

# THE PARISH MAGAZINE

## February 2023

*Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness.*

Matthew 9:35

**The United Benefice of  
St Michael Lichfield, with St John, Wall**

**£1**

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**LARGE COPIES** of the  
magazine are available  
on request

## Reflection ....

Dear Friends

The second Sunday before Lent has had a variety of names in my lifetime. In the Book of Common Prayer it is sexagesimal, in the ASB it was 8 before Easter, now it is 2 before Lent. The Church of England does get round to organisational change now and then. However this Sunday also had a theme and for a time was also called Christ the Healer. It meant that at a time in the Christian year when more reflection about our spiritual state occurs, we were reminded of Jesus' concern with healing. About a third of the stories we have of Jesus, are accounts of someone being healed. My favourite is the woman who touches the hem of Jesus' garment. It is one of the few places in the gospels where Jesus says daughter. When I was ill one time and undiagnosed, I did the unusual thing, for me, of picking up my father's bible and opening it to see if there was a message for me. My eyes fell on the phrase, Daughter, your faith has made you well, be at peace, be healed of your disease. It was awhile before the doctors came up with a name, and I needed their skills and medication, but something within me changed when I prayerfully re-read that passage and it was certainly part of my journey towards wholeness. Still on that journey of course.

For Jesus and his followers healing and teaching went together. It was an integral part of being a disciple. Jesus sends the disciples out to teach about the kingdom and to heal. Down the ages the church, through monasteries and convents, made space for the sick and sought to bring healing. As a young adult this was an area of faith I had not really encountered until an older friend gave me a book about it and shared her enthusiasm. It is a part of our faith I am still passionate

about, despite the puzzles and questions it inevitably raises. When clergy I have been with have discussed these puzzles, the one thing we have taken courage from is that 99% of people find prayer for healing to be of benefit.

We have had the names of those needing prayer for healing on our notice sheet for many years now, rightly so. At some services the names are included in the intercessions. At St. Michael's we have a space to light a candle for someone, then on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in the month, and during Advent and Lent, we have the opportunity for specific prayer with the laying on of hands during the time after receiving communion. It has always been my strong feeling that this part of prayer should be a quiet part of a normal service. I have attended services where prayer for healing was the major focus of a lot of noisy prayer, that may suit some, but I often felt it ran the risk of taking the focus from Jesus and putting it on the ministers. This prayer deliberately invites God into the painful and difficult parts of our lives. Like inviting Jesus to Your mother-in-law who is ill; or to your daughter's bedside even though you are told she has died while you are asking; or to shouting for Jesus from the roadside like Bartimaeus.

There is a small team that enables the prayer at St. Michaels and the team needs more people. If God is nudging you about this please speak to me and we could chat about it. There would be training.

I wish you a holy Lent, and God's blessing on your spiritual journey.

*Chris Polhill*

# **WORLD DAY OF PRAYER**

Please consider finding time on

**Friday March 3rd**

to attend one of two services to be held at

**St Chad's Church at 10.30am and 7pm.**

The service this year has been prepared by

the Christian Women of Taiwan

and its theme is

"I have heard about your faith",

which is based on Ephesians 1:15-19.

Christians all over the world will be holding

similar services on March 3rd.

As we know Taiwan has been caught in a superpower struggle for many years and is at present at risk of conflict. The people of Taiwan are very much in need of prayer. The service goes beyond praying for the people of that country though. It includes letters of encouragement for women who face suffering and injustice. Stories of faith will focus on issues that are shared by women and girls around the world and that challenge us to prayerful action.

*Alison James*

Thank you to you all for subscribing to this year's magazine and to new faces who have joined us. I hope you will enjoy reading this year's editions and contribute to them yourself with interesting articles.

Thank you too to all our distributors for collecting the money in such a timely fashion.

I now have everyone's subscription barring one or two queries that I know about.

**HAPPY READING!**  
Liz Clarke

# Finding a Voice: Lent course

This year's Lent Course for St Michael's and St John's will be held for 5 weeks, starting on Ash Wednesday, at 10.30am on Wednesday mornings, after Holy Communion at St Michael's.

The film club will be showing The King's Speech on February 6<sup>th</sup> at 2pm at St Michael's but you don't need to see the film beforehand - we watch clips and talk about them at the sessions. There is also a book, by Hilary Brand, which we will read together as part of the course.

The course explores the ways in which fear holds us back and examines how we, like Bertie, can face and overcome our fears and begin to find our authentic voice. The sessions are

**22<sup>nd</sup> Feb** - The stuff of nightmares and the power of friendship

**1<sup>st</sup> March** - Chasing the dream or fulfilling the calling

**8<sup>th</sup> March** - Pressing forward and breaking through

**15<sup>th</sup> March** - Poisonous words and profane responses

**22<sup>nd</sup> March** - Faith in our voice

Each group member would ideally need a copy of the book - £5.99 available to order through the office, however there will be a few copies to borrow. To order a copy of the book please contact Angie on 01543 262211 or by email [office@stmichaelmaryjohn.org.uk](mailto:office@stmichaelmaryjohn.org.uk).

If you need to borrow a copy, please let Angie know.

**DEADLINE FOR ORDERING BOOK – Friday 10<sup>th</sup> February**

Coffee and biscuits available, all welcome.

*Revd Abbie Walsh*

# Regular Services and Worship in the Benefice

## Regular Services at St Michael's Sundays

8:00am Holy Communion  
10:00am Holy Communion

### 1st Sunday

10:00am Family Praise

### Thursdays

9.30am Morning Prayer

## Regular Services at St John's Sundays

10am Holy Communion

### Baptism @ 11.30am

Last Sunday of the month

## Other Services at St Michael's Sundays

*1st Monday 10.00am*

First Steps

*2nd Sunday 4:30pm*

Messy Church

*3rd Sunday 6:00pm*

Choral Evensong

*Last Sunday 12:30pm*

Holy Baptism

## Music in the Benefice

St Michael's Church

### Wednesdays

6.00pm Junior Choir Rehearsal

6:30pm Senior Choir Rehearsal  
(except on the Weds before 1st  
Sunday)

### Friday before 1st Sunday

7:30pm Music Group & Senior  
Choir Rehearsal

## Baptism Preparation

First Saturday 10:30am

at St Michael's

## Bells Practice

Every Thurs 7:30pm, St Michael's



# CHILDREN'S SERVICES & ACTIVITIES

Family Praise

Sunday

5th February

10am St Michael's



First Steps

Monday 6th February

10am—11.30am

Come and join us at our ...

**MESSY CHURCH**

for craft, story, song and food on

**SUNDAY 12TH FEBRUARY**

4.30 – 5.45pm

in St Michael's Church

Ages 0-11 yrs. welcome



# ***Film Club***

***at St Michael's Church***

***FREE ADMISSION AND REFRESHMENTS***

***Doors open at 2pm***

## **The King's Speech**

*(2010, 15, 1h 58m Biography/ Drama/ History)*

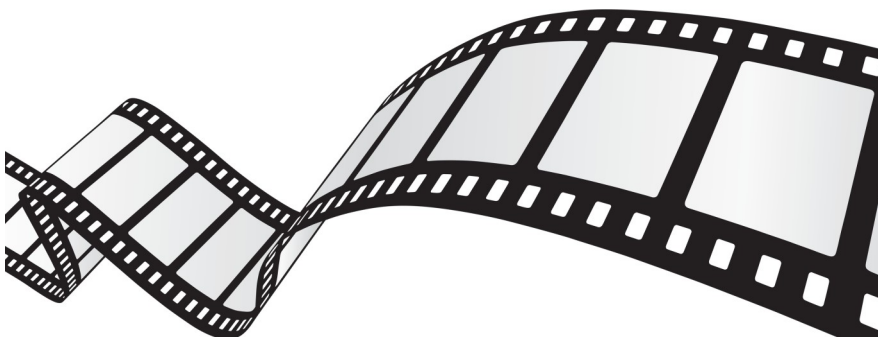
The story of King George VI, his impromptu ascension to the throne of the British Empire in 1936, and the speech therapist who helped the unsure monarch overcome his stammer.

**Mon 9th February 2.30pm start**

**Tea/Coffee and Cake will be served**

**at the interval**

**All welcome.**



**Save the Date:**

**Next Film Club**

**March 6th**

## **FILM CLUB REVIEWS**

### **5<sup>TH</sup> DEC 2022 THE RAILWAY CHILDREN RETURN**

I arrived early to get a seat with a good view of the screen! I received a warm welcome from the Refreshment Team who were busy setting out the coffee/tea and cakes for the interval break. Bagged my cushions to sit on said my hellos and welcomes to faces you do know ( and those you don't).

Lights out – Film on – then OOPS “HOUSTON we have a problem!!” NO SOUND. Ron Plimmer dashes off home for replacement speakers!!

The interval came early, and the delicious refreshments were served, and we all took the opportunity to catch up with friends and family news – then – Problem solved it was “LIGHTS OFF again and on with the SHOW!!

It was 1940 and WWII was underway the evacuation of hundreds of children was underway from London to the safer rural climes of English country villages.

For most it was a much-needed bath, a hearty home-cooked nutritious meal, and a warm bed for a good-night's sleep, uninterrupted by air-raid sirens and the drone of Nazi bombers in the dark London skies.

It's 1940 in the Yorkshire Dales, all this and the love for city children from Country-folk all helped to ease the fear and anxieties of war and the loss of Fathers, Brothers, Mothers and friends brought them all together to help a 14-year-old coloured American boy who had lied about his age to join the US army, like his brothers, to be a soldier and fight for his Country!!

But, disillusioned by the violent and discriminatory treatment meted out by his own, White, Officers to black soldiers, he runs away. The colour of his skin marks him out as different from the others, but the determination of the village children led by “Bobby’s three offspring (remember “Bobby – Jenny Agutter from the original film?) and after a thrilling scene to halt the American General’s train the 14-year old’s actions are vindicated and he is packed off back to the US and his family for a thoroughly happy ending.

*Shirley Trelfa*

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## ***“Their Finest”*** Film Club review

The January Film Club was well-attended by an audience of more than 30.

The film, was set in the 1940s at the time of the Blitz and heavy bombing in Britain’s towns and cities. The scenes of the horror of nightly air raids, destruction, and death, particularly in London, where safety was sought from the raids in the Underground tunnels, were all depicted well.

The story revolves around a young woman, Caitlin Coles, recently moved from Wales, with her boyfriend, a struggling artist who is unable to serve due to war wounds inflicted during the Spanish Civil War. Their financial situation forces Caitlin to find a job with “*British Ministry of Information*”, making short propaganda films. She joins a team of men who generally treat her as a second-class citizen which is reflected in her meagre salary of £2 weekly. She builds a working relationship with the head scriptwriter and despite the contemptuous way he treats her their relationship becomes close.

Soon Caitlin's ideas and the short films the unit produces come to the notice of the higher authorities at the Ministry and they are asked to make a full-length film portraying a topical war story to include heroic females "*Slop*" as they are disparagingly referred to, "a dog", and "an American" **America was not yet in the war !!**

The film is to be set in the time of the Dunkirk Evacuation in May/June 1940. It is loosely termed as a true story of twin girls who steal their father's boat to join the armada of "*small boats*" to help rescue the soldiers from the Hell of the Dunkirk beaches It portrays the trials and tribulations which occur both in the film and to the scriptwriters and crew.

Bill Nighy plays an ageing star, a vain hammy character who plays the twins' Uncle Frank and manages to steal every scene he is in!

During the tea interval we were treated to tea, coffee and cakes served up by the very able and cheerful Refreshment Team.

Throughout the film, set in the 1940s, the language and general attitude towards women was particularly bad and they were generally considered as good for nothing but decoration, despite the fact they often did the job better than their male counterparts.

I really enjoyed the film, certainly different from the norm - a romance, a comedy, and drama in equal measures – and a reminder of how far women's equality has improved in the Western World since the 1940s.

*Angela Burgess*



## **Bishop Clive to retire**

*Published: 6th January 2023*

The Bishop of Wolverhampton, the Rt Revd Clive Gregory, has announced that he is to retire.

Bishop Clive took on the role in April 2007, overseeing the Episcopal Area of Wolverhampton which includes the Archdeaconries of Walsall and Lichfield, encompassing Wolverhampton, Walsall, Sandwell and other parts of the Black Country and southern Staffordshire.

Bishop Clive (61) said: “After sustained and prayerful reflection over a considerable period of time, I have discerned that this is the right time for me to step aside as Bishop of Wolverhampton.

“It has been a privilege to serve in this role for the past 16 years and I will take with me many fond memories of the wonderful colleagues that I have served with, the faithfulness and inspirational witness of clergy and laity alike across the diverse churches of the Wolverhampton Episcopal Area, and of the City of Wolverhampton itself, a very happy home for my family and I.

“This role is a very demanding one and becoming increasingly so, as the challenges that the Church of England faces become more onerous and complex. I believe that someone with different gifts, new vision, and fresh energy will be best placed to join Bishop Michael and the senior staff team in leading both Area and Diocese onwards.

“I will be excited to discover where God is leading me on my path of discipleship and will hold the people of the Diocese, and of the Black Country and South Staffordshire in my heart as we journey into God’s future.”

There will be a farewell to Bishop Clive from the Episcopal Area and Diocese at St Matthew's Church in Walsall on Sunday 2 April at 4pm. He will then preach at the Chrism Eucharist at Lichfield Cathedral – an occasion which gathers clergy and lay leaders from across the diocese – on Thursday 6 April before his last parish service at St Peter's Church in Wolverhampton on Easter morning, 9 April.

Bishop Clive was ordained as a curate in Canterbury Diocese in 1988, serving at St John The Baptist in Margate before moving to the Midlands in 1992 to become Senior Chaplain at Warwick University. In 1998, he became the Team Rector of Coventry East and then moved to Wolverhampton nine years later. He also served as Acting Bishop of Lichfield following the retirement of the Rt Revd Jonathan Gledhill in September 2015 before the arrival of Bishop Jonathan's successor, the Rt Revd Dr Michael Ipgrave, the following year.

Bishop Michael said: "Like very many others across the diocese, I have been extremely appreciative of Clive's ministry and personal support to me over the past six years. Clive's commitment to social justice, climate concern, the welfare of clergy and lay ministers and the City of Wolverhampton itself will leave an indelible mark. I and my colleagues will miss his wisdom, commitment and pastoral care, as well as his fondness for diocesan cricket! We look forward to giving Clive and Jenny a good and fitting farewell in April."

Archdeacon of Lichfield, the Ven Dr Sue Weller, said: "Having served alongside Clive for over eight years as Archdeacon of Walsall and currently as Archdeacon of Lichfield I have greatly valued his insight and his knowledge of the Wolverhampton Episcopal Area, always seeking to grow the kingdom of God. Clive's encouragement and understanding in many complex and challenging situations, will be much missed. I pray for a smooth transition and fruitful ministry in pastures new for Clive and Jenny."

The process to identify Bishop Clive's successor will begin in due course.

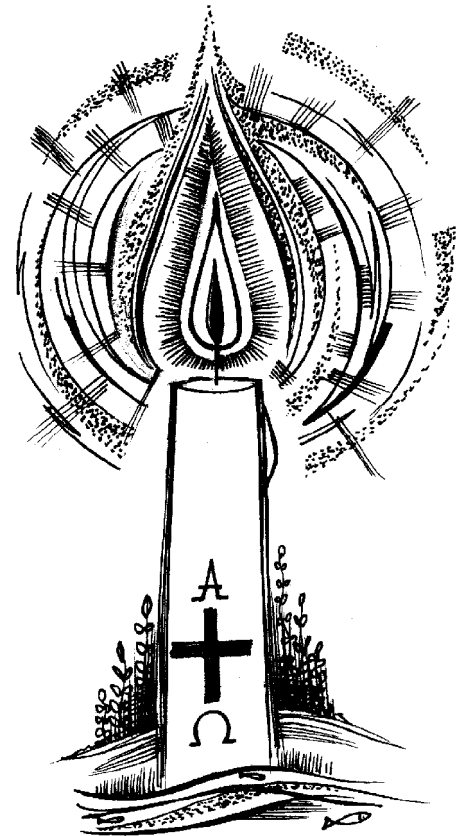
# LONGEST NIGHT SERVICE

On the 21st December 2022 I attended the memorial service conducted by Abbie, our Rector. She mentioned two types of grief: the grief felt following the loss of a loved one and grief suffered within our relationships.

Grief following the loss of our loved ones is something which may give us the feeling of never being able to get over the loss. However, in the fullness of time, it is hoped, with our faith, that we are able to come to terms with our loss.

Grief within our relationships is somewhat different. Our relation 'break-down' whether with a partner, a sibling, a neighbour and there are many other examples, is not always straightforward in gaining a measure of reconciliation and forgiveness. In some cases alleviation is not possible therefore it may be extremely difficult to move on.

Abbie's sermon was both thought-provoking and uplifting. I enjoyed the service immensely.



*Mary Maund*



# Warm Place of Welcome

*Thursday afternoons*

1.30—3pm

until the end of March

## At Lichfield Fire Station

Opposite the old Debenhams store  
on Birmingham road



Join us for a hot drink  
and a chat in their  
lovely warm meeting  
room

## EVERYONE WELCOME

# MOTHERS' UNION LENT LUNCH

## Saturday 11 March 2023

### 12.00 - 2pm in church

## WHAT'S IN A WORD!

*Catherine Kyte reflects on the progression from empathy to compassion*

Many of us of a certain age will remember (and still probably chuckle at) the character Sybil Fawlty in the sitcom Fawlty Towers, on the phone to her friend Audrey, who was obviously in a spot of bother. Sybil's response of 'I know...oh, I know!' to her friend's woes prompted her husband Basil to comment sarcastically that, if Sybil already knows, why is Audrey telling her? We're also left with the impression that, however much Sybil seems to empathise with Audrey, she only wants to hear the gossip and won't be doing anything practically to help. In contrast, the characters in the Monty Python 'Four Yorkshiremen' sketch, rather than showing empathy, vie to outdo each other's descriptions of the poverty of their upbringing... epitomised in the retort: 'You were lucky!' It's a competition to prove whose experience was the worst.

Although these examples were created purely in the name of entertainment, I'm guessing that we have all experienced something

of both attitudes at some point. If I'm honest there have been times when my reaction to someone has been along the same lines, even though I may have kept that reaction hidden. But even when I totally empathise with what a person is experiencing or feeling, I'm left with the niggling sense that this isn't enough; it's only part of what's needed.

Both empathy and compassion are often hailed as qualities to be prized. I've been pondering what might be the difference between them. This quote by Tracy Robbins sums it up better than I ever could: ***We need to remember that empathy alone isn't enough. Real love translates empathy into action. Compassion stirs us to act, to serve, and to help. It's not enough to feel bad for or with someone.***

In the biblical narratives of Jesus' interactions with people, he displayed both empathy and compassion. Jesus completely identified with people's emotions and circumstances (remember how he wept with Mary and Martha at the death of Lazarus), but he didn't stop there. Whenever we read that Jesus had compassion on someone or a group of people, it then goes on to say what he did practically to help. When a leper asked for healing, Jesus had compassion on him... and reached out his hand to heal. When he was met by a crowd of five thousand, Jesus had compassion on them and not only taught them but provided dinner!

When in Nain, Jesus met a widow whose son had just died. He had compassion on her... and brought the son back to life. I love how one version of the bible translates 'compassion' in this story – 'his heart went out to her' (*Luke 7:13, NIV*). This encapsulates the depth of his love and reaction to her vulnerability. It also gives me faith that Jesus' heart will go out to me, when I'm in a vulnerable state of any kind.

The challenge is that we're called to show not just the same empathy, but the same compassion as Jesus. Our actions may not have such

miraculous components, but the principle stands. In other words, we need to turn our 'Oh, I know!' into tangible, real love in action. But this all sounds tiring to me! Have I really got the capacity (or selflessness) to help someone who comes across my path in a practical way, as well as sharing in their concerns and emotions? No, not in my own strength, I'll end up burnt out and in need of help myself. Yet, wonderfully, the words of 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 encourage me simply to use the same comfort that I've experienced from the God of compassion, when I've been in trouble, to help others in theirs. Everything I experience of God and receive from God is a precious resource, giving me all I need to translate my empathy into action.

*Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of our compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God. (2 Corinthians 1:3-4)*

(article taken from the autumn edition of Mothers' Union CONNECTED magazine)

## Deadlines!

For **March** Magazine: Deadline is

**SUNDAY 12th February**

Please send articles to David Shiel

AND the Parish Office

[shielfamily@gmail.com](mailto:shielfamily@gmail.com)

[office@stmichaelmaryjohn.org.uk](mailto:office@stmichaelmaryjohn.org.uk)

**Pew Sheet:**

every Thursday

7:30am

Contact

Parish Office



About two years ago whilst on a shopping trip to Tesco's in Lichfield after checking out I was walking along by the tills they have charity displays of book DVD's and so on, stopping to have a look I came across a very old video cassette tape titled "Canals & Canal Boats" one puts a donation in the box for it, the other day I was having a sort out in my computer room study , I thought oh I forgot about this I'll have a look at it , and it's a gem of a story, I have managed to transfer it onto my computer then DVD, this is what's it all about

Two hundred or so years ago the growth of Britain's waterways paved the way for the industrial Revolution, Now they offer thousands a break from everyday life as a much loved leisure – activity, the fascinating and tradition steeped history of canals from Roman beginnings, through the golden pre- rail age – when Birmingham alone had more canals than Venice – to the modern renaissance, the changing face of canals and boats and people that worked them, it's one hour running time,

In our area you can see the work being carried out on the Lichfield & Hatherton – Canals Restoration Trust.

In the very near future I hope to collaborate with the Rector and Dr Trevor James and to show this film at St Michaels Church, watch this space.

*Romulus Plimmer*



# UNITED BENEFICE WALKING GROUP

## February Walk

**Leader—Liz Clarke**

*Cannock Chase—Hednesford*

**Date:** Sat 25th February 2023

**Start Time:** 10.30 a.m.

**Meeting Point:** Cannock Chase Enterprise Centre, WS12 0QU

**Walk Details:** The Walk starts at Cannock Chase Enterprise Centre, WS12 0QU which is located off the A460 between Rugeley and Cannock, just outside the Hednesford sign.

We will be walking across what was the No. 5 West Cannock Colliery in Hednesford.

The walk is easy, across gently undulating land on a part of The Chase, with which you may not be familiar. Approx 3 mls. on mostly well maintained pathways. Start time 10.30am.

## Lunch

There is a small Chase Cafe, open 8am - 2pm, popular with walkers which specialises in breakfast items, full English, bacon/sausage baps etc.

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PLEASE LET ME KNOW IF YOU PLAN TO COME SO THAT WE DON'T SET OFF WITHOUT YOU.

[beneficewalkinggroup@gmail.com](mailto:beneficewalkinggroup@gmail.com)

01543 262211

Angie King 07907 691053



# Warm Place of Welcome

## Article in the Lichfield Fire Station Community Newsletter

Lichfield Community Fire Station and St Michael's Church have come together to create a warm space for local residents this winter.

**The drop-in sessions take place at the fire station every Thursday between 1.30pm and 3pm up until the end of March 2023.**

With energy bills rising, firefighters from Lichfield are also working with the church to provide 'Winter Warm' packs to keep local communities warm this winter.

Station Manager, Leigh Richards, said, "Providing a warm space for the local community to come and enjoy companionship, conversation and hot drinks at this time is the right thing to do for our communities,

"As a service, we have a number of ongoing initiatives to help support families to keep warm this winter. This includes Community Safety Officers and crews available every Thursday to offer advice and distribute winter warm packs.

These packs include thermal blankets, hats, scarfs, gloves, socks and other items, such as hot water bottles and thermal mugs."

Rector of Str Michael's, the Revd Abbie Walsh, said " We'll work with the fire station to offer a warm space, a warm welcome, conversation and hot drinks. Additionally, the fire station will work with us to provide winter warm packs and promote home safety advice.

"The station has great community facilities and it's wonderful to be working together so we can keep everyone in our community safe and warm this winter, while also offering companionship for those who might be on their own."



# A GRANDFATHER'S VIEW OF CHRISTINGLE ON CHRISTMAS EVE

On Christmas Eve we gathered in St. Michael's Church and were presented with a gift of Christingle and candles. The church was packed for the 4pm service with congregation in the pews, in seats at the back and in the choir stalls. People of all ages. I was surprised that there were so many mature people like me..... a grandfather with family who were preparing to celebrate the birth of the Christ Child. This service provided an excellent way of showing the story to the young and providing smiles on the faces of the older congregation.



The service started with the St Michael's Church Girl's choir singing to us. It was their first public performance. We look forward to them singing again.

The nativity performance was played out at the top and bottom of the central aisle. Archangel Gabriel visited Mary before she was married to tell her of the miracle of her conception and coming pregnancy. Joseph showed great concern when told they would have to travel to Bethlehem for the census close to the date of the expected birth. On arrival there was the desperate need to find a roof for Mary before the baby was born. The night of the birth the Shepherds were visited by Archangel Gabriel to give them the news and they hurried to the stable. They left singing praises of the new-born child, Jesus. We assisted the story by singing the relevant much-loved carols.

I found the act of lighting the candle of the adjacent person in the pew made me think. Was it symbolic of passing the Christmas story to the next generation? Jesus's life has shone bright for the last 2022 years.



These joyful services were planned weeks ahead; produced and directed by our very own skilful thespian, Sheila Irvine; our choirs under the guidance of Choirmaster Dudley Ray, the small army of Church members who prepared the church and finally the children of St. Michael's school,

The Children's Society brought this custom to Church of England in 1968 and St Michaels has turned it into a delightful occasion for the whole Parish. Wikipedia says the amount raised for the Children's Society each year through these services is now over £1million and this is used to ensure all the young children supported by them will receive enjoyable gifts, just as the wise men brought gifts for Jesus to show their thanks for the safe arrival of the Little Christ Child.

Thank you again to the whole team at St. Michael's, and especially the children of St. Michael's school, under the watchful eye of Churchwarden, Sue Jones, for assembling the Christingles and for such a beautiful service.

*Brian Homewood*

*Children from St Michael's School with the Christingles that they made.*



## Saint Michael's Churchyard

The Churchyard is well known for its beautiful displays of snowdrops during the months of January, February and March. This season's display, however, began earlier than ever with the first shoots and flower buds being spotted on December 23<sup>rd</sup>! Do go for a walk to look at them. There are some really pretty ones on the bank separating the Old and New Churchyards.



We recently welcomed Peter Covey to our regular monthly Working Party. Peter, a student at King Edward VI High School, is completing his Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme and, as part of this, he has volunteered his services in the Churchyard. Community work is an important part of the Scheme. We are pleased Peter will be working with us throughout this year.



If you visit the Church Website you will see photographs of Churchyard paintings by Olga Vikhireva. Visit [www.stmichaelmaryjohn.org.uk](http://www.stmichaelmaryjohn.org.uk) and click on Photos in the left hand menu. This painting by Olga is called Nexus.

We hope you will be able to join us for our **Churchyard Nature Day on Saturday April 1<sup>st</sup>, from 10.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m.** A short summary of the day's activities is given on the opposite page and page 32.

[www.stmichaelmaryjohn.org.uk/photos.html](http://www.stmichaelmaryjohn.org.uk/photos.html)

# **SAINT MICHAEL'S CHURCHYARD WORKING PARTY**

We will be meeting on

**Saturday February 11<sup>th</sup>**  
**from 10.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m.**

Our main tasks will be  
**Tidying graves, clearing plants from  
headstones & making more wood piles  
to attract small creatures**

**Refreshments (Tea/Coffee/Cake) will be served  
during our Mid-Morning Break**

---

## **CHURCHYARD NATURE DAY**

**Saturday April 1<sup>st</sup>**  
**10 am – 4pm**

**Talks by local wildlife experts**

**Herb walk & Lichen walk**

**Children's Activities**

**Find out about the Churchyard Working Party**

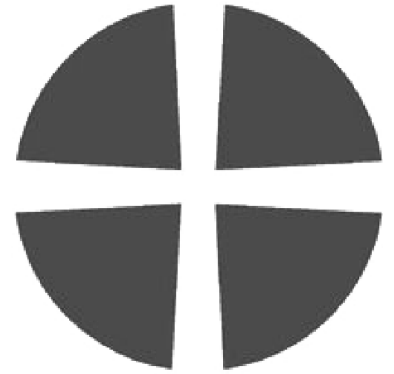
**Hot & Cold Drinks provided**

**Please bring a packed lunch**

For more information about Churchyard events please contact  
Ray Allen: 01543 251654

## Volunteering - who is my Neighbour??

*Ella Sibley-Ryan, Mission Projects Officer for the Methodist Church, writes about her experiences volunteering with refugees in France.*



The people sleeping rough in Calais and Dunkirk have come from Sudan, Eritrea, Afghanistan, Egypt, Iran, Ethiopia and countries all over the Middle East and North Africa. They've been driven from their homes for a range of reasons – persecution based on gender or religion, war, famine. Lots of young men talk of leaving to avoid conscription – into national armies or, more often, into militias or terrorist groups. One man told me the Taliban had come and told him he must join them as a soldier or pay them a fee to leave him alone; he had no money and didn't want to fight and so had to run.

There are around 900 refugees living in Calais and Dunkirk at any one time. There are no refugee camps, only people sleeping and camping illegally on disused pieces of ground – brownfield sites, parks and waste ground. At this time of year, the mud is inches deep and at every time of year there is litter. The rubbish is everywhere – strewn about and heaped in piles. Volunteers go out with black bags daily, but it's like litter-picking a landfill site. There are no bins anywhere – a long-term volunteer told me that the authorities had taken them away in an attempt to discourage people from staying.

The Rwanda plan is well-known in Britain, but the refugees of Calais and Dunkirk had never heard of it. To every single person I spoke with, the suggestion that they may be sent to Rwanda was brand-new information. Most people were saddened, confused, hurt, by this new

information, asking why and for what purpose this was done. There are no good answers or ways to explain the complex interplay of fear, privilege, prejudice, good intentions, poor leadership, and greed, which, mapped onto the social and political landscape of 21st century Britain, has led us to this place. Instead, we offer lamely, “some people in the UK don’t like refugees and want to send them away”, as if this remotely covers it. We remind them to memorise the phone numbers for legal aid, or write them on their arms. If they are taken to a detention centre, their phones will be confiscated.

Hurt and sad though many are by the news of possible deportation to Rwanda, most are not put off by it. All of them have travelled hundreds of miles, many walking the whole way, to reach this point. They have suffered and, in crossing the channel, will face more danger and pain. Many have already been ‘sent’ places – shipped around, within and between countries, for reasons unfathomable to them. The distant possibility that it could happen again is of little concern.

Occasionally we see children in the camps – babies held by mothers, or primary-aged kids who run and play along the distribution lines. Some think that heart-breaking – to see children aged four and five given sweet tea and second-hand jumpers amidst the rubbish. But far worse, to my mind, are the teenagers. Boys, and it is almost always boys, of fourteen or fifteen who have travelled alone. Because the babies and kids at least have their parents – they might be in a desperate situation, but they are shielded from it in part. The 14 and 15 year-old cousins I met who had walked from Afghanistan to Dunkirk were children, and yet they had now to shoulder the burdens and responsibilities of adulthood, alone as they were.

Advent has always been a season of waiting-... for the Christ-child so many years ago. For Refugees during Advent 2022 they waited for food and clothes distribution, for hot drinks and for haircuts. For night to fall, for the tide to turn. People wait for the future and for a place to call home. It’s easy to get caught up in this atmosphere, to begin waiting oneself for something to change. To begin waiting for

everything to change – waiting for Emmanuel, God with us. Because where is God in all this? Surely, we’re still waiting on his arrival. Until, with a jolt of recognition, you see and remember – Christ was born long ago. Advent is an echo only, a remembrance, not a reality. God is with us in this place, with the people of all nations, young and old; in the land and sea and sky; in the campfires and sharing of stories. Here, on the French coast, on the shores of tomorrow, God is with us.

*Ella Sibley-Ryan is the Mission Projects Officer in the Connexional Team of the Methodist Church in Britain. She volunteers one week a year with Care4Calais, most recently in November 2022. Care4Calais was one of a coalition of groups who worked with asylum seekers to challenge the Rwanda Plan in the High Court and request a last-minute injunction to stop the first flight from taking off on 14 June 2022. It was ultimately unsuccessful, but the flight was later cancelled due to a last-minute interim measure by the European Court of Human Rights.*

*Christine Polhill.*

## **FLOODLIGHTING**

Sponsor St Michael’s floodlights to mark a special occasion or remember a loved one!

Your donation will brighten up the skies over Lichfield for the night.

**Contact the United Benefice Office on 01543 262211**



## Environmentally Friendly Stuff

### *Going for the Silver Eco Award*



The School Uniform swap in January was a successful event for all involved. There were a steady stream of parents and children visiting the church all morning and many items of free clothing were both given and taken away.

We have some left over so if there is anyone who outgrows their St Michael's uniform and needs the next size up call into the office and I can help you find what you want. There is no requirement to bring uniform to hand in in return for any uniform that you take away.

Office opening hours are

Monday Tuesday Wednesday and Friday 9am till 12 noon.

Or you can contact me on 01543 262211

or by email on [office@stmichaelmaryjohn.org.uk](mailto:office@stmichaelmaryjohn.org.uk)



If you want to make a donation to the church you are welcome to but there is no charge for the clothes.

It is purely a swap shop.  
(that's showing my age!!)

*Angie King*

**St Michael's Church, Lichfield**

# **CHURCHYARD NATURE DAY**

*"Consider the wildflowers, how they grow" – Luke 12: 27*

**Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> April**

**10am – 4pm**



Talks by local wildlife experts

Herb walk and lichen walk



Outdoor children's activities

Find out about the Churchyard



working party



Hot and cold drinks provided

- bring a packed lunch





**Staffordshire**  
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**LICHFIELD  
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## *The Work of a District Ecologist*



**A talk by Kristie Charlesworth,  
LDC Ecology Officer**

**Tuesday 7 March 7:45 p.m.**

**Wade Street Church**

**Frog Lane, Lichfield WS13 6HL**

**Admission: £3.50 (under-16s free)**

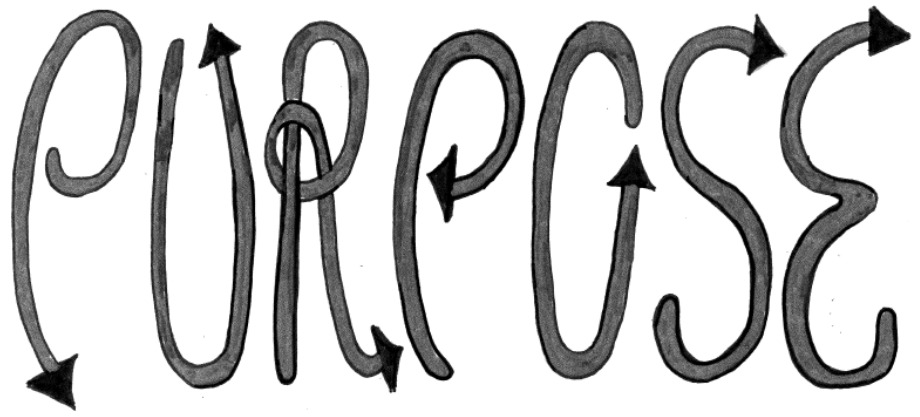
**Under-18s must be accompanied by a responsible adult.**

**Contact (01543) 257812**



[www.facebook.com/lichfieldwildlifegroup](http://www.facebook.com/lichfieldwildlifegroup)

**PROVERBS  
PRAYERS**



**CHAPTER 16:1-9**

**Everything with a Place and a Purpose**

- <sup>1</sup> Mortals make elaborate plans,  
but GOD has the last word.
- <sup>2</sup> Humans are satisfied with whatever looks good;  
GOD probes for what *is* good.
- <sup>3</sup> Put GOD in charge of your work,  
then what you've planned will take place.
- <sup>4</sup> GOD made everything with a place and purpose;  
even the wicked are included—but for *judgment*.
- <sup>5</sup> GOD can't stomach arrogance or pretense;  
believe me, he'll put those braggarts in their place.
- <sup>6</sup> Guilt is banished through love and truth;  
Fear-of-GOD deflects evil.
- <sup>7</sup> When GOD approves of your life,  
even your enemies will end up shaking your hand.
- <sup>8</sup> Far better to be right and poor  
than to be wrong and rich.
- <sup>9</sup> We plan the way we want to live,  
but only GOD makes us able to live it.

*The Message*

Romans 8:27-29

<sup>27</sup> All of our thoughts are known to God. He can understand what is in the mind of the Spirit, as the Spirit prays for God's people. <sup>28</sup> We know that God is always at work for the good of everyone who loves him. They are the ones God has chosen for his purpose, <sup>29</sup> and he has always known who his chosen ones would be. He had decided to let them become like his own Son, so his Son would be the first of many children.

*Contemporary English Version*

\*\*\*\*\*

*Lord, as I make plans for the week ahead, the month, 2023 and my future, help me to meditate on your eternal purpose and plan:*

*Many of us make plans throughout our lives. Many of us try to live with purpose, following the teachings of the Bible but only you have made **the** plan. I know that I can never understand that plan because I am only one miniscule part in the immensity of your vision. However, I also know that you have made everything with a place and a purpose.*

*Your purpose was to reconcile all people on Earth with your holy self through the death and resurrection of Jesus.*

*Your plan now is for us to make known this good news to people from every 'tribe, tongue, and nation' so that all people who love and worship Christ can become your children in heaven.*

*Father send your Spirit to guide us, your loving children, to do your will on earth. I prayer that you direct our actions so that we do what is good in your eyes.*

*I ask this in Jesus' name.*

*Angie King*

## MEMORIAL BOOK

Having the name of a loved one written in our Memorial Book is another way of remembering their life. The Book is kept in the case in the Prayer Corner and the pages are turned twice a week, so that names are visible through the glass on the date of their death. It costs £10 to insert a name.

Please complete this form and return it to

✉ Parish Office, St Michael's Church, Church Street, Lichfield, WS13 6ED

✉ office@stmichaelmaryjohn.org.uk

Name of Deceased (as you wish it to appear in the Memorial Book)

Date of Death:

Age at Death:

Name of Contact (in case of any problems or queries)

Telephone Number:

Please make cheques payable to 'PCC of St Michael and St Mary'

If you wish to pay by bank transfer the details are

Bank: Lloyds

Sort Code: 30 95 04

Account Number: 00114488

Please label your payment: **MEMBOOK** follow by your surname

# *From the Registers*

<b>Baptisms</b>		

<b>Weddings</b>		

<b>Funerals</b>		
St Michael's	29th November	Stephen Trickett
St Michael's	13th December	Reginald Shelley
St Michael's	20th December	Collin Roberts
St Michael's	4th January	Helen Grafham
St Michael's	19th January	Terence Barlow
St Michael's	20th January	Linda Freeman

# Bible Readings

**Sunday 5th February**  
**3rd Sunday before Lent**  
**[Green]**  
1 Corinthians 2.1-end  
Matthew 5.13-20

**Sunday 12th February**  
**2nd Sunday before Lent**  
**[Green]**  
Genesis 1.1-2.3  
Matthew 6.25-end

**Sunday 19th February**  
**Sunday next before Lent**  
**[Green]**  
Exodus 24.12-end  
Matthew 17.1-9

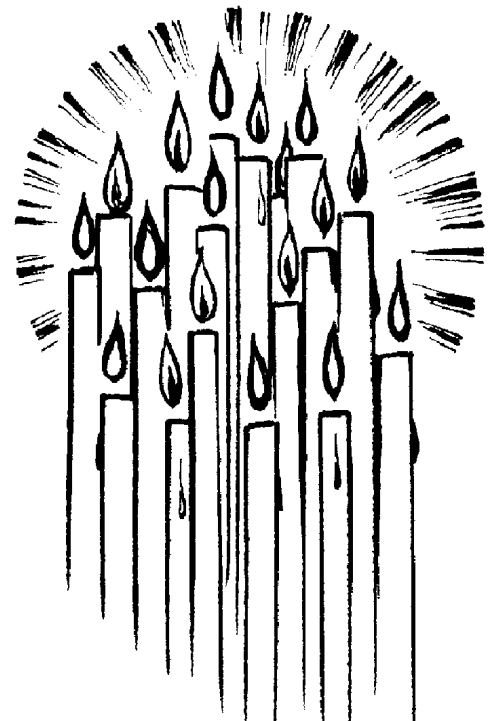
**Sunday 19th February**  
**Sunday next before Lent**  
**[Green]**  
**EVENSONG**  
Ecclesiasticus 48.1-10  
Matthew 17.9-23

**Wednesday 22nd February**  
**Ash Wednesday**  
**[Purple]**  
Isaiah 58.1-12  
Matthew 1-6, 16-21

**Sunday 26th February**  
**1st Sunday of Lent**  
**[Purple]**  
Romans 5.12-19  
Matthew 4.1-11

**Sunday 5th March**  
**2nd Sunday of Lent**  
**[Purple]**  
Romans 4.1-5,13-17  
John 3.1-17

**Sunday 12th March**  
**3rd Sunday of Lent**  
**[Purple]**  
Exodus 17.1-7  
John 4.5-42



# St Michael's Rota – February 2023

Sunday 08.00 am	5 February	12 February	19 February	26 February
<b>Sidesperson</b>	Brian Smith	Brian Smith	Sandy Baker	Brian Smith

Sunday 10.00 am	5 February	12 February	19 February	26 February
	<b>Family Praise</b>			
<b>Sidespersons</b>	Maureen Brand Brenda Liptrot	Pat Toplis Mike Jones	Judy and Mike Godfrey	David Bull Enid Barry
<b>Reader</b>		Angela Burgess	Mike Godfrey	Brian Rostill
<b>Servers</b>		Kay Martin David Shiel	Kay Martin Elizabeth Salt	Kay Martin Elizabeth Allen
<b>Communion Assistant</b>		N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Intercessor</b>		Kay Martin	Elizabeth Salt	Brian Rostill
<b>Coffee</b>	Elizabeth Allen Trish Jones	Sylvia Burkinshaw Angela Burgess	June Frayn Betty Lyne	Judy Godfrey Brenda Eley
<b>Healing</b>				TBA

Sunday 6.00 pm	5 February	12 February	19 February	26 February
	<b>No service</b>	<b>No service</b>	<b>Evensong</b>	<b>No service</b>
<b>Sidesperson</b>			Ray Allen	
<b>Reader</b>			Ray Allen	

# And Finally...

## *Even Santa's feeling the Chill!!!*

We weren't the only ones feeling the chill this Christmas, Even Father Christmas had to avail himself of St. Michael's **Place of Warmth** at the Fire Station when the North Pole got a little too chilly in December as can be seen from the accompanying photos taken at Lichfield Fire Station on the Thursday before Christmas.

Over 50 mums, Dads, grandparents and children took advantage of the warmth and hospitality provided by the Rector and members of St. Michael's Church to spend the afternoon in the Fire Station's Community Lounge where they were served Tea, Coffee and soft drinks plus mince pies, cake and biscuits **AND**, would you believe it, chip butties, courtesy of Victoria at the Sefton Fish Bar on St. John



Street in Lichfield.

Santa's presence was more than welcome with his sack of chocolate "PRESENTS" bringing broad "chocolaty" smiles to the children's faces.

As an added bonus the station's firefighters answered a "SHOUT" treating us all to the departure of a bright red fire engine with blue lights flashing and sirens howling as a distraction to the cakes and drinks





[hopefully the subjects of the “Shout” were safely helped without any serious injuries!]

Now with Christmas a fond and distant memory there will still be a **Place of Warmth** available the Fire Station until March and we here at St. Michael’s look forward to catching up with everyone on our Thursday afternoon get togethers.



So until we see you again stay warm, safe and keep well in 2023.

## The Editor

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