road sometimes floods). We saw some sheep who seemed convinced they were alpacas; we had a great lunch at the Greyhound pub in Burgh-by-Sands (interesting fact - this is the place where King Edward I - known as Longshanks - died) (the village not the pub).

The path continued alongside the River Eden, going through a somewhat flooded underpass to cross the Carlisle Northern By Pass. Fortunately, there was a route to scramble through without getting our feet wet!

And one for the railway buffs - on the way into Carlisle we passed the bridge which used to take the Waverley Line over the Eden.

We were two very tired walkers this evening with icepacks on Paul's ankle and Kate's knee! Bring on tomorrow - just a short stroll of 10 miles!

Wednesday September 20th – Carlisle to Brampton



Today we said goodbye to Carlisle and headed east following the line of the Wall. This area has been farmed for hundreds of years and there are no obvious signs of the Romans – at least to the uninitiated eye. Every so often we passed a signboard explaining how archaeologists had identified this ditch as part of the Wall complex, or that that hill covered the remains of ... something.

As the day and the miles passed, the rain stopped, the clouds began to clear – and finally the sun came out – just as we reached a causeway across the fields which the signpost announced as the remains of the wall.

... continued over the page

KATE & PAUL'S WEE WALL WALK DIARY continued

Soon after, we passed Blea Tarn which was formed from the quarry which provided the stone for this section.

The signboards told us the entire wall was built in around 10 years. Impressive – until we read the next paragraph which explained that the workforce was provided by slaves, and we considered the human cost of this great feat of engineering.

Tomorrow the Wall proper begins – lots of milecastles, towers, and steep ups and downs on the map. Our great advantage is that the wind is behind us and pushing us up the inclines!

The best thing we saw today was on the banks of the River Eden in Carlisle. A movement at the water's edge attracted our attention and we saw an otter peering up at us. It had a good look at us, then somersaulted back down into the river. Amazing! They say you always see otters and kingfishers when you least expect them ...

Thursday September 21st – Brampton to Gilsland

A wonderful day's walking over undulating pastureland climbing gradually as we moved further away from the coast. Beautifully sunny with just enough breeze to stop us getting too warm. Great views behind us of the Lakeland fells, to our right of the North Pennines and to our left of the Border country.

Before leaving Brampton we visited the Parish Church where we saw the Burne Jones windows which, unlike Birmingham Cathedral, are not obscured by scaffolding. Then a 3 mile walk along paths that are clearly not used very often before rejoining the wall path where we left it in Newtown.



After about 5 miles we finally caught a glimpse of some of the wall! Up till now the far western sections had been turf walls which had disappeared, then sections where stones from the wall had been repurposed to build houses, barns, churches and even Lanercost Priory (re-use and recycle clearly has a long pedigree!). The wall became more evident over the next 4 or 5 miles as we approached Birdoswald Fort with clear remains of milecastles and turrets.

We stopped to look around the Fort, then descended to cross the River Irthing and find a very comfortable looking B&B in Gilsland. 13-14 miles altogether; knees and ankles bearing up well!

Friday September 22nd – Gilsland to Once Brewed

Definitely the best breakfast so far at last night's B&B, and we set off to rejoin the Wall Walk in good time. Down the hill into the village, across the river, up the hill on the other side to where we'd left the path yesterday – to be met by a sign announcing there was

a ‘temporary diversion.’ Which then took us back down through the village, and along a track almost opposite where we had been staying! Note to selves – always check where the next day’s path will begin ...

Almost as soon as we began walking we could see the ‘edge’ along which the Wall winds its way across the countryside. The guide book tells us these dramatic cliffs are the result of volcanic activity hundreds of millions of years ago, resulting in very hard rock which has survived Ice Ages and the like with minimal erosion.

This is the iconic, picturesque section of the Wall. Here there is a very clear Wall to follow, and the views to both north and south are expansive. We can still see the Lake District hills in the far distance to the west, and pick out the expanse of Kielder Water to the north-east. Until the clouds come in that is!

It’s also very up and down – in some places the National Trust has installed stone steps to reduce the erosion of the thin layer of grass and heathland covering the rock.

One downside of walking at this time of year is that there is very little wildlife around – today we had to content ourselves with some newly dug mole hills and several skeins of geese flying south for the winter. We could hear them well before we saw them!

So today we both passed the half-way point on the walk, and reached the highest point. Lots more ups and downs to go, though, before we finish ...



Saturday September 23rd – Once Brewed to Chollerford

After 14 miles of hard walking we were very glad to arrive at our hotel just in time for the England Chile rugby match!

For the first 4 or 5 miles the weather was dreich – raining half the time and like walking through clouds for the rest. Which was a shame because I suspect this part of the walk



has the best views. It also passes the most famous photo opportunity on the whole walk at the Sycamore Gap (we got there before the iconic tree was vandalised). It was very up and down along a line of crags, walking alongside the remains of the wall just a couple of feet from a sheer drop with a line of loughs below. Definitely not a walk to bring your small

grandchildren on. Along the crags we saw enthusiasts rock climbing on the cliffs – rather than me.

We stopped alongside one of the turret ruins for a coffee and kitkat (other chocolate treats are available), and within 5 minutes the weather changed completely and the sun began to shine. We even saw a faint rainbow!

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KATE & PAUL'S WEE WALL WALK DIARY continued



As the clouds cleared we were able to see the crags which we had walked over, as well as the views all around of the Northumberland countryside - absolutely stunning.

The path continued along grassy tracks following the line of the wall, which became less obvious as we progressed. I assume as we began to enter farm land again there were more potential uses for stones from the wall.

We met many people on the walk - a surprising number from the US, Canada, Australia, South Africa and Europe as well as many more local, including a group of students on a Duke of Edinburgh expedition who had got lost.

Strictly speaking they are not supposed to ask for help – but a question – what would you do if they asked you where they were?

The path was easier but muddier now as we continued through pasture land before getting to our hotel alongside the North Tyne river in Chollerford. All in all a hard but rewarding day.

Sunday September 24th – Chollerford to Heddon on the Wall

As we left the hotel this morning we met the Hadrian's Haul guy who has been moving our bags from place to place in his rather funky van, before crossing the river to look back at the hotel where we had stayed – such a wonderful setting alongside the River Tyne. Then on, up the hill on the far side of the river valley, and some wonderful views in the morning sunshine.

We didn't see much of the Wall today (most of it was reduced to rubble to provide the hardcore for a road built along its route in the mid 1700s). However, one section which has survived shows that even the Romans sometimes changed their spec to cut costs – the initial width of the Wall was around 10 feet wide, but from this point onwards it was reduced to around 8 feet.

A little further on we passed a tiny church dedicated to St Oswald at Heavenfield. This was the site where Oswald, the heir to the Northumbrian throne, defeated the Mercian king Penda, and reunited the two halves of Northumbrian kingdom. Oswald had been brought up on Iona and subsequently sent for monks from there to help to bring the Good News of Jesus to his subjects. St Aidan responded to the call, and through him and his successors, especially Cuthbert, and later Chad and Cedd, Christianity was brought to the north of England.



As the day wore on the weather began to draw in and the footpath aligned with the road mentioned above. Occasionally we would go through a stunning woodland in the autumn sunshine, but often the path led into a rough, low-lying strip of land without much of a view of anything other than rather scrubby stuff and nettles. My steps counter says I've done 39,722 steps today, and I reckon that about 30,000 of those have been through mud!

And so on and on and on. The road was Roman-straight so followed every up and down. Between that and the mud, progress was quite slow, and we reached our booked taxi at Heddon on the Wall exactly on time at 5pm.

A long day – over 15 miles - but getting closer and closer to the end of our journey ...

Monday 25th September – Heddon on the Wall to Wallsend

After a wonderful evening meal, a comfortable bed and a fine breakfast we are ready for the final stage. A taxi took us back to the Three Tuns Pub in Heddon on the Wall for us to resume the walk. We begin by seeing a surprisingly long section of surviving wall remains – we are told this is the last section we will see on our walk and no one is quite sure why it hasn't been plundered over the years. Clearly it's well known as we had to wait for a coachload of overseas tourists to move before we could get a photo. In fact there was one more tiny section still to be found - but that was still 16 miles away.

Our route took us through the village of Heddon – very much a transition village between rural Northumberland and the ever advancing urban sprawl of Newcastle – and down to the banks of the Tyne. The path continued on a greenway (the trackbed of an old railway line) towards the city centre. Along the way we met two ladies walking their dog who spoke (amongst other things) about the similarities between Geordie words and the Norwegian language.

We also met an old soldier who congratulated us on our achievement and then reminisced about when he and his mates did the wall in 3 days!

We passed the site of the battle of Newburn which took place in 1640 during the Second Bishops' War (I'd never heard of the Bishops' wars either), then a building with marker lines showing various flood levels over the years.

The greenway continued taking us over the A1, and we then joined a riverside walk which took us right into the centre of Newcastle under the array of bridges. Clearly a vibrant city!

Having passed through the city centre we continued alongside the Tyne, through trendy marinas and post industrial wastelands before eventually reaching our endpoint of Wallsend. There is a museum at the end – but unfortunately winter opening hours begin on September 25th (and what is the date today?) which meant we were too late! We did manage to take the obligatory end of walk photos and catch a glimpse of one more (very short) piece of wall.

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KATE & PAUL'S WEE WALL WALK DIARY continued



Wearily we walked to the metro station to catch the train to St James station in the city for a short(ish) walk to our hotel for the night. Tired but happy!

Tuesday 26th September – in Newcastle

Our morning started with Morning Prayer in Newcastle Cathedral. After the service we chatted to the priest who had been leading worship – he is the lead for the Lantern Initiative run by the Cathedral. High in the tower is a lantern that used to be lit to guide ships safely up the Tyne – a real beacon of hope and safety for all. The Lantern Initiative seeks to make the Cathedral once more a beacon of hope for the community – all the community including those who are often forgotten – the homeless and the prisoner. One very practical thing it does is in the Cathedral café. It is staffed by ex-prisoners and some others on day release from prison – real jobs and real experience. All the bakery goods are purchased from the prison bakery where inmates are trained in new skills that will help them when released. We were pleased to buy our sandwiches there for our lunch on the train. And very delicious they were too!

We also spent some time looking around the castle – perhaps the only medieval castle in the country with a railway line running through the middle of it – before heading to the station to get our train home.

Later – when we get home

So here we are – safely back at home after our adventure.

Now we are unpacked and the first load of washing is just about done, what are our impressions of the past week?

For me (Kate), it's the range of landscapes we've walked, the people we've chatted to on the way, and sheer amazement at the audacity of building a Wall 84 miles long, across an entire country, in something between 7 and 10 years! But above all, the sense that this countryside which is now so serene was, for hundreds of years, a very real border between different peoples, different traditions and different ways of understanding life.

There is 'history' here from just about every period from the Romans until now – most of it bloody. And yet people are people whether they come from north or south, east or west. We all have our stories to tell, and they are all worth listening to.

The Wall must have been seriously imposing, but I realise that I'm glad that it's no more than three or four stones high at the maximum. I prefer having good relations with the Scots!

And for me (Paul) some thoughts about whether history is just to be looked at, or learned from. Our guide book referred on many occasions to the wall having been vandalised when stones had been removed to be built into new structures – houses, roads, churches or whatever. Along the walk there were many opportunities to look at remnants of the wall and reconstructions of the forts – all very interesting but hardly life changing. Maybe the things that have changed lives are where the stones from the wall have been incorporated into new things. Perhaps this illustrates well the way we should learn from both the good and the bad in the past and build those lessons into the way we live today.

And finally – a thank you to all of you who have taken an interest in our walk, and especially to those who have sponsored us so generously!





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Members are given a permanent number which is entered into a monthly draw which takes place on the 1st Sunday of each month. The first prize is £50 and second prize £25. An additional draw is made in December. Membership is £26 per year which can be paid either for six months or twelve months, due on 1st June and 1st December. Subscriptions can be paid either by cheque, cash or standing order.

If you are interested in becoming a member please speak to a member of The Friends committee or contact Lynda McPherson on 0121 439 8711.

Congratulations to the October winners

£50 ~ Kate Crocker £25 ~ Sophie Ray

HELPING PEOPLE IN NEED

CLOTHING BANK: now that the cold season is coming (though it's very warm as I write this in mid-October!) there is a great need for warm jackets or anoraks, especially for Little Beings!

I was given a huge black sack of children's wellies recently which (when David has washed the mud off them!) will be very popular with mothers - especially mothers of young boys who seem magnetically attracted to puddles.

NARTHEX: the two sets of children's bedding (trains and spaceships) which you donated were super; I would love to have been around when their new owners saw them on their beds for the first time. Are there any more lurking at the back of your airing cupboards, please?

The usual appeal for buggies, especially double ones, which are rarer than hen's teeth.

FOOD BANK: thank you for the cutlery, mugs, bowls etc. which are being given out regularly (sadly) to young men at an ex-prisoner's hostel in Sparkhill when they come in for a food parcel after discharge from prison.

I have put aside one or two of your knitted hats and scarves for them for when the winter winds blow.

But, of course, it's really the donations of food which are vital; thank you for your support. The recent Harvest Festival collections were a welcome boost but the increased need as we head for the colder weather, and more of folk's income has to be spent on heating, will be alarming.

Please could I ask that when you leave donations for my (many) appeals in the Parish Office or church, that you label them with my name to prevent them going astray?

Thank you very much, Elizabeth Paice



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BLACK HOLE THE ETERNAL SOUL THE ESSENCE OF GOD

In trying to describe a black hole and what would happen if you went through one, I think it was Brian Cox, the astronomer, stated that time stops but you would reappear in essence. He illustrated this by saying that if you burnt a sheet of paper and were able to gather up all the resulting gases and ashes, in theory you could reconstitute that sheet of paper. Therefore, even when burnt that sheet of paper still exists. And that is how you would exist through the black hole!

That made me think seriously about the essence of God, of Jesus, of the Holy Spirit as well as thinking of Creation, Resurrection, life after death and prayer - or more specifically, who do we pray to?

If scientific research and theory happily talk about time standing still or even reversing, then the idea that God is and was and will be everywhere always and now is no longer far-fetched. We must also separate thought from language and scientific understanding. 500 years ago - talk about video calling, artificial intelligence, space telescopes - who would understand you, let alone believe you? Creation stories or myths tried to explain in a language and understanding of the time. These accounts are not necessarily accurate but often the theory is possibly sound.

God, as an unseen Spirit - partly because there was no-one to see - was already there at the beginning of time as well as at the end and everywhere in between. Faith does not dwell in the past - the past is simply the foundation for the present and the present is the launchpad to the future, and this is because we as humans are a linear creation. God isn't linear!

For me a belief in a virgin birth is not crucial to my faith. Many stories and accounts are slanted to fit beliefs and prophecies. I do believe that Jesus, fully human from conception, was also fully divine. He needed to exist in human form because even those who believed didn't really understand on a purely spiritual level. Mankind needed a solid being, a human being, who would take them that one step further. Once that was understood then could God, as the Holy Spirit, be in them - Pentecost and beyond!

The Resurrection wasn't just 'I'm not dead' - it was reassurance of the reality of the divine. The human Jesus is dead, the divine Jesus is alive and not chained to human limitations. Of course, he could walk through doors. He is spirit with an element of humanity - the opposite to us! Like passing through a black hole death strips us of the shackles of humanity. We still exist, like the burnt paper, and we exist in an eternity where time ceases. We will be aware of those we love as our soul, our spirit becomes everything, everywhere, at the beginning, the end and in between.

Our spirit, our soul will be aware of and part of the essence of Heaven. Hell is being unaware of that essence and therefore unaware of the heavenly joy that is the Spirit of God and all believers.

So, who am I praying to in either private prayer or sacramental intercession? The Trinity of God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit is always with us so if we pray to God we are praying to Jesus and to the Holy Spirit. All are one, all are equal, all are really beyond our earthly comprehension but not beyond our faith. The essence of the Divine Being surrounds us, fills us, carries us and loves us.

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ST JAMES CHURCH POD PROJECT - UPDATE

A huge thank you to everyone who has given their time, talent and money to help raise funds to install a toilet and kitchenette in the church. The sum raised so far is amazing (over £13,000 plus gift aid at the time of going to print) and speaks volumes about our shared life as a Parish and wider community.

We still have a long way to go with fund-raising but the 'partnership funding' will help with applications for grants by showing that we are committed to the project and doing what we can to help ourselves.

Meanwhile, there is quite a lot of preparation to be done. We have to get on with this, trusting that the main grants will arrive early next year in time to start work next Spring.

The Faculty (permission from the Diocese) is in process and we have also applied for permission for the works under Building Regulations. Drainage is proving a vexed question since the maps of existing infrastructure are very sketchy. We are working on a solution to get a connection approved by Severn Trent.

After the first excitement of launching the project and fund-raising, things will progress more slowly until work gets underway. We have made a leap of faith in taking on this project but that is no bad approach for a Christian Community!

Watch this space.

Kate Crocker

OUR CHRISTMAS GIFT TREE

This year's gift tree will be going up at the back of St James Church on 4th November, decorated with gift tags for the things that we are hoping to include in present bags for the clients of the ADAVU charity.

If you are able to, please take a label and, having bought the gift, bring it back wrapped and with the label stuck on the outside - preferably on a Sunday up to and including 26th November. Thank you!



JOURNEY TO THE STABLE

During the week commencing **Monday 27th November** local school children will be visiting St James Church to hear and experience the real Christmas story.



For safeguarding reasons, access to the Church will be limited during this time.

We would like to say a very big 'thank you' to all who came to our Macmillan coffee morning; those who helped, those of you who made cakes or provided some for sale (savoury treats as well), for donating raffle prizes.

We raised a total of £240.

God's blessings

Denise and Sarah



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And don't forget that our Welcome Cafe is open every Tuesday morning, 10am until 11.30am in Church House - hope to see you there!

DEEPER ROOTS - UPDATE

Many thanks for all the contributions to the Parish Prayer Book. We are hoping to have this printed and ready for Sunday 5th November when we have the final sermon in our Lord's Prayer series. The Parish Prayer Book will have a number of ideas for daily prayers for both morning and evening in different styles and also a selection of the many prayers that members of our churches have submitted. I am sure it will be a useful resource for all of us and help us in our prayer lives.



But prayer is more than words and some of us may not find words helpful in bringing us closer to God. Our Creative Prayer Day on **Saturday 11th November** in St James Church is an opportunity to try some different ways of praying using art, music, nature and other aspects of our creativity. Some things you try will do nothing for you, others will help you immensely in your relationship with God, and those things will be different for each one of us. The day will start with a short Morning Prayer at 9am (instead of our usual Parish Prayers), break for prayers in the middle of the day at 1pm and finish with Compline at 4.30pm. There will also be the opportunity to join us for an Act of Remembrance at the war memorial at 11am. Come for as long a time or as short a time as you wish. Please put the date in your diary!

And lastly, we are matching up pairings for Pilgrim Partners – regular meetings in pairs to encourage, support and pray for each other. It's not too late to join in – just let me know!

Reverend Paul Day

COMMUNITY LITTER PICKING

I love Shirley Park: the open areas, the tree-lined paths, the little clusters of trees making secret nooks, the wild-flower garden, the pergola and the shouts of children playing on the swings and slides. We are so lucky to have this green space in the centre of our town. The Friends of Shirley Park have done a huge amount to develop and improve the park and to keep it tidy. Unfortunately, litter is a real scourge. The Friends have to clean up every few days, but on the **first Saturday of every month**, they hold an open event for members of the community to come and help.

Everything is provided, collecting bag, picking stick and a hi-vis jacket. The event starts at 2pm, only lasts an hour and starts by the British Legion memorial (close to ASDA) where the kit is handed out. It is not hard work and adds quite a lot of steps towards your daily total!

It is sad to see so much rubbish on the ground, looking so untidy and posing a real threat to wildlife, but it's good to be able to help. All volunteers are welcome, just turn up on the day.



Kate Crocker

Mothers' UNION

Coffee Morning

Saturday 4th November - 10.30am until 12 noon
at 237 Bills Lane, Shirley B90 2PP

All are welcome

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IT'S GOOD TO WALK!

A reminder that our Parish has two walking groups:
 'The Friends of St James' usually walk on the
 second Sunday of the month and the 'Nordic or
 not' group walk on the second Monday of the
 month.



Please contact the Parish Office or see the weekly notice sheet for more details

The Friends of St James invite you to



Christmas by Candlelight

A three course Christmas meal with
 coffee and a glass of wine or soft drink

Saturday 25th November - 7.30pm in Church House

Tickets are £16 and are on sale from the Parish Office

Coming next month ...

Christmas Tree Festival in St James Church

Thursday 7th to Sunday 10th December

Look out for more details ...



Mothers' UNION



At our October meeting we welcomed Pam and David Humphries who took us on a virtual ride on the No 11 bus route known as the Birmingham Outer Circle. Its 27-mile route has circumnavigated Birmingham since 1927 apart for a small deviation in recent years into Sandwell and is the longest bus route in Europe.

We boarded the No 11 at Sarehole Mill travelling in an anti-clockwise direction towards Stratford Road, Hall Green before entering School Road heading towards Acocks Green and then on to The Yew Tree, Stechford, Fox and Goose, then continuing on our way taking in the well know landmarks around the City of Birmingham before arriving back at Sarehole Mill.

It was a superb talk, spoken with such passion, a real trip down memory lane on a bus route that has been running for 96 years.

We look forward to our next meeting on **Wednesday 1st November** for a craft session with Jan Dalton.

Visitors are always most welcome to any of our meetings.

Susan Knight

PREPARING FOR A GREENER CHRISTMAS - IT NEEDN'T COST THE EARTH

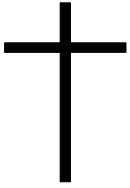
When we celebrate the birth of our Lord, we cannot help but get swept along with all the festive trappings - gifts to be wrapped, trees to be decorated, crackers to pull, special food with all the trimmings. It can become a drain on our energy levels, on our purses and on the planet's resources. Perhaps some of these tips can help us all.

1. **Wrapping presents.** Plastic-lined, shiny or glittery paper cannot be recycled and ends up in landfill. As we use 100 million rolls of wrapping paper in the UK at Christmas, that makes a lot of landfill. We can search for recyclable gift wrap - or we can be creative. How about using scraps of brightly coloured fabrics and non-plasticised ribbon? Or brown paper, string and a bit of festive greenery? Or newspaper and a nice ribbon or fabric bow? Or spare "silky" scarves tied up into rabbit's ears? You may have some great imaginative ideas - please share any on the eco-board in St James Church. I remember Liz Yates telling us about her daughter and friend who have exchanged the same gift bags year after year - truly planet-friendly.

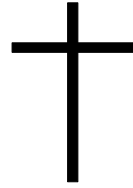
2. **Christmas cards.** Again, avoiding glitter and foil will reduce landfill. We can save the picture part of cards after Christmas and start making our own for the following year - or find someone who sells them for charity (maybe Rev. Wendy Martin). There is also the option of sending electronic cards which cuts down on travel miles (post) and paper use.
3. **Christmas crackers.** Glitter, foil, unwanted "gifts" inside that we rarely need. This year, I shall attempt a circle of fabric for everyone, placing useful little gifts or after-dinner chocolates, cracker jokes found via the internet and some newspaper made into a hat shape for the guests to make their own (perhaps) plus some ribbon to gather it all up into an old-fashioned little Christmas pudding shape. I'll let you know how it goes! Can you think of any other planet-friendly, purse-friendly alternatives to the cracker? Please share on the eco board.
4. **Christmas trees.** Real ones are definitely better for the planet if they are sustainably grown. We bought one with a root a few years ago. It remains in its pot after Christmas, goes into the garden until the next December. So far, so good. But if you have a plastic tree, keep using it for at least nine years to lessen its environmental impact. Alternatively, put a few natural decorations onto a large houseplant.
5. **Decorations.** To avoid plastic and glitter, we can scavenge for acorns, pine cones, holly, ivy, twigs and add colour and fragrance with bundles of cinnamon sticks and slices of past-their-best citrus fruits.
6. **Energy awareness.** Christmas lights that use LED bulbs will use less energy and with a timer to reduce how long we light up, we can be both festive and thoughtful. Rechargeable batteries will also save a lot of waste when batteries run out of power.
7. **Gifts.** The Covid pandemic made our family rethink giving at Christmas because we were not meeting together. We agreed to make small gifts for each other, and we each chose a charity we wished to support, and we all contributed. We chose, for example, Mourne Mountain Rescue, Air Ambulance, Crisis, RNLI, toilet twinning with Malawi, Fight For The Forgotten. We all felt that this should be the way of our future gifting. Other gifts with a lesser detrimental environmental impact could include gift tokens, cinema tickets, museum membership, homemade preserves and pickles. Let us know by posting on our eco board if you have ideas to add to the list.

Chris Speakman on behalf of the Parish Eco Group





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HOLY YEAR WALKING PILGRIMAGE TO SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA - Part 6

In Parts 1-5 (May-October 2023 Parish Magazines) I related our pilgrim route from Leon in Northern Spain towards the shrine of St James the Great in Santiago de Compostela. There were three of us: my husband Dave, myself and our friend Revd Colin Jones. The distance to be covered was 302 kilometres and we expected it to take us eleven days. Here is the final part of our pilgrimage story.

We had breakfast at our Pension in Arzúa and started to walk at 8.10 am. It was our intention to get to the outskirts of Santiago today. As the day wore on it began to get hot and humid and the route was very hilly. There were lots of new faces, since pilgrims were joining from different routes to the bottle neck part of the route that leads on to Santiago.



Accommodation in the refuges begins to get scarce after this point since there are so many in search of a bed for the night and of course there are so many more pilgrims due to it being the Holy Year. This offers the possibility of passing through the Holy Door, which is opened only during the years when the feast of St James falls on a Sunday.

For most of the day we walked through a forest and so did not come upon any bars. We carried as much water as we could, but it being so incredibly hot and with the weight of the rucksacks it was disappearing fast. Colin had walked on ahead and Dave, of course, stayed with me and I have to say, was being over generous towards me with his own bottle of water. There were more and more cyclists passing us and calling out 'Animo' (take heart), or 'Buen Camino' (good Camino) and every bit of encouragement was welcome. The response to their good wishes is 'Gracias' (thank you) so we called back to them when breath (in my case) would permit. Later we met a group of cyclists from Barcelona and came upon another who was having problems with his bicycle. Eventually, though, he got going again. Day by day, just like life, one encounters problems and the unexpected.

For most of this part of the route we avoided the busy main road as much as possible but I began to get very tired and the water was running out. One can stop for the occasional rest but you know you have to get going again and each day there is a kilometre target to reach. We saw a sign at a small village which was quite a silent and desolate place.

HOLY YEAR WALKING PILGRIMAGE TO SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA *continued*

The sign said 'supermarket' - thank goodness. We followed the sign which led us on a detour from our route for about fifteen minutes but we journeyed on with visions of cool, cool water. Do you remember that song of Frankie Laine's with the lines: 'O Dan can you see that big green tree with the water running free...' I don't think under 40's will remember it or even, maybe, under 50's! When we arrived at the supermarket which was more of a little shop it was closed since it was siesta time. I looked through the window hoping that there might be someone in there, but no. Ah well, just keep going. I'm thirsty, so what? Soon we saw the airport in the distance, but it was a long way off our route and it was a long time before we actually got any water. When we got it, my, did it taste good. No wonder it's called the nectar of the gods.

That night we stayed at the Hotel Garcas (no refuge for us tonight, thank you) having walked 29k in such heat. There were a large number of Germans in the hotel. It was interesting to note that the number of English people undertaking the pilgrimage was negligible. We met a few Scots, some Americans, Canadians, and French, but very few English. Now then, what's for dinner? Caldo (green cabbage and potatoes), Turbot, Lenguado (sole) and lamb stew. The dessert was cuajada, but not home made as we had in the farmhouse, but from the fridge this time ... and the water ... yes, the water ... the cool, cool water. But of course, we also had a good bottle of wine and good conversation. Tomorrow we can walk 9k by road or 11k by paths ... nearly there.

After a good night's sleep and a good breakfast, we set out to walk the last few kilometres to Santiago. Soon we came to Lavacolla, this was the traditional washing and purification place for pilgrims before they entered Santiago. Before long we reached Monte del Gozo - the Mount of Glory - also known as the Mount of Joy. This is celebrated as the first point from which the towers of the cathedral in Santiago can be seen and so a place of great joy and celebration for pilgrims down the centuries. There is

a pilgrim refuge nearby with 800 free beds. We went into the chapel of St Marcos, said a prayer and had our pilgrim passports stamped. As we continued along the road a man came towards us and said, hello. I did not recognise him at first and then realized to my delight that it was Eric the friend we had made on the way who had such trouble with his toe and calf muscles. He had travelled 50k by bus, walked 15k a day and taxied some part of the route. He had done it his way and made it. I was amazed because his appearance was transformed. He looked years younger and was so happy to meet us.



He was waiting at the refuge for his friends to arrive. Hallelujah! We had a photo taken together and then parted.

We walked on into Santiago with a cheerful step. Somehow the rucksacks didn't seem so heavy. Everyone seemed to be rejoicing. 'Buen Camino!', 'Animo!' one after another, they greeted us. You sense a feeling that everyone wants to make a fuss of those who have endured the journey. And it is clear by their look and appearance who they are. We found some hostel accommodation but, not stopping to change, went straight to the Pilgrim Office to show our stamped passports. There was a long queue of tired but happy pilgrims. We were asked for what reason we had undertaken the pilgrimage ... and replied: 'religious'. Our names were written in Latin on our Compostela certificates and we made our way towards the cathedral. What a fine city Santiago is. Everywhere you look there is magnificent architecture. So on in through the Gate of Glory and to the Pilgrim Mass. This takes place every day at 12 o'clock. The cathedral was packed and there was standing room only. The singing was so uplifting. There seemed to be Bishops and Priests in profusion. At the end of the service the huge 'Botafumeiro' (censer) was swung the whole length of the cathedral. Apparently it takes eight men to swing it with the thick ropes. In the past, it is said, that it was a way of fumigating the pilgrims and refreshing the air. Then outside we went and through the Holy Door. What a wonderful experience. Then we paid our respects to Master Mateo who built the Portico de la Gloria and waited in the queue to climb the steps to embrace from behind the statue of St James the Great. What a day. The Way of St James, unlike other pilgrimages, is more about the journey than the arrival, and so it was for us.

Thank you for travelling with us.

Reverend Theresa Jones

*May I be willing Lord to bear
Daily my cross for thee
Even thy cup of grief to share
Thou hast borne all for me
Lest I forget Gethsemene
Lest I forget Thine agony
Lest I forget Thy love for me
Lead me to Calvary.*

Jennie E. Hussey (1874-1958)



THIS MONTH'S CROSSWORD

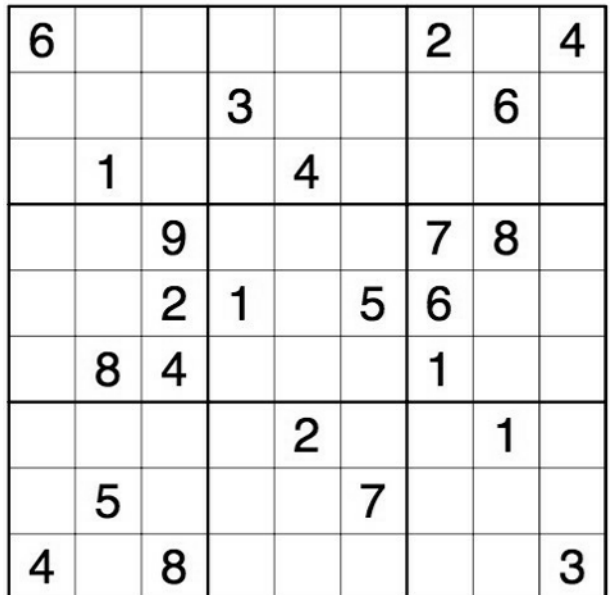
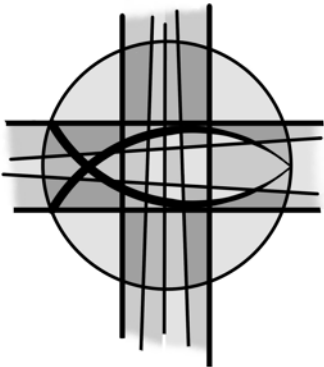
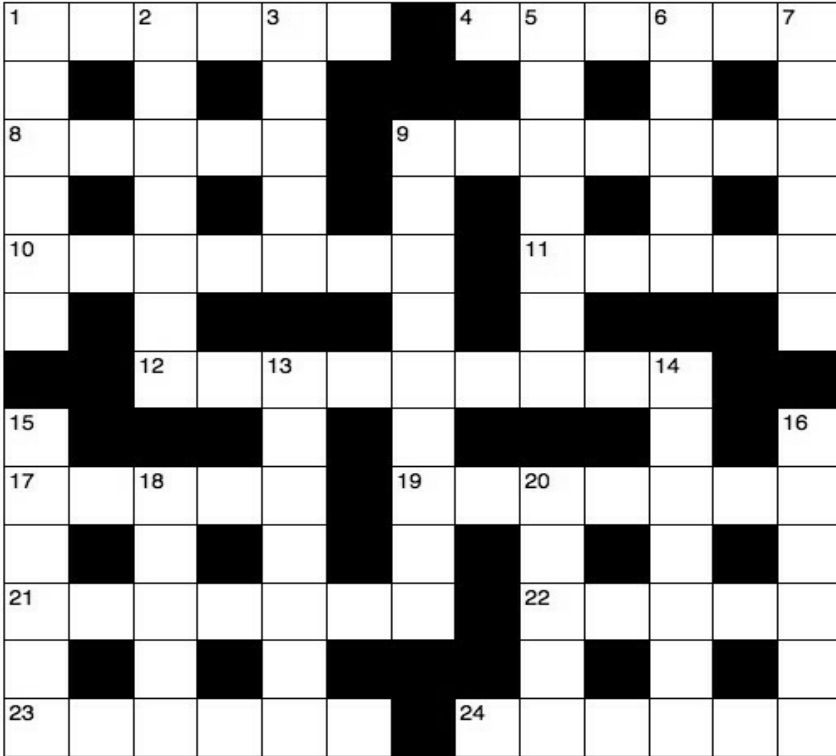
Across

- 1 'The Lord Jesus... took bread, and when he had given — , he broke it'
(1 Corinthians 11:24) (6)
- 4 'He has taken me to the banquet hall, and his — over me is love'
(Song of Songs 2:4) (6)
- 8 Surrey town that hosts the National Christian Resources Exhibition (5)
- 9 Also known as Abednego (Daniel 1:7) (7)
- 10 Liken (Isaiah 40:18) (7)
- 11 A son of Etam, descendant of Judah (1 Chronicles 4:3) (5)
- 12 A part of the temple where the blood of a young bull was to be smeared
(Ezekiel 45:19) (9)
- 17 'They make many promises, take false — and make agreements' (Hosea 10:4) (5)
- 19 Roman province to which Paul returned after evangelizing it on his first missionary
journey (Acts 16:6) (7)
- 21 Material used to make baby Moses' basket (Exodus 2:3) (7)
- 22 'And feeble as — , in thee do we trust, nor find thee to fail' (5)
- 23 'The watchman opens the gate for him, and the sheep — to his voice' (John 10:3) (6)
- 24 Stalk carrying the sponge of wine vinegar given to Christ on the cross
(John 19:29) (6)

Down

- 1 Elijah dug one round the altar he built on Mount Carmel and filled it with water
(1 Kings 18:32) (6)
- 2 'I am not — of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of
everyone who believes' (Romans 1:16) (7)
- 3 Buddhist term relating to belief in reincarnation (5)
- 5 Damascus disciple who, at God's command, restored the sight of the blinded Saul
of Tarsus (Acts 9:12) (7)
- 6 and 16 Horses: their sound (Jeremiah 50:11) (5) and their gait (Joel 2:4) (6)
- 7 A three (anag.) (6)
- 9 Athenian council addressed memorably by Paul (Acts 17:22) (9)
- 13 Abide by (Galatians 3:5) (7)
- 14 Persian princes (Daniel 3:2) (7)
- 15 Force (Galatians 6:12) (6)
- 16 See 6 Down (6)
- 18 Paste (anag.) (5)
- 20 How the cedars of Lebanon are described (Isaiah 2:13) (5)

THIS MONTH'S CROSSWORD & SUDOKU



Answers are on page 31



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NOVEMBER WORDSEARCH - ST ANDREW

This month, on 30th November, Scotland remembers one of the very first disciples of Jesus. St Andrew is honoured, not for any mighty deeds of his own, but for his love of introducing people to Jesus. He went straight off and introduced his brother Peter to the Saviour, and followed that up by bringing Nathanael/Bartholomew to Jesus. 'Better Together' seems to have been his slogan, too! 'We have found the Messiah!', he told them, unable to keep the good news to himself.

Andrew's connection with Scotland dates back to the claimed translation of his remains from Patras in Achaia to Scotland in the eighth century. The church in Fife where these remains were buried became a place of pilgrimage during the tenth century. All of this may be no more than pious legend, but that St Andrew was highly regarded in Scotland and became its patron saint is beyond doubt.



Answers are on page 31

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ANDREW
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 BARTHOLOMEW
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 EIGHTH
 FIFE
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 INTRODUCING
 JESUS
 LOVE
 MESSIAH
 NATHANAEL
 PATRAS
 PATRON
 PETER
 PILGRIMAGE
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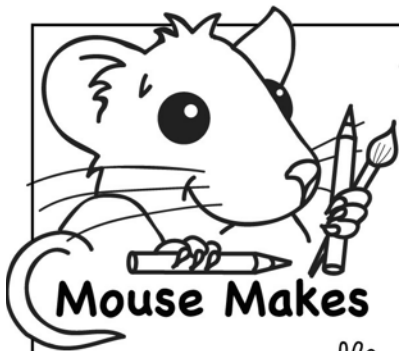


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"Do not be anxious about anything,
but in every situation, by
_____ and _____
with thanksgiving, present your
_____ to God."

Philippians 4:6-7 NIV

"The _____

is _____

to all who _____

on him in _____."

Psalms 145:18

"For where two or three _____

in my name, there
I am with them."
Matthew 18:20

SAY SORRY

PRAY FOR OTHERS

PRAY FOR YOURSELF

THANK GOD

FOR MY FAMILY

PRAY FOR FRIENDS

PRAY FOR THE NEEDY

PRAY FOR THE SICK


PRaise GOD

PRAY FOR THE CHURCH

C O N F E S S P K R Q C
N E A R M D P E H E A R
T I M E E D A T E Q M Y
I Q E J D T P I P U E O
F P V O I R P T R E N U
O R D I T U R I A S K T
R A E C A T O O Y T P R
G I V E T H A N K S R A
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V E T G A T H E R U Y E
E L E C A L L I S T E N
M U B L E S S R L O R D

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APPROACH
MEDITATE
HEAR • LISTEN
BLESS • PRAISE
FORGIVE • NAME
CRY OUT • AMEN

NIV

Look up the Bible verses,
fill in the blanks then
find them in the word search

" _____
always, _____
continually, _____
in all circumstances."
1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

"Therefore, _____
your sins to one another and
_____ for one another,
that you may be healed."
James 5:16

" _____
yourselves
to prayer, being
watchful and
thankful."
Colossians 4:2

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Tudor Grange Primary Academy St James *Nurture, Learn, Achieve*

Principal - Mrs H Lynch

For details about the school contact the PA to the Principal - Mrs G Giles

Tudor Grange Primary Academy St James, Halifax Road, Shirley, Solihull B90 2BT
Phone: 0121 744 7897 office@stjames.tgacademy.org.uk www.stjames.tgacademy.org.uk

FROM THE PARISH REGISTERS - SEPTEMBER 2023

Baptisms

10th Miley Rutter

17th Leo MacDonald

24th Jacob Connor

Wedding

16th Ashton Eustace and Sarah Foster

Funerals

7th Leonard Sheldon

21st Anthony Rigby



PRAY WITH US



Give to us your people, living God,
 A renewed faith and a bold vision
 that we may proclaim
 the Good News of your Son
 with faith that your kingdom will come,
 with hope for our community
 and with love for Him
 who died and rose again
 to save us, Jesus Christ our Risen Lord
 Amen

God of Mission, who alone brings growth to your Church,
 send your Holy Spirit to give vision to our planning,
 wisdom to our actions, and power to our witness.
 Help our church to grow in numbers, in spiritual commitment to you,
 and in service to our local community.
 Through Jesus Christ, our Lord.
 Amen

SHIRLEY PARISH GUIDE *continued*

READERS

Kate Day

email: kate_day@me.com

Tel: 0121 537 9672

Gill Gough

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Sarah Penfold

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Tel: 0121 681 1525

Denise Smith

email: deesmith1181@hotmail.com

Tel: 07815 193892

CHURCH WARDENS

Parish Wardens

Linda Pitt Tel: 0121 744 6777
email: lindaalisonpitt@gmail.com

Gill Hanton Tel: 0121 733 2347
email: gill.hanton@btinternet.com

Deputy Wardens - St James the Great Church

Kate Crocker John Richards
Tel: 07562 664163 Tel: 07941 634971

Deputy Warden - Christ the King Church

Denise Smith
Tel: 07815 193892

Deputy Warden - St John the Divine Church

Linda Alford
Tel: 0121 430 4785

SAFEGUARDING

Sue Harries
Tel: 07977 012753 or 0121 745 8896 (c/o Parish Office)

***As you all know we are a parish that takes safeguarding very seriously.
Everyone who comes to our churches deserves to feel included and
very importantly, safe.***

***If anything is concerning you, please talk to Sue Harries, Safeguarding Co-ordinator,
or Paul Day, Vicar.***

We must all look after one another.



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