Almighty God, whose most dear Son went not up to joy but first he suffered pain, and entered not into glory before he was crucified: mercifully grant that we, walking in the way of the cross, may find it none other than the way of life and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Third Sunday in Lent

Almighty God, you see that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves. Keep us both outwardly in our bodies and inwardly in our souls, that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Minister's Message

Hello everyone,
I hope you are being blessed by this season of the year as we share in the Third Sunday of Lent. There is a real contrast between the beautiful spring weather and the horrific scenes from Ukraine's cities. I found it moving to have the opportunity for prayer, in quiet but alongside others, when our Church was open on Tuesday this week. We will be opening again at different times in the coming weeks and encourage you to pop in for a few moments. The release of Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe and Anoosheh Ashoori shows that prayers are answered, long for an answer to our prayers for peace in Ukraine. As we remember the journey of Jesus to Jerusalem, we know that he is alongside us in our search for peace and justice.

God Bless Peter

UPCOMING PREACHERS

Sunday 20th March Revd. Clement Matarirano (St James’)
Revd. Peter Hughes (phone)
Pictures from Peter

I managed a flying (20 minute) visit to the Leeds and Liverpool Canal at Burscough on my way to a meeting on Thursday. The pictures show Burscough Wharf and Ainscough Mill looking good in the spring sunshine. The front of the boat, pointing ahead in one of the pictures made me think about the fact that God always leading us forward in a positive and hopeful direction.
WORSHIP AT ST. JAMES’

There are now 3 ways in which you can enjoy our Sunday morning services.

- By attending St James’
- Via telephone
- Via Zoom

All details and information are below.

Please use the Zoom link below

**Joining from 10.15 for a 10.30 am start – Revd. Clement Matarirano**

Either click on this link:  
https://zoom.us/j/5913455610?pwd=aVdZcFpaZVVaMDdsZ1BiR3lhRE1yQT09

Meeting ID: 591 345 5610  
Passcode: 12466

We hope to see you there.

If you want to listen in to the Service on Sunday, dial the above number, then PIN and listen in. You can chat up to 10.30, but when the service starts everyone will be “muted” to avoid feedback/noise.

**This Sunday our preacher will be Revd. Peter Hughes**

To join us for a short (15-20 minutes) Act of Worship:

Between 2.20pm and 2.30pm on Sunday:  
From your normal “landline” telephone: Dial: 0333-006-7775  
On being asked, enter the following number, or “Pin”: 08 39 09 01  
You will be able to chat with everyone else who joins until the service starts.

This Sunday’s Act of Worship, or short service, will comprise:

**The Host for this service is Graham Martin**

**Order of Worship:**
- Welcome and notices: (Host)  
- Opening prayer (Host)  
- Bible reading (Kate Cook: Luke 13: 1 - 9 )  
- Lord’s Prayer (Host)  
- Talk or “mini-sermon” (Rev Peter Hughes)  
- Prayers (Graham Martin)  
- Grace and dismissal. (Host)

COST: - The above number costs the same to dial as ordinary UK numbers – if you have “free minutes” from your telephone supplier then there will be no cost.

**God Bless Graham Martin**  
Communications officer (and local preacher) St. James Church  
[Call me on 0151-222-5832 or 07712-525239 if you have any questions.]
DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Wednesday 9th March to 6th April  7.30pm Lent Groups

Monday 14th March to 4th April  2.30pm Lent Groups
(Every Monday during Lent at 2.30pm in Church)

Sunday 20th March 10.30am Morning Worship

Monday 21st March 7.30pm Worship Consultation Meeting

Everyone is invited to join this meeting which is to share ideas for worship at St James’. This is an open group, not a committee, and we would value the input of all. We will meet in Church to look ahead at forthcoming Services and to develop the worship life of our Church.

Sunday 27th March 10.30am Morning Worship Mothering Sunday

Thursday 31st March 7.30pm Property & Finance Committee Meeting

Thursday 7th April 7.30pm Mission Action Group Meeting (open to all)

QUIET PRAYER SPACE

Over the next fortnight the Church will be open for Quiet Prayer on Thursday March 24th between 11 a.m. and 12 noon and Tuesday March 28th between 2 and 3 pm

Come and offer your prayers for Ukraine, peace in the world, our country, our community, our homes and lives.
Bring your personal concerns to God.

Drop-in for just a few minutes or stay for a while or leave a prayer request in the prayer box by the main notice board.

EVERYONE IS WELCOME

Tie a WHITE RIBBON FOR PEACE to the railings outside church.
Please invite others to do so too.

The Samaritans challenge

I’m taking on The Samaritans challenge for March to walk 10,000 steps a day and raise money for them. This March, I will be walking 10,000 steps a day to raise money for The Samaritans. It would be great if you could sponsor me. Every little counts, however small. If not, a word of support will keep me on track. A sponsor form/online details will be available soon.

Many thanks for your anticipated support.

Pam Alexander
Covid Precautions Update from the Steward Elders Meeting on March 6th

It is slightly worrying that infection rates appear to be rising again, though more slowly locally than in other parts of the UK. The Steward Elders meeting agreed that until Easter at least, anyone visiting church for worship or other reasons will be asked to continue to:

(a) wear a face covering over their nose and mouth while moving about the church and singing unless personal health reasons make this impractical. Face coverings can be taken off once you are seated.

(b) make frequent use the hand sanitiser provided at the entrances, and especially in the toilet areas.

(c) be especially sensitive to others’ need for personal space, remembering that not everyone is fully confident or comfortable yet being in crowded areas, even with friends.

Please continue to help us look after each other.

Benevolent Fund

The focus of the benevolent fund collection during our communion service next Sunday is Bradbury Fields Services for Blind and Partially Sighted People

Bradbury Fields is a Liverpool based charity which has been supporting people who are blind and partially sighted for more than 170 years.

Its main objective is to improve the lives of blind and partially sighted people living in the area, by helping people who incur sight loss to adapt to their new circumstances, providing facilities and support designed for the use of blind people and aiming to minimise the isolation of blindness.

For newly blind people: support for people who have received the devastating news that they are going blind; help with the complicated business of sorting out their benefit entitlements in their new circumstances; and rehabilitation support to help adapt to the new challenges in their lives.

A variety of activities is on offer: there are walking groups; tandem groups; swimming groups; a book club; choir; and many other activities provided in the comfort of Bradbury Fields. Many service users are older in years and find great happiness in the Active Vision clubs which run four days a week and provide companionship and purpose to many who would otherwise be at home and isolated.

Please gift aid your contribution if you are able to do so.

Monetary Offerings

Your monetary donations are vital to the running and future of St. James Church.

Please contact Margaret Dee if you would like to change your giving to a Standing Order or join the Weekly Envelope scheme (out now).

Also, if you are a UK Tax payer, please consider Gift Aid, as the Church is able to claim 25% from the Government at no addition cost to you (for example, for every £10 the Church would receive £2.50).

We thank you for your continued support. Contact Margaret Dee (428 3356).
**Recycling at St. James’**

Recycling of batteries, ink cartridges and spectacles: We will no longer be offering donation boxes for these items. All large supermarkets now have used battery collection tubs and some also take ink cartridges. Spectacles can be taken to Boots, Specsavers, Vision Express and some independent opticians will also take them. We will however continue to collect used stamps. **Thank you.**

**Joan Greenall**

Joan Greenall would like to thank everyone at St. James for the lovely cards, gifts, phone calls and prayers she has received over the past few weeks.

**Church Flowers**

We have recently resumed our beautiful flower displays in Church each week.

If you would like to donate money for flowers on a particular Sunday - perhaps in memory of a loved one or in celebration of a happy event - please speak to Jonquil Dickson who can add you to the calendar for the months ahead.

Also, if you would simply like to donate for flowers so that we can make sure all Sundays are covered, please speak to Jonquil. At present, we have many dates available, especially **Easter Sunday.**

We will then deliver those flowers to people after the Service. If you know someone who you feel would be blessed by receiving flowers from Church please speak to Jonquil or a steward.

We will also need some more volunteers to take flowers out to people.

The flowers looking resplendent this week.
A huge thank you to Jonquil for all her hard work.
**Praise be to God.**

**Flower provider and delivery in March and April**

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<tr>
<th>Sunday date</th>
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<th>Flower delivery</th>
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<td>27th March</td>
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**BIRTHDAYS**

For those who are celebrating a birthday this week, wishing you a wonderful time ahead.

Happy, happy birthday,  
That's my birthday wish for you,  
I hope your day brings you joy,  
Whatever you plan to do.  
Live each moment to the fullest,  
Every single moment is dear,  
This is the time to remember,  
You only get one birthday a year.

*Spring watch with St. James'*

This fantastic photo was taken by **Mike Hughes** of the first sign of Spring in The Japanese Garden.

The season of Spring brings hope.  
Let this be a start of rekindling your faith in the Lord Almighty.  
It is the time to renew your faith and acknowledge His presence.  
Trust in Him, and you will prosper.  
Recognise Him again and wait for His light to shine upon you.  
Let us believe in His blessings—both visible and invisible. Follow His words, be righteous and loving, and do good deeds to others.  
Let Him lead you to the right way. That's the essence of Spring.
In the current times, churches have had to find new ways of engaging with their communities. At St James' Church, Woolton, Liverpool, they have been creative in their thinking, making use of their garden and railings.

The "Thy Kingdom Come" Prayer Initiative in 2017 was the catalyst for a Prayer Ribbon event which was organised over the Pentecost period. The event was very successful with extra ribbons having to be provided to cope with the take-up. Some people took the ribbons home instead of tying them to the railings as an ongoing reminder – all those prayers offered by people wanting to bring a thought or concern to God and each prayer marked by a ribbon.

The ribbons remained on the railings for more than a month. They were a colourful sign of many people praying for many different things. They were not just the prayers of church people, but also those of people passing by – people who may never go into a church building. Eventually the ribbons were attached to a simple wooden cross which was taken into church to bless. The congregation then followed it outside at the end of the service for a simple dedication.

Having a garden and railings enables St James' to connect with the community using appropriate seasonal messages they can share, and this is where magnet comes in. Meditation pages have been laminated and attached to the railings, with a Say One for Me prayer box, located adjacent to the church notice board. It enables people to post their prayers.

Seasonal displays also use art work from the local primary school, junior church and youth organisations. At the time of writing they are planning to display their Lenten cross with explanations of the items attached each week.

The garden includes a topiary frame of a horse, named Jimmy (from St James'), which has been a real hit with passers-by. Children love to shout "Hello" to him and tourists, including a family from Japan, visiting Woolton because of the connections with the Beatles, took photos with him!

We may find it difficult to be a missionary church but we do not need to move far from our buildings to do missionary work.

Thank you to Lynne Barker for contacting us and sharing the St James' story with us. We would love to hear other novel ways in which you use your magnet, so do get in touch.
LENT 2022

Each week we will be sharing a poem, prayers and Bible Verses with you. Treat this as a Sabbath Day – read them slowly, soaking in the words and asking God to speak to you through them.

Sunday 20th March A Forest Once

I thought I dreamt of a forest once, darkfully green,
a place where the wind could hide
and becoming lost we would find ourselves.

I thought I dreamt of fallen leaves,
of decay enriching the soil – life rising
from the sweet sting of impermanence.

Now awake, encased by undying concrete,
I think of the beginnings that will never come
because of the endings that cannot.

Monday 21st March The power of Community

The dawn is breaking, wake up
God’s glory, is going around the world
The world asks me, where is your God?
I say my God is seated in glory, oh Yahweh, be praised!
Let me magnify him, for he is my strength!

Tuesday 22nd March Each other

God who is one, make us one with you, one with creation, and one with each other.
Help us to tear down the walls that divide us; to build bridges across the divides that separate us; to reach out in love and inclusion, always.
In Jesus’ name, amen.
Wednesday 23rd March The Lonely Place

In the same way, even though we are many individuals, Christ makes us one body and individuals who are connected to each other.

Romans 12:5

God of connection, help us to feel more connected to those around us, so that together, we can change things for your glory.

Amen.

Thursday 24th March Restoring relationships

Almighty God, who sits upon the throne, I worship you.
You are the author and perfector of all things.
I bring my life to you and ask you to make me new, in your image and to your glory.
Help me to bring that same renewal to those I meet. Amen.

Friday 25th March Wounded healers

"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free."

(Luke 4:18)

Before your meals today, thank God.
Lift up every part of it and the journey of how it made its way to you.
Pray for a fair wage and working conditions for the farmers and workers involved.
Saturday 26th March  Us, not me

God of unity, connection, togetherness, community –
When divisions arise and conflict takes hold,
Help us to dethrone ourselves,
To look for common ground,
To seek the greater good,
To let go of me and mine and embrace us and ours.

When we are faced with challenges
Such as extreme poverty and disaster and the climate crisis,
Help us to work as one,
To embrace our shared humanity
To see that the path ahead is in our togetherness,
To let go of me and mine and embrace us and ours.

God, I love you. And I do not want to be shown to be a liar.
When I find other people difficult,
When I am tempted to anger, unforgiveness, or even hatred,
Help me to let go,
To see your face in everyone,
To share your love with everyone,
To let go of me and mine and embrace us and ours.

In Jesus’ name,
Amen.

Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen.

1 John 4:20
Opening Sentence

Sing praise to God, who is merciful and just.
Sing praise to God, whose love endures forever.

Hymn: StF638 Through all the changing scenes of life

Sing/ Read /pray /proclaim the words or listen to it here: https://youtu.be/OVJxhaeJ6O

Through all the changing scenes of life, in trouble and in joy, the praises of my God shall still my heart and tongue employ.

Of his deliverance I will boast, till all that are distressed from my example comfort take, and charm their griefs to rest.

O magnify the Lord with me, with me exalt his name; when in distress to him I called, he to my rescue came.

The hosts of God encamp around the dwellings of the just; deliverance he affords to all who on his succour trust.

O make but trial of his love; experience will decide how blest are they, and only they, who in his truth confide.

Fear him, you saints, and you will then have nothing else to fear; make you his service your delight, your wants shall be his care.

Let us pray together:

God, you welcome us as, with all your people, we come to worship. You welcome us each day, calling us out of darkness into your marvellous light. You rejoice in our vitality and excitement, and you delight to see us reaching out to you, responding to your love. Our hearts are full of praise as we consider the work of your hands. And we are moved to silence when we consider the work of Jesus.

We praise you for all you have given through Jesus. He has shepherded us and guided us. He is our prophet, opening our eyes to the truth about ourselves – and about the hope we have in you. He is our King, leading us as we battle it out with life, as we seek to be faithful despite temptations, and the times when we do not know what the right thing to do is.

We confess that we do not always live in the light of Christ. We should be generous and welcoming, but we shut the doors of our homes or our church to keep the cries of the world away. Jesus calls us to live for others, but sometimes we find that too costly. Yet, Jesus has the last word – and Jesus says, your sins are forgiven.

Amen. Thanks be to God.

Today’s Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 55:1-9

Time to Reflect:

Why do we suffer? People used to call life ‘this vale of tears’, and you can understand why. Life in was often hard and short. And for many people, in this country and elsewhere, it still is.

Why do we suffer? Part of the Biblical answer seems to be – because we do. We’re here because we’re here because we’re here because we’re here because we’re here.

Some people came to Jesus with a question - were the Galileans Pilate murdered in the temple worse sinners than all the other Galileans? Jesus reminds them of another incident as well – a tower that collapsed in Siloam, in Jerusalem, killing 18 people. Were those victims worse sinners than everybody else? Did they deserve it? Or the women in Haiti at a prayer meeting in a church which collapsed during the earthquake of January 2010? They were all killed. Were they worse sinners than everyone else who survived?

Humans have always looked for patterns. We look for the pattern of a face, and we see it in the moon. Or we see the pattern of an England batting collapse after Joe Root is out. We look to a pattern of rewards and punishments. We expect justice. We expect the world to be fair. But it’s not.

In the book of Job, Job suffers terribly. Job’s three friends keep telling him that he must have done something to deserve his suffering. But Job declares his innocence. It’s an idea that continues into the present day – that bad things are God’s punishment. It’s almost as if we want a world where you can look at suffering and say, ‘they deserve it’. Though, if that were the case, would we have the courage to say, ‘we deserve it’?

But Jesus is clear – do not look at things in that way. Suffering happens – it’s the way of the world. Sometimes suffering is inflicted by others – by Pilate killing pilgrims, or someone attacking worshippers at a mosque with assault weapons. Sometimes by accident – a tower collapsing, or a cyclone wreaking devastation, or cancer cutting short a life. Jesus says very clearly, not their sin. Not your sin. There may well be blame, we’ve all done stupid things that have brought down a pile of brick on our heads. But it still isn’t God’s judgement. And there are plenty of examples of people ‘getting away with it’. But (there’s always a ‘but’). But what Jesus does say, very clearly, is, turn to God. Turn to God – repent, in other words.

If the idea of turning to God makes us uneasy – and it should – remember the second part of the gospel reading. The landowner wants to rip out the fig tree, but Jesus has the gardener give the fig tree one more go – and he’s going to give it every chance, by digging around it and giving it some proper manure. The tree will bear fruit. We will bear fruit. And what fruit will we bear? The fruits of the spirit – love, joy peace patience kindness goodness, faithfulness and self-control. So:

1) Don’t judge. Things happen in life – and to assume they are God’s judgement is wrong.
2) Give people a break, including yourself. The gardener does so in Luke, giving the tree another chance and taking responsibility for it.
3) Remember that we bear fruit - the fruits of the spirit. Allow the Holy Spirit to work in our lives.

Take a time to sit quietly.

A time of prayer

Jesus, our friend, hear our prayers for the church and the world. Today, the prayer handbook asks us to pray for Christians in China and Hong Kong. Within this country, we pray for churches and people of the Newcastle upon Tyne district. As we walk together through Lent, may we all grow in grace and love for you and our neighbours.

Jesus, our shepherd, we pray for those who suffer. However, suffering comes, we pray that people will find the care and support they need to stand firm and come through. We pray for ourselves, that we may be a light to those who are in the dark and a comfort to those who need strength.

Jesus, our prophet, we pray for those who give us hope. We pray especially for those who, like the gardener, give us a second chance. We pray for social worker and probation officers. We thank you for their graciousness and vision. We pray that we may be slow to condemn and quick to see the image of God within everyone.

Jesus, our life, we pray that you will fill us with hope, strengthen us by faith and direct us by love, so that we may play our part in your Kingdom of justice, love, life and hope.

Amen.
The Lord’s Prayer

Our Father ......

Hymn: Listen to Tender Saviour, by Nick and Anita Haigh.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JhGi3npNLYY or sing a verse of a hymn that comes to mind

A prayer of blessing

May the Jesus who suffered bless you with strength. May the Jesus who rose from the dead bless you with hope. May the Jesus who endured the cross bless you with joy. Amen.

Readings:

Isaiah 55:1-9

Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you that have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which does not satisfy? Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. Incline your ear, and come to me; listen, so that you may live. I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David. See, I made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander for the peoples. See, you shall call nations that you do not know, and nations that do not know you shall run to you, because of the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has glorified you. Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near; let the wicked forsake their way, and the unrighteous their thoughts; let them return to the Lord, that he may have mercy on them, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.


At that very time there were some present who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. He asked them, ‘Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way, they were worse sinners than all other Galileans? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish as they did. Or those eighteen who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them—do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others living in Jerusalem? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish just as they did.’ Then he told this parable: ‘A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and found none. So, he said to the gardener, “See here! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still, I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?” He replied, “Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig round it and put manure on it. If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.'
Dear Lord, it is my will to surrender to you everything that I am and everything that I’m striving to be.
I open the deepest recesses of my heart and invite Your Holy Spirit to dwell inside of me.
I offer you my life, heart, mind, body, soul, and spirit.
I surrender to you my past, present, and future problems.
I ask You to take hold over every aspect of my life.
I surrender to You all my hurt, pain, worry, doubt, fear, and anxiety, and I ask You to wash me clean.
I release everything into Your compassionate care.
Please speak to me clearly, Lord.
Open my ears to hear Your voice.
Open my heart to commune with You more deeply.
I want to feel Your loving embrace.
Open the doors that need to be opened and close the doors that need to be closed.
Please set my feet upon the straight and narrow road that leads to everlasting life.
*Amen.*

We continue to pray for those who need our prayers at this time due to ill health, struggling with mental health and all difficult situations and their loved ones who are sometimes overlooked but need our prayers too.

We also pray for Ken Kitchen, John and Sylvia Pagan, Ian Taylor, Arthur Evans, Helen and Fred Stanford, Pat Fagan, Pam Draper, Alex and Doreen Banks, Ron Swindells and Mike Hughes.

**LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD ANSWERS**

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Down: 2 Stirred, 3 Attend, 4 Lies, 5 Milk, 6 Sinned, 7 Evening, 8 Beasts, 9 Ashdod, 13 General, 14 Hittite, 15 Believe, 20 Chance, 21 Strange, 23 Examine, 24 Twenty, 25 Cedars, 26 Escape, 29 Ends, 30 Acts.

Bible Crossword by BiblePuzzles.org.uk
```
THIS WEEK'S CROSSWORD

Across

7 Remembering Israel's deliverance from Egypt (8)
9 A mother who gave her son to the Lord in service (6)
10 Father (4)
11 Genealogically recorded (10)
12 Father of seven daughters (6)
14 Tether for a Hebrew mobile home (4-4)
15 It would help our understanding! (13)
17 Painful (8)
19 At peace (6)
21 Those who watch the world go by (10)
22 Siloam for example (4)
23 Reflect (6)
24 Adept (8)

Down

1 They mocked Jesus (6)
2 Paul forbidden to preach here (4)
3 God will do this with our sins if we repent (8)
4 Selected (6)
5 What Jesus does for us (10)
6 How we should be if we trust God (8)
8 Goodness (13)
13 Gleaners (10)
15 Number of years taken to build the temple (5-3)
16 Jesus said the kings exercised it over them (8)
18 Hoarded riches are harmful to these people (6)
20 Time to go! (6)
22 Could be crossed or waved in celebration (4)

by Philologus

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If you would like to share anything with your Church family in this newsletter including any birthdays, celebrations, or anyone to include in our prayers, please let me know.

Please send any messages to Jayne McLaren at jayniemac@hotmail.co.uk