

# 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*

May 2022

70p



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PLUS

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Reminder: Christian Aid Week 15<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> May

# All Saints Leighton Buzzard

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## *God, the figurative sculptor*

*By Rev'd Steve Marsh*



A couple of weeks ago I went on a two-day figurative sculpture course. I had previously attempted some sculptures at home and felt that I had reached the limit of my skill set, so needed some input to develop my sculpting abilities.



The course involved sculpting a seated figure in clay, from a live model, something I had never done before. As we looked to form and shape our sculpture, our very patient and skilful tutor, Arabella Brooke, (seen here working in her studio) helped us to insightfully observe the human form. Arabella encouraged us to look at the shapes each part of the body is made up of. The torso partly an inverted cone, the triangle of the shoulders. Then to observe the proportions, how feet are roughly the same length as the calf of a leg, the head sitting more forward than we might realise. Moving on, to then notice the crest of curves on a body, hinting at the muscles, bones and joints under the skin, tracing the high point of light on a thigh, the pools of shadow in the collar bones.

To all of us the human body is one of the most familiar forms we observe. We are so familiar with it that we can instantly spot when the portrayal of a human form in painting or sculpture is not quite right, even if we might not be able to say why. The ability to represent the human form in a way that is instinctively and profoundly correct is what separates the talented artist from the amateur.

As I observed the human form, which I thought I was so familiar with, in a more insightful way during the course, it became quite a meditative and spiritual experience. As I then created and sculpted a human form from clay, I came to marvel at how wonderfully and carefully God has made us. This reminded me of verse 14 from Psalm 139, 'I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful'. God's creation of the human form is beautiful, the fact that God breathes life into this form is wonderful, that God makes each one of us unique in form, character and personality, truly is something to marvel at.

I would encourage you to observe a favourite painting, or sculpture of the human form afresh and consider the care and skill the artist has given to capture the essence of the human form. I then encourage you to consider, maybe using Psalm 139 vs 14 alongside the picture or sculpture, how much skill, care and love God has put in to creating you.

*Rev'd Steve*

## *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

1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays: All Age Service

2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday Holy Baptism

6pm Said Evening Prayer

3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday: followed by Benediction

#### **Weekdays:**

#### **Holy Communion**

7.30pm Tuesday

(Service of Healing on 3<sup>rd</sup> 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](http://www.linslade-parish.org.uk)

### **St. Leonard's, Heath & Reach**

#### **Sundays:**

8am: Holy Communion

11am Holy Communion (in church & via Zoom)

1<sup>st</sup> Sundays: Family Service

**Tuesdays:** 7pm Holy Communion

#### **Morning Prayer via Zoom:**

9.00am Monday - Saturday

[www.saintleonardschurch.com](http://www.saintleonardschurch.com)

### **St. Michael's, Eggington**

9.30am 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays: Holy Communion

### **St. Nicholas', Hockliffe**

9.30am 2<sup>nd</sup> Sundays: Family Communion

4<sup>th</sup> Sundays: Holy Communion

### **St. Michael's and All Angels, Billington**

11.15am Holy Communion

### **Good Shepherd, Astral Park Sports & Community Centre, Johnson Drive, Sandhills, LU7 4AY:**

**Sundays** at 9.45am:

1<sup>st</sup> Sunday: Holy Communion & CGS Juniors

2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday: 'In the Community', at Astral Park

3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday: Family Service

4<sup>th</sup> Sunday: Bring and share breakfast and Holy Communion

Free pop-up café every Sunday from 9.45am

**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.

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

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

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

**Spire Coffee Shop:** Tuesday & Saturday 10am-2pm; Friday 10am-12noon (drinks & cakes only)

*Contact Details on Page 2.*

## News Roundup

Revision of the Electoral Roll takes place this month. If you have changed address, telephone no. or email since May 2021, please contact me with the details, or leave a note in the Parish Office. The Roll is also always open to new members. Everyone, aged 16+ and baptised, may like to consider enrolling, indicating your commitment to our church, to share in its life and to receive its ministry. New applications should be returned to the Office by the 7<sup>th</sup> May 2022 at the latest. Liz Corbett 01525 372822.

# HOLIDAY CLUB 2022

15<sup>th</sup> August - 19<sup>th</sup> August

## Jungle Fever

Forms available  
after Easter  
or speak to  
Lindsay Bevis  
01525 381418

HAVE YOU HEARD  
ALL SAINTS HOLIDAY  
CLUB IS BACK ...



## Worth a smile

### *Some miscellaneous observations on life....*

- ❖ The way to do a great deal is to keep on doing a little. The way to do nothing at all is to be continually resolving that you will do everything.
- ❖ Thinking of going on holiday? Look in the mirror. If you look like your passport photo, you probably need the trip.
- ❖ Don't wait for people to be friendly, show them how.
- ❖ Assumption is the mother of all foul-ups.
- ❖ Be different. Conform.
- ❖ Can atheists get insurance for acts of God?
- ❖ A smile is a curve which helps to put things straight.
- ❖ If you want to soar with the eagles in the morning, you can't hoot with the owls all night.
- ❖ Experience is a wonderful thing. It enables you to recognise a mistake when you make it again.
- ❖ Is a lame duck a politician whose goose has been cooked?
- ❖ People have always named their children after expensive things: Mercedes, Chardonnay, Dior. This year, look out for: Electric, Gas, and Petrol.



# ***Parish Registers***

## **Holy Matrimony, March:**

26: Thomas Brookes & Lumba Silunyange at All Saints

***'Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate'***

## **Holy Baptism, March:**

13: Evelyn Pearl Austin, Branwen Parish Evans, Eleri Parish Evans, Rosie Frances Robinson, Ruby Iris Chamberlain

***'One Lord, one faith, one baptism'***

## **R.I.P. March:**

2: Ellie Ogden-Hooper at St. Mary's; 8: Winifred Wood at St. Leonard's; 9: Joan Patman at St. Barnabas; 18: Robert Cherry at Crownhill; 23: Ian Hogg at St. Barnabas

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

## **Years Mind, May:**

1: Marjorie Parker; 2: Philip Meredith, William Cummins, Colin Sykes, Molly Goodliffe; 3: Charles Kiteley, Dennis Duff; 4: Vivien Lewis; 5: Frederick Groom, Frederick Foskett; 6: Ronald Higgs, Robert Molloy; 7: Gwendoline Parris; 8: Victor Norman; 9: Valerie King, Audrey Hill, Margot Freeman; 10: Vera Elliott; 11: Nicholas Jovic, Agnes Milne, Marjorie Holroyd; 12: Percy Collor, Martyn Clarke; 13: Francis Hyde, Kenneth Watts; 14: Alan Daniels, Aubrey Marchant; 15: Marion Butler; 16: David Mills, Sidney Willis; 17: Mollie Biggerstaff; 19: Patricia Munroe; 20: Edith Sutton, Kevin Smith, June Audas; 23: William Atkinson, Wingate Underwood, John Wellby; 24: Paul Reynolds; 25: Patricia Olds; Karolyn Jones, John Watkiss; 26: Christine Roe, Peter Jones; 27: Cyril Stratton, Olive Aris, Ray Francis, John Lawrie; 28: Ethel Gilbert, Eleanor Edgoose; 29: Sarah Loke, Amy Willett; 30: Irene Sutton, Brian Hill; 31: Sydney Ranger

## ***Pentecost: Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> June 2022***





## *Could you become a bell ringer?*

All Saints is blessed with one of the best peals of 12 bells in the country and many people in the congregation tell us how much they enjoy hearing the bells rung. Unfortunately, due to members of the band moving away or being unable to commit for personal reasons, together with the impact of Covid, we are desperately short of ringers.

We need to recruit and train new ringers, so that we can continue to ring the bells for Sunday services, festivals, and other special events. Bell ringing is a team activity that stimulates the brain and helps keep you fit. It also makes a glorious sound and that is particularly true at All Saints!

Many consider ringing to be their contribution to church life, others do it for the pure pleasure it brings: Once you've got the bug, it's hard to give up. Ringers come from all walks of life and range in age from 10 to those in their 80's.

Ringling is well within the capabilities of most people. You just need to be able to count and you can become a very good ringer knowing nothing about music. You also need the physical ability to climb the 55 steps up to the ringing chamber. The initial teaching takes several weeks, after which a learner can begin to ring with the rest of the band at Monday night practices and before church services.

We will be opening the tower over the Jubilee weekend and offering 'give it a go' sessions during the Inspire Weekend. We are also very happy to arrange individual or small group visits to the tower. If you are interested, please contact Margaret (Emma), Barry or Kevin via the Church Office.

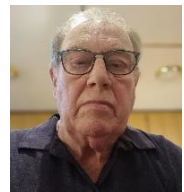
*Margaret Birtles*  
*Tower Captain*  
*07949 141211*



*Kevin Pughe*  
*Tower Secretary*  
*07402 233022*



*Barry Eglesfield*  
*Ringling Master*  
*07967 755148*





## The Gentleman Gardener

Let your local RHS qualified gardener make your garden beautiful, from simple garden maintenance to redesigning your garden.

Please call Barry  
01525 222451 or 07541 196384  
to pop round to have a chat.

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Buzzard, LU7 3HT  
**01525 377384, or 07774 901293**  
email: [eileennaples50@outlook.com](mailto:eileennaples50@outlook.com)

## St Leonard’s Church Hall Heath and Reach

Refurbished Hall available for hire.  
Regular or occasional bookings



Capacity approx 130  
Easy access. Car parking  
Contact **07502 320 023**  
[stleonardheath@gmail.com](mailto:stleonardheath@gmail.com)



36 High Street, Leighton  
Buzzard, Beds, LU7 1EA  
01525 372 204

## Selections

*Pet, Gift and Garden.  
Kitchen & workshop  
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*[selections\\_pet\\_garden](http://selections_pet_garden)  
[www.selections-  
web.co.uk/petandgarden](http://www.selections-web.co.uk/petandgarden)*



# On a musical note.....

## *Life as Head Chorister*



I have served as Deputy Head Chorister for a year and am in the middle of serving what is nearly two years as Head Chorister and so I have racked up quite a lot of experience within the role. From an outsider's or congregationer's perspective it may look like all I do is sing (and occasionally try to herd certain distracted young trebles) but it isn't just singing my heart out; many don't see the work that goes on behind the scenes.

Both my Deputy (Francesca P) and I spend a lot more time up in the choir vestry than many believe. Before and after each service we dedicate a lot of time to putting out and taking in music from everyone's pigeon holes. Taking in music is slightly less time consuming as we rely on everyone who is here that day to take their music out of their folders and leave it in piles on the side; however, giving music out takes slightly longer due to having to find the correct music in the first place from the very outdated filing system. In order to keep up, Francesca and I usually get to choir practice around 40 minutes early. This also gives us time to do a bit of housekeeping, which sometimes involves tidying up pigeon holes that aren't our own.



After a service we sometimes get some of the slightly older trebles to help put music away in order for them to learn the system and take on a bit of responsibility.

As Head Chorister I am also in charge of the trebles (our under 18s) which includes: sorting out who is responsible for a little one; who sits on the ends of the pews; who should do solos; making sure they look smart and tidy; encouraging them to work towards medals; working out their pay for the end of each term and weddings, but also, and perhaps most importantly, making sure they are happy and comfortable.

As some of our trebles are quite young, they are still learning to keep on top of things and so we have implemented an APEX chart (Attendance, Punctuality, Effort and Excellence) which allows them to earn points to be counted at the end of each term. This is filled out at the end of each practice or service, a role taken on by Francesca. Unfortunately, not everyone is here all the time for every service so as a reward to those who were at a low attendance service, we will sometimes double their pay for that day. However, everyone will get double pay at Christmas and Easter.

There is so much more I could talk about in regards to being Head Chorister as it is a role I have thoroughly enjoyed these last few years. There are times when not everything has been up to par but I have worked hard to rectify the situation and it has become a role I love and will treasure forever no matter how difficult it may be sometimes.



**Grace Webb**

# Calendar of Events

**1<sup>st</sup> May**

Services as usual including Messy Mass All Saints 11.30am

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



**4<sup>th</sup> May**

**Lunch Club** in the North Transept, All Saints 1pm.

Tickets £5.00 available from the Coffee Shop.



**8<sup>th</sup> May**

Services as usual including Bereavement Service All Saints 3pm

**14<sup>th</sup> May**

**Pant Sale Eggington** 10.30am to 12-30pm in the churchyard



**15<sup>th</sup> May**

Services as usual including All Age Communion All Saints 11.30am; Civic Service 3pm

**20<sup>th</sup> May**

**Crafty Natter** All Saints 1.30pm - 3.30pm



**21<sup>st</sup> May**

**Plant Sale** All Saints 10am- 12.30pm



**22<sup>nd</sup> May**

Services as usual at All Saints including the Wilkes Walk after the 9.30am service.

**Annual Parochial Church Meeting** All Saints 11.30am

**26<sup>th</sup> May**

**Ascension Day Eucharist** All Saints 8pm



**Eggington dates to look forward to: see also page 17**

Quiz night on June 11<sup>th</sup> at 7pm in the village hall.

Cream Teas on July 24<sup>th</sup> 3pm -5pm.



## ***Christian Aid Week: 15<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> May 2022***

Christian Aid works with 700 local organisations in around 50 countries throughout the world. They help poor communities to deal with climate change, floods, droughts, famine and natural disasters. They help with education on health and sanitation in rural communities, and for more than 70 years, have provided humanitarian relief & long-term development support for poor communities worldwide, while highlighting suffering, tackling injustice and championing people's rights.

The impact of Covid-19 on the poorest countries in the world has been disastrous and it only makes their situation even more in need of our help.

This year Christian Aid will focus on the effect of drought which numerous countries around the world face. It recognises that droughts have become more intense and more common because of the changing climate. The impact on the world population is great, as it means that millions of people around the world struggle to get the food and water that they need. Your gifts could help to buy water taps for a village and provide water for a community garden.

### ***How can you help?***

*There are many ways in which you can raise money towards this year's appeal.*

*Here are just a few ideas:*

- 1. Hold a coffee morning or afternoon tea for friends and family*
- 2. Sponsored walk or cycle ride*
- 3. Bake for Christian Aid and invite everyone to buy your cakes*
- 4. Dine for Christian Aid. Invite family and friends to dine with you*

*There will be the usual red Christian Aid envelopes in Church throughout the Christian Aid week so that you can put your donation directly into the envelope.*



*This is Jessica – read her story on the Christian Aid website:*

*Pauline Lyon has posters and sponsorship forms for all fundraising events.*

*Please contact her if you would like one:*

*01525 234139 or 07968 746618*

*Email: paulinelyon@idnetfreemail.co.uk*

***Every gift. Every action. Every prayer.  
Every one of us can help to change lives***

## *Around the Ouzel Valley Team*

*Eight churches, each special in their own way, but all being Christian witness to the whole community of Leighton Linlade & the villages of the Ouzel Valley*



*View looking toward St Barnabas Church*

The initial development started in 2016 when, with the help of the Town Council, a 'Bags for Help' grant of £10,000 for hard landscaping was obtained from Tesco's by the Friends of Leighton-Linslade in Bloom. At that point, there was only a very small section of garden with a few lavender and box plants by the gap. The old rose garden had long since disappeared.

*Below: The remains of the former flower bed*



Over the following years the volunteers planted the beds with a range of plants flowering at different times and focusing on specific colours. We have largely eschewed large shrubs, preferring smaller flowering plants so that the Church is visible. The paths allow pushchair and wheelchair access and have 4 bench bays with offset benches allowing wheelchairs to be positioned next to the benches.

The arch to the church has been planted with white climbing roses to provide, in the future, a photo opportunity for weddings. Many of the original plants came from the garden by Mary Bassett Lower School which was altered from a water dependent Cottage Garden to a gravel Drought Garden. The noticeboard now tries to inform residents about the plants in the garden on a seasonal basis. Each year we organise a plant stall in the garden to raise donations towards development and maintenance of the garden. On that Saturday residents can come and ask the volunteers any questions about the flowers and plants and have a tour of the garden.



## *This month, St. Barnabas. Linslade and the Community Garden*

Sustainability is very important to us. Watering was a problem, solved by an under-ground storage facility fed from rainwater collected from the Church Hall.

The Town Council constructed a three berth composting area and we now produce our own compost to use as a mulch in autumn. We also have a plot at the side for the local Brownie group to encourage further community use of the area.



Our aim has been to create a community garden for the residents of Linslade and we have been far more successful than we ever expected. So many people ask about the plants, bring their toddlers to learn about colours or just smell the roses. Some place painted stones hidden in the plants for others to find. Many people have said how important the garden has been in the recent pandemic. It was a focus for exercise walks and, when allowed, for meeting up with friends. There is a group of enthusiastic volunteers who maintain the garden but anyone, of whatever age or gardening ability, is welcome to our Tuesday morning working parties which also serve as a friendly social gathering place.

When we initially thought about a garden in Linslade Rec we just thought about equalising the provision so Linslade didn't get left out. We could never have envisaged what an impact it would have on so many people.

***Rosie Palmer, on behalf of the Friends of  
Leighton-Linslade in Bloom***

*Photos: the garden in summer;  
the garden in winter; and new roses.*





## ***Good Shepherd, Sandhills***

***Vicar: Rev'd Steve Marsh***

***Tel: 01525 838450***

***Churchwarden:***

***Steve Nixon***



**CHURCH of the  
GOOD SHEPHERD**

Awareness and understanding of mental health and wellbeing has come on leaps and bounds in the last decade. This has been good for those that suffer from bouts of mental health episodes as there is less stigma and shame, knowing that more of the outside world 'get it'. Also, those that experience low mood, anxiety or depression for the first time, are hopefully more likely to know that trying to shrug it off or be stronger are not likely to be a long-term solution.

When I was struggling with my mental health, whilst my faith was a comfort, the teachings of the Bible were not what got me through. Instead, the friendship from my church community and the skills I learnt from a counsellor and mental health workshops were what led to change. I identified my unhelpful thinking styles, turned down the volume on my inner critic and methodically worked through my thoughts and how to deal with them.

One of my problems was perfectionism, so to hear calls to be bold, be strong and have courage, were not helpful. Even though the message is that the Lord is with me, so it will be ok, I wasn't prepared to deal with my frequent tearfulness and panic attacks through something intangible. I needed a practical solution.

Our home group has just started a new course on wellbeing, based on a book by Dave Smith called 'God's Plan for Your Wellbeing'. Dave dealt with his fear of failure through his faith, specifically prayer and an improved self-awareness.

The course looks at physical, emotional, spiritual, relational, financial and vocational wellbeing and how these can all affect our overall wellbeing. It focusses on the Hebrew word 'shalom' as peace in every part of our lives.

The Wellbeing Journey course is supported by a clinical psychologist who looks at mental health as character strengths and virtues. He has researched the science behind gratitude, hope, love, wisdom, self-control, humility, forgiveness, courage and much more. He is on a journey to define a wellbeing model to a flourishing, abundant life.

I'm looking forward to this course, at a time when my emotional wellbeing is in a much better place, to think about the adjustments I could make to maintain my mental health.



Resources on the Wellbeing Journey course are available at [wellbeingjourney.org](http://wellbeingjourney.org) or you can join the Church of the Good Shepherd's home group to join in with the discussion. Details are available at [www.goodshepherdsandhills.org.uk](http://www.goodshepherdsandhills.org.uk)

***Jo Bellamy***

## ***St. Nicholas, Hockliffe***

***Vicar: Rev'd Noel McGeeney***

***Tel: 01525 237633***

***Churchwardens:***

***Brian Speller: 210565; Roger Spalding: 07451 877501***



March is always gives me hope as the spring flowers start to bloom and nature starts to wake up. St Nicholas sits within the beautiful Bedfordshire countryside looking down on the village of Hockliffe. For any of us who have strolled through the Churchyard, you will have witnessed this awakening as the first flowers begin to show as the days lengthen. The beginning of the year for me is February. The celebration of Candlemas is the mid-point between winter and spring, this day commemorated the ritual purification of Mary 40 days after the birth of Jesus, and the day of the ritual presentation of the baby Jesus to God in the temple in Jerusalem. The Gospel of Luke says that Jesus was met by Anna and Simeon, and as Simeon held Jesus he called him The Light of the World. When I look at the emerging new growth, Candlemas reminds me that there is light in the world.

I think about light as I take the journey into Lent which is an old English word meaning 'lengthen'. As the days lengthen and the light begins to extend our days, I find it helps me to observe the 40 days of Lent as Christians many of us try replicate the sacrifices Jesus made as he withdrew to the desert for 40 days. In the Western world of plenty giving up chocolate hardly seems enough!

The journey of Lent begins on Ash Wednesday which is a reminder to us all of our mortality and our need for reconciliation with God. As the period of Lent proceeds I am sure we all try and reconcile things we have done, understand God's love with more depth, and the suffering of Jesus for us humble Beings, in the sorrow and shame of Good Friday. And then the celebration of Easter Sunday and the resurrection of Jesus as Christ, giving us all hope of New Life.

For many of us the last two years has been difficult and full of change. It has only been in the last few months the congregation of St Nicholas has been able to meet again to reconcile and share this hope. In March, Fr Noel held a service of to remember those touched by CV19. Some of the village lost love ones; others gave their time and service putting themselves at risk as key workers. They all were remembered or thanked in the service. If you would like to stop and reflect, two rose bushes were planted as a memorial to those lives lost. They are roses of hope and inspiration: a Peace Rose and a Captain Tom and are near the lych-gate if you want to see them.

On Mother's day this year, Fr Noel led our family service. The posies for the congregation were beautiful, and for those that were at the service we all enjoyed a piece of Brenda's delicious Simnel cake. Thank you to Brenda, Carol and the team who provided us with coffee, cake and flowers. What more could you want on Mother's day?

Now, belatedly, wishing you Happy Easter.

***Rose Price***

## ***St. Michael & All Angels, Billington***

***Vicar: Rev'd Steve Marsh***

***Tel: 01525 838450***

***Churchwardens:***

***Sandra Brewin 373644;***

***Julia Haviland 850380***



### ***The Church and Churchyard Clean-up day***



We had to do it as a week after the clear up, on 9th April, the Church was hosting the wedding of the decade. Andrew Cook who grew up in Little Billington, and Erica Buckley planned to get married in the Spring of 2020. For two years they have been trying to find a date which would not restrict their arrangements; plans complicated by the fact that Erica is Canadian and a large group of her family had been unable to travel because of Covid. As it turned out the wedding service was perfect from start to finish. The weather was kind, the bride and bridesmaids beautiful and the large congregation of friends and family were delighted to participate in the joyous celebration. Carl Moulding played the organ magnificently, pleased by the fact that the day before it had been tuned and repaired by Kevin Meyer from Chesham. All together a very memorable day.

We were so grateful that a small army turned up to help with the “clean up”. Most of those who worked are in the photo above; notable exceptions are Julia Haviland who took the picture and the Reilly family, Ginny, Oscar, Amber and Ethan who did sterling work weeding the church path.

We are looking forward to celebrating Easter and are hoping that the service on Easter Day will be well attended. Like many small churches our congregations have been dwindling and Covid hasn't helped the decline. But we want people to know that we are now fully open. Everyone who enters St. Michael and All Angels remarks on its beauty and its atmosphere of peace and prayer. Even Kevin the organ tuner said as much and he must know!

## ***St. Michael's, Eggington***

***Vicar: Rev'd Noel McGeeney***

***Tel: 01525 237633***

***Church Officers:***

***Carol Hart 384634; Paul Brown 751861***



### ***Eggington Past and Present.***

As I write this the sun is shining through the window and the tulips and daffodils are swaying in the breeze and looking beautiful. The storms of a few weeks ago seem a long way away, and hopefully a thing of the past.

The churchyard looks very pretty with all the bulbs blooming and is a testament to all the hard work that is carried out each month by our small band of workers. We are now working on the large grave at the back of the yew tree. It will need a lot of hard work to complete this, but I am sure we will get there. We have got to have some work done on a couple of trees in the churchyard as they are becoming dangerous.

A few weeks ago, while sorting out a box in the church, I came across a set of books called Bedfordshire Churches in the Nineteenth Century. I discovered it contained information on all our village churches. I was intrigued so started to look through them. It was very interesting to read about the churches and the state of repair they were in. They have all been loved and looked after for a very long time.

Until 1810 when it became a separate parish, Eggington was a dependant chapelry within the parish of Leighton Buzzard. The church has an outer shell of early C14th date. It is a simple building consisting of Early English chancel and decorated nave, with a south porch and an organ chamber and vestry on the north side of the chancel. Its present appearance largely derives from Ewan Christian's restoration in 1882-3. There had been a fire at the church in 1876.

In a view of the church in 1820 it shows that the west wall, now containing a circular window of 1882-3, was originally without windows.

There is little information on earlier alterations and improvements to the fabric but in 1844 the reseating inside and reroofing of the church was under consideration. In 1882-3 work was undertaken to restore the south porch, raise the pitch of the chancel roof and re-roof the whole building with tiles. The cost of this work is recorded as having been £1,300, and was done by H Edwards of Eggington.

I expect the people of the village had to work as hard as we do to raise this money for their church.

We are still working hard to keep our church in good condition, with our Plant sale on May 14<sup>th</sup> 10.30am to 12-30pm in the churchyard and Cream Teas on July 24<sup>th</sup> 3pm - 5pm. We are also having a Quiz night on June 11<sup>th</sup> at 7pm in the village hall. More details will appear in the pew sheets.

***Carol Hart***



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## *The Wilkes Walk – an ancient tradition*

This ancient tradition has been carried out since the 17th century. It was once a part of the tradition of beating the bounds of the parish and is included in the charity estate of Mr. Edward Wilkes, founder of the ten Alms Houses in North Street, who died in 1646. His son, Matthew, left funds to be devoted to this annual commemoration to be held in Rogation Tide, when the reading of part of the will of Mr. Wilkes takes place.

A procession of servers, choir, trustees and clergy leaves the parish church and wends its way to North Street, following the garland bearer who leads the way carrying an arrangement of flowers and greenery on a pole. Originally this may have been to help ward off the somewhat unpleasant smells which may have been encountered on the way. This year, it will be on 22<sup>nd</sup> May after the 9.30 service.

At the Alms Houses the choir sings a short anthem, prayers are read in thanksgiving for the Wilkes family and part of the will is read aloud. While this is done a member of the choir must stand upon his or her head, the better to remember the occasion. Each member of the Alms Houses also receives a small remuneration to celebrate the day.

Following this ceremony the gathering makes its way to the Market Cross, or the church, where buns and drinks are dispensed to those who have taken part. Originally this took the form of buns and free ale, but some time ago the ale was changed to soft drinks when so many turned up for a free drink that the beer ran out, as did the good behaviour of the onlookers!





## *... the Workplace* by Geoff Marchant

*A series exploring some of the ways we encounter God in the world and in our lives.*

44 years ago I stepped foot onto a construction site for the first time. This was to be the workplace that would characterise the whole of my working life. This is therefore the background as I reflect upon where I see God in the workplace.

People have mixed skills and abilities that they bring to their employers. They may be school leavers, graduates from university, students on placement, parents returning from maternity or paternity leave, people seeking a change of career whether or not of their own choice. Legally, employers also have to make their workplaces ergonomically fit for purpose and safe working environments. This is important when they have to be seen as employing and recruiting in the world of work that should accept nothing less than equal opportunities. More and more we are seeing how the disabled and underprivileged are being employed in positions which match their mental and physical abilities and aptitude. Let us not forget the whole matter of rehabilitation either; people taken from their workplaces through industrial injury or crime want to seek a pathway back to a working life they enjoyed – the camaraderie of the workplace. Is God at work here? Yes, I believe he is.

God created each of us in his own image and wants us to live fruitful lives. Rightly this extends to our use of the skills and talents with which he blessed us - in our various workplaces. That is why unemployment and redundancy tarnish the whole morality and ethic of being able to use our minds and bodies to work for a living. There is a sad reflection of this in that wonderful story of healing in John's Gospel. Jesus heals a disabled man who had spent almost the whole of his working life sitting beside the pool by the Sheep Gate in Jerusalem. Many other invalids – blind, lame and paralysed had got themselves into the pool desperate for healing but none of them, or anyone else, thought of letting this disabled man have his turn. Jesus gives him back his mobility, his employability, which had so wrongly been denied him. [John 5. 1-15]

God was a worker himself and we only have to read of the creation story in Genesis and look at the wonder of the created world around us to see how God has gifted the human race with such technological advancement.

How do I feel in the workplace which is this construction site? I believe God influences us as people of faith or none at different phases throughout our working lives. There are different levels of vulnerability associated with the responsibilities workers take on whilst on site.

Some of my work colleagues are truly gifted – they literally take their work in their own stride. For others they aspire for the higher salary and promotion, working late on site to help maintain programme.

I see the gifts all brought together to create this project from hole in the ground to the completed building. The team give the client the keys to his new building which becomes a new place of employment for God's people.

This construction site is like a mini community: the management, supervision, welfare and the tradesmen doing the physical work. They have their families at home too. God is there for them in the life events even if they are not aware of it. God has skilled the managers and supervisors so that employees and tradesmen can work to their full potential – to live out the gifts that He has blessed them with.

I have witnessed many improvements over the years borne out of the statistics that have shown the construction industry has historically been notorious for high accident rates including fatalities. Health, safety and well-being is central to the successful delivery of a new building. Everyone on the site should be confident they can go home from a day's work safe. The culture is that of the Good Samaritan; you just don't walk by if you see a safety risk. People's physical and mental health is critical and we can only help the growth of God's kingdom by keeping his people safe while they are working on our construction sites.

As a construction team, who then is our extended neighbour? There is the environmental aspect that the industry has been following with the government in terms of sustainability and social value. We are challenged by our clients to employ local labour and create opportunities for apprentices. It is vital that we know where the labour on our sites is being sourced from and that materials are being sourced ethically. Recent legislation covering modern slavery and the sustainable sourcing of timber is helping towards preserving a created order for future generations. Many of our sites organise events with the local community which include school visits, construction of allotments and assisting with the flood defence projects.

**Geoff Marchant**

*Heavenly Father,  
whose work is the whole of creation,  
we thank you for the skill and intelligence you have given us,  
for the fulfilment and creativity we can find in work  
and for the colleagues who encourage us in all that we do.  
Bless us as we work, that we may reflect your creative love for the world,  
bring justice to those who work in unfair or unsafe conditions,  
find employment for all who are without it  
and give opportunities for rest and re-creation to all,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.*

*[The Canterbury Book of New Parish Prayers,  
Collects for the Church and for the World – Kramer 2020]*

## *Silver Eco Church Award on the horizon*



Back in 2020, All Saints Leighton Buzzard was both pleased and proud, not only to host the Diocese of St. Albans first hybrid online Eco Conference, but to receive its bronze Eco Church award.

Now we are within touching distance of being awarded our silver. We took an audit that started not with our wonderful building, but with worship and teaching. The Eco Church Team checked that we use songs that celebrate God's creation. We looked at our church year, and homed in on special Sundays - like Rogation and its choir-boy dangling, or the times when we have Forest Church - that focus our minds on caring for God's earth. We quizzed our clergy on their eco-preaching, and we found joy in the summer club's theme of the jungle.

It was only then that we looked at our building, as practicalities must be guided by a rich and robust faith. Energy use has been monitored. Efficiency ratings have been logged. LED bulbs have been checked. Paper for copying is reduced. Cycle racks are available. Blister packaging recycling has been spearheaded by our Sunday school. Bird boxes, swift houses, owl boxes, bat boxes, bug hotels are dotted around our churchlands. Wild flowers bloom. There are apple trees, and native trees, and plum trees, and strange trees. And all this is open to all in our wider community to come and spend an hour or two.

But this is not just us as a church, it is about our community. We have had our MP in for eco-hustings. We organise environmental awareness events; we are involved with local conservation work; we use Fairtrade goods; we showcase local produce from our Bee Team; and we have been active in promoting eco-church to other churches.

With all this we have been able to submit our evidence for a silver award. And while we are immensely proud of all of you, we have an inkling that we could perhaps become one of the handful of churches in the UK to gain a gold Eco Church award.

So well done.

But now we will need to make a commitment anew to move from a church-led project to our life as a community. We might all need to start talking about how we invest our own money ethically. We need to start car-pooling... or walking. We need to curate our churchyard as a place of prayer and picnic. We need to ensure that our café is as fair and local as possible. We need to share practical tips about living ethically. And in doing this, we will show God's love for God's earth to the people living in the corner of creation that we call Leighton Buzzard.

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