

Saints ALIVE

*The magazine of:
All Saints, Leighton Buzzard
St. Nicholas, Hockliffe
St. Michael's, Eggington
St. Michael and All Angels,
Billington
The Good Shepherd, Sandhills*

December 2021 / January 2022

70p

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community together



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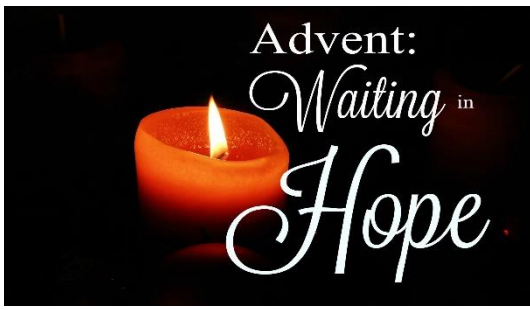
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by Rev'd Cate Irvine

We begin December in Advent, our season of expectant waiting. We hold before God the darkness of our world and the darkness within our own lives and we wait with longing for God to come to us bringing light and hope.

We are all still living through the most enormous changes in our world and I wonder if we have the courage to look for more change in a time when so many of the changes that we have experienced have felt all too challenging. I think that we are all longing for something that we can't quite name. Advent is the perfect time to hold that longing before God.

I remember my mother telling me that when she was little, her father, who was a parish priest, used to come home after Midnight Mass and then put up the decorations. I can't imagine what time he got to bed, but it must have been magical for the children to come downstairs and find the house transformed for Christmas. I suspect that there is a small child in each of us that wants to wake up to find our lives transformed by beauty and joy, to live in that moment when we are surrounded by love and hope and peace.

As we move from Advent into Christmas and the New Year, we move from our season of waiting into the time of new possibilities. At Christmas we remember that God enters this world as a tiny and vulnerable child, taking on all the risks that being human brings. Jesus knew physical frailty, and was born into a time of huge political uncertainty and religious change. At New Year we look back on what has been and then turn our faces to the year ahead with whatever it may bring.

Our lights and celebrations are declarations of hope in the darkness, our confidence that however tiny the light of a candle, however insignificant the life of one more child, real change is possible. God comes among us to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves, to bring us salvation and real hope for the future. In Advent we hear again and again that we should stay awake and keep alert, watching and waiting for what God will do. God changes everything with the birth of Jesus, the child who is both divine and human.

We may sometimes feel worn out by all the changes of this world, we may feel that we are waiting in the darkness, but what we celebrate at Christmas is that our waiting is never in vain. God may not always do what we want or even what we expect, but God is with us in our waiting and uncertainties, in our darkness and in our celebrations. If we pay attention we will see that God is very much at work among us today, bringing light and hope and new possibilities for each one of us and for our world.

Mother Cate

Our present pattern of services across the Ouzel Valley Team

All Saints

Sundays:

Please note new times which allow for cleaning between services

8am Holy Communion

9.30am Parish Eucharist

11.30am

1st & 3rd Sundays: All Age Service

2nd & 4th Sunday Holy Baptism

6pm Said Evening Prayer

3rd Sunday: followed by Benediction

Weekdays:

Holy Communion

7.30pm Tuesday

(Service of Healing on 3rd Tuesday)

10.00am Thursday

9.00am Saturday

Morning Prayer: St. Hugh's Chapel

9.00am Tuesday – Friday

St. Barnabas, Linslade

Sundays:

8am Said Eucharist

10am Parish Eucharist

6pm Evensong

www.linslade-parish.org.uk

St. Leonard's, Heath & Reach

Sundays:

8am: Holy Communion

11am Holy Communion (in church & via Zoom)
(first Sunday of the month is a Family Service)

Tuesdays: 7pm Holy Communion

Morning Prayer via Zoom:

9.00am Monday - Saturday

www.saintleonardschurch.com

St. Michael's, Eggington

Sundays:

9.15am 1st & 3rd Sundays: Holy Communion

St. Nicholas', Hockliffe

Sundays:

9.30am Holy Communion

St. Michael's and All Angels, Billington

Sundays:

11.15am Holy Communion

Good Shepherd, Greenleas School, Sandhills:

Sundays at 9.45am:

1st Sunday: Holy Communion and
CGS Juniors at Greenleas School

2nd Sunday: 'In the Community' at Astral Park

3rd Sunday: Family Service at Greenleas School

4th Sunday: Bring and share breakfast and
Holy Communion at Greenleas School

Sunday Saints: for age 3+ year olds, meets during 9.30am Sunday service at All Saints.

All Saints Toddler Time: All Saints every Wednesday during term time, at 9.30am & at 1.30pm.
£1.50 per parent / carer & child; 50p extra per child; refreshments included.

ACTIVE: (Senior Youth Group for age 11+) **not meeting at present because of a lack of leaders.**
If you could help, please contact the office.

Leighton Young Singers Club: for children in Years 2-6, meets on Fridays at 6.30 - 7.30pm.

Bereavement Café: a support group offering friendship and understanding.

1st Sunday of the month, 2.30-4pm The Spire Coffee Shop, All Saints

Choir Practice: Normally Friday evenings, 6.45 trebles; 7.30 adults.

Bellringers: Practice on Monday, 7.30pm-9.30pm.

Spire Coffee Shop: Tuesday & Saturday 10am-2pm.

Contact Details on Page 2.

News Roundup

The Editors would like to thank all the contributors for their articles and continued support over the past year, and we hope you have enjoyed reading your Saints Alive Magazine. There will be no January issue, but we will be back in February with, hopefully, yet more interesting stories and articles to share with you. In the meantime we would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a healthy and happy 2022!



Worth a smile

Camels

In Jane's Christmas drawing, two of the camels were approaching the inn, over which was pictured a large star.

The third camel and its rider were going directly away from it.

"Why is the third man going in a different direction?" her mother asked.

Jane replied: "Oh, he's looking for a place to park."



Christmas Carols

One night Freda went carol singing. She knocked on the door of a house and began to sing. A man with a violin in his hand came to the door. Within half a minute, tears were streaming down his face. Touched, Freda sang every carol she knew - and some she didn't. The man continued to weep gently throughout her performance. "I understand," she said softly at last. "You are remembering your happy childhood Christmas days."

"No, not exactly," he replied in a choked sort of voice. "I'm a musician!"



New bank

Mother decided that ten-year old Cathy should get something 'practical' for Christmas. "Suppose we open a savings account for you?" she suggested. Cathy was delighted. "It's your account, darling," mother said as they arrived at the bank, "so you fill out the application." Cathy was doing fine until she came to the space for 'Name of your former bank.' After a slight hesitation, she put down 'Piggy'.



Angel tidings

The little boy was to be an angel in the Christmas play and his one line was: "Behold, I bring you good tidings." He asked what tidings were and his mother explained that the word meant news. On the night of the play, the youngster had stage fright and, after a long silence, blurted out: "Hey, have I got news for you!"

Parish Registers

Holy Baptism, October:

10: Aubrey-Grace Bush, Peony April King-Mand, Eliza Duleep King-Mand, William Arthur Uffindell, Aaron James Uffindell, Luca John McFadden, Romy Ellis-Mae Bright, Maisie Deborah Ryder; 17: Bethany Mabel Holbrook; 24: Mason Babatunde Theodore Edward Carter, Isla Raye Eniola Penelope Carter, Molly Louise Wilson, Maddison Turner Hancock, Elizabeth Ann Litwin

Holy Baptism, November:

28: Austin Ethan Arthur Harris, Ava Veronica Gilmartin, Ava Elizabeth Rose Towe

'One Lord, one faith, one baptism'

R.I.P. October:

7: Brian Allen at St. Barnabas; 15: Audrey Corazzi at Bierton; 20: Janet Stanley at West Herts; 22: Patricia Osbourne at All Saints; 27: Kim Lay at All Saints

R.I.P. November:

1: Jason McGovern at All Saints; 2: Andrew Yorston at All Saints; 8: Clifford Baines at All Saints; 10: Johnny Macauley at St. Leonard's; 11: Joan Richards at St. Leonard's; 12: William Spencer at St. Leonard's; 17: Margaret McLeod at Bierton; 25: Roger Swaby at Bierton;

'Everyone who lives and believes in me will never die'

Years Mind, December:

1: Tony Pyman, Nora Davis; 2: Frederick Deeley, Leslie Morgan; 3: Bram Evans, Keith Hazells; 5: Peter Harmer, Stefan Szuca; 6: Leslie Plenderleath, Charles Scraggs; 7: Jonathan Finch; 8: Doreen Lewis, George Lee; 9: Arnold Woolhead, Derek Williamson; 10: Kathleen Meredith; 11: Cynthia Slater; 12: Edie Skevington, Albert Perry, Edna Carpenter; 14: Dorothy Scammell, David Groom, Roy Clark; 16: Ernest Lennard, Win Deans; 18: Simon Munford, John Jones; 19: Gemma Howard; 20: Cynthia Jury; 21: Keith Biggerstaff; 22: David Noble, Eric Crompton; 25: Joan Winter, Margaret Ellison, Alice Shelley; 26: Roy Palmer; 27: Melanie Andrews, Sandra Hipwell, Maurice Raymond, Cecil Joynes; 28: Albert Nash, Colin Proctor; 29: David Brooker; 30: Mary Warburton, Evelyn Pomeroy, Reg Lunnon, Mary Jaggard, Roy Eggleton; 31: Edward Meredith, Nancy Meredith, Peggy Stonier

Years Mind, January:

1: Sarah Andrew; 2: Arthur Keyworth, Kay Kiteley; 3: Cynthia Tucker; 6: Eileen Garlick, Peter Walker, Elizabeth Underwood, David Burley; 7: John Fogg, Joyce Lathwell, John Carter; 9: Ellen Daniels, Stanley Rees Jones, Stanley Blake, Jeffery Sermon; 10: Eileen Pott, Arthur Speller, Margaret (Peg) Tingey; 11: Ivy Nash; 12: Rita Shephard, Elsie Molloy, Ronald Chandler; 15: Annie Norman, Mary Dell, Dennis Holroyd; 18: Danny Munroe; 19: Dian Milne; 20: Maurice Greensted, Dolly Harmer, Pauline Murrie, Joyce Dolton; 22: Margaret Beck, Cyril Dimmock; 23: Robert Kiteley, Percy Flewin, Betty Tuck, Annie Williams, Revd. Vernon Smith, Peter Kiddle, Jean Majchrowski; 26: Charlotte Sawka; 27: Betty Baines, William Leath, Alice Pyman; 28: Russell Palmer; 29: Bill Stonier; 31: John Harris, Maureen Webb

Pulford VA Lower School
Head Teacher: Mr Dave Heather
Office Manager: Mrs Alison Quick

A church school for
a whole community



Tel: 01525 372188

Website: www.pulfordschool.org

As a Foundation Governor, it has been a privilege to visit Pulford School on a number of occasions this term. I have been impressed with the variety of lessons taught, observing the drawing of Christmas cards in October (!), mosaic making, computer coding in the form of creating a pizza shop, maths and phonics lessons.

My favourite memory maybe comes from the annual governor day, where those of us who were able visited the school. I was in a class and a fellow governor arrived also (Ed Price for those of you who know him). As he entered the room, one of the children whispered loudly "The Government are here!"

Humour aside, it is a privilege to be a Foundation Governor to help support and pray for the running of the school. It's great to know the current values of the school are based around 'Faith, Hope and Love'. I'm particularly proud of the way the leadership is opening up conversations about diversity with parents, and how best to talk to our children to ensure they grow up to be tolerant and caring citizens.

A practical outworking of this has been the new pathway that has been laid this term alongside the new fence, to ensure Pulford is more accessible and inclusive for all pupils. Seeing the leadership respond quickly to specific needs speaks volumes about the love and care that God has for each one of us, whatever our individual circumstances.



Beci Morley



The Gentleman Gardener

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Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in
Matthew 2: 1-10

Around the time of Jesus' birth, in a land far to the east of Israel, there were men who studied the stars...

When they saw a new star they believed it showed a special King had been born. ✨ ✨



They set off to see that King.



They reached Jerusalem, the home of King Herod.



Where is the new King whose star we saw?

The Romans had made Herod king of the Jews about 30 years earlier. He was ruthless.



The Jews hated him and he was always worried that people were plotting against him.



He had them killed even if they were his wife or children...



So what the wise men said about a new King upset Herod



and that made everyone else afraid.

Herod got the teachers and priests together and asked about the king's birthplace.



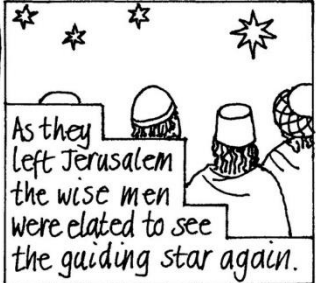
That would be Little Bethlehem*
*Micah 5:2



Herod secretly met the wise men and asked when they had first seen the star.



Go to Bethlehem and look for the child. When you find him let me know so I can come and worship him.



As they left Jerusalem the wise men were elated to see the guiding star again.

The story of the Christingle

The word 'Christingle' actually means 'Christ Light', and celebrates the light of Jesus coming into the world. Stories of how the Christingle began look back to the Moravian Church, which is found in the Czech Republic. The Moravians have held Christingle services for more than 200 years, and according to them, this is how the first Christingle might have been made:

Many years ago the children in a village were asked to bring a Christmas gift to put beside the crib in the church. One family was very poor, and had no money for gifts, but the three children were still determined to take something. The only nice thing they had was an orange, so they decided to give the Christ-child that.

But then they discovered the top was going green, so the eldest cut it out, and put a candle in the hole. To add some colour, one of the girls took a red ribbon from her hair and tied it around the middle of the orange. It was hard to make the ribbon stay still, so they fastened it in place with toothpicks. The toothpicks looked a bit bare, so the youngest child added some raisins to them.



The children took their decorated orange lantern to the church for the Christmas Mass. The other children sneered at their meagre gift, but the priest seized upon it with joy. He held it up as an example of the true understanding of the meaning of Christmas, for the following reasons: the orange is round, like the world; the candle gives us light in the dark, like the love of God; the red ribbon goes round the 'world', as a symbol of Christ's blood, given for everyone; the four sticks point in all directions, and symbolise that God is over all: North, South, East and West; and the fruit and nuts remind us of God's blessings.

The Children's Society first introduced the Christingle Service to The Church of England in 1968, and it has since become a popular event in the church calendar. This candlelit celebration is an ideal way to share the key messages of the Christian faith, while helping to raise vital funds to help vulnerable children across the country. Visit: www.childrenssociety.org.uk

[PS: Did you know: Christingle is an anagram of "Nicer lights"?

How many more words can you make from these letters?

Thanks to Parish Pump for this article, and for so much more in this magazine. Ed]

On a musical note.....



On Friday 12th November 2021, between 6.15 and 6.25 pm, along the pathway between the gates and the North Transept door, a steady procession of parents and slightly nervous children walked through the mist, excited to be taking part in the new Leighton Young Singers Club. This is a new venture in the musical life of All Saints. It's for children aged 7 to 11 who just like to sing.

These are the children who can be heard every day singing on their way to and from school, in the shower, in the car and whenever an opportunity arises. They'll sing anything: popular music, music from the shows, film music, jazz and even a bit of classical.

The club now meets for an hour on Friday evenings, at roughly the same time as the church choir treble practice. It is led by All Saints ex-Head Chorister Saffron Pughe, who sings alto in the church choir. She is ably assisted by her sister Elysia (All Saints ex-Deputy Head Chorister) and Peter Mundy from the choir tenor section. Saff is a newly qualified primary teacher and a brilliant guitarist, ideally suited to the role and I am very grateful to her, Elysia and Peter for giving up their time to run this new venture.

Each term, the Club will perform to the general public, family and friends. This term, they have a spot in the Town Mayor's Carol concert on 11th December at 7pm. Do come along to listen to them. If you can't come in person, it will be broadcast on the church's YouTube channel. We are also hoping that the children will sing in the All Age service on Mothering Sunday next term and will form the nucleus of the children's choir in our production of "*Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat*" in the summer term (watch this space).

There are 30 children in the Club and, at the time of writing, there are almost as many on a waiting list. The first two sessions have gone well with, I am told, some particularly fine singing in the second session, which is good to hear.

Paul Dickens

Calendar of Events

5th December

Bereavement Support Café Coffee Shop, All Saints 2.30pm – 4pm

Services as usual including Messy Mass All Saints 11.30am

8th December

Lunch Club in the North Transept, All Saints 1pm. Tickets £5.00 available from the Coffee Shop.

11th December

Mayor's Carol Concert All Saints 7.00pm

15th December

Pulford School Christmas Services All Saints 9.45am PS/YR, 11am Y1/Y2, 2.15pm Y3/Y4

17th December

Leighton Middle Christmas Services All Saints 11.30am & 1.30pm

Crafty Natter All Saints 1.30pm - 3.30pm

5th January

Lunch Club in the North Transept, All Saints 1pm. Tickets £5.00 available from the Coffee Shop.

16th January

Services as usual including All Age Communion All Saints 11.30am

21st January

Crafty Natter All Saints 1.30pm - 3.30pm



LEIGHTON BUZZARD MUSIC

LIVE PROFESSIONAL CONCERTS

In Leighton Buzzard Library Theatre 7.30pm

Saturday 8th January 2022

Pianist Florian Mitrea

a Making Music Selected Artist

Programme: Mozart, Beethoven, Schoenberg & Prokofiev

Please note: Tickets will not be available on the door, and must be pre-ordered either

at the box office downstairs in the library; or **via TicketSolve**

Please see links on the website, www.lbmusic.co.uk

Leighton Buzzard Music is a registered charity no: 1183681



Special Services for Advent, Christmas, New Year & Epiphany



Sunday 5th Dec	11:30am	Messy Mass with Toy Service: <i>Please bring new, unwrapped toys to give to charity</i>
	6:00pm	“In the Bleak Midwinter“ <i>A simple service with space to reflect for those who find Christmas difficult</i>
Sunday 12th Dec	4.00pm	Christingle, <i>in aid of the Children’s Society</i>
Sunday 19th Dec	6.00pm	Lessons and Carols for Christmas
Christmas Eve	2.30pm	Nativity Service <i>A short and simple nativity service with carols</i>
	5.00pm	Carols by Candlelight <i>*details and booking for this service are on Eventbrite at allsaintslb.eventbrite.com</i>
	11.15pm	Midnight Mass
Christmas Day	8.00am	Holy Communion (said service)
	10.00am	Family Communion for Christmas
Sunday 26th Dec	8:00am	Holy Communion (said service)
	9:30am	Parish Eucharist <i>Please note: no services at 11:30am or 6pm</i>
Saturday 1st Jan	11:00am	Eucharist for New Year’s Day
Sunday 2nd Jan	11:30am	Messy Mass for Epiphany
Thursday 6th Jan	10:00am	Holy Communion for Epiphany
	7:30pm	Holy Communion
Sunday 9th Jan	6:00pm	Epiphany Carol Service

Lift your eyes ... Looking at some of All Saints' curiosities

with thanks to Terry Warburton for his help with this series



A succession of bells:

A previous church was demolished in the late 13th Century, to make way for the church we see today. Work began in about 1277, and it was consecrated in 1288.

The only survival from that earlier building are the early 13th century font and a small priest's or "Sanctus" bell of about 1150. This ancient bell, the oldest bell in the diocese, then survived the fire of 1985 when it fell from the burning tower onto the altar.



Called the *ting-tang*, because of the sound it made when struck, it is now safely housed in the ringing room. However, when the BBC visited a couple of years ago and the bell was lifted and struck (?), it did not sound cracked at all. It had a wonderful medieval clear tone. It would be good to see it re-hung and used, as it was before the fire.

The ring of ten bells, cast in 1787, was lost in the 1985 fire. So a new ring of 12 was cast by Taylors of Loughborough, and hangs in a bell chamber above the ringing room which is above the crossing ceiling, reached by a spiral staircase from the north transept.

There are now 13 bells in all, (one a sharp second, allowing fewer bells to be rung if necessary) and cast in the key of C#. Each bell carries the name of an apostle with the 13th dedicated to St. Paul. It is a heavier peal than most cathedrals, and ranks 21st out of 92 peals of twelve in the world.

Christmas bells are ringing and merry organs playing

2 organs were lost in that fire as well. A new one was built by Harrison and Harrison of Durham, and installed in 1989. It has 2434 pipes ranging from 1.3cm (1/2 inch) to 4.6m (16ft). The Festival Trumpets – the pipes sticking forwards – are unusual, and produce a very distinctive sound. The crests on the casing are those of Lincoln (first diocese of All Saints), St Albans (the present diocese), and Durham, where the organ was made.

The next 16 years of restoration work filled this organ with dust, and a thorough overhaul was undertaken in 2018.



All Saints Tree Festival had much to say ...

Hundreds of visitors wandered through the 70 trees.

Following the theme of Christmas Past Present and Future,

1000s of baubles adorned those trees; and none was there by accident.

Someone had thought about every single one. Here are just some of the messages ...

Don't waste it –
recycle it

Music,
& laughter and
companionship is good
for us all

Care for
each other

Do you remember
...

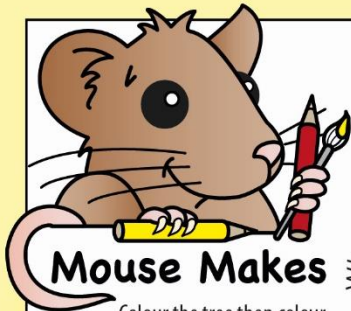
Climate change
is real

FAIR
TRADE

Make the world
a fairer place

UNFAIR
TRADE

Care for
the animals



Mouse Makes

Colour the tree then colour in one star each day until Christmas. Leave the large star at the top of the tree to colour in on Christmas day!

What's on the Christmas Tree?



A STAR
shows the way
to Jesus

Read
Matthew 2:1-12



ANGELS
bring messages from God

Read about
Gabriel's message in
Luke 1:26-38

Read the
shepherd's story in
Luke 1:26-38



**LIGHTS
AND CANDLES**
remind us that Jesus
lights our way to God

Read *Luke 2:29-32*



PRESENTS
remind us of God's
special gift to us ... **JESUS!**



"For God loved the world so much that He gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not die but have eternal life." *John 3:16*

Farewell, old friends

In November All Saints lost two long standing members of its congregation who will be missed by family and friends: Geoff Stopford at the age of 80 and Iain Smith, aged 99.

Geoffrey Stopford



Geoff was born in Gravesend in 1941 and attended the Duke of York's Royal Military School in Dover as a boy. He married Christine in 1968 and they had two sons, Edward and Philip. Geoff worked at Lancer Boss for 35 years and taught the piano to many children in and around Leighton Buzzard.

He was a member of the Leighton Buzzard Festival Singers, The Phoenix Choir and played bass guitar in *The Gooseberry Fools*. He was a friendly man, supportive of Christine as churchwarden of All Saints and regularly attending services.

A Service of Thanksgiving for his life will be held in All Saints on Monday 6 December at 12 noon.

Iain Smith



He was christened John Freeland Smith, but was always known as Iain. Perhaps he suspected there may be other John Smiths about! Born in Aberdeen in 1922, his first job was a morse operator for the railway. His war years in RAF 303 Squadron, were spent in North Africa where his skill with radio was put to good use in mobile communications, spotting and reporting enemy air movement. He crossed into Sicily, liaising with the US army and slowly working his way up Italy.

He married Vicki in 1946 and they had 3 children. Daughter Katrina, now Grant, well known in Theatreland and to most in All Saints, remained living nearby after she married and kept a caring eye on him when Vicki passed on.

Iain specialised in air traffic control, working in a number of major UK airports, and for many years was principal of the Civil Aviation Authority's Telecommunication College at Bletchley Park. Iain received the OBE from the Queen in recognition of his public service.

He and Vicki were very active helping All Saints until he was partially disabled by a stroke in 1995, which, with the shock of her death two years later and advancing old age, kept him increasingly confined to his Linslade home. He donated the external oak doors to the south porch in memory of Vicki. He would have been 100 in August next year.

His funeral will be at All Saints on Tuesday 21 December at 2pm.

St. Nicholas, Hockliffe

Vicar: Rev'd Noel McGeeney

Tel: 01525 237633

Churchwardens: Brian Speller: 210 565;

Roger Spalding: 07451 877 501



***The St. Nicholas tree
at the All Saints Tree Festival:
created by Carol & Brian Speller, & Julie Tierney***

***Oh my goodness – whose bright idea was this
then? And where does one start?***

***On the theme of Christmas Past, Present &
Future: it's all in the detail:***

***Christmas Past: the robin on Jacob Marley's
tomb stone, with the chain draped around it;***

***Christmas Present:
The writing desk with the quill, inkpot, old
candle, and cobweb with the spiders in the web;***

***Christmas Future: the Christmas tree with lights;
Scrooge was a reformed character and was
celebrating Christmas.***



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St. Michael's, Eggington

Vicar: Rev'd Noel McGeeney

Tel: 01525 237633

Church Officers:

Carol Hart 384634

Paul Brown 751861



Well Autumn has arrived, and the leaves are turning beautiful colours and the evenings are drawing in. We will have to start sweeping the leaves up in the churchyard on our next working party. Always fun!!!

We had a lovely joint villages service on the 31st October, with Father Grant leading the service. It was lovely to see all our friends from the other villages and catch up on the news. Father Grant has moved back to Wing so we may see him again.

We had a Remembrance Service in the churchyard on the 14th November, conducted by Linda, it was well attended and the rain kept away.

We are getting ready for Christmas now with Advent around the corner. I will have to start making the Advent Ring. We will celebrate Advent Sunday on the 28th November with St Nicholas hosting the service.

We have communion services on the 5th and 19th December, at 9.30am, and a joint villages service on the 26th December at 10am.

We will be holding our Carol Service on Wednesday 15th December at 7pm, followed by mulled wine and mince pies. All welcome.

Our Christingle service is on 24th December at 3pm, when I will once again hope to find enough children to dress up to tell the Christmas Story.

Then believe it or not we will be into 2022 with a service on 2nd January. Let us hope we all have a happy and healthy new year.

I wish you all a very happy Christmas and new year.

Carol Hart



Carol Services at

Eggington: Wednesday 15th December at 7pm;

Hockliffe: Saturday 18th December at 7pm

Midnight Mass 11.15pm at both St. Nicholas and St. Leonard's Heath & Reach.

New weekly Service pattern

Also please note: Hockliffe & Eggington are now sharing weekly Sunday services, at 9.30am: 1st & 3rd Sundays Eggington; 2nd & 4th at Hockliffe

St. Michael & All Angels, Billington

Vicar: Rev'd Steve Marsh

Tel: 01525 838450

Churchwardens:

Sandra Brewin 373644; Julia Haviland 850380



David Thompson took this photo on Remembrance Sunday - a moving reminder for the congregation as they entered the church. Julia and Geoff set up the Tommy, a common sight on the verges of many villages and a stark reminder to all who pass that we owe our cherished freedom to the thousands who sacrificed their lives.

The Christian story is played out every day of our lives, in every country in the world, that "Greater love has no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends".

The Gospel for that day was not an easy one. Jesus speaks to his disciples of the future in which there will be wars, rumours of wars, famines and earthquakes: does that ring a bell for you! Rev'd Steve Marsh took up the challenge in his sermon, encouraging us to

turn our minds away from thoughts of doom and gloom and directing them towards God's promises of a New Heaven and a New Earth where there is no more crying or pain.

He spoke to us of a small charity called "Weavers of Hope", bringing together artists and craftsmen to work together. The idea is that we should weave hope into our everyday lives, not closing our eyes to those who suffer horrendous tragedy but keeping alive our faith and belief that love, truth and goodness will prevail. Though physically our lives may become harder and less prosperous we, as believers and sharers of hope, will hold on to the truth that "All shall be well and all shall be well and all manner of things shall be well".

The Friday Tea in the village hall continues to flourish on the 1st Friday of each month from 2.30pm-4.30pm. Everybody is welcome to come for tea, coffee, cake and chat.

The Bowls Club continues on Monday evenings at 7.30pm in the village hall. It is eagerly seeking new members. It is a game anybody can play, no matter what age. Please just turn up for a free try or contact Julia Haviland on 01525 850380 for more information

Sandra Brewin

Good Shepherd, Sandhills

Vicar: Rev'd Steve Marsh

Tel: 01525 838450

Churchwarden: Steve Nixon



**CHURCH of the
GOOD SHEPHERD**

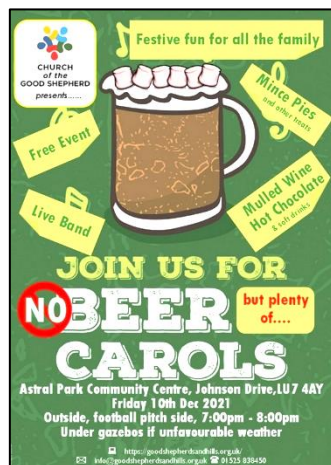
Christmas at CoGS

Our annual Beer and Carols event was unsurprisingly cancelled last year. Singing was banned and families could not mix so gathering over a hundred people together in one room singing carols and enjoying beer was out.

This year whilst it would be legal, we've decided it just won't be sensible to invite the Sandhills community to gather in this way. So our PCC put their heads together and have kept the spirit of the event but removed the beer and taken it outside.

This year our "No Beer But Plenty of Carols" event will be held in Astral Park itself rather than inside the Sports and Community Centre. The shorter one hour event will still have our fabulous band playing our favourite Christmas carols and there will be hot chocolate and mulled wine to ward off the chill.

In the run up to Christmas, members of our church will be regaling the Sandhills community with a carol singing tour of the estate. We did this socially distanced last year and we received some great feedback from people that heard us go by their home. So we're doing it again on Wednesday 1st December. Locals should keep an eye out for the troupe of singers in hi vis jackets.



A few years ago one of our members, Julie, responded to a call to use our personal gifts and skills for the betterment of our church and community. Julie set up a flower fund so that we could let others know that the church community is thankful, is praying for them at a difficult time or celebrating their achievement. Julie raises the funds through hosting a Christmas Flower Arranging Evening that is a great chance to chat and giggle as we create some surprisingly stunning Christmas dining table centrepieces under Julie's patient tutelage. This year the event is being held on 8th December.

Other dates:

Our monthly 'Out and About' mission event at Astral Park will be Christingle on Sunday 12th December at 9.45;

Christmas Eve, 5pm: a joint crib service with St Michael and All Angels church, Billington.

Christmas Day Service, 9.45am, at our usual base at Greenleas School, Kestrel Way.

Even with the lingering threat of Covid in our midst, we have been able to arrange safe community events that we hope new and familiar faces will value this Christmas.

Jo Bellamy

Saints on Earth

Personal accounts of the wide-range of spiritually significant men and women who have inspired and influenced us. Rev'd Kirsty Borthwick looks at

The Cathedral Saints

Given it's the final article in this series I hope you'll forgive me for talking this month not about one saint, but seven. And in particular, the seven saints whose statues stand together on the screen behind the Nave Altar at our Cathedral.

I was working and worshipping at St Albans Cathedral as I went through the initial vocations process and during that formative time in my life, these statues watched on, a constant reminder of the heritage of faith and heavenly communion in which we share. In this short article I want to introduce you to them and talk a little about the two themes that unite them.

Saint Alban, for whom our Diocese is named, was a Roman citizen who lived in the town of Verulamium, the ruins of which lie in the parkland below St Albans Cathedral. He sheltered a priest, converted to the Christian faith and, when soldiers came in search of his guest, dressed himself in the priest's clothes and was arrested in his place, allowing the priest to escape. Alban refused the opportunity to revoke his faith. And so was led to the top of the hill outside the city and executed. Legend has it that his executor's eyes popped out and rolled down the hill... apparently. With more historical certainty, it's that hillside on which our current Cathedral is built.

Saint Amphibalus: The priest Alban sheltered has come to be known as Amphibalus, a brave man who was committed in life and death to proclaiming the Gospel. Despite Alban's best efforts local legend has it that Amphibalus only made it as far as nearby Redbourn before the Roman soldiers found and executed him. He's a character easily forgotten in the history of our Diocese, but Alban wouldn't be a Saint, and our Diocese wouldn't be named as it is, without him.

Saint Alban Roe was a Roman Catholic Priest at the time of the English Civil War. His statue has him holding playing cards. They're a testament to his creativity in preaching the Gospel under persecution. Wary of being caught teaching openly, he used the numbers on the cards as theological symbols (three for the Trinity, for instance) so that he could claim to be innocently gambling if anyone raised questions. Nonetheless he was caught, briefly imprisoned in St Albans and then executed in 1642.

George Tankerfield was a baker by trade but his faith led him to become a Protestant preacher in the time of the persecutions under Mary I. This in turn, led him to his death. Wanting to set an example to others, the authorities had him burnt at the stake not far from the West End of the Cathedral.

Sister Elisabeth Romanova was born a member of the Russian royal family (and granddaughter to Queen Victoria) but on the death of her husband gave up all her worldly riches and used the proceeds to found the orthodox convent of Ss Martha and Mary (in Moscow) of which she became abbess. She worked tirelessly for the relief of

the poor. Alongside her family, she was arrested in 1918 and brutally executed during the Bolshevik revolution. Her captors threw her and others down a mine shaft. Surviving the initial fall, she is rumoured to have tended the wounds of those with her before dying herself.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a German Lutheran, a passionate theologian and pastor, and famously stood against Nazi rule. He was one of a small number who even plotted an assassination attempt aimed at killing Hitler. It was this act that finally saw him arrested and sent to Flossenbürg concentration camp. He continued to write profound pieces of theology from prison until he was hanged on the morning of 9th April 1945, just days before the camp was liberated.

Archbishop Oscar Romero was an Archbishop of the Roman Catholic Church in El Salvador where he campaigned tirelessly in defence of the poor and downtrodden, and particularly vulnerable children. He bravely opposed the Junta government who took power in 1979, and as he himself predicted was likely to happen, was shot whilst celebrating the Eucharist in 1980.

7 saints:

++Oscar
Romero

Alban Roe

Amphibalus

Alban

George
Tankerfield

Elisabeth
Romanova

Dietrich
Bonhoeffer



So, what unites these seven people of God? First, they're all martyrs. Each answered the call to discipleship even unto death, laying down their lives for the sake of the Gospel, the good of the Church and for love of Christ. Their lives and their deaths call us to live sacrificially and not to count the cost. What a summons!

But together these seven also call us into the pursuit of unity. Alban and Amphibalus' friendship speaks of the power of hospitality and generosity. Roe and Tankerfield serve as a reminder of what goes wrong when we let division run rife. Romanova, Bonhoeffer and Romero, modern representatives of three of our sister churches (who each happen to have a worshipping community that meets at St Albans Cathedral), remind us that our fellowship in Christ – with all those in heaven and on earth - reaches far beyond the bounds of the Church of England. As we enter a new year may their example inspire us to be united to one another and all God's Church, in Christ, as we live out his calling in this world.

Mother Kirsty

Recycling gets another kick start at All Saints Church

We can start to help Save the Planet as we save ourselves. Did you know it is now possible to recycle the blister packs that hold our medicine?

So if like me you feel mildly guilty about the plastic waste left as you pop the pills that keep you up and at, (for me that's 4 packs a month, 48 a year and that's been nearly 10 years - in my personal health journey so 480 blister packs of life continuing pills alone then add in the paracetamol and ibuprofen for general aches pains, headaches and hangovers.

Now you can let that guilt dissipate by dropping off your empty blister packs here at All Saints Church. We will collect them up and take them to the recycling centre when the quantity is great enough.

Dropping them to us is yet another Eco Church initiative to keep the carbon foot print down, being just one journey to the recycle centre. Blister packs from any medicine that can be recycled.

Every little helps to try reduce our plastic landfill

These ideas will save you money and don't involve much money or big changes to your lifestyle. If I'm preaching to the converted, sorry, but with the recent COP26 and a sharp increase in energy prices I thought I'd put together a few ideas to help people save money and perhaps reduce their impact on climate change, and with many of them you will save money straight away.

These first options are basically free and will save you money.

- 1) turn your thermostat down, unless you have very young children, the elderly or are ill, 19° C is a good temp for you house.
- 2) wear more clothes if you are cold. You don't have to buy more, just wear a vest top or T-shirt under your clothes.
- 3) turn off radiators and shut the doors of rooms you are not in. You don't need to heat bedrooms you aren't in during the day. Turn the radiators back on about an hour before you go to bed. If you can afford it / want to, you can get smart radiator thermostats and you can do it from your phone. But that involves buying more stuff and that isn't great for the environment.
- 4) turn off lights in rooms you aren't in. Turn off electrical items you aren't using.
- 5) draw your curtains. They keep in a lot of heat and when you replace them get thick thermal ones.
- 6) Don't replace things that aren't broken, just because they aren't trendy or you want a new one.

More ideas to come next month.

Jaine Holford

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