



St Alkmund's  
**Duffield  
Parish  
Magazine**



October 2021

Picture: Kieran Harrod

# CHURCH OFFICIALS, ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS



Vicar: **Revd Dr James Hughes**

The Vicarage, Vicarage Lane, Duffield. Telephone 01332 841867

e: [james@stalkmundsduffield.co.uk](mailto:james@stalkmundsduffield.co.uk)

Trainee Minister: **James Rollin**

Telephone: 07485 027171

Reader: **Richard Lindop**

Telephone 01332 840282

Churchwardens:

**Paul Linford**

Telephone 01773 821853

**Roger White**

Telephone 01332 840580

CHURCH OFFICE: <i>Emma Rollin, Diane Whiteside &amp; Liz Hardwick</i> .....	01332 987550
HON. SECRETARY P.C.C.: <i>Janet Roulstone</i> .....	01332 840561
HON. TREASURER P.C.C.: <i>Nick Peacock</i> .....	01332 840935
HON. PARISH MAGAZINE EDITOR: <i>Jeffrey Taplin</i> .....	01332 842665
YOUTH & CHILDREN'S WORKER: <i>Adam Heaton</i> .....	01332 987550
MUSIC GROUP LEADER: <i>Fiona Lindop</i> .....	01332 840282
TOWER SECRETARY: <i>Luke Heaton</i> .....	07801 246993
PARISH SAFEGUARDING OFFICERS: <i>Paul and Gill Linford</i> .....	07486 560657

\* \* \* \* \*

St Alkmund's Church Office, Church Drive, Duffield, Belper DE56 4BA. 01332 987550

e: [office@stalkmundsduffield.co.uk](mailto:office@stalkmundsduffield.co.uk) [www.stalkmundsduffield.co.uk](http://www.stalkmundsduffield.co.uk)

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Duffield Parish Magazine e: [duffieldparishmag@gmail.com](mailto:duffieldparishmag@gmail.com)

# THE VICAR'S LETTER

JAMES HUGHES



*Dear Friends,*

As we move into autumn, and the weather becomes a little bit colder and wetter, as we enter into our stormy season, come with me to a Bible passage all about the storm.

Come with me to the book of Jonah. We had a great time looking at this in our Holiday Club back in August (which is reviewed elsewhere in the magazine), and you may be familiar with the story. Jonah is supposed to go to Nineveh to tell the people about God but goes the other way on a ship to Tarshish, until God sends a storm (Jonah chapter 1). In order to stop the storm, the sailors reluctantly throw Jonah over the side—and God rescues him by sending a big fish (chapter 2). Eventually, Jonah goes to Nineveh and tells the people, who repent (chapter 3), although Jonah isn't terribly happy about that (chapter 4).

It is fair to say that Jonah is a reluctant prophet. He doesn't want to go to Nineveh, because he doesn't want to tell them about God—because the people of Nineveh are Israel's enemies, and he doesn't want them to repent and turn to God. He knows that God is merciful, but he doesn't want everyone

to experience that mercy. The first two verses of Jonah chapter 4 capture Jonah's attitude:

*But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry. And he prayed to the LORD and said, "O LORD, is not this what I said when I was yet in my country? That is why I made haste to flee to Tarshish; for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from disaster. (Jonah chapter 4, verses 1 and 2, ESV)*

Jonah is a difficult prophet. It is hard to imagine that someone who knew the mercies of God like Jonah does would not want other people to share in those mercies. At the same time, there is another side to this. Jesus picks up on the story of Jonah in the New Testament, when the Scribes and Pharisees are asking him for a sign, some kind of miracle that (they say) will convince them that Jesus is who he says he is:

*But he answered them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man →*

→ *be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.” (Matthew chapter 12, verses 39 and 40)*

Jesus will not give them another sign. By Matthew 12 there have already been plenty. The only sign left for them is the sign of Jonah. Jesus here points to his death and resurrection. Just as Jonah was in the fish for three days, so Jesus will die, and on the third day rise again to life. Jesus continues:

*The men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here. (Matthew chapter 12, verse 41)*

But just as the religious leaders had rejected all the other signs Jesus did, so they will reject this sign. And so, the ‘wicked’ men of Nineveh will condemn them—for not seeing the signs. For missing what was obvious. For refusing to see what was right in front of them.

For refusing to acknowledge the one greater than Jonah, Jesus.

If Jonah is a difficult response, then the response of the Scribes and Pharisees to Jesus is also difficult. Why, having seen the grace and mercy of God shown in Jesus, who came to die and rise again to save his people, why would they reject that grace? Why didn’t they see who Jesus was? Jesus’s answer is clear—they did not want to see it.

As the weather changes, as we move through what is hopefully going to be a more normal autumn, as some old patterns of life are restored, let me encourage you not to miss the grace and mercy of God shown in Jesus. Join us at St Alkmund’s to find out more. We promise we will not be on the way to Tarshish.

We look forward to seeing you.

Yours in Christ,



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# October

## Services & Events

### SUNDAY 3RD OCTOBER

- 8.00 am **HOLY COMMUNION** at All Saints' Chapel
- 10.00 am **FAMILY SERVICE (HARVEST FESTIVAL)** at St Alkmund's  
*Mark 8:1–13*
- 4.30 pm **FAMILY SERVICE** at St Paul's Little Eaton (Harvest) Bible Overview 10  
*Deuteronomy 6:1–12*
- 6.30 pm **FIRST SUNDAY SPECIAL:** at St Alkmund's (in the Church Hall)  
*"Sorry Seems to be the Hardest Word"*
- 

### SUNDAY 10TH OCTOBER

- 10.00 am **HOLY COMMUNION** at St Alkmund's  
*Acts 22:1–29*
- 4.30 pm **AFTERNOON SERVICE** at St Paul's Little Eaton  
*Mark 9:33–50*
- 6.30 pm **EVENING SERVICE** at St Alkmund's  
*Joshua 9*
- 

### SUNDAY 17TH OCTOBER

- 8.00 am **HOLY COMMUNION** at All Saints' Chapel
- 10.00 am **MORNING SERVICE** at St Alkmund's (with Sunday Club and Fuel)  
*Acts 22:30–23:11*
- 4.30 pm **AFTERNOON COMMUNION** at St Paul's Little Eaton  
*Mark 10:1–16*
- 6.30 pm **EVENING SERVICE** at St Alkmund's—*Good Neighbours Launch Service*
- 

### SUNDAY 24TH OCTOBER

- 10.00 am **MORNING SERVICE** at St Alkmund's (with Sunday Club and Fuel)  
*Acts 23:12–35*



- 4.30 pm **AFTERNOON SERVICE** at St Paul's Little Eaton  
*Mark 10:17–34*
- 6.30 pm **EVENING SERVICE** at St Alkmund's  
*Joshua 10:1–28*
- 

## SUNDAY 31ST OCTOBER

- 10.00 am **MORNING SERVICE** at St Alkmund's  
*Acts 24*
- 4.30 pm **AFTERNOON SERVICE** at St Paul's Little Eaton  
*Mark 10:35–52*
- 6.30 pm **EVENING COMMUNION** at St Alkmund's  
*Joshua 10:29–12:24*
- 

### **Regular Events:**

**SALT CAFÉ**—Sunday 3rd, in the Church Hall at 5.00pm. For any youth of secondary school age (and a bit beyond). Games, pizza and lots of fun.

**MORNING COMMUNION**—Tuesday 5th at 11.00am.

**IGNITION** (school years 10–13)—Tuesdays (5th, 12th & 19th), 7.30–9.00pm in the Church Hall.

**LADIES' BIBLE STUDY**—Wednesdays (6th & 20th) at 10.00am in the Church Hall.

**MONTHLY PRAYER MEETING**—Wednesday 6th, 7.30pm in the Church Hall.

**BEYOND COVID**—Thursdays (7th, 14th & 21st), 1.00–3.00pm in the Church Hall.

**MORNING PRAYER**—Tuesdays (12th & 19th) at 9.30am.

**GROWTH GROUPS**—Normally Wednesdays (13th) at 8.00pm, at various locations (*see leaders for details*).

**MEN'S GROUP MEETING**—Wednesday 20th. (*To be confirmed.*)

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### HALF TERM

Monday 25th Oct–Friday 29th Oct, so no youth events

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### **Special Events:**

**BIBLE OVERVIEW COURSE**—Thursdays (7th, 14th & 21st), at 10.00am in the Church Hall.

**DERBY CHORAL UNION CONCERT**—Saturday 16th, in church at 7.30pm. (*See display ad.*)

**MUSIC@DUFFIELD CONCERT**—Saturday 30th, in church at 7.30pm. (*See display ad.*)

# Making a Difference

The much-appreciated “Journey with Jonah” was the theme of St Alkmund’s Holiday Club this year. After, for the most part, considering the needs of children, the church has turned its attention to facing challenges posed by the pandemic. “Beyond Covid—everyone has a story” began in September. Recognising a desire to continue participating in the village’s Good Neighbours Week, the church is supporting a “Good Neighbours, Good Stewards” service and a tea party in October.



Other places in the village are housing food banks, and caring individuals are raising awareness of homelessness and providing resources to help people experiencing a loss of shelter and often dignity. From drawing on a rich background of involvement (not always personal), I used this resource to understand the issues included in *Summer's Out at Hope Hall* by Pam Rhodes. As a presenter on *Songs of Praise* she may well have encountered people suffering in a variety of ways.

The hardship suffered by character “Michael” is well described, and her ability to contrast his plight with subsequent accounts of people enjoying life only heightens the reader’s sympathy for him. She records how volunteers from Churches Together “set up an emergency Food Bank in the foyer, so that local people struggling to keep food on the table for their families, or who were living hand-to-mouth on very little money and few resources, could get a range of rations, basic goods and clothing.”



Indeed, whilst reading this book (which I do recommend) you will experience occasions when the four Rs will come into play: reaction, retention, reflection and response. I expect, too, you may laugh out loud and, with equal sensitivity, be moved by other content. Author Debbie Duncan says “*Summer's Out at Hope Hall appears to be just a light-hearted book, but it powerfully demonstrates the strength of community and the importance of faith.*” The delightful Hope Hall trilogy includes *Springtime at Hope Hall* and, available September 2022, *Christmas at Hope Hall*.

Effective village life is enhanced by recognising the needs of others and the strength of community. Permanent solutions to problems may not be immediate, but my connection with and enjoyment of *Summer's Out at Hope Hall* drew on the valuable efforts of local people. You have not got to look any further than Duffield to realise that attempts at “making a difference” are evident.

**Paul Wiggins**

Our new Youth and Children's Worker is **Adam Heaton**, who joined the church Staff Team just ahead of this year's Holiday Club. In this article, Adam reflects on his new role and his Christian background.



**M**y first sight of Duffield was in February 2021, cycling out of Nottingham bound for Carsington Water and the fringes of the Peaks. I had no idea as I paused to admire the bridge on Makeney Road that six months later I would be starting work just 200 yards across the river.

As Youth and Children's Worker, I'm delighted to be opening the Bible with an amazing core of young people each week, as well as supporting faithful volunteers and reaching out to local schools. This summer's Holiday Club was a great launch into the ministry and I am looking forward to escaping to the Peaks for the youth weekend away in October to play games, tackle tough questions, and enjoy the hills.

Before coming to Duffield, I spent five years in Nottingham, arriving as a music student and leaving (quite unexpectedly) a church children's worker. I settled at a city church called Cornerstone, and despite watching many friends enjoy an internship there after graduating, I was surprised to find myself signing up to do the same.

Working for a church struck me as odd, but it would be a gap year of sorts, and after three years of Bible teaching and solid friendships, I felt very much at home. Admittedly, it was also a considerable comfort at the time to dodge children and get to work with students.

Over what turned into two years of first student work, then children's work, then

lockdown video editing, streaming and (of course)

Zooming, I found that

opening the Bible with children was always challenging, character-building, rewarding, and usually hilarious.

I am very grateful for the foundations of faith laid and strengthened at Cornerstone that have set me up to take on a role at Saint Alkmund's, and after a very warm welcome from the church (I don't think I have been so routinely fed since I moved out of catered halls!), I am excited to take on the challenge of a new season in a new place.

Having grown up in Lancashire (Chorley, for those of you lucky enough to know it), it warms my heart to be back among green hills and under grey skies. And while Derbyshire is so far pretty tropical for me, I am very pleased to be calling it home.

Back in Lancashire, I grew up with a Christian background and can't remember a time before I would have called myself a Christian, but through my teens and into my twenties a variety of challenges, friendships, and experiences have deepened that faith and given it richness and confidence year on year.

As always, there's a well-known line from CS Lewis that sums it up. Just as Lucy finds that every year she grows, Aslan seems bigger too; I have found that it's the biggest questions and roughest storms that

show me just how big my God is. I loved Lewis's *Narnia* books growing up, and spent my teens mulling over his *Mere Christianity* and *Screwtape Letters*, but it's the life experience I've had since that translated an interest in Jesus into a real trust in him.

Alongside the familiar Bible stories I heard at home and at school, music has been a major force in teaching me what Jesus has done for me and giving me a way to respond.

From the '80s Graham Kendrick tunes of my C of E primary school to songs that

will always take me back to the hundreds-strong youth tent at Keswick convention, when the church sings together it moves my heart. Among the many things I have missed through lockdown, singing Jesus's story in a congregation of believers again has been monumental.

In what spare time I have, you might find me buried in a book, puffing along on my bike, or playing any piano I can get my hands on. If you do see me out and about, a novel, bike route, or album recommendation are always welcome!

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# Alkmund Bear - A Mystery!

Despite extensive enquiries, nobody seems to know where Alkmund Bear came from. Several years ago, he appeared at the back of church seeking shelter and company. He was later adopted by the Church Office to be looked after, where he did try to help out with some of the typing; unfortunately, due to his paws pressing several keys at once, he produced some rather unexpected results and was instead given only nominal duties.

During the Great Flood of November 2019, after helping to direct operations to rescue property from the hall, he was himself rescued and given a temporary home, where he subsequently spent lockdown during Covid. The only clue we have to Alkmund's identity is that he is a 'Millennium Bear', which means he is 21 this year!

He had a special cake made for him to celebrate this important milestone in his life, and being a very clever Bear, Alkmund suggested we save on candles by using the Roman number XXI for '21'. Alkmund has a trick question for you. How many candles were saved? Clue: Have a look at the front of the cake.

◆ The answer to Alkmund's question from last month was **Win Hill**, opposite to Lose Hill near Hope in Derbyshire. The key words were 'Win', 'Lose' and 'HOPE'ful.

*John and Mary Birkby*



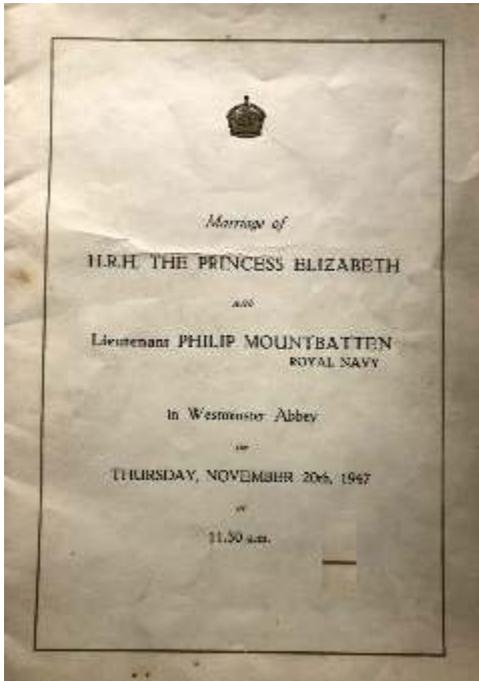
# Correspondence...

Following on from the recent article in the Parish Magazine reflecting on the Queen and the Christian Faith, local Duffield resident David Cox has contacted the magazine with his own memories of the Queen's wedding in 1947.

## Excerpt from the "Life and Times of David J Cox"

Thursday, November 20<sup>th</sup> 1947

The day started as any other day at a boarding school, with early rising in the dormitory, was, dress, make the beds and then off to breakfast. This was no ordinary school; this was Westminster Abbey Choir School and today was like no other. Being a chorister at Westminster Abbey, my mind was focused on the forthcoming marriage of Princess Elizabeth with Philip Mountbatten, an occasion that had taken all the choir's efforts over the past few weeks. To perfect the musical score to a degree of excellence,



rigorously imposed by our choir master Dr William McKie, a gentleman of Australian descent, ex RAF officer and one that makes our music like a firework display, it had under his direction, bangs and excitement and plenty of colours.

Finishing breakfast, a general inspection of cleanliness, polished shoes, etc., and a formal inspection of our cassock, surplice, ruff and mortarboard, in case any running repairs were required. After which we departed across Deans Yard, through the cloisters to our practice room where a few singing exercises, arpeggio scales were performed to finely tune the voices of the most celebrated choir of the day.

Weeks before the wedding, the choir's everyday activities had been the subject of the media attention, with reporters and photographers taking every opportunity to get that extra picture on report; the official magazine that had access to the choir was "Picture Post", who spent some time with the choir. They took genuine interest; the music was recorded by HMV and produced on 78 records (*of which I do own a copy*).

Back in the practice room, having been given our final instructions and being joined by the choir from the Chapel Royal Windsor, who were eyed by us with a degree of suspicion as they had their uniform of scarlet and gold which seemed a little over dressed. Finally, and in good time, the choir walked through the cloisters into the Abbey, not to the choir stalls but up the very narrow

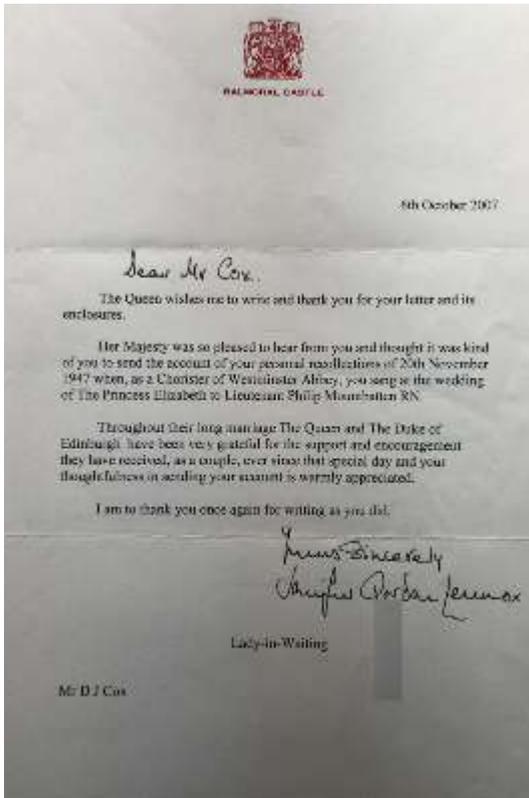
stairs to the organ loft, which span the nave at the half way point.

There seated at the organ was Dr Peasgood, our assistant organist, a likeable and friendly man who was much admired by us boys. He entertained the congregation with a selection of music. Our position in the organ loft gave a marvellous bird's-eye view of the marriage ceremony which began with the procession hymn "Praise my soul, the King of Heaven". Sounding, as it did with a full complement of choir, the organ which appeared to have all the stops out, and the congregation that knew the tune, it was a "hair standing on the back of the neck" experience.

The hymn "The Lord's My Shepherd", sung to the tune of Crimond, was especially requested by Princess Elizabeth, and for some reason Dr McKie had to present

himself at the Palace to hear both Princess Elizabeth and Princess Margaret give their rendition of the tune and descant. This was duly noted, with a hand written score and on his return, myself and eleven other boys were chosen to sing the descant on the last verse "Goodness and Mercy". The final piece of music "The Wedding March" by Mendelssohn, played by Dr Peasgood, ended the proceedings. It was back to the choir school for a special lunch and then the rest of the day we had to ourselves.

This is my memory of the Royal Wedding day; it was a privilege to have been at Westminster Abbey during this period. Together with other memories of the Royal Maundy, the unveiling and dedication of the Battle of Britain chapel, Montgomery of Alamein Field Marshal, and many more.



# Holiday Club '21—The Story of Jonah

journey with JONAH

After more than enough delays and disappointments in recent months, it was a joy to get together and hear the story of Jonah at Holiday Club 2021. Local children from three to eleven assembled in intrepid teams to help 'Captain Codswallop' and 'First Mate Frog' uncover the amazing story of this reluctant prophet.

With so much excitement, some of us were a little overwhelmed at first, but new friends made sure everybody felt at home, and we were all getting stuck in in no time.

We soon found out that Jonah was a man with social distancing close to his heart; the further he could get from Nineveh, the better! But Jonah wasn't worried about germs spreading, he was worried about God's grace spreading to people he thought didn't deserve it.



As we played games, coloured crafts, and chatted together, we learned that God's grace has always been for people who don't deserve it. People just like Jonah and just like me and you.

As well as hearing Jonah's story, we heard Rachel's story of how she became a Christian. Years after a holiday club a little bit like ours, Rachel remembered the leaders who had wanted to share God's grace with her. Looking in her Bible, she discovered the God who loved her and came down to Earth to die for her. Everybody on the holiday club team has a story a little bit like Rachel's.

We had a lot of fun dancing along to our brilliant youth band, causing chaos with games outdoors, and chatting to parents over coffee and cake. If you enjoyed Holiday Club '21 or think it looks like fun, we would love to see you again soon at one of our regular Sundays or our October Light Party.

**Adam Heaton**



Music at Duffield presents

**Sophie Rosa & Miloš Milivojević**  
(violin) (accordion)



Saturday 30 October 2021, at 7.30pm  
**ST ALKMUND'S CHURCH, Church Drive**  
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**PROGRAMME—TWO FOR TANGO**

To include:

- Johann Strauss: Wiener Blut
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- Monti: Czardas
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## Mouse Makes

Can you find the lost coin, the lamp  and the broom  in the picture?

What else can you see? 



**THE LOST COIN**  
Jesus told this story:



A woman who has 10 silver coins loses one of them, what does she do? She lights a lamp, sweeps her house and looks carefully everywhere until she finds it. When she finds it she calls her friends and neighbours together and says "I am so happy I found the coin I lost. Let us celebrate!"

In the same way the angels of God celebrate over one sinner who repents.

Luke 15:8-10



*“When a holiday club gives as much to the helpers as to those it was designed for!”* ANNA MADDISON offers her thoughts on the event.

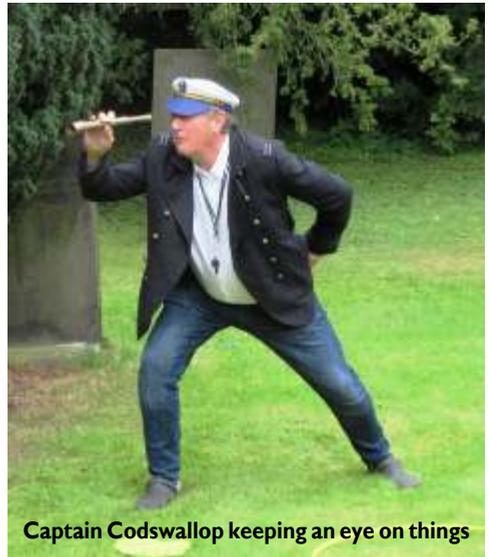


**I**ncredible hard work went into the planning and preparation of this year’s holiday club (not by me I must add), and so what follows did not happen by chance...

This was my first year as a holiday club leader and what a blessing. As I said to a friend after day one: *“you just walk through the doors and check out of being an adult”*. Any worries or stresses are just parked as you find yourself surrounded by children, all learning through brilliant songs (sung with excellent music, thanks to our youth band!), great story telling from Jonah with some very special amateur dramatics, games, refreshments and crafts; what’s not to love!

As the days went on I was so struck by how engaged the children were, recalling the section of Jonah we had looked at the day before and enthusiastically (and often very loudly)

joining in with ‘Captain Codswallop’ and ‘Frog’. They all had so much fun playing the games outside, and even the more timid of the group would be charging around joining in, which was just brilliant to watch ... and join in with! The lure of the obstacle course and whether I could make it through the tunnel was too much to resist, and the sense of achievement when I did was well worth it.



**Captain Codswallop keeping an eye on things**

The refreshments, as a mum, I feel qualified to say, are a very key part to any morning activity (or actually any-time-of-day activity in our household!). I did have to chuckle when on the first day when they didn't know when they would be getting them, the children all gratefully received them having not asked for them before. By day 2 I think it only took the first 30 minutes of the morning before I could hear the familiar cry of 'I'm hungry' ... — they knew what was coming!

Watching the children end their morning with the crafts was so lovely. Again very engaged, a lot of concentration, but also a lovely time to be able to help and chat to them during a quieter time. The craft time was also when their parents or carers came for refreshments themselves, and that was such a lovely opportunity to either meet them for the first time or have time to get to know familiar faces better. And what a great encouragement they were too, so grateful and appreciative of the time their children had had with us.

Personally, the fun enjoyed with the children was really added to with spending time with the older youth who gave so much to the club, for both the children and leaders. In addition, time with the other leaders was a real privilege; we were all there for the children but worked so well together.

We prayed before and during holiday club for the safety of all involved and that we, as leaders, would have the opportunity to show God's love to the children and their parents and carers, and our prayers were most definitely answered.



There were plenty of fun and games activities outside

# “A Clash of Cultures” or “Wisdom Shared”

## Synopsis

Moses is the son of Ralph Smith, and is currently living with Ralph and his wife Rosemary in Much Mumbling, in the White House on the Green.

He is troubled by inequality in England. Ralph and then Moses tell today’s story.



**Ralph:** Our son Moses has already been here for nearly six months, since he appeared in our lives shortly after we were married at Christmas. He came early to do some preparatory work for his course on Environmental Engineering. He has already been away to two trips, one to look at Wind Turbines, and the other at small scale hydro-electric plants. He came back very excited at what he had seen, especially at the Archimedean Screw Turbine at William Armstrong’s home, Craggside in Northumberland, the birthplace of hydroelectricity.



Moses calls himself “the son of two continents.” I, Ralph, his father, am English, although I have lived in Africa for much of my adult life. His mother was from Africa.

Perhaps because of this, Moses is fascinated by the different lifestyles and technologies he had seen and read about in different countries.

However, initially excited and somewhat overwhelmed, he began to be troubled. He kept it to himself for some time, until he decided to share his concerns.

“Father,” he said to me one day, “why is it that I see so many contrasts in this country?”

“There are many, my son. Tell me about them.”

“I see fine roads and railways; with litter strewn along their verges. I see opulent houses with people begging in London, one of the world’s great cities. And so much useful stuff being sent to landfill, when it could be refurbished and used again. Please explain.”

“Moses, there will always be tensions between right and wrong, between poor and rich. Since Adam and Eve were disobedient, men and women have been selfish and disobedient.”

“But people have so much money. I see large cars, which look like mobile houses. Why do people not give their money to the poor?”

He began to get really upset. “Anyone in this village could build a whole village in

Africa. Why do they have so much, and not share anything at all?”

“Perhaps they could build a village, but you are wrong to imply that they all ‘have so much’ and more so that they do ‘not share anything at all’. We do not know their circumstances, or their generosity—or lack of it! I will try to explain, by asking you some questions.”

I took a deep breath.

“Tell me, my son, Moses: how much did your flight to the UK cost?”

“About £500: why did you ask?”

“And why did you not give that money to the poor?”

“It wasn’t my money, it was a grant from my government.”

“And if it had been yours?”

“How could I not come to find my father!?”

“Indeed, my son, and I am very, very glad that you did. But nonetheless, you might have given it to the poor?”

“But Jesus said, ‘You will always have the poor...’”

“He did indeed, in Matthew’s gospel! I believe that we have a dilemma. However, he also said, to the rich young ruler, ‘... go, give all you have to the poor, and ... follow me.’ (In Matthew 19 verse 21) The problem here was that Jesus knew that the man’s wealth was keeping him from accepting Jesus.”

“I know this teaching, Father, but it is not easy to understand and follow.”



“Most things that are worthy need to be studied, and pondered, and prayed through. Talk to us, talk to your friends. Challenge them, and let them challenge you.”

Moses nodded, thoughtfully. There was a comfortable silence.

“Another question, my son. After your degree, you hope to get a good job?”

“Of course, and then I can...,” he paused.

“Yes?” I waited. There was a very long pause.

“My head tells me that I can get a really good job, be well paid, help the planet, and find a wife and have children. Perhaps near you in England.”

He ruminated.

“My faith tells me that I should be serving our Lord Jesus, and spreading His message to all people.”

Another long, long pause.

“But my desire is to travel and explore the world, to see new people. And I even dream of having a wife to take with me on my travels.”

“We do not know what plan God has for our lives, the path chosen for us. Some things in life are wrong—sinful—and the Bible tells us about them. The Bible has a great deal to teach us. Look at what our Lord Jesus told us himself. And look at what the apostle Paul had to say; there is a great deal to study.

“Some things may not be sinful, but may be inappropriate.”

“Such as?” Moses looked confused.

“Extravagant expenditure or hoarding come to mind. The Bible tells us things that are sometimes unexpected. For example, we should always put God first. But we are not called to neglect others, our friends, our families. The apostle →

→ Paul says in 1 Corinthians 5 verse 8:  
*‘... if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.’*

“Clearly Paul is saying that we have responsibilities to our own families, which we must take seriously.”

“I’m sorry, Father, I am lost. I don’t know what you are trying to say?”

“Life is complex, life can be hard. Each one of us must seek, in our own way, what God wants us to do and what He wants us to do.”

“What if we can’t hear Him? Or find the way?”

“Talk to us, your family, your friends, the wider church family. Try doors to see if they open or close for you.

“Have you talked about your life to anyone outside those who welcomed you last month?”

“A little. Sometimes I find the English people hard to understand!”

“Yes, indeed. I am English, and I’m still trying to get the hang of it, especially after returning from Africa.”

We laughed together.

—ooo OOO ooo—

I looked outside.

“Talking of friends, I see that Katie is coming across the green. I don’t think that it is me that is bringing her over here, do you?”

“Father, she is a child. Should I say something?”

“Be wise, young man. And kind. I think that you will have the right words at the right time. And that time might be this morning, perhaps?”

I’ll let Moses tell the next chapter of this story.

—ooo OOO ooo—

**Moses:** Katie came in for a coffee, and then we went for what was becoming our regular stroll. It was obvious that she wanted to ask me something, and I had a good idea what it might be. But I was wrong.

“Moses, can I ask you something?”

With Katie, you don’t have to beat about the bush, she just comes out with it.

“I thought you might...”—that took her off-guard—“... because you always do!”

She relaxed after that.

“I guess you know what it might be about?”

“I will let you lead on this occasion.”

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“OK,” she took a deep breath, “so what do you think is the status of our relationship?”

“You are a wise young woman,” I said, intending a compliment, but it fell flat.

“I don’t like the ‘young’ tag in there.”

“Well, to be frank, I don’t think that you would prefer ‘Wise Woman?’”

“No, not really, it would make me sound about 80, wouldn’t it?”

I took a deep breath. “We are both young, I think me more than you in very many ways. So, in terms of our friendship, I think we should walk and talk like two good school friends, in the innocence of youth, and not worry about other things.”

“You think I’m too young?”

“No, I don’t, but I do think that I am very young. After all, I have only just met my parents, which makes me a baby!”

We laughed together, and there was a clear sense of resolution.

“I think that we both will take time to mature. Let us share together and with our friends as we grow.”



And we walked on. After a fruitful silence, we began to talk, and there was healing in our friendship.

Sometimes things need to be dealt with at once. But at other times it is much better to let things mature with the passage of time.

I am very blessed, both by my new family, and by my new friends. It will take time to see how friendships will develop. But it will be worth the wait.

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*This story continues our walk with Moses and his new family. We all have to think about how we use our God-given gifts, and how we walk with Jesus every day. Let us pray that we do so wisely. Again, the characters and story are fictional, but based upon the Bible and our daily walk with Jesus.*



"Er... vicar – does the church have a position on the donation of GM vegetables for the Harvest Festival?"

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