

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

June 2025

£1

Inside:

*"To Choir or
Not to Choir"?*

Young Singers
is loads of fun.
As is singing in
the church choir.

Both are
a gift for life.

*(Image created by
Alan Perrott & Al)*

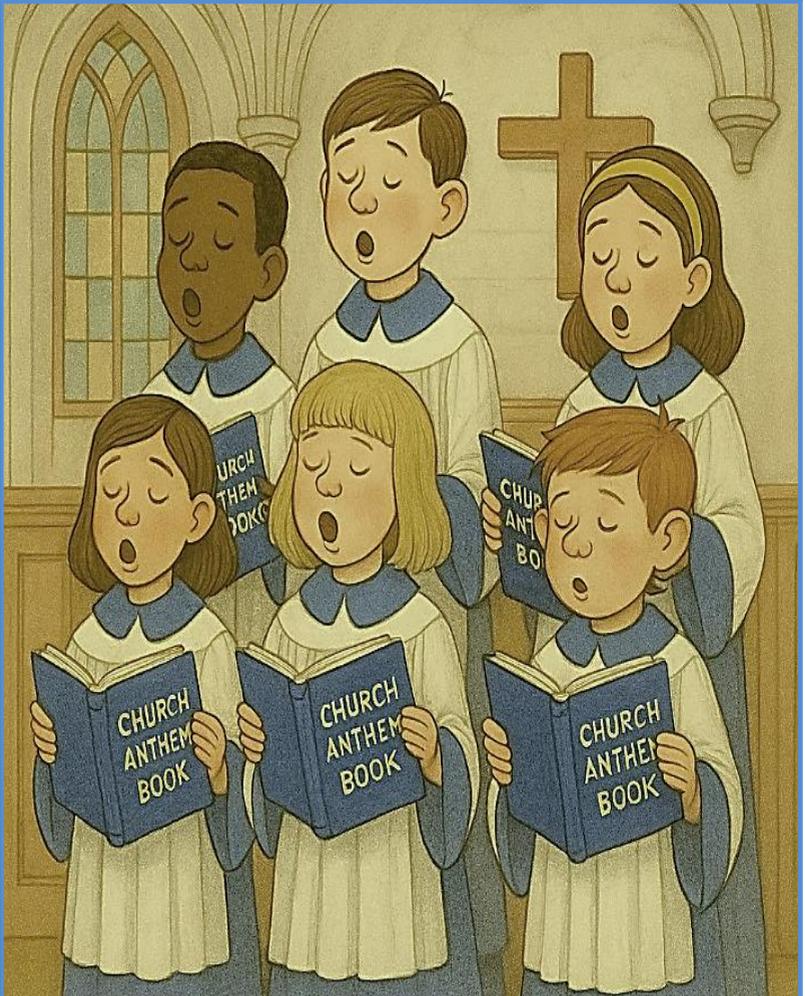
Living God's love
with Joy
Ian Woodward

Remembrance
helps Pulford
children learn
the values of
unity, courage
and peace

*"A true servant
of Christ"*

Frank Reedy RIP

Flower Festival,
Toddlers Toddle
& other dates



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Three levels to Hospitality

By Rev'd Noel McGeeney

In the Jerusalem Bible, Romans 12: 13, Saint Paul says, “*you should make hospitality your special care*”.

Hospitality begins by saying “we welcome you” as a good start, as long as it is open and inclusive, but there are two more levels to reach.

In our church services we welcome everyone, and indeed invite everyone for refreshments afterwards. Plus, we have coffee mornings and lunches, summer fayres and winter bazaars. A Heath and Reach villager told me that Christmas begins for her at our Christmas Bazaar.



The next level of hospitality invites us to go from there and say: “*we are in solidarity with you*”. That means: your joys are our joys, and we celebrate them with you; and your troubles are our troubles, and we stand beside you.

In St. Leonard’s school this half term the Value is Justice. Last week I shared the distinction between justice and fairness: justice upholds people’s rights under the law, as in the Declaration of Human Rights, whereas fairness is about the way we are treated in comparison to others.

Britain and most of Europe are in solidarity with Ukraine. British families gave 254,000 Ukrainians refuge after the Russian invasion three years ago. That is solidarity in practice.

Saying “*we welcome you*” and “*we are in solidarity with you*” has one more step, and that is towards “*mutuality*”, where we say: “*we need you*”, where we comprehend just how deeply the global community of Jesus’ followers needs each other in order to be the People of God we are called by Scripture to be.

Jesus exemplified mutuality in every way: in the parables he told, in the way he related to others (such as with the woman at the well) and even in the manner of his death.

When the church works to embody mutuality, especially towards minority groups, we learn to lament, celebrate and learn from one another. Ultimately, we are fulfilling God’s plan for healing and wholeness as we reflect Christ’ love.



Our Diocesan vision includes growing younger and more inclusive. Moving through being a welcoming community to being in solidarity to the deeper awareness that we need others who are different to us so we can learn that diversity is indeed the spice of life.

Fr. Noel McGeeney

Our present pattern of services across the Ouzel Valley Team

All Saints

Sundays:

8.00am 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

6.00pm 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

10.00am Thursday

9.00am Saturday

(Service of Healing on 4th Saturday each month)

Morning Prayer:

9.00am Tuesday – Friday in the Chancel

St. Barnabas, Linslade

Sundays:

8.00am Said Eucharist

10.00am Parish Eucharist

6.00pm Evensong

www.stbarnabaslinslade.uk

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: 'Chapel Time':

Lead reflection and discussion

3rd Sunday: Holy Communion & CGS Juniors

4th Sunday: 'Morning Break':

Informal service with sermon and discussion.

Free pop-up café every Sunday from 9.45am

*Community Cafe every Wednesday at Astral Park
10am - 12noon with a Music, Rhythm and Rhyme
session from 10am - 10:30am.*

St. Leonard's, Heath & Reach

Sundays:

8.00am 1st & 3rd Sundays: Holy Communion

11.00am Holy Communion

1st Sundays: Family Service

Tuesdays: 7.00pm Holy Communion

Morning Prayer via Zoom:

9.00am Monday – Saturday

www.saintleonardschurch.com

St. Michael's, Eggington

9.30am 1st & 3rd Sundays: Holy Communion

4th Sundays: Café Church 3-4pm

St. Nicholas', Hockliffe

9.30am 2nd Sundays: Family Communion

4th Sundays: Holy Communion

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 10am - 2pm.

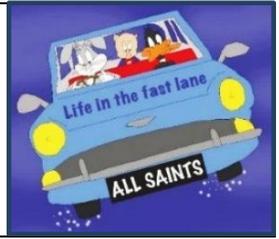
Saturday 10am - 12noon for drinks & cakes only.

Contact Details on Page 2.

News Roundup

All Saints Holiday Club 11th - 15th August
"Life in the Fast Lane".

Application forms now available.



Worth a smile

I gave my four-year-old grand-daughter money for sweets and the church collection plate. Later, seeing her enormous pile of sweets, I got suspicious and asked if she hadn't also given some money to God in church that morning. "No," she replied sweetly, "He wasn't there."



My husband was attempting to build a patio for the first time. He bought 100 cement blocks. Laying them out in a pattern, he discovered the chosen area was too small. He stacked the blocks against the house and cleared more space. The next day he put the cement blocks back down, only to find that the ground was too hard to keep the patio level.

He ordered a truckload of sand to be delivered the following morning. Again, he stacked the 100 blocks against the house.

Observing all this, our next-door neighbour asked, "Are you going to put your patio away every night?"



The vicar asked a member of his congregation, a banker, why he seemed a bit down. The banker replied: "I'm a walking economy! My hairline is in recession, my stomach is a victim of inflation, and both of these together are putting me into a deep depression."



Beware of the new Amazon scam. I asked my husband to order me some expensive jewellery, but motorcycle parts came instead! Thankfully, they fit his bike.



Sometimes I think I understand everything – but then I regain consciousness.



'Publish the date of the jumble sale, but not the US bombing plans. Those were sent to us by mistake'

Parish Registers

There were no weddings or Baptisms in April.

R.I.P. April:

1: Jean Goodyear at All Saints; 14: Harold Hammond at St. Leonard's;
17: (Mary) Liz Lemon at Bierton; 22: David Wheeler at All Saints

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

Years Mind, June:

2: Barbara Macdonald; 3: Ira Bowerman;
4: Karl Jones, Roy Turney;
5: Norman Griffiths; 7: Dorothy Speller, Beryl Jessup, Sidney Westwood;
8: Robert Molloy, Doris Pullin, Shirley Jones;
9: Ann Meredith, Michael Nash;
11: Peter Beecroft; 13: Davina Baker, Jasmine Baker;
15: Jean Waudby, Cyril Burchell;
18: John Shelley; 20: Margaret Leath, George Willett, Joan Spencer, Doris Froud;
21: Marie Cooper; 23: Edgar Hart, Shirley Humphreys;
24: Norman Dillamore;
27: Elsie Beauchamp, Eddie Shephard;
28: David Ingledow, Rosemary Plenderleath;
29: Marjorie Bewick; 30: Paul Bottos

All Saints Churchyard LU7 1AE
Saturday 7th June 10am-1pm

Plant Sale and Love Nature Fun Day

 FREE ALL AGE
ACTIVITIES

Church Cafe

 make seed bombs

Friends of the Earth stall

 tree trail

 join the nature count

 play nature bingo



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



Lighting the Way to Remembrance: The Children of Pulford celebrate VE Day with Lanterns and Medals

This May, the spirit of remembrance and gratitude shone brightly—quite literally—as the pupils came together to mark Victory in Europe (VE) Day with creativity, reflection, and joy. Inspired by the stories of bravery and resilience from wartime Britain, the children crafted medals out of clay. Each medal became a small act of remembrance, honouring those who gave so much. The children were also fascinated by the fact that there were medals given out to animals.



The British Royal Legion and Chelsea pensioners encouraged people to 'light a lamp for peace' to coincide with the lighting of beacons around the country at 9.30pm on 8th May. Classrooms were abuzz with scissors snipping, glue sticking, and the soft flicker of tea lights as children made their very own lanterns. Seeing the children so busily engaged, it was a moving reminder that even the youngest in our community can help keep the flame of remembrance alive.



Mr. Heather said: *"It's so important that our children understand the significance of VE Day—not just the history, but the values of unity, courage, and peace. These activities allowed them to engage with the past in a personal and meaningful way."*

Mr. Heather Snr came to visit; he would have been the age of a year 4 child on VE day. He talked to the children about his experiences and the children asked some pertinent and interesting questions.



Mrs. Nurden led an assembly where pupils shared some memories recorded by adults who remembered the event. The children dressed in red, white and blue. And the day was rounded off by playing games from the 1940's and celebratory eating of cake, followed by a rousing rendition of God save the King!

Tessa Rees, Deputy Head.



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On a musical note..... 

The Choir – a gift for life

I have been singing in a church choir for so long now that I often take it for granted – not just the time that we individually commit to the choir, but what we get from it. While I may sometimes moan about the commitment, it means that for most of my life I have been part of a close community where I can contribute and feel valued.

When we moved to Leighton Buzzard in August 1988, I naturally followed the spire to All Saints for evensong. This was during the period when the church was being repaired after the fire, so my first service was in the south aisle surrounded by polythene sheets and dust! I was sitting behind the late Fr. Peter Moss, and he must have noticed my enthusiastic hymn singing because he approached me after the service and introduced me to Richard Watts, the organist at that time. The rest, as they say is history! Sue Revis fitted me out with robes and music, Bryan Gilbert and Keith Biggerstaff made room for me in the back row, and there I have been for the last 37 years. Even though I am now the longest serving member of the choir, my Church Anthem Book still has my original choir number B4. One week after leaving Ireland and moving to Leighton Buzzard, I was part of a new community where I could immediately fit in and contribute.

As time went on, we were blessed with our beautiful daughters, and when they were old enough, they naturally joined the choir too. They grew up as part of this special community, making friends and learning skills that they will never lose.

My children, and others who are lucky enough to be a part of the choir, learn a lot more than how to sing – they learn the importance of respect, commitment and hard work; they learn about teamwork and shared responsibility; they develop confidence in performing. As they progress through the choir they learn to lead, and to take responsibility for the younger children. Most importantly, they learn that hard work can be fun, and that the reward for this commitment is a wonderful sense of achievement and kinship.

As my daughters grew up and began to find their own way in the world, they moved away from singing and explored other activities. However, what they have learnt in the choir never left them. When Ciara went away to university, she joined the Huddersfield Choral Society and was immediately welcomed as an experienced singer. When Aisling wanted something to get a break from looking after her children, she naturally turned to music and joined the Watford Philharmonic Society. They were delighted that she could not only sing, but could also read music, pronounce Latin – and even watch the conductor!

Whether you have been in the choir for 7 years or for 37 – or more – then it is a gift for life, and you will continue to reap the benefits.

Alan Perrott

Calendar of Events

1st June

Services as usual including Messy Mass All Saints 11.30am
Bereavement Support Café Coffee Shop, All Saints 2.30pm – 4pm



4th June

Lunch Club North Transept, All Saints 1pm.
Tickets £6.00 available from the Coffee Shop.



7th June

Plant Sale 10am – 1pm (*see page 6*)

8th June

Pentecost Services as usual at All Saints including
Festal Evensong 6pm



14th June

Volunteers Fair All Saints 10am – 3pm (*see page 19*)

15th June

Services as usual including All Age Communion All Saints 11.30am

19th June

Corpus Christi Holy Communion All Saints 10am

20th June

Crafty Natter All Saints 1.30pm - 3.30pm



21st June

MU Toddler Toddle All Saints Churchyard 10 -10.30am (*see page 22*)

22nd June

Morning Services as usual at All Saints including Pet Service 4pm
MU Wave of Prayer All Saints 2 – 2.30pm (*see page 22*)

27th – 29th June

Flower Festival – see opposite

29th June

Services at All Saints: Holy Communion 8am
Parish Eucharist celebrating Preb. David's 25 years as a Priest 10am





ALL SAINTS CHURCH
LEIGHTON BUZZARD

Flower Festival

FABULOUS FLORAL DISPLAYS

FRIDAY 27TH JUNE 10am - 5pm

SATURDAY 28TH JUNE 10am - 5pm

SUNDAY 29TH JUNE 1pm - 5pm

FREE ENTRY

Church coffee shop open
for refreshments

Live music



on ...

The Growing Church

On Friday evenings children can be seen running down the path, some turning left into the coffee shop entrance and others making their way around to the North Transept door. Both groups are going to spend time singing, but in different ways.



Holding your breath for 20 seconds is a serious business

Young Singers is a group of children from many different schools within the town, who, under the leadership of Saffron Pughe, sing with great enthusiasm a wide range of music. The sessions are only an hour long, but SO much is packed into those 60 minutes. There is a warmup with breathing exercises and clapping of rhythms, followed by singing in rounds and learning how to listen carefully to each other.

Then onto the songs, sometimes just for fun and at other times practising for a performance.

The children have sung at the Mayor's Carol service, the Civic Service and recently joined in a performance of Carmina Burana, singing in Medieval Latin!



Resting after a hectic game of sardines

*A series looking at youth work in our churches.
This month: To choir or not to choir – that is the question?
Some choose Leighton Buzzard Young Singers ...*

When asked what they enjoyed about each session, the children had very different ideas. For some it was making friends with children from different schools, for others it was the games and laughter which end each session. Needless to say, the drink and biscuit featured highly for others. However, the SINGING was a favourite with them all. The next project is to put on performance of “Jonah”. At least that does not involve learning Medieval Latin!

Basking in glory after their contribution to Stewkley Singers’ performance of Carmina Burana, singing with full orchestra, professional soloists and a conductor. What an experience.



Young Singers was set up to be a form of outreach, and the Friday evening session is at the same time as junior choir practice – which might seem odd but occasionally the groups get together – partly to satisfy the inquisitive minds of the Young Singers who ask what the older children are up to as they can hear them singing in the background on the few occasions when they are actually quiet ☺!

Young Singers normally covers Years 2-6, though they can join from Year 1 if they are good, confident singers. Several have graduated to the “blues” church choir, while weekend commitments prevent others from making that step. Recruitment to church choir is anyway not the primary aim.

There are some spaces for more Young Singers – simply drop an email to ask Paul (pmjdickens@gmail.com) or speak with Saffron or Peter if you wish to know more.

Katrina Grant

Good Shepherd, Sandhills

Vicar: Rev'd Steve Marsh

Tel: 01525 838450

Churchwardens:

Stuart Blofeld; Katharine Reedy



**CHURCH of the
GOOD SHEPHERD**

Frank Reedy: Obituary

23rd July 1962 – 6th April 2025

Francis Paul Reedy was born in Barnet, the youngest of 4 brothers, and his early life was a mixture of politics and faith. His parents had met and married as members of the Communist party, but not long after Frank was born, his mother came back to her childhood faith and his father began his faith journey.

Frank made a commitment to Jesus early in his life, at the age of 8, and went on to have a big influence on the faith of his friends too.

At Queen Elizabeth's Boys' School and later Queen Elizabeth's College London, Frank took a leadership role in his school and college Christian unions.



Whilst at university and then afterwards, he worshipped at All Souls Langham Place and was a key member of the student team. He led the student coffee bar, which was renamed Frankie's in his honour.

Not long after starting work at Surrey County Council he was asked to become a trade union representative in his workplace and later took on the roles of Branch Secretary and lead negotiator. He strongly believed that faith and social action should inform each other and never sought to hide his Christian faith in any way.

After a few years of being active in the union, he joined the Labour Party and was elected as a Councillor in the London Borough of Hackney, which brought him into contact with many people of diverse backgrounds and faiths. He was one of life's peacemakers, both in politics and the church, being able to bring people of different views together successfully.

Frank and I met and in 1992 got married at All Souls, having got to know each other on a canal boat holiday organised by a mutual friend. I was won over by the morning cup of tea he brought to my bedside! Our son John was born in 1997. We lived in Ealing for the first 6 years of our married life, where we were part of St Mary's Church. In 1998 we moved to Leighton Buzzard, which enabled Frank to still commute to his job at the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students (IFES) in north London.

He worked in IT and Finance, and he was very clear about the importance of doing this role well so that those on the front line of mission could be freed up to be as effective as possible.

As a family we had a happy, peaceful and stable life together, taking pleasure in the small everyday moments and our mutual interests of music, coffee, food, travel, walking and our two cats. He was enormously proud of our son John. Frank was a big Doctor Who fan so that was always a fixture in our house.

From 2002 – 2016 Frank worked for Milton Keynes Council, where he took on the roles (at different times) of UNISON branch chair and treasurer.

Frank and I served together in several different churches over the years, most recently at Church of the Good Shepherd. We trained for lay reader ministry together, were licensed together at St Albans Abbey in September 2022 and had just completed the second, post-licensing stage of our training when he died.

He was a gentle, kind, humble and generous man, both in his family life and in the community roles he took on. These included:

- governor at Southcott Lower School where John went up till the age of 9, and chair of governors for 4 years, altogether serving from 2002 – 2010
- Treasurer for the Leighton-Linslade Homeless Service 2017-2025
- PCC member at our current church, Church of the Good Shepherd, from 2018 and Treasurer from 2020. He believed in a generous God, possibly unusual for a Treasurer, and this was reflected in the way he carried out his role.

He strongly believed that so much of the Bible is about justice for the poor and the excluded and that Christians are to reflect God's priorities for society. Frank was a committed supporter of several global mission organisations, including the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students (IFES) which he also worked for on two occasions. Together with Stuart Blofeld, Frank and I trained as Pioneer Mission Enablers for CGS.

Frank's gift for teaching and preaching meant that he was able to explain complex ideas in a clear and accessible way. He enjoyed leading services. He was also a musician, playing the keyboard regularly at church.

He was a deep thinker, who helped others to grow in their Christian life. One of Frank's heroes of faith was Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who notably wrote about the cost of discipleship. One of the last things Frank did was to write an article on Discipleship for this magazine saying this: "Jesus promises that those who follow him will receive the Holy Spirit. The Spirit, if allowed to work in each disciple and the church as a whole, will develop that character so that we become the hands and feet of Christ on earth, bearing the fruit that comes from having his nature within us".

Frank reflected that nature. He was a true servant of Christ and leaves a huge gap in our family, church and wider community life.

Katharine Reedy

St. Michael & All Angels, Billington

Vicar: Rev'd Steve Marsh

Tel: 01525 838450

Churchwardens:

Julia Haviland 850380; Tina Thompson 378411



VE Day 80 years on ...

On Saturday 10th May, the much anticipated, '80th Anniversary V.E Day Celebration Lunch' was held in the village hall. Organised by the Events Committee, it was a 'street party' style table setting with sausage rolls and sandwiches using ingredients similar to those available in May 1945. There were cakes and jellies to follow, and one committee member tried her hand at making three blancmange rabbits just like our grandmothers used to make. There was even a black-market spiv present with a case of 'off ration' spam! Walls and windows had been decorated with wartime posters and the stage held many items of memorabilia. To top it all the committee members all wore wartime costume and songs of the period played in the background. Over 80 people attended and £500 was made from the raffle and donations table with all profits going to the British Legion. It was a very good occasion and succeeded in re-enacting some of the euphoria of 1945, a day unique in our history. It was certainly enjoyed by everyone there, many of whom also came '1940's style'! Well done indeed the Events Committee.

Another little bit of nostalgia occurred when one of our Great Billington residents, who volunteers to fly historic aircraft out of Old Warden on special air display days, gave us our own treat when he performed a few loops and turns over the village green in a WW2 Hurricane. He was on his way to an air display and navigated over the village to give us our own, much appreciated, little show. I hope that his approach and departure was seen and enjoyed by others.

By the time you read these notes, our church wardens will have organised our first clean-up day of the year. As we had some serious pruning of the yew trees in the early spring and with the beautiful weather we have been having recently, the churchyard is looking reasonably tidy but there will be weeds and overgrowth around the edges needing to be dealt with and always much dusting and polishing inside. We hope for a good turnout of volunteers and all will be welcome. Refreshments will be provided.

Another event will also have taken place before many of you see the next issue of Saints Alive. The screening of the documentary, Sinking of the Lisbon Maru, which I have been promoting for some considerable time, will have featured at the Leighton Buzzard Library Theatre on 3rd June. However, the timing is much better for me to remind you of our next big village hall event, the Italia Day Lunch on 14th June when I hope to hear from many of you, as we enjoy a dish of delicious lasagna or risotto, how much you were moved by the film! As usual the Italia Day Lunch will be a donations-only event with all profits going to church funds.

Geoff Haviland

St. Michael's, Eggington

Vicar: Rev'd Noel McGeeney

Tel: 01525 237633

Church Officers:

Carol Hart 384634; Paul Brown 751861



Be Humble.

As a very young child, I used to hear my mother say “Be humble”. When I asked what she meant, she told me always to be mindful of people less fortunate than myself, never to think I was better than anyone else, and always to help whenever I could.

My grandfather was a humble gentleman who died in my mother's arms when I was just seven years old - I knew grief then, as part of my mother died that day. My darling Mum, Mrs Sheila Sexton, wrote a poem for grandad.

You came to us to say goodbye

We loved you until the end

The dearest darling that we had

Our father & our friend.

You lived a life so very true

Meek & humble that was you.

A man who never told a lie

A Gentleman that had to die

Our Dad xx

Recently Pope Francis died, a gentle man and a very humble man whose parents were Italian immigrants. He was passionate about helping everyone, reaching out to women, immigrants, refugees, LGBTQ people and people of other faiths. Pope Francis will be celebrated as a humble yet forceful Pontiff. He left behind a rich legacy of inclusion and activism.

In a world fast becoming more dominated by social media, there is greater focus on self-image, competitive behaviour and demonstrating how you are better than others, wanting to be noticed. It is the time of inflated egos, obsession and pride, a far cry from all that Pope Francis believed in.

I'm writing this as I'm waiting with the world for the new pope to be announced. May he carry on Pope Francis 's legacy of peace. (PS: Now we know: Welcome Pope Leo.)

Jackie Townsend



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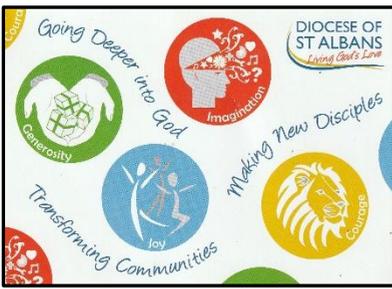
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Living God's Love

*A series exploring
the St. Alban's Diocese Vision Statement
This month:*

***You shall go out with joy
By Ian Woodward***

I started writing this piece in February with the idea that I would get it done and “out of the way!” But as I usually do, I dipped in and out of the article, adding bits when I thought of them. Had I got on and done it, I believe that I would have missed the whole point. *“Stir us, strengthen us, teach and inspire us to live your love with generosity and JOY, imagination and courage.....”*

Ever since I saw the runners and riders for this project, I have had one song buzzing around in my head. “You shall go out with joy and be led forth with peace.” We used to sing this a lot at St Mary’s, Becontree. Sing it through three times and end with a loud shout of “Oiy!” Got everybody “going”.

It got me wondering what was “joy”? What was it that made our hearts glow with warmth and love? What was this feeling you could regenerate at times when you felt sad and low? I was sure I knew what my definition of joy was, but was it the right one? And what did other people think? So I asked them.

I am not sure that the answers that I got drew me any closer to knowing exactly what Joy was, but I will share some of the answers:

A friend who has been married for over sixty years said that what he, and his wife, shared was joy. It was the togetherness that they knew through the happy and the sadder times.

Another had joy sharing, with his family, a birthday celebration and playing his guitar, with and for his friends.

One described it as a “transcendent feeling of oneness with everything”. She said it falls between happiness and ecstasy, and she feels it sometimes through music or a single thought during a sermon.

Several people expressed the thought that thinking about a time of joy, they can recreate the feeling, thus bringing that joyfulness back again. I, too, have done this when something sparks a memory, and a fading ember is rekindled.

In all the responses that I got back, it is clear that many joyful times are personal and different for each individual. It was clear that our “joy” was as individual as our relationship with God. These moments of joy involved family, friends, music, beauty in the world, a sight, or a sound. It is more than just happiness. A fellow reader put it like this: *“Happiness is perhaps a momentary high, but joy is the long haul”.*

I remember leaving a Reader training retreat, at Pleshey, Chelmsford, full of joy and hope. The weekend had finished with a short service, and we sang “Tell out my Soul”. Just thirty of us in the small chapel but to me it filled the place and sounded like thousands.

I sing in a rock choir and several times we have sung and had the sort of response we dream of. We sang our best, the audience joined in with the singing, clapped their hands; some got up and danced. It was an amazing feeling. All of the above involve “joy” during or after the event but in our prayer, we are called on to “live God’s love with joy”. So we need to generate that joy before the event. And if it can be done, it should be done.

Back to St Mary’s, Becontree, where we join forces with a local free church to stage a weekly children’s event in a local park. We gathered in the church hall, sorted the gear that we needed, and loaded a van. We then had our lunch and a service which committed the event to God, and we prayed for each other and those who would attend. Each time the program ran smoothly, we helped each other and those who needed to talk were listened to. It was a joy to be part of the event. Near the end of one event, a microphone was thrust into my hand, and I was told to sum up the hour, which I did with the help of the Holy Spirit. We certainly went out with joy to each of those events.

Praying for each other was a part of the CPAS Ventures that I attended. At seven in the morning, if you were not on early duty, the early rise team gathered and prayed for the coming day, its program and each member of the Venture. Looking back, you felt that we had invited the Holy Spirit into the activities, which was ridiculous because he was there anyway. What we did was to acknowledge the fact and use it to help us through each day.

We have just celebrated Easter and all that that entails and it hit me: the point that I would have missed had I got on and got this done, is that we have Joy in us all the time. A fellow reader gave me this response to the question: “*What gives you joy?*”

Her answer: “*Knowing that we have a living hope because Jesus rose from the dead, and that living hope sheds light over the whole of our lives.*”

Do we remember that every day? Because if we did it would be a lot easier to live God’s love with generosity and JOY!

Ian Woodward





What is Mothers' Union?

A Christian organisation supporting families worldwide for nearly 150 years. Begun by Mary Sumner in 1876 in her local parish it is now an international charity with over 4 million members in 84 countries. We work through members around the world to transform communities, improving health and education through our literacy and finance programmes.

We have been consulted by the UK government and are representatives on the UN Commission on the Status of Women which works to overcome women's inequality.

At All Saints:

- ★ We usually meet at 2pm on the second Tuesday of the month for prayer and fellowship in the vestry chapel.
- ★ We have Corporate Communion on the third Thursday of the month at 10am.
- ★ During the year, we meet members from the diocese to celebrate Lady Day, help on Mothering Sunday and we gather for the MU wave of prayer usually in All Saints during June. We raise funds and advertise campaigns run by MU to improve family life. In November we support the UN 16 days of action for the elimination of domestic violence.
- ★ Crafty Natter meets at 1.30pm on the 3rd Friday of the month to use up donated wool and material to provide items for local homes, L&D hospital and overseas aid.

All are welcome to join us for any of our activities. More information about MU can be found at www.mothersunion.org

Join the Toddler Tiddle on 21st June

Members of the Mothers' Union in St Albans Diocese are calling all Toddlers (and parents) to do their bit to help those less fortunate by raising money for "Away From It All Holidays" and 4 Women's Refuges within the diocese.

On 21st June my grandchildren Bethany and Abigail will be walking round the churchyard from 10 to 10.30am. Please sponsor them, or better still get your own children involved. More information about how your donations will help those in need is on the sponsor forms which are available from Alison (Mothers' Union), or the sidesmen's table in church.

Wave of Prayer 22nd June

Mothers' Union have 4 million members in 86 countries and every hour of every day someone in the Mothers Union is praying for named dioceses around the world.

Join us for our slot in the global wave of prayer 2- 2.30 pm on Sunday 22nd June.

Alison Dobbie



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