

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

July / August 2025

£1



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Living God's love with Imagination: John Wallace

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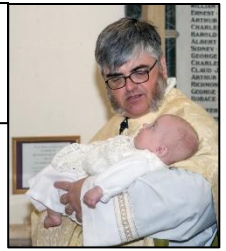
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On the body of Christ

By Rev'd Dr Bernard Minton



Recently, I've been thinking about what we mean when we talk about the Church as Christ's Body. It's a Scriptural phrase, but often when we use it, we think that we are being merely metaphorical: as though it's a mental picture, but it isn't actually real.

Our own bodies are real to us; we can touch, see and feel them. The Church as Christ's Body seems too abstract. But this is wrong, because our own bodies that we can see and feel are members of the one Body that is the Church, just as our organs and limbs are members of our physical bodies. So we touch the Body of the Church whenever we touch another Christian!

The members of our physical body are connected to us physically, and if they are separated, they stop being part of us. In the same way our individual physical bodies are connected to the Body of Church spiritually, in a way that is just as real as a physical connection, but a bit different. We feel 'connected' to the people that we love; to families or friends. That connection is one example of the same spiritual connection that binds all of us together into the one Body that is the Church. We might not always feel that spiritual connection to other Christians in the same way as we feel connected to those we love, but we are nonetheless quite literally all members of one another through our baptism. We are all members of the Body of Christ, just as our organs and limbs are members of our physical bodies.

Of course, our spiritual membership of Christ's Body is a different kind of connection. Our organs and members are united by our bone, flesh, and muscle. The individual members of Body of the Church are united not by physical connectors like those, but by an equally strong, and equally real, but immaterial kind of connection, who is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the 'connecting tissue' who binds us all together into one real Body, even though we are all physically distinct.

That Body, of course, is the Body of Jesus Himself. We all have our own bodies, but we are also members of the Church and so we all share one spiritual, real head: Jesus, who has ascended into the heavens, where all the angels and saints are now united in praise with Him.

Imagine that your body is standing in the cold, dark water, but your head is above the waves in the warm bright sunlight. The Holy Spirit unites us with our celestial Head, in and through whom we feel the wonderful glory of the God who loves us.

Father Bernard

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

Welcome to this Bumper 'Holiday' issue of Saints Alive for both July and August. All information is up to date as at the time of publication. The next issue will be September.

*** **

The Coffee Shop will be closed from 2.00pm Saturday 9th August reopening 10am Tuesday 2nd September.

*** **

Please remember that during Holiday Club week (11th - 15th August) there will be limited access into church for anyone not wearing a 'Life in the Fast Lane' t-shirt!

*** **

Revd Keith Robinson: died on 8 June aged 76 after a long illness. Keith was a popular curate at All Saints during the period of the fire in the mid-1980s. He was a gifted priest going on to become Rector of St Martins church, one of the oldest in Salisbury. He was also a fine artist and led a great deal of the research which helped to identify the figures carved into the roofs of the church. He drew the sketch of the church which adorns the weekly newssheet. He joined the Roman Catholic Church through the Ordinariate and lived in Herefordshire with his wife Christine. They had 3 children.



Worth a smile

Notices in a church newssheet:

- Organist required: to work with small but trying priest and congregation.
- Weight Watchers to meet at 7pm in the church hall. Please use large double door at the side entrance.
- There will be a shared supper at church this Sunday – with prayer and medication to follow.
- The minister would appreciate it if the ladies of the congregation would lend him their electric girdles for the pancake breakfast next Sunday.
- The students will be presenting Shakespeare's *Hamlet* in the church basement Friday at 7pm. The congregation is invited to attend this tragedy.
- Glory of God to all and peas to his people on earth.
- Join us for a skirt presented by the Drama Team.
- Applications are now being accepted for two year-old nursery workers.
- The Rector is on holiday this month. Local clergy will be celebrating with us all the Sundays that he is away.
- Don't allow anxiety to kill you. Let the church help.
- The minister went to the bank and asked for a statement of his account, adding: "We want to know how far afield we can go for our holiday." Handing him his statement the cashier enquired very gently: "Have you got a field at the back of your garden, sir?"

Parish Registers

Holy Matrimony, May:

- 2: Rodney Elwick & Yulia Volfovskaya at All Saints;
3: Kevin Pughe & Fiona Fraser at All Saints;
23: Andrew Osborne & Louise Jackson at St. Michael & All Angels

‘Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate’

Holy Baptism, May:

- 11: Rafferty Jozsef Lewis, Arabella Daisy Page-Tickell; 25: Madison Tate Barry

Holy Baptism, June:

- 8: Nathaniel Charles Atang, Maeve Marian Catherine Riches; 22: Darcy Akhtar Kate Beer

‘One Lord, one faith, one baptism’

R.I.P. May:

- 13: Mary Williamson at Crownhill; 14: Brenda Sharratt at Bierton;
16: David Pearson at All Saints; 19: Francis Reedy at St. Mary’s;
23: Roland Bartels at St. Barnabas, Karen Benesch at Bierton; 27: Ann Hamilton at Bierton

R.I.P. June:

- 6: Frederick Robert Hobbs at St. Mary’s 20: Robert Stonier at All Saints;
26: Ann Gilroy at St. Michael's; 27: Angela Dyer at St. Michael's

‘Everyone who lives and believes in me will never die’

Years Mind, July:

- 1: William Gilbert, Margaret Nash; 3: Colin Major; 6: David Edgoose; 7: Vicki Smith;
8: Ruth Kiddle, Stephen Goodger, George Turney;
9: Florence Groom, Elizabeth Hankins, Meg Hollins; 10: Joy Reynolds; 11: Eva Milne;
13: Primrose Cox; 14: Iris Marko; 17: Canon Alan Freeman, Josie Watkiss;
19: Christopher Hinchliff; 20: Blake Edwards; 24: Judith Woodruff; 25: Dick Spratley;
26: John Brantom, William Parris; 29: Charles Beauchamp

Years Mind, August:

- 1: Joanne Bradburn; 2: Annie Clements; 7: Norman Rumbelow, Bert Whitney;
8: Raymond Fisher; 9: Marion Deeley, David Harrington; 12: John Froud;
16: Wilfred Dumble, Margaret Dumble; 18: Michael Read; 19: Sheila Wadd;
20: Doreen Rolls; 22: Elsie Daniel, Doris Dunnett; 24: Leslie Nash, Linda Wood;
26: Bernard McAuliffe; 27: Catherine Flynn, Matthew Stephen Jones; 31: Maximillian Szuca

Answers to Bible Dingbats on p.12

- | | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. The Last Supper | 8. The Raising of Lazarus | 15. Golden Calf |
| 2. God Above | 9. Incarnation | 16. Reap what you sow |
| 3. Holy Spirit | 10. Forbidden Fruit | 17. Noah |
| 4. Burning Bush | 11. Fall from Grace | 18. Solomon |
| 5. Advent | 12. Sermon on the Mount | 19. A Multitude of Sins |
| 6. Parting of the Red Sea | 13. Forever and Ever | 20. Amen |
| 7. The Ten Commandments | 14. Praise God | |

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



A Pulford Musical Extravaganza!

Each year Pulford, along with every school in the country, produces a series of priorities and targets known as the School Improvement Plan (or SIP).

This year one of our targets was to implement a new scheme for teaching music in the classroom. Subjects like music are notoriously ones which can scare teachers who may not have done much formal training in that area, so a good scheme of work that is easy to follow and deliver is essential for making sure that the children get the most rounded, fun and fulfilling introduction to the subject.

So, Mrs Borelli found a new scheme which sought to achieve this. It soon became clear that to have some additional musical instruments to support its delivery would be hugely beneficial. Budgets are tight, so we decided that we should put on a concert to not only raise some money for them but also to celebrate the many talented musicians associated with Pulford.

We gathered together a brilliant mix of current pupils (including the debut of the Pulford Cheerleading Squad, the 'Pulford Poms'), former pupils, parents, grandparents, Governors and staff for an eclectic mix of musical styles delivered to a packed out All Saints. The audience were of all ages. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the performances and availed themselves of the fabulous refreshments provided by the PTA.

There was everything from organ, piano, violin & trumpet solos, clarinet ensembles, solo singers and the school choir as well Mrs Borelli's folk band 'Chasm' and Leighton Buzzard pop music legend Nick Beggs and his daughter Willow.

The evening culminated in a cheeky piano duet from Mr Heather and former pupil Arthur Togneri leading a singalong of 'Defying Gravity'. An evening of musical and social joy which highlighted all that is wonderful about the Pulford family.

We also raised £1000 and have purchased a beautiful set of African Drums which are now making a (loud) contribution to musical life at the school!

My thanks to the Vicar & Mrs Bevis for allowing and facilitating the use of All Saints for this celebration and I hope we'll do another one next year - watch this space!



Ed Price, Chair of Governors



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On a musical note.....



“Music is a voice that conveys what language cannot.”

Jean Sibelius, one of the great 20th-century symphonists, once said ‘Music begins where the possibilities of language end’. From the stirring vigour of his Karelia Suite to the sombre intensity of his Violin Concerto, it is easy to see how. As I sit down to write this article, I wonder whether the possibilities of language somewhat evade me. But, as Sibelius divines, music, especially one’s love for it, ought to speak for itself.

On 8th March 2024, I attended my first rehearsal as a member of the choir at All Saints, Leighton Buzzard. I had sung in my school choir previously, but wanted to hone my skills in preparation for applying for a choral scholarship at university. What immediately struck me was the rigour of rehearsals; the speed and accuracy with which new pieces needed to be digested and familiar ones refined. Whereas at school we were learning a piece a term, here I was learning several pieces a week. For someone with little to no exposure to the liturgy, it was a steep learning curve, and it took me some time to find my feet. I mean this both figuratively and literally: on one occasion I had actually managed to forget my black shoes and had to rush out of the church to retrieve them minutes before that morning’s service.

Having now been part of the choir for a little over a year, I am so glad that I persevered. There is such an enormous sense of camaraderie in the choir where we all share a love for the music we’re singing, as well as many a joke if things happen to go wrong! The opportunities to sing solos and sing in other churches have also left me with fond memories. Our choir’s trip to Exeter Cathedral last year instantly springs to mind. I will never forget our performance of Herbert Howell’s magnificent Collegium Regale canticles, and how the cathedral seemed to quake as we sang the final Gloria. I have no shame in admitting I had tears in my eyes!

All of this has made me a more technically able and confident musician, culminating in winning a choral scholarship at The Queen’s College, Oxford. While I did not go on to win an academic place, to know that my time at All Saints has enabled me to meet the standards of such a highly regarded choir has only inspired me to keep singing.

It is in this spirit that I would encourage anyone to take the leap and join a choir. Whether it is a community choir, a chamber choir, a choral society, or a chapel choir like All Saints, the discipline, resilience, and satisfaction one gains could not be more worthwhile. At a time when support for music and the arts is dwindling, we must never forget the relevance of Sibelius’s words; music is a voice we all have that conveys what language cannot. We all must make sure we never lose it.

Harry Murgatroyd.

Calendar of Events



Your Church needs you:

*Many of these events need more helpers.
Some happen just once in a while; some are regular;
and all would appreciate more volunteers.
If you could spare a little time,
there are some contact details on page 4;
or Lindsay and Jo can put you in touch with the organisers.*

2nd July

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

Tickets £6.00 available from the Coffee Shop.



5th July

Summer Fete All Saints 10am-2pm

6th July

Services as usual including Messy Mass BBQ All Saints 11.30am

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



18th July

Crafty Natter All Saints 1.30pm - 3.30pm



20th July

Services as usual including All Age Communion All Saints 11.30am

3rd August

Services as usual including All Age Communion All Saints 11.30am

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



6th August

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

Tickets £6.00 available from the Coffee Shop.



11th – 15th August

'Life in the Fast Lane' Holiday Club All Saints 9.30am – 12.15pm

Service and BBQ 6.30pm on Friday

Restricted access to the church all week.



18th August

Services as usual including All Age Communion All Saints 11.30am



All Saints Parish Church Leighton Buzzard

SUMMER FETE

Saturday 5th July - 10am to 2pm

Fete set in Vicarage Gardens
and Church Grounds



FREE ENTRY

FUN FOR ALL THE FAMILY

STALLS - MUSIC - REFRESHMENTS - ETC

Bible Dingbats

<p>SUPPER SUPPER SUPPER → SUPPER</p>	<p>→ GOD GOD</p>	<p>RUM</p>	<p>BUBURNSH</p>
1	2	3	4
<p>+</p> <p>Outlet</p>	<p>BAL TIC</p>	<p>Stop Run Go Walk Sit Wait Stay Come Quiet Speak</p>	<p>Lazarus</p>
5	6	7	8
<p>Dianthus IN Caryophyllus</p>	<p>Banana ✗ Mango ✗ Orange ✗ Potato ✓</p>	<p>Grac</p>	<p>SPEECH EVEREST</p>
9	10	11	12
<p>Ever Ever Ever Ever EVER</p>	<p>GOD</p>	<p>Au</p>	<p>REAP</p>
13	14	15	16
<p>BCDEFG IJKLMNOP OPQRST UVWXYZ</p>	<p>↓</p>	<p>SIN SIN Sin Sin Sin Sin SIN SIN Sin Sin Sin Sin Sin</p>	<p>R R</p>
17	18	19	20

Quiz-Questions.uk

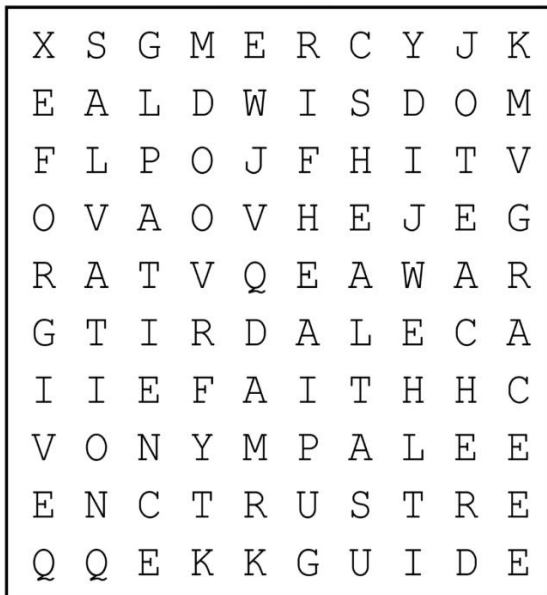


Answers on p.6

And a Bible Wordsearch



God is Love



Word list:

FAITH
FORGIVE
GRACE
GUIDE
HEAL
LOVE
MERCY
PATIENCE
SALVATION
TEACHER
TRUST
WISDOM





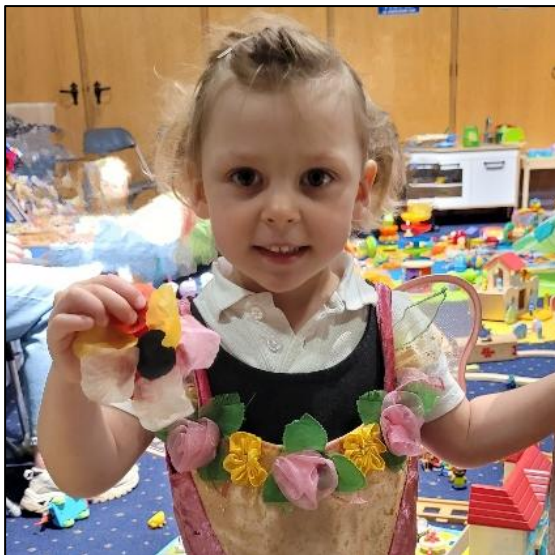
on ...

The Growing Church

Welcome to All Saints Toddler Time! Every Wednesday during term time you will find us in the North Transept and coffee Shop of Church. We are a group of parents and carers of pre-school children meet in 2 sessions, from 9.30-11am and 1.30-3pm. Children have an opportunity to play and make new friends, learn new skills and generally have fun, while the adults can have a chat and enjoy a cup of tea or coffee with a slice of homemade cake, with squash, biscuits and fruit for the children. There is a small weekly charge of £1.50 per adult and child, plus an extra 50p for each additional child. We have a large variety of toys, jigsaws, books, and ride-on toys and there is usually a child to be found in the ball pit. The children can discover painting, sticking, colouring, chalking and the ever-popular Play-Doh.

After a tidy up, the sessions end with a circle with songs, a short story, birthday cards for any child who has had a birthday in the previous week, and a closing prayer.

During the past year our fundraising included our annual 'Toddlers Toddle' round the churchyard one Sunday in June after Messy Mass, raising money for Mothers' Union. In September we helped sell raffle tickets for Alzheimer's Research.



A series looking at youth work in our churches.
This month: Toddler Time



Last autumn the children had lots of messy fun making carrots, apples, watermelon, grapes, bees and butterflies to decorate one of the church windows at harvest and in November we sold chocolate teddies for Children in Need. Christmas term ended with a party enjoyed by 23 families with 25 children. Father Dave joined us for the last part of the morning, and we finished with the telling of the nativity story, songs and a round of Hokey Cokey, all enjoyed in our beautiful church. Mothers' Union continues to support us by serving the refreshments and we greatly appreciate their help. The homemade cakes are always popular with both the adults and children. We also offer fruit which is enjoyed by lots of the children.



We currently have about 30 families coming along in the morning and about 10 in the afternoon. We are always happy to welcome new members. If you have a baby or young child and are free on a Wednesday, why don't you come and see what we do. We would love to welcome you into our group!

Julie and Terry Dolton

From The Archives: Those were the days!

*Thanks to Alan Perrott for these random fun facts,
gleaned from the County Archives:*



1869 Sept 30, Harvest Thanksgiving service: full Choral in All Saints' Church.

C.D. Mortimer, organist, was so drunk or poisoned that he could not play. He had spent the afternoon at the market with 3 travellers, one named Blackie. This man Blackie called at the Bell on the way to church and took a pint of wine to church, sitting in the organ loft with Mortimer. My impression is that Mortimer was drugged: he played the service after a fashion.

1892: From Leighton Buzzard Parochial Magazine - hymn practice for all:

“With regard to the practice for congregational singing, we again wish to draw attention to the fact that members of the congregation are desired to remain after the Wednesday evening service and take part in rehearsing the hymns etc. for the following Sunday. Now that the Ely Festival work is put aside, it is hoped that congregational singing will receive greater attention, and that in time a supplementary choir may be got together and placed under the spire to connect the music of the chancel with that of the nave.

1890: From Leighton Buzzard Parochial Magazine - the Choir outing:

The boys of All Saints' Choir had their annual outing on Thursday 27th. The Railway Company kindly reserved compartments in the 8.26 up train, and on arrival at Euston a large North-Western omnibus was in readiness to convey the party to S. Paul's. The ten o'clock matins had commenced by the time the Cathedral was reached, but the Te Deum and Jubilate (Goss in A) were familiar to the choristers, the service being one of those in use at All Saints'.

June 1882: Rules for the Company of Ringers of All Saints' Church

No. 10: The subscriptions for the Ringers be requested of the inhabitants of the town once a year (at Christmas), and be collected and entered in a book by two Stated Ringers, chosen by the rest.

No. 16: The money divided among the Ringers shall on no account be spent in drinking; and if any member be known to reproach another for not agreeing to spend all or part of the money in a manner contrary to the spirit of these Rules, he shall pay a fine of 2s. 6d. *[Work it out! Is this encouraging the Ringers to behave badly? Ed.]*

And finally –Sunday School was flourishing in 1876.

A return made to the Bishop of Ely in November that year said this:

All Saints: 86 boys, 102 girls

St Andrews: 138 boys, 144 girls

How might Noah fare in the modern world?

In the year 2025, the Lord came unto Noah, who was now living in Canada, and said, "Once again, the earth has become wicked and over-populated and I see the end of all flesh before me. Build another Ark and save two of every living thing along with a few good humans."

He gave Noah the blueprints, saying, "You have six months to build the Ark before I will start the unending rain for 40 days and 40 nights."

Six months later, the Lord looked down and saw Noah weeping in his yard... but no ark. "Noah," He roared, "I'm about to start the rain! Where is the Ark?"

"Forgive me, Lord," begged Noah. "But things have changed. I needed a building permit. I've been arguing with the inspector about the need for a sprinkler system. My neighbours claim that I've violated the neighbourhood zoning laws by building the Ark in my yard and exceeding the height limitations. We had to go to the Development Appeal Board for a decision.

Then Transport Canada and the Departments of Highways and Hydro demanded a bond be posted for the future costs of moving power, trolley and other overhead obstructions, to clear the passage for the Ark's move to the sea. I argued that the sea would be coming to us, but they would hear nothing of it.

Getting the wood was another problem. There's a ban on cutting local trees in order to save the spotted owl. I tried to convince the environmentalists that I needed the wood to save the owls. But no go!

When I started gathering the animals, I got sued by an animal rights group. They insisted that I was confining wild animals against their will. As well, they argued the accommodation was too restrictive and it was cruel and inhumane to put so many animals in a confined space. Then Environment Canada ruled that I couldn't build the Ark until they'd conducted an environmental impact study on your proposed flood.

I'm still trying to resolve a complaint with the Human Rights Commission on how many minorities I'm supposed to hire for my building crew. Also, the trades unions say I can't use my sons. They insist I have to hire only Union workers with Ark building experience.

To make matters worse, the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency seized all my assets, claiming I'm trying to leave the country illegally with endangered species.

So, forgive me, Lord, but it would take at least ten years for me to finish this Ark."

Suddenly the skies cleared, the sun began to shine, and a rainbow stretched across the sky. Noah looked up in wonder and asked, "You mean you're not going to destroy the world?"

"No," said the Lord. "The Government beat me to it."

[Author unknown]

A Retreat to Buckden Towers



Father Noel announced deep in the winter, that he and Linda [Morris] were planning a retreat for the upcoming Spring and asked for a show of hands in the hope that enough people were interested to make a viable group visit. It came as no surprise that the response was a positive one and so it was that plans were made for a “Parishes together” weekend retreat that would take place on 2nd May, covering three days.

Father Noel had previously visited Buckden Towers and thought it the perfect place to go. He wasn't wrong, as a group of 13 keen Pilgrims enjoyed a full weekend of activities which included all the Church Services that you would expect plus group sessions of meditations and ways for us to become closer to God. All in such lovely, simple, historic, yet peaceful, place surrounded by nature, with a natural lake and many acres of land.

Sandy recognised several songbirds with the use of her phone and Geoff heard a cuckoo, a rare experience that not many of us can witness now. Several of us heard the call of a distant owl in the night.

The weekend was so well organised and was a wonderful way of getting to know our fellow worshippers better.

The photographs are enough to show what a great time we had, but what they don't show is what we brought back with us. I am only speaking for myself when I say that I found a way of connecting with my inner self, resulting in an inner peace through meditation. A feeling of achievement which resulted in the joy of making a closer bond with my fellow Church friends.



I am positive that they feel the same, as when Father Noel asked who would join him in a return visit next year, he was rewarded with a resounding “Yes”.

Richard Page

St. Nicholas, Hockliffe

Vicar: Rev'd Noel McGeeney

Tel: 01525 237633

Churchwardens:

Brian Speller: 210565



By the time you read this article the Church will have celebrated the feast days of Pentecost and Trinity Sunday. Our church altar frontals and vestments return to the green of that long period of Ordinary Time from the Lectionary which always spans the summer holiday period. Sometimes the word 'Ordinary' can give us a false impression that, as a church, the pressure is off for a while. In truth there is no let-up in the work of growing God's Kingdom on earth.

This is ever more poignant for us at St. Nicholas. It is worrying that the new Electoral Roll numbers have dropped to just 8 parishioners, and we were unable to appoint any churchwardens at the recent Annual Parochial Church Meeting. I would urge all of you reading this magazine during the Summer to keep the mission and fellowship of St. Nicholas, one of our Team churches, in your prayers – thank you.

It was really encouraging then, that 14 people from Fr. Noel's parishes, shared in a refreshing and prayerful retreat at Buckden Towers in Cambridgeshire from 2nd to 4th May 2025. It was an opportunity to understand more about what prayer is all about and some of the applications that we can use to enrich our own prayer lives. Several people attending were making a retreat for the first time. Some of them have shared with me how they found this a rewarding opportunity to share in learning, worship, fellowship and the beauty of the surroundings away from their own homes and churches.

We learnt about the 'ACTS' pattern for prayer; you might like to try this yourselves during your own prayer time. It is divided into four parts which can be remembered by the acronym itself: A is for Adoration, C is for Confession, T is for Thanksgiving and S is for Supplication (which really means 'asking', for ourselves and for others). This pattern of prayer can also be followed by using our hands – this can help us to focus more intentionally and emotionally on what we are bringing to God's attention: palms upwards - your thumb, because it is the strongest, represents 'God' (Adoration). Your index finger points at others but when it does, the other three fingers point back at you, so it represents 'Confession'. Your middle finger is the tallest so it represents 'Thanksgiving'. The smaller two fingers represent 'Supplication' as we pray for 'others' (those for whom we have been asked to pray) and 'myself' (ourselves).

May God bless us at St. Nicholas during this Summertime as we yearn to grow His Kingdom in the village.

Dates for your diaries:

Cream Tea at St Nicholas Church - Sunday 7th September 2025 2pm-4pm.

Café Church is on Sunday 28th September 2025 at 3pm-4pm in Egginton Village Hall.

Geoff Marchant

St. Michael & All Angels, Billington

Vicar: Rev'd Steve Marsh

Tel: 01525 838450

Churchwardens:

Julia Haviland 850380; Tina Thompson 378411



Our 'Churchyard Clean Up Day' on 17th May brought forth a splendid group of volunteers who worked wonders to leave the church and grounds looking tidy and inviting for the next few months. Many thanks to all who came and to all who would have come had they been able.

14th June was the official birthday of King Charles III and, rather fortuitously, two of the wartime aircraft, en route to fly over Buckingham Palace and the Trooping of the Colour ceremonies, flew over Billington where Jean Albertella had once again organised the Italia Day Lunch. It was a nice touch and added to the enjoyment of the occasion for the 80 plus people who were present. Jean of course put on her now famous Italian style meal and with the welcome help of others, mainly from the Events Committee but other volunteers as well, provided a colourful and tasty lunch that was enjoyed by all. The weather was ideal for outdoor eating, and many took advantage of the sunshine and warm conditions. It was a joyful occasion and especially good to see old friends and many new-comers getting together for a good cause. All proceeds will be donated to St Michael & All Angels Church in memory of Peter Albertella.



Jean and Tina checking the lasagna & a colourful display of fruit, cheese and, my favourite, panettone!

As a postscript and final mention of the documentary on the Lisbon Maru I was indeed approached by several people at the lunch who wanted to express how much they were moved by the story. It had been a memorable evening as I knew it would. A big thank you from me to all who came.

Our thoughts and prayers at this time continue to be with Roger and Audrey and we wish Rev'd. Steve Marsh a full recovery from his current vision problem.

Geoff Haviland

St. Michael's, Eggington

Vicar: Rev'd Noel McGeeney

Tel: 01525 237633

Church Officers:

Carol Hart 384634; Paul Brown 751861



Angela Dyer RIP

Angela Dyer sadly passed away on Wednesday 4th June.

I first met Angela in 2002 when we moved to Eggington where she was very active in the village community. She always had a lovely way of asking for your help and support at events like the annual cream teas and other fundraising events for St. Michaels. Angela also became treasurer at the church and did a fantastic job with the accounts.

I got to know her very quickly and she became a very good friend. She cared deeply about people and our community and wanted to take an active role in it. She had a way of always finding solutions and making everything and everybody feel ok. She had a sunny nature and never allowed anyone to get her down. On one occasion she said to me that she would not let anyone offend her because life is too short!

Angela will be sadly missed by us all, but we will always remember her with a smile and very fond memories.

Martine Tournay

Eggington House

Hog Roast

12th July 2025

All profits to St Michael's Church, Eggington, & a local charity
Garden Games; Live Band; Open Gardens; Archery; Stalls;

Homemade Cakes; Bar

Come and join the fun

12-5 pm

£15 Adult; £7.50 Child (under 12)

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Welcoming Fr. Tope Aregbesola



Father Tope Aregbesola has been a regular member of our congregation with his family, but we are very pleased that AT LAST the paperwork has arrived from Nigeria to allow Bishop Richard to license him as a non-stipendiary minister in the Diocese of Saint Albans. It is a real joy, finally, to be able to welcome him into our church at All Saints. Although he holds a permission to officiate license, he will be learning the ropes particularly here at All Saints.

Tope and his family arrived here from Nigeria 18 months ago. He was originally a parish priest in a region of Nigeria before moving here with his wife and three children. Sadly, nothing works quickly in the church either here or abroad, so he has had to wait to receive his license.

He will be spending the next few years learning how the Church of England works (good luck with that one) and will be serving as a stipend curate sometime in the future. This could be here or somewhere else in the diocese.

For now, we hold Tope and his family very much in our prayers and look forward to his ministry amongst us over the coming months. It was lovely that Bishop Richard joined us for evensong recently, to welcome him into the diocese and also into the Church of England.

Preb David



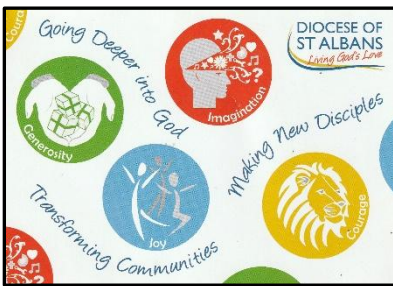
Sponsored Bike 'n Hike
BEDS AND HERTS HISTORIC CHURCHES TRUST

**Saturday
13th September**

Here's a very pleasant way to raise money for All Saints.

Join the All Saints team for the Bike 'n Hike on Saturday 13th September and get sponsored to have a day out walking in lovely countryside and visiting historic churches en route. We like to stop for a pub lunch too. We have not yet finalised the route, but it may be part of the Greensand Ridge this year! Last year we raised over £1,200 and were awarded a silver certificate. The sponsorship money is divided between Beds & Herts Historic Churches Trust which gives grants to repair churches in the two counties, and your nominated church. (i.e. All Saints for us). The Trust has been very generous to All Saints, giving over £120,00 to our church over the years. It would be great if any cyclists would like to take part too. Please let Katrina Grant know if you would like to join the team this year. Sponsor forms are available to pick up in church.

Katrina Grant



Living God's Love

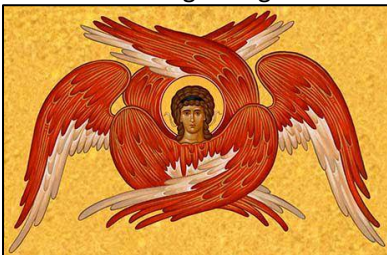
A series exploring
the St. Alban's Diocese Vision Statement
This month:

With Imagination
By Dr. John Wallace

The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary defines 'imagination' as 'the act of forming a mental concept of what is not actually present to the senses'. So imagination has to be something within ourselves which actually cannot be shared with others, unless we decide to share what we have imagined. In the King James translation of the Old Testament, the word is used in a very negative sense of scheming or plotting and we pick up that meaning at Evening Prayer when we recite the Magnificat. 'He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts'. But we need to move away from that concept when we use the Living God's Love prayer as we turn our minds to how we can use imagination in our Christian lives to confirm and deepen our faith.

I tried to think of examples in the Bible of the use of imagination and I came up with the idea that what we now call imagination, was what to the biblical writers were visions. I want to share two examples of these both of which occurred when the writer was in some way in the presence of God.

First, Isaiah. In Chapter six he describes a vision of God. He sees God sitting high up on a throne wearing a long robe that filled the temple.



He was attended by seraphs (one of the types of angels) who had six wings, two to cover their faces, two to cover their feet and two for flying. They were calling to one another: 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory'. Isaiah felt the temple shaking as they called and it was full of smoke.

He was quite disturbed because he believed that he had seen God but was unclean and unworthy. In his vision one of the seraphs picked up with a pair of tongs a burning coal from the altar and touched his lips and told him that he had been purified and was no longer unclean. He then hears the voice of the Lord saying: 'Whom shall I send and who will go for us?' His response was immediate. 'Here am I, send me.' God then gives him a message of judgement which he has to deliver.

The second, much longer and more intense vision is that of John, the writer of the book Revelation. He was exiled as a Christian to the small island of Patmos in the Aegean Sea, about 60 or so miles from the Turkish Coast. He writes: 'I was in the Spirit when I heard a loud voice behind me like trumpet saying, 'Write in a book what you see and send it to these seven churches'.

He turns round and saw seven golden lampstands and in the midst of them one like the Son of Man. He describes this person's appearance and dress. His reaction was more physical than that of Isaiah. He fell at his feet as though dead. He describes how he was physically touched and told not to be afraid. John goes on to describe what he was told to do, to write what he had seen, what was happening at the time and what was to take place afterwards.

He wrote his letters and then the vision continues: he saw an open door in heaven and the trumpet-like voice said, 'Come up here and I will show you what must take place after this'. The rest of the book describes in vivid terms his vision. It includes living creatures: a Lamb with seven horns and seven eyes, elders holding golden harps and golden bowls of incense; four horses, white, red, black and pale green; and a dragon with seven heads and ten horns which leads to a war in heaven.



There is so much more in this vision in John's imagination, but I do not have space to describe it. Suffice it to say that biblical scholars have tried for hundreds of years to understand it and it has led to many conspiracy theories especially among those who take every word of the Bible quite literally.



But what has this to do with Living God's Love with imagination? The most important thing about the two scenarios that I have described, is that they occurred when Isaiah and John were in the conscious presence of God. God used their imaginations as vehicles to confirm them in their ministries. Isaiah's vision commissioned him as a prophet, someone who delivers messages from God. John's vision is something that closes his ministry, for he was believed to have been an old man at the time.

But whatever our age, whatever the length of our Christian experience, each of us can ask God how we can use our imaginations to live out his love and in doing so share that love with those around us.

John Wallace

A green success! *A recent Plant Sale* *and Nature Fun Day*

On 7th June, as part of The Great Big Green Week, Friends of the Earth and Eco Church together organised a day of plant stalls and Nature Fun – including seed bomb making, a tree trail (easily accessed via a QR code), and a popular nature bingo game.



The busy plant stalls raised an amazing £315, plus a further £28 from a table of unsold pots after Whitsunday's Parish Eucharist, i.e. a total of £345 for All Saints Net Zero Fund. [Even with a mild winter, we spent over £20,000 last year on gas and electricity. We must reduce this cost as well as helping our planet by investing in new low carbon systems!]

There was a great variety of plants grouped in five categories: houseplants, ornamentals, vegetables and culinary herbs. Something for everybody. I ended up with three trays of good plants which I am looking after (feeding and potting-on as required) so they will look first class when Katrina's stall returns at the forthcoming Summer Fete on Saturday 5th July – see you there!

A very big thank you goes to Katrina Grant, Victoria Harvey, and all those who helped by providing plants, manning the stalls, purchasing plants; and not forgetting Laurelin Burge and the Spire Coffee Shop team who stayed open an extra hour and coped with all the extra trade.

Stephen Jury





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