



ADVENT THANKSGIVING GIFT DAY

“Nothing is impossible with God” (Luke 1 v 37)



It has been another fruitful year in the life of St James as we have sought, by God’s abundant and enabling grace, to fulfil our calling as a church to live **All of Life for Christ: empowering** ordinary people to live extraordinary lives by **enabling** people to come to know Christ as Saviour and **equipping** people to live for Christ as Lord.

St James seeks to be an everyday church, both individually and corporately. We want to give every member of our church family the confidence and courage to be an ambassador for Christ in their daily context, on the frontlines where God has placed them, at work, at home and in the community. At the same time we want to be a beacon of hope and grace as a church community in Furzedown, providing opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds to taste and see that the Lord is good and to grow as whole-life disciples of Jesus. We have contact with around a hundred families each week through our Bible Clubs for children and young people; we offer open hospitality and community every Tuesday at The Well Cafe; our older church members gather each month at Friendship Circle to enjoy each other’s company with a varied programme of activities aimed at reducing isolation and encouraging a sense of belonging; we actively support the work of the Furzedown Youth Centre with its Friday night open youth club and its weekly café for sixth form students from Graveney School. When you add in our small groups for bible study and mutual support, our women’s nights, Messy Sunday, midweek communion, schools ministry, support for mission beyond Furzedown, and more, it is clear that St James is a busy and active church.

Of course, this all costs money and in this post-Covid period we have seen our church budget increasingly squeezed with deficits in the last few years. We are again heading for a deficit in 2024 with the strong possibility that the PCC will have to make some tough decisions to cut back expenditure in 2025 which will inevitably impact some of the activity mentioned above. That is why we have set a higher target than usual for the Advent Gift Day of **£22,000** in the hope that we can put a dent in the projected deficit and begin the new year in better shape.

So, how might you respond to God’s kindness & faithfulness this Advent?

Could you give Him a one-off gift, over and above your regular giving, to express your gratitude to God and to help fund our mission in Furzedown and beyond?

Advent Gift Day – Sunday 1st December 2024

This year we will give the first £1,500 to:

Musalaha, based in Jerusalem & Bethlehem - www.musalaha.org



October 7th 2023 was an unspeakably tragic day in Israel – the worst massacre of Jewish people since the holocaust. Since then the world has watched in horror at the devastating loss of life and destruction of property in the Palestinian Territories and Lebanon as Israel has responded with massive firepower. Of course, the conflict didn't begin last

autumn – it has been raging for decades. Most of the time it bubbles silently but menacingly beneath the surface in communities across the Holy Land, but every so often it erupts in catastrophic acts of violence and vengeance. While the world seeks a top-down political solution to the conflict, there are numerous grassroots Christian organisations working for peace and reconciliation, striving for a bottom-up resolution.

Musalaha is once such group. Founded in 1990 during the first intifada by a Palestinian Christian and a Messianic Jew, Musalaha, which means '**Reconciliation**' in Arabic, runs a variety of Christ-centred programmes for women, men, children and youth, aimed at enabling people from different sides of the conflict to build relationships, create friendships, share their stories, seek mutual understanding and find ways to create a lasting peace based on security, equality and justice for all.



We will also give £1,500 to:

Furzedown Youth Centre



FYC has enjoyed something of a renaissance over the last year with renewed energy and vision resulting in encouraging growth, both at Friday Night Youth Club, where 40+ young people from our local community gather each week, and at the Tuesday Café catering for 6th formers from Graveney School. Funds for youth work are increasingly hard to come by at a time when our young people are more vulnerable than ever. So, here is a precious opportunity to support the social, educational and spiritual development of young people in our community.

You can give by the following means:

- Bank Transfer to Barclays Bank, A/c Name: St James PCC, Sort Code: 20-96-89, A/c No: 00196878. **Please add reference 'Advent Gift Day'**
- Cash or Cheque in the special Advent Gift Day envelope available from the Information Desk on Sundays or the Church Office on weekdays.