

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 2023 / January 2024

70p

Inside:

How many chainsaws
does it take
to get that tree there?
See the centre pages.

Plus

Fr. Noel discusses Grief;

Mother Kirsty:
Sending - and returning

Eco Church loves trees

Do you play an
instrument?
Old or young;
beginner or Grade 8 -
the 11.30 band would
love to hear from you.

The villages marked
Remembrance Sunday
AND EVERYONE is
looking forward to
Christmas

Diary dates, service times,
Christmas puzzles
and more

HAPPY CHRISTMAS



All Saints Leighton Buzzard

Team Rector & Vicar of All Saints:

In Vacancy

The Vicarage,
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Canon Grant Fellows 01525 381418

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Grief *by Rev'd Noel McGeeney*

Grief is an inevitable part of human experience, a natural response to loss and significant life changes. The processing of grief is unique to each one of us. What's common is that grief is personal, pervasive, permanent and painful.

Grief changes everything; it is the great disrupter; we are shaken to our core. Here in lies an opportunity to grow into who we are becoming as destined by God. What our families, communities and society need above all else are wise people, a wisdom rooted in the Holy Spirit. Grief propels us to become who we are called to be.

Tragedy gives us the opportunity to explore meaning in life while we are grieving a loss. Introspection can help us to make sense of overwhelming emotions and find a sense of purpose even after experiencing loss. Silence and contemplation are the means to rapid spiritual growth gaining new perspectives on our belief and values. It is this introspective phase that marks the beginning of a transformative journey where an individual's need to connect to something greater than themselves begins to bear fruit. Bereavement acts as a catalyst for personal transformation by prompting individuals to confront life's fragility and reassess their priorities and values. As we travel through grief and mourn our loss we may discover a renewed sense of purpose, a deeper appreciation for life's precious moments and an increased awareness of our own identity and indeed resilience. Embracing this transformative process may lead to a journey of self-discovery and healing.

Rituals play an important role in easing the grieving process by providing structure and comfort during times of emotional turmoil. These rituals can be both personal and communal, helping to create a sense of belonging and continuity. Personal rituals might include keeping a journal, or creating a memorial space, or engaging in regular meditation or mindfulness exercises. Communal rituals can involve attending support groups, memorial services or participating in activities that honour the memory of the deceased or loss experienced. Thus, engaging in deliberate rituals is one way for us to acknowledge our loss and reclaim some semblance of control. After the pandemic we planted trees and blessed cemeteries to mourn all who died or experience long covid.

In conclusion, grief is an unavoidable part of human experience, but it does not have to consume us for ever. By actively engaging in the healing process and incorporating strategies to manage grief, we can find solace, growth and transformation amid pain of loss. It is important to remember that healing from grief takes time, and seeking support from friends, family or mental health professionals can provide valuable assistance through this journey of recovery and self-discovery.

Shalom.
Fr. Noel

Our present pattern of services across the Ouzel Valley Team

All Saints

Sundays:

8am Holy Communion

9.30am Parish Eucharist

11.30am (usual pattern but can vary occasionally)

1st Sunday: Messy Mass

3rd Sunday: All Age Service

2nd & 4th Sunday: Holy Baptism

6pm Evening Prayer

1st Sunday: Choral Evensong Plus

3rd Sunday: Sung with hymns

(NO choir) followed by Benediction

2nd & 4th Sunday: Said Evensong

Weekdays:

Holy Communion

7.30pm Tuesday

(Service of Healing on 3rd Tuesday)

10.00am Thursday

9.00am Saturday

St. Barnabas, Linslade

Sundays:

8am Said Eucharist

10am Parish Eucharist

6pm Evensong

www.stbarnabaslinslade.uk

St. Leonard's, Heath & Reach

Sundays:

8am: Holy Communion

11am Holy Communion (in church & via Zoom)

1st Sundays: Family Service

Tuesdays: 7pm Holy Communion

Morning Prayer via Zoom:

9.00am Monday - Saturday

www.saintleonardschurch.com

St. Michael's, Eggington

9.30am 1st & 3rd Sundays: Holy Communion

St. Nicholas', Hockliffe

9.30am 2nd Sundays: Family Communion

4th 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:

1st Sunday: Holy Communion & CGS Juniors

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

3rd Sunday: Family Service

4th 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.

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: Friday evenings, 6.45 trebles; 7.30 adults.

Bellringers: Practice on Monday, 7.30 - 9.30pm.

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

Contact Details on Page 2.

News Roundup

We, the editors, would like to thank all those involved in the production and distribution of Saints Alive during the year - contributors, distributors, advertisers .. and you, our readers for their continued support over the past year. We hope you have enjoyed it. There will be no January issue, but we will be back in February with, hopefully, 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 2024!

Jo Waller and Julia Dickens



Worth a smile: The Everlasting Turkey

On the first day of Christmas my true love said to me
I've bought a big fresh turkey and a proper Christmas tree.

On the second day of Christmas much laughter could be heard
As we tucked into our turkey – a most delicious bird.

On the third day of Christmas people came from just next door,
The turkey tasted just as good as it had done before.

On the fourth day of Christmas came relations young and old
We finished up the Christmas pud and had the turkey cold.

On the fifth day of Christmas, outside the snowflakes scurried,
But we were nice and warm inside, and had the turkey curried.

On the sixth day of Christmas, the Christmas spirit died.
The children fought and bickered – we had the turkey rissoles fried.

On the seventh day of Christmas my true love he did wince
When he sat down at table – and was offered turkey mince.

On the eighth day of Christmas, the dog had run for shelter,
For he'd seen our turkey pancakes and the glass of alka-seltzer.

On the ninth day of Christmas, by lunchtime dad was blotto,
He knew that bird was back again, this time as a risotto.

On the tenth day of Christmas we were drinking home-made brew,
Anything to help us face that steaming turkey stew.

On the eleventh day of Christmas our lovely tree was moulting,
And with chilli, soy and oyster sauce, the turkey was revolting.

On the twelfth day of Christmas we had smiles back on our lips,
The guests had gone, the turkey too – WE DINED ON FISH AND CHIPS.

Parish Registers

Holy Matrimony:

No weddings in October or November:

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

Holy Baptism, October:

8: Jude Francis McBrearty, Chloe Rebecca Coolbear;

22: Chizaram Oluchukwu Enetanya, Chimbusonma Somtobechukwu Enetanya, Meriko Lynn Marija Lambert

No Baptisms in November.

'One Lord, one faith, one baptism'

R.I.P. October:

2: Patricia Jakeman at All Saints; 3: Adele Hammond at St. Leonard's;

6: Dean Fountaine at St. Barnabas, 9: Alison Day at All Saints; 11: Frank Richards at St. Leonard's; 19: Sarah Watson at Bierton

R.I.P. November:

6: Edwin Cosby at All Saints, (Alexander) Sandy Hamilton at Bierton;

10: Nicholas Lee at St. Mary's; 15: Doris Morris at Crownhill;

17: Sheila Longstaffe at All Saints; 29: Elsie Yeomans at Old Linslade Cemetery

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

Years Mind, December:

1: Tony Pyman, Nora Davis; 2: Frederick Deeley; 3: Bram Evans; 5: Peter Harmer;

6: Leslie Plenderleath, Charles Scraggs; 8: George Lee; 9: Derek Williamson;

10: Kathleen Meredith; 12: Edie Skevington; 14: Dorothy Scammell; 17: Terry Spencer;

18: Simon Munford; 20: Cynthia Jury; 21: Keith Biggerstaff; 24: Marie Brooker;

25: Joan Winter, Margaret Ellison, Alice Shelley; 26: Roy Palmer; 27: Sandra Hipwell;

28: Albert Nash, Gwenda Burley; 29: David Brooker;

30: Mary Warburton, Reg Lunnon, Michael Sharratt, Betty Harris;

31: Edward Meredith, Nancy Meredith, Peggy Stonier

Years Mind, January:

1: Sarah Andrew, Ernest Kinnaird; 2: Arthur Keyworth, Kay Kiteley;

6: Eileen Garlick, Elizabeth Underwood, David Burley;

7: Joyce Lathwell, John Carter, John Loria; 9: Ellen Daniels,

10: Arthur Speller, Margaret (Peg) Tingey; 11: Ivy Nash, Malcolm Ginn;

12: Rita Shephard, Elsie Molloy, Ronald Chandler; 15: Annie Norman, Mary Dell,

Dennis Holroyd; 17: Joyce Lebek; 18: Danny Munroe; 19: Dian Milne;

20: Maurice Greensted, Dolly Harmer; 22: Margaret Beck; 23: Robert Kiteley, Betty Tuck,

Annie Williams, Revd. Vernon Smith, Peter Kiddle, Cynthia Berry; 26: Charlotte Sawka;

27: William Leath, Alice Pyman, Maxwell Gash; 28: Russell Palmer; 29: Bill Stonier;

31: John Harris, Maureen Webb, Joan Alcock

Pulford VA Lower School

Head Teacher: Rev'd Dave Heather, MBE

Office Manager: Mrs Alison Quick

Tel: 01525 372188

Website: www.pulfordschool.org

A church school for
a whole community



As you read this article the children and staff at Pulford School are heading towards Christmas, with classes full of excited children eagerly waiting for the BIG day.

December in school starts with our lovely senior citizens tea party. The children love to entertain everyone with songs from our Nativity, Christingle and carol services.

Following on from this Mrs Borrelli along with her team of volunteers will share the wonder of the Christmas story with school children from around the town, who attend the Christmas trail held in Church. This year many lower schools have attended and over 500 children, have heard the true meaning of Christmas, some for the very first time!

Following this Mr Heather and Mrs Quick will lead the lower schools carol service which again gives the children of the town the opportunity to celebrate Christmas with readings from the Bible and singing. This will be closely followed at Pulford with lots of different art and design projects, with cards and calendars to take home and proudly share with family members. Hot on the heels of all this activity is our school Christmas dinner and this year we finish the term with our key stage Nativity, Christingle and carol services for family and friends.



All this activity helps the children learn about the Christmas story through song, as well as Bible readings. You can regularly hear them singing their songs as they move around the school. The term is a very busy one, but one in which we have the pleasure of teaching children the greatest story ever told.

The Christmas story is the one curriculum topic which is retold year after year and from our youngest child through to our oldest member of staff (I will let you work out who that might be!) it never gets boring. The magic the children add, gives each year extra sparkle and often a unique twist which only a child can add. The joy of seeing the Christmas message told through the eyes of a child is awe-inspiring... if only we could bottle it!

***Mrs Stacey Major.
Early Years Lead.***

All Saints Christmas Tree Festival decorations, which we made for our Pre-school tree.



The Gentleman Gardener

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

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

For all your painting and decorating needs ...

J. M. Wyatt



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Eileen M. Naples

BSc., AMCST
Ryecroft, Plantation Road, Leighton
Buzzard, LU7 3HT
01525 377384, or 07774 901293
email: 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
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stleonardheath@gmail.com



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01525 372 204

Selections

*Pet, gift and garden.
Household, kitchen tools and
electrical items.
Calor Gas, DIY and repairs.
Memorial.*



selections_pet_garden

On a musical note.....



Do you know any youngsters aged (say) 8 to 16 who are learning to play a musical instrument? They need to live in or around Leighton Buzzard and not be playing football or be otherwise busy on a Sunday morning!



Twice a month, usually on the first and third Sundays of the month, there is an 11.30 morning service at All Saints where the music is less formal than that at the 9.30 Parish Eucharist. Instead of hymns accompanied by the organ, the music at the 11.30 service is accompanied by a small band of instrumentalists. We used to have a drummer at one stage and indeed there is a set of drums upstairs in the choir vestry waiting for someone to make a joyful noise, as the psalmist commands us to do.

There are huge benefits to playing in a church band some of which are not immediately obvious. Your instrumental teacher will teach you all about music theory and technique (how to play your instrument properly) and that's all good and much to be desired. Your teacher will even teach you how to prepare for music exams. Joining a school band is also great and you learn to play with other people. But playing in a church band, such as the 11.30 All Saints band, teaches you something which you rarely get in other situations. It's to do with what is sometimes referred to as "busking it": reacting to and coping with the unexpected. Playing by the seat of your pants is another way of putting it. Maybe the song has been changed at the last minute; maybe you have to play it in a different key because another instrumentalist has brought the wrong music. There's hardly any rehearsal – maybe 5 minutes before the service. This performance skill is a great way to improve confidence when playing, enabling you to become a much better player.

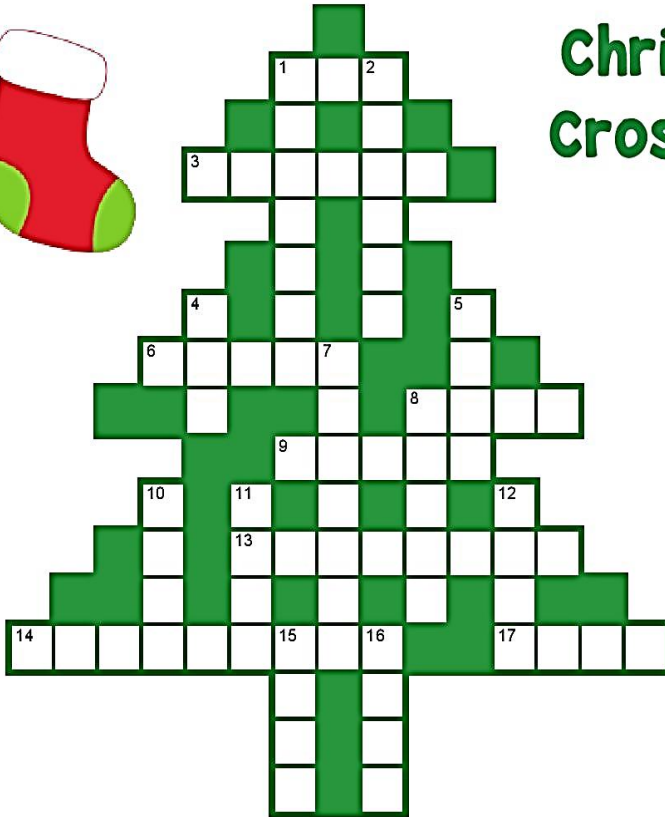
I have seen a large number of young players improve rapidly through regular playing in a church band. Many have gone on to do well at Grade 8 and some have reached the dizzying heights of music college and becoming music teachers themselves. If you know of anyone who might benefit, do get in touch. And don't worry if they're just starting. We're quite used to providing special scores to suit beginners.



Paul Dickens



Christmas Crossword



ACROSS

1. Pumpkin or mincemeat
3. Santa's ride
6. Celebration
8. Newborn
9. Northpole crew
13. Word of praise
14. Words on a Christmas card
17. It's opened on Christmas

DOWN

1. Alternative word to 17 across
2. Christmas drink
4. Christmas dinner centerpiece
5. Dec. holiday
7. Christmas warmer
8. "Jingle _____"
10. Christmas tree
11. O. Henry's "The Gift of the ____"
12. What carolers do
15. French Christmas.
16. Snow glider

Solution on page 12

A stylized, low-poly illustration of a nativity scene. The background is a warm, golden-yellow glow. In the foreground, a woman in a red robe and grey headscarf is shown in profile, looking down. To her right, a dark silhouette of an ox is visible. In the lower right, a baby lies in a manger. The overall style is modern and artistic.

All Saints Parish Church **CHRISTMAS SERVICES**

Festival of Lessons and Carols
Sunday the 17th December, 6pm*

CHRISTMAS EVE

Nativity Service 2.30pm

A short and simple nativity service with carols

Carols by Candlelight 5pm

MIDNIGHT MASS OF THE NATIVITY 11.15pm*

CHRISTMAS DAY

Holy Communion 8am

CHRISTMAS COMMUNION 10am*

LIVED STREAMED*

Calendar of Events

Groups, concerts and other carol services

3rd December & 7th January

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



6th December & 3rd January

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



19th January

Crafty Natter All Saints 1.30pm - 3.30pm
NB: NO Crafty Natter on 15th December.



9th December

Town Mayor's Carol Concert All Saints 7pm

10th December

Voices of the Isles Concert All Saints 6.30pm

15th, 18th, & 20th December at various times.

School Carol Services and Concerts at All Saints

Access to the church will be restricted
during these services



LEIGHTON BUZZARD MUSIC

LIVE PROFESSIONAL CONCERTS

Leighton Buzzard Library Theatre, Lake St, LB. LU7 1RX

Saturday 6th January 2024 at 7.30pm

A piano recital by

Victor Lim

*Another winner of the Philip & Dorothy Green Award
for Young Concert Artists*

A programme of music inspired by literature,
some of which Victor will read during the concert.
Schubert; Amy Beach; Debussy; & Schumann

Please note: Book via TicketSource or at the door.

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

Leighton Buzzard Music is a registered charity no: 1183681



All Saints Services for Advent, Christmas & Epiphany

Sunday 3rd December: Advent Sunday with Bishop Richard
Morning Services as usual
including 11.30am Toy Service - Messy Mass for Advent.
Donations of new unwrapped toys go to support KidsOut charity.
6pm Advent Procession Music and readings for Advent



Sunday 10th December: Advent 2
Morning Services as usual
4pm Christingle



Sunday 17th December: Advent 3
Morning Services as usual
including All Age Communion 11.30am
6pm Lessons and Carols for Christmas (streamed)
followed by wine and mince pies

Sunday 24th December: Advent 4 & Christmas Eve
8am NO service; **9.30am Parish Eucharist**
2.30pm Nativity Service A short simple nativity service
with carols; dressing up as a character from the story optional.
5.00pm Carols by Candlelight
11.15pm Midnight Mass of the Nativity (streamed)



Monday 25th December: Christmas Day
8am Holy Communion
10am Christmas Day Family Communion (streamed)

31st December
Morning Services as usual

Monday 1st January: New Year's Day
11am Holy Communion

Sunday 7th January: Epiphany
Morning Services as usual
including Messy Mass All Saints 11.30am
6pm Epiphany Carol Service (streamed)



21st January
Services as usual
including All Age Communion All Saints 11.30am

Epiphany image by Free-Pik



*Groups and activities,
sustaining the
Christian community of
The Ouzel Valley Team*
on ...



It's here. THE BIG TREE. On a lorry.

And we can't contain our excitement.

This is THE beginning of Christmas. But it's not going to get itself into church, safely in its place, standing proudly in the corner by the altar, welcoming all the people who visit the church during the Christmas season.

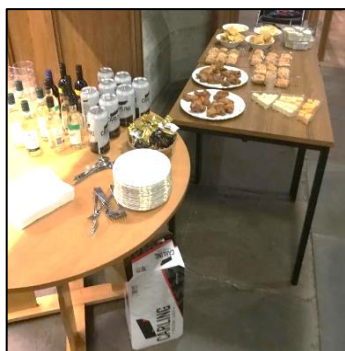
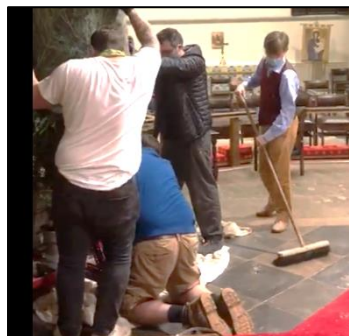
Achieving that takes a committee, a team, a chainsaw, ladders, brooms, and a party.



Christmas is coming ... But how does THAT tree get there?



Lindsay always names the tree - this year she is called is "Talia", Hebrew for dew of God - fresh beginning.



Traditionally, the big star goes on top first, with masses of lights – about 3000 in total.

To start with, the baubles are silver & purple for Advent, but are changed for red and gold after Advent 4. There are also two robins, always put on the lower branches.

The lights are only used for carol & civic services until Christmas Eve.

We need to keep her alive till Epiphany carol service, so she drinks rainwater brought by David Williams.



The True Story of Christmas Word Search



Read the story below. Find and circle the words that are **underlined**. The words can appear in any direction: horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backwards.

The True Story of Christmas

More than 2000 years ago, there lived a young woman named Mary. She was preparing to be married to a man named Joseph.

One day, an angel appeared to Mary and said, "Listen! You will soon have a son, and you will name him Jesus. The baby will be holy and will be called the Son of God."

Around the time for Jesus to be born, the Roman rulers ordered everyone to return to their hometown to be counted.

Joseph and Mary had to travel to the town of Bethlehem. When Joseph and Mary arrived at Bethlehem, the town was very crowded. They had to stay where animals were kept.

While they were there, baby Jesus was born. Mary wrapped him with pieces of cloth and placed him in a manger.

That night, in a field near Bethlehem, shepherds were looking after their sheep. An angel appeared to them and said, "I bring you good news of great joy for all people. Today in Bethlehem, a Savior has been born. He is Christ the Lord!" Then many more angels appeared, praising God for the birth of Jesus.

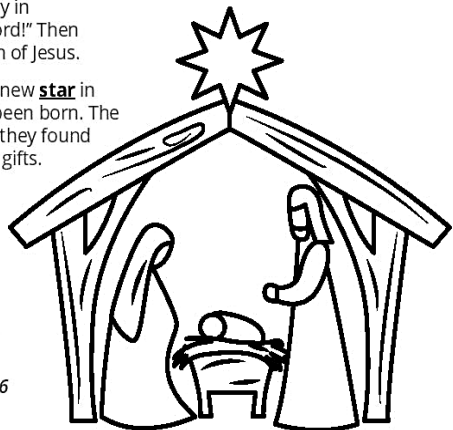
Sometime later, wise men from the east saw a bright, new star in the sky. They knew it was a sign that a great King had been born. The wise men followed the star to look for the child. When they found Jesus, they bowed down, worshiped him and gave him gifts.

This is the true story of Christmas. Christmas is the day we celebrate the birth of Jesus.

God sent his Son, Jesus, to be born on earth because he loves us very much.

For God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.

John 3:16



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Solution on page 12

VOICES *of the* ISLES

Featuring: In
Dulci Jubilo, Ding
Dong Merrily on
High, In the Bleak
Midwinter and
much more!

Presents **A Christmas Carol Concert**



All Saints Church, Leighton Buzzard
LU7 1AE

Sunday 10th December

6:30 pm

Free Entry

please consider a donation to the church fund

Good Shepherd, Sandhills

Vicar: Rev'd Steve Marsh

Tel: 01525 838450

Churchwardens:

Stuart Blofeld & Katharine Reedy



**CHURCH of the
GOOD SHEPHERD**

Christmas with The Good Shepherd

The countdown has begun and we're excited about celebrating Christmas with our community.

First up is carol-singing round the new estates on Wednesday 29th November. There's a lot of streets to cover, so each year we aim to go somewhere different. Last year we walked around Romangate; this year it's likely to be Billington Park, but stay tuned to our Facebook page for details and do join us if you'd like to.



On the afternoon of Sunday 3rd December, we'll be leading some carol singing at Greenfields Retirement Development, with live music and sweet treats. We first did this last year and are really looking forward to going back.

Preparations are under way for our annual Beer & Carols evening on Friday 8th December at Astral Park Community Centre – doors open at 6:30pm and music starts at 7pm. This is a highlight of the year, and will be a fun and festive evening for all the family with singing led by a live band (For One Night Only), and some Christmassy refreshments.



10th December will be our usual Sunday morning café: a chance to enjoy a cuppa and a chat and make a Christingle. For those who appreciate a quiet moment in all the Christmas busyness, there will be a short time of reflection.



On 17th December, as well as our morning service, we'll be hosting an afternoon Christingle event starting at 3pm, where children and families can make a Christingle and join in a short service.

Our Christmas day service will be at 9:45am and all are welcome. More details on our flyer, and latest news on our Facebook and Instagram pages.



<https://www.facebook.com/goodshepherdsandhills/>

https://www.instagram.com/church_good_shepherd/

Katharine Reedy

St. Nicholas, Hockliffe

Vicar: Rev'd Noel McGeeney

Tel: 01525 237633

Churchwardens:

Brian Speller: 210565; Roger Spalding: 07415 877501



Why Are We Waiting?

The time between Summer and Christmas means different things to different people. For schools, September is the beginning of the new school year. For teachers, thoughts of Christmas are shelved until the sometimes-frenzied preparation for Nativity plays and class parties begins after the October half-term holiday. For retailers, orders of Christmas stock begin in September, with Christmas Cards and suggestions for presents appearing, like timid wildlife, in shop windows, sometimes as early as October. For the producers at BBC Radio stations no Christmas music can be played before December 1st. For their counter-parts in the world of TV, many Christmas Specials are filmed in August.

For Christians the last four weeks before Christmas are known as Advent. The word Advent is from the Latin word 'adventus' which means arrival. The first celebrations of Advent have been traced to the fifth century when a period of fasting and prayer led up to the Christmas feast day.

Advent starts on the fourth Sunday before Christmas and signifies a period of waiting for the birth of Christ and the second coming of Jesus. There are several ways of counting down the time of waiting but the most common are by candles or calendars. Advent calendars have been in use in Germany from the early 19th century where they could have been simple chalk marks on the wall whilst modern calendars in the UK are mass produced in card and consist of 25 little windows which can be opened each day in December to reveal a picture or a sweet.

Advent is in the darkest time of the year so light and darkness are powerful symbols. Five candles are used in churches in the Advent Wreath: one for each Sunday of Advent, and one centre candle which is white.

The first candle stands for Isaiah and the prophets.
The second candle stands for The Holy Bible.
The third candle stands for Mary, the mother of Jesus.
The fourth candle is for John the Baptist.
The centre candle is white and is lit on Christmas day and stands for Jesus, the light of the world.



Services at St Nicholas, Hockliffe:

Sunday 10th December 9.30am: Family Service - The Celebration of the Christmas tree

Saturday 16th December 7pm: Carols By Candlelight

Sunday 24th December: 11.15pm Midnight Mass

Roger Spalding

St. Michael & All Angels, Billington

Vicar: Rev'd Steve Marsh

Tel: 01525 838450

Churchwardens:

Sandra Brewin 373644; Julia Haviland 850380



WE WILL REMEMBER THEM

Two minutes silence we spend in church, in our homes, near a War Memorial to take in this momentous task. Can our fickle minds even concentrate for that short time on the enormity of the lives lost in sometimes futile battles: "Did I leave the oven on; it's raining again, and I haven't got an umbrella; why are so few people in church at this Act of Remembrance?"

Our brains cannot cope with the truth that while millions have suffered and died and still at this present moment are being blown up, shot, starving, sick and without help, we live in comparative comfort and security.



"When comes the promised time when war shall be no more and lust, oppression, crime, shall flee thy face before". It is more obvious than ever that we only are the answer to our prayers to God for peace.

Our Remembrance Service in Billington was enhanced by the outline of a Tommy. Geoff and Julia Haviland had placed him near the chancel with a decoration of poppies and opportunity for people to put their own poppy in memory of a deceased loved one. Margaret Foskett had also made a beautiful arrangement beside the framed details of Cuthbert Pratt from Billington who died in France shortly after the start of WW1. Rev'd Steve spoke to us in his sermon of hope and the light which, unlike the foolish virgins in Jesus's parable, we should never allow to go out.

At the Village Hall we had a Quiz arranged for 28th October. We got "cold feet" and cancelled it when we realised it was the night of the final of the Rugby World Cup. Hopefully a new date will be arranged.

On Saturday 2nd December there will be Pre-Christmas Event in the Village Hall. It will start with free Switching on Christmas Lights accompanied by mulled wine, nibbles and carols. Father Christmas will also be making a special visit. This celebration will be followed by a three-course meal (£12 for adults, £8 for under 12s). Please contact Jean Albertella on 01525 379621 for tickets.

At St Michael and All Angels there will be a Holy Communion Service at 11.15 am on Christmas Eve. The Crib Service for all families will be at 5pm. The Midnight Mass will be at 11.15 pm. All will be warmly welcome at these events.

Sandra Brewin

St. Michael's, Eggington

Vicar: Rev'd Noel McGeeney

Tel: 01525 237633

Church Officers:

Carol Hart 384634; Paul Brown 751861



Christmas is fast approaching. I for one am trying really hard to teach my 2½ year old granddaughter Lucia the meaning and significance of Christmas. She's not too young to start learning. No matter what your family's relationships or structures, your grandchildren can share your faith with you.

For most, Christmas is a joy-filled holiday; but others may wish it wasn't even on the calendar. Many of us this year have lost the ones we love, leaving our hearts completely broken; but we can reflect on all the wonderful Christmases we shared with them and remember that they were indeed happy times. I know they would want us to celebrate in some way.

For the world, the holiday season is about extravagance, opulence and making every detail picture perfect. The story of Jesus however is one of humanity & sacrifice.

A poem by Bonnie Lake Bloomfield captures something of this combination:

Christmas

*Today there will be joy for some
and memories to make,
Friends & family gathered round
Goodies to be baked.
There may be old traditions kept
Or new ideas to try
But for everyone who smiles & sings,
another one will cry.*

*They may cry because of loneliness,
Or cry because of pain.
The joyful Christmas spirit
Might be too hard to sustain.
Maybe life is stressful
Or there disabled in some way
Maybe there in mourning
Because a loved one's passed away*

This festive season feels like the right time to share our warmest thanks for making us so welcome in St Michael's church and the Eggington community.

Wishing you all a happy holiday season and a new year filled with blessings.

Jackie Townsend

Dates to remember in December:

- 06. Elevenses at St Michael's
- 13. Carol Service, 7.00pm followed by mulled wine and mince pies
- 24. Christingle Service at 3.00pm for all ages.
- 24. Midnight Communion Service at St Nicholas Hockliffe, 11.15pm
- 25. Christmas Day Service at St Leonard's H&R, 10.00am
- 31. Joint Villages Service at St Leonard's, 11.00am





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Birthday Boy Barry

On Tuesday 7th November, my 75th birthday, I was invited to ring at our magnificent Cathedral and Abbey Church of St. ALBAN.

I received a warm welcome and a surprise party.

Many thanks to Jonathan Humbert for organising this and the rest of the ringers for baking delicious cakes and making this a wonderful evening.

In conclusion I would like to mention that the previous Sunday evening, four of the Abbey ringers travelled to All Saints to assist with the glorious sound of all our twelve bells for our patronal Festival evensong.

Barry Eglesfield

{Belatedly wishing you a happy birthday, Barry. We're glad to hear that you had a fabulous day. Ed}



Solutions to the puzzles on pp 10 & 16





Tell out my soul:

*A series exploring how elements of our worship
What we do and why we do it.*

This month:

Sending Out

by Rev'd Kirsty Borthwick

Go in peace

William Temple, Archbishop during the war years of the early 1940s famously said “the Church is the only society on earth that exists for the benefit of non-members”. This series of articles over the last year has of course made clear that what we do when we gather together to worship is vitally important and transformative. But our worship together cannot and must not be separated from who we then are in the world. Our worship is incomplete without the dismissal at its end – by which we are sent out into the world to live to God’s glory and for the building of God’s Kingdom. We gather as worshipping members of the Church, so we can serve those who are not (yet, we pray!) the Church’s members.

In fact, the word ‘mass’ - used by so many around the world and in our own parishes to describe what we do when we gather to worship – gets precisely at this point. ‘Mass’ comes from the Latin word *missa*, a form of word which means ‘sent’. It in turn comes from the final line of the liturgy of the Latin Mass: *ite, missa est*. ‘Go, it is sent’. In the oldest liturgies of the Western Church, the word that gives those liturgies their name comes from the service’s final act – our being sent out into the world.

We are familiar with this act of sending from our own services, which so often end with the words ‘Go in the peace of Christ’ or ‘Go in peace to love and serve the Lord’. It is traditionally the Deacon of the Mass who says these words and rightly so if we compare this line of the liturgy with the words spoken to Deacons at their ordination:

“They are to serve the community in which they are set, bringing to the Church the needs and hopes of all the people. They are to work with their fellow members in searching out the poor and weak, the sick and lonely and those who are oppressed and powerless, reaching into the forgotten corners of the world, that the love of God may be made visible.”

Deacons are famously called to inhabit thresholds – most obviously the boundary between the gathered Church assembly and the world. But they do not stand in this space on their own; the Deacon’s calling is representative of God’s call upon the

whole Church. We are called to be a people who look outwards, whose care and attention is for the world and its people: those whom God loves. The duty of every single one of us is to be people of welcome, who reach out into the world, and people commissioned, who step out into the world to serve it in its need and to proclaim the gospel. We are all called to be 'deacons'. In fact, we are all called to be 'apostles', literally (from the Greek) those who are 'sent'.

We have lots to learn here too from our Orthodox siblings. They speak of a 'liturgy after the liturgy' which is our worship of God as those who serve him in the world. They remind us that our worship does not end at the close of our gatherings, but enters into a new phase as we worship God in and through our daily lives.

Our identity as those who are sent plays out across so many aspects of the Christian life, and is an identity that speaks ultimately of great hope; for we are not sent out and left to it but sent out and then gathered back in. When the Deacon dismisses the congregation at the end of the service, they're expecting everyone to come back again! And when God sends us out to serve the world, he expects us to return bearing the needs of the world with us. We saw that made clear in the description of what it is to be a Deacon.

Our whole life is one great movement, of sending and return. Take the words of the Nunc Dimittis, for example: "Lord, lettest now thy servant depart in peace". We end each day with these words at either Evening Prayer or Compline in assurance that we will gather again in prayer with the dawning of the new day. And we so often speak these words at a deathbed or funeral, this time in the hope that as those we love depart from our company, they make their return to peace in the eternal care of God.

Sending and return is even writ large in the very acts of God. We imply sending and return every time we profess faith in the Trinity, for we encounter the Trinity as the Father sends the Son and the Spirit to reconcile us to himself – sending the Son to be incarnate and to die and rise again; and sending the Spirit to unite us to the Son and enliven us in faith. And it's as those filled with the Spirit and united in Christ that we 'return' with and in them to the intimacy of their relationship with the Father.

Our whole lives, then, are an act of worship, in which at regular intervals and at our last breath we answer God's call to depart in peace and find ourselves gathered into his kingdom, here and now, and in the fullness of eternal life. And this whole movement – this lifelong pilgrimage of sending and return – is but an echo and an invitation, pointing us to God's own triune identity as the one who sends and is sent, who gathers in all that he has made. It is all of this that should stir our hearts when we reply to the Deacon in trust and joy: 'in the name of Christ, amen!'

Mother Kirsty

Trees, trees, trees – essential to life as we know it



At this time of year many people use a Jesse Tree to retell Bible stories from Creation to the birth of Jesus. The tradition is founded on the verse from Isaiah 11:1 “A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a branch will bear fruit.”

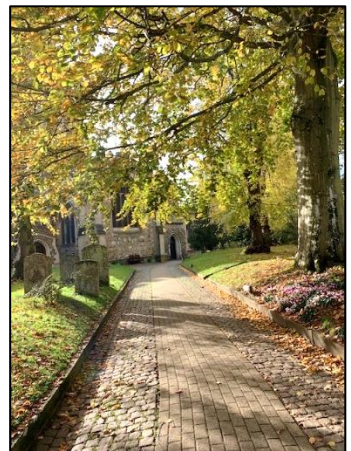
This is not the only reference to trees in the Bible, but it made me think of the importance of trees for our lives.

1. They produce oxygen: a leafy mature tree can provide enough oxygen for 10 people.
2. They absorb carbon: one tree can absorb 48lbs of CO₂ annually.
3. They mop up other toxins and act as filters by trapping larger particulates.
4. Trees are natural air conditioners, providing physical shade and releasing water vapour from their leaves which lowers the temperature nearby. The cooling effect is equivalent to 10 air conditioning units running for 20 hours a day.
5. Trees are a natural sound buffer and can reduce sound levels by 50% in noisy areas.
6. Trees can prevent flooding as they absorb up to 450 litres through their roots every day in addition to capturing rain water on their leaves.
7. Trees support wildlife by providing habitat and food sources for many different species from mosses and fungi to bugs, birds and bats.
8. Trees communicate with each other, warning of insect invasions and, utilising special fungi, can share nutrients.

In recent years it has been shown that spending time surrounded by trees can reduce the levels of the stress hormone, cortisol, in the brain. We only have to walk through the church gates to experience the peace within our churchyard. Indeed, our late Queen knew the benefits, and advocated tree planting throughout her life.

Recently a tree trail was produced to inform people about some of the trees we have in our churchyard. Pick up a copy from the board beside the entrance to the coffee shop, and go for a walk round our wonderful churchyard.

Alison Dobbie



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