

THE PARISH MAGAZINE
March 2022

LOVE

Mothering Sunday 27th March

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

£1

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United Benefice Office

St Michael's Church, Church St, LICHFIELD, Staffs, WS13 6ED

Mon, Tues, Wed & Fri **CLOSED** Thursdays

9.00 am to 12.00 noon.

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Reflection.....

Puppy Theology

Good news! Writing for the Parish Magazine gives me the opportunity to report a happy event. It's that the Barton family has grown by one. We've been joined by a puppy Border Terrier! We've called him, 'Primus', because he was the *first* of the litter. As you can imagine, he's rather special and very cute. Already, this bundle of life—growing rapidly by the day—has given us great joy. He's so cuddly and bouncy and affectionate.

What I can also report, however, is that this bundle of life has caused chaos! There was urgent shopping to be done to get the right equipment. The utility room had to be reorganized to make space for his bedding (which now finds its way into our bedroom every night!). The rugs have had to be taken up after he decided to pee and poo on nice soft surfaces. We had to borrow a stair gate to keep him from climbing the stairs. Dog insurance had to be organized and paid for. There was the trip to the vet's for his check-up and first injection. Our holiday plans had to be changed. Come rain or shine, either Helen or I have to take him outside at very regular intervals to get him to perform out of doors. And we're discovering that he's also full of mischief with a proclivity for nibbling our shoelaces!.

So the advent of Primus has given us huge joy: but it's also been unsettling. Life won't be the same again! We've had to make ready. We've had to make room. We've had to change our plans and priorities. We've had to learn to relate to a new member of the family!

As I think about the experience, all this strikes me as a little parable about the meaning of the seasons of Advent, Christmas and Epiphany now past. Like the arrival of our puppy, these seasons speak of an *invasion*: God coming to make God's home

with us in the person of Jesus. That's good news! Here is a cause for great joy. In the words of Isaiah: 'The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined. You have multiplied the nation, *you have increased its joy*' (Isa 9.2-3).

But as well as the joy, there's the chaos! Receiving the gift of God's presence among us is unsettling—and much more so than having a puppy in the house! Life can't be the same again. Receiving Jesus into our lives without reservation makes us different people. More than anything, the presence of Jesus by his Spirit, *expands our capacity to love*.

That's certainly been our experience with the arrival of Primus. He's so dependent and trusting, we want to protect him. He's so soft and furry, we want to cuddle him. His eyes are so bright and knowing that we just want to give him attention. And he's such a life-force that he reminds us what a blessing life is.

There's a wonderful little book by Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg called *Things My Dog has Taught Me* (Hodder, 2018) where he talks about his relationship with his Border Collies. In a chapter on 'Love', he continues:

'Or maybe it's the way a dog can open the heart, the simplicity of feeling which a dog's unequivocal trust and devoted companionship engenders, which brings us the gift, not just of being loved, but of feeling that we, too, are capable of being loving.

It's sad when someone goes to his grave with his capacity for love unfulfilled. Imagining there really is a God who gives us a post-mortem interview, one of the questions would probably be: "How much did you love?" It would be tragic if we had to reply, "Not a lot, really. I only used about twenty per cent of my heart." Dogs certainly help us to raise our grades.' (p.73)

It seems to me that receiving Jesus into our lives is a bit like that. His presence as God's gift of love opens us up, lets us know that we are loveable and able to love—perhaps in ways we would never have thought possible.

So as we go forward in 2022, let's receive the gift without reservation. As we gather for church week by week, let's open ourselves to that Gift which unsettles us, makes us new, and sets us free to be loved and to love.

Stephen C. Barton



Love is kind and patient,
never jealous, boastful,
proud, or rude.

Love isn't selfish
or quick tempered.

It doesn't keep a record
of wrongs that others do.

Love rejoices in the truth,
but not in evil.

Love is always supportive,
loyal, hopeful,
and trusting.

Love never fails!

1 Corinthians 4-8a

**MU LENT
LUNCH
SATURDAY 12th
MARCH
12-2
In St Michael's
Church**



LIVING IN LOVE & FAITH

After further consideration, we have decided not to use Living in Love and Faith for our Lent course this year. Details of what we will be offering instead can be found in this magazine.

However, if you are interested in following the LLF course, you are welcome to join a course on Tuesday afternoons in Lent (1.30-3.30pm) at All Saints Church, Foley Road East, Streetly. Contact Revd Mandy Walker (0121 353 3582) for more details.

Also, St Chad's Church, in Lichfield, will be running the LLF course between Easter and Pentecost.

Ruth Bull

Deadlines!

For **April** Magazine: Deadline is

SUNDAY 13th March

Contact David Shiel

shielfamily@gmail.com

Pew Sheet:

every Thursday 7:30am

Contact Parish Office

CHILDREN'S SERVICES & ACTIVITIES

Family Praise

Sunday 6th March

10am St Michael's



First Steps



Monday 7th March

10am St Michael's

Come and join us at our ...

MESSY CHURCH

for craft, story, song and food on



SUNDAY 13th March

4.30 – 5.45pm

in St Michael's Church

Ages 0-11 yrs. welcome

News from



Your sacrifices have saved lives: Bishop thanks parishes and public as Covid-19 measures lift



The Bishop of London, Sarah Mullally, has thanked front line workers, parishes, and all who have made sacrifices to help protect one another from Covid-19, as England prepares to move away from ‘plan B’ restrictions on Thursday.

Bishop Sarah, who chairs the Church of England’s Covid Recovery Group, was speaking as new advice was published by the Church of England ahead of Thursday’s change of national rules. She said: “When the first measures to curb the spread of Covid-19 were introduced in March 2020, few would have imagined that we would still be making adaptations to the way we live our lives – including our worship – almost two years on.

“It has been a very challenging time.

“People have made huge sacrifices to protect one another – not only those they know and love but strangers they might never meet. We’ve

learnt again as society something of what it means to love our neighbour, as Jesus taught.

“And it has certainly not been without cost.

“The loneliness and isolation many have experienced; the impact on people’s mental health; the lost jobs and failed businesses and strained relationships must not be overlooked.

“Yet, terrible as the toll from this virus has been, and continues to be, the actions people have taken have saved lives and prevented countless infections, with all the potential long-term consequences that could go with them.

“We may never know what good has been done.

“So as we can begin to look forward with cautious hope, we once again thank those who have done so much to protect us all - particularly our NHS, carers and other front line workers.

“I want to thank everyone who has made sacrifices for others. I think particularly of younger people who, though often least at risk, have sometimes given up the most.

“And I want especially to thank our clergy, parish volunteers and congregations for all you are doing - not simply to keep worship going, but to innovate with bold and remarkable new ways of doing so; reaching new people and, of course, serving your communities.

“As ‘plan B’ restrictions come to an end the future remains uncertain and we must continue to be cautious. In our churches government rules have been eased but I would still encourage congregations to consider what mitigation can best protect others.

“As we look now towards spring and the vivid demonstration of new life it offers us, my prayer is that we won’t forget what we’ve learnt; that we take this opportunity to thank others and that we look with hope to the future.”



UNITED BENEFICE WALKING GROUP

Date of Walk: Saturday 5th March

Meeting point: Meet lay-by just one mile south of Yoxall on the A515 [on the left-hand side, adjacent to a small industrial unit]

Distance: 2 miles

Meeting Time: 10.00 am

Type of Paths largely pavements, with one brief diversion into a park [one mile in and one mile back]

Negotiations are underway to enable us to have brief exploration of St Peter's Church, with the possibility of coffee being served

The walk is limited to 20 people

BOOKING ON THE WALK IS ESSENTIAL

<https://www.stmichaelmaryjohn.org.uk/walking-group-bookingpage.html>

Trevor James beneficewalkinggroup@gmail.com



ST MICHAEL'S CLOCK—AN UPDATE

Our Historic Tower Clock has been dismantled and taken to Smith of Derby to be overhauled and refurbished, prior to a possible electrification at a later stage. Two hundred and eight years old, it has literally been taken to the successor-firm of John Whitehurst, the notable late 18th Century clock-maker because Smith of Derby was founded by former apprentices of Whitehurst. Their records show that the invoice for the clock was paid in 1814, thus giving us a firm date for its manufacture and installation. Our photo shows the component parts of the clock, after it was dismantled and carried down our very challenging tower ladder, prior to its departure for Derby on 25 January. Donations have been arriving to cover the further £3,75000-00 of the final bill but your further support is invited to help us fully to restore this historical feature of Lichfield's sky-line.

Trevor James



Photo by Ron Plimmer

A Bit Rich?

Published: 4th February 2022

There's much talk of 'levelling up', an apparently worthy aspiration to bring extra resources into historically wealth-deprived parts of the UK. But the difference between the levels of wealth in London and the South East and large parts of the Midlands and North is so great and resources for 'levelling up' so limited in view of the nation's present economic straits, that it is difficult to see that such a strategy will achieve much more than cosmetic benefit.

At the personal level, wealth inequality continues to rise with the majority continuing to see their real incomes slide downwards, as inflation outstrips earnings, but many others seeing their income and assets grow exponentially as property prices continue to rise and the stock markets flourish. The number of millionaires in the UK continues to mushroom and the super rich have never had it so good.

The Church, at all levels, often speaks out in solidarity with the poor and marginalised and at parish level often incarnates that through individual actions and projects which directly benefit those in greatest need. I recently visited the Good Shepherd Ministries in Wolverhampton, founded by an order of Catholic Brothers fifty years ago, which is as pure and inspirational example of 'lifting up the lowly' as you will ever find. Offering every individual in need, love and compassion, respect and dignity, alongside a range of material resources, advice and support services.

This is what levelling up looks like – in the words of Mary - 'filling the hungry with good things'. But she also spoke of 'sending the rich away empty' and 'bringing down the powerful from their thrones'.

The truth, and it is a difficult truth for the church to witness to as it/ we are so compromised by all the wealth that we have, is that the fundamental levelling up which Jesus, Mary and many of the prophets

said was in accordance with God's just will, involves good news for the poor but bad news for those who have much and who prosper within a political and economic system rigged to favour them. There are various forms of wealth taxes that could raise huge amounts of money for redistributive purposes if there was the political will to adopt them. For the church to be faithful to its Biblical witness we have to have the courage to preach bad news to the rich. Though, as with all preaching, the message may need to be heeded by the preacher as much as by the congregation...



+Clive

Image: Bishop Clive is pictured with Brother Stephen and Brother Charles, Brothers of St John of God, who still volunteer at the Good Shepherd Ministries Centre in Wolverhampton which celebrates its 50th anniversary this year. For more information visit <https://www.gsmwolverhampton.org.uk/service-starts-golden-anniversary-celebrations/>

Mothers' UNION

Christian care for families

Diocese of Lichfield

Mothers' Union began with the AGM on 24 January... the first since 2020 and welcomed 17 members. As usual the meeting began with a short act of worship. Elizabeth began her report by reminding members of what had happened or not happened since 2020. We had kept in touch with each other by phone, texts and emails, doorstep visits and zoom services until restrictions eased and we could resume a more normal life and meet together again as a branch which we did in September 2021 completing our autumn programme. Now we look forward to the rest of our Spring programme of meetings and other events:

March 12 Lent Lunch in church 12 – 2pm

March 14 Lent meditation – led by members

March 25 Making of Posies for Mothering Sunday on 27th

March 28 Lady Day service – led by Linda Collins at which we will enrol 4 new members -Judy Godfrey, Ron Plimmer, Doug Little, and Audrey Dudley

A warm welcome extended to everyone who would like to join us.
Elizabeth Allen

RECOGNISING the POTENTIAL for CHANGE

Naomi Herbert reports on peace and healing in South Sudan

Did you know South Sudan is currently positioned 187 out of 189 in the Human Development Index (UNDP)

South Sudan is the world's newest country. It is estimated that over 400,000 people have died there since the 2013 conflict, with over 4.3million displaced internally or in neighbouring countries. MU South Sudan (MUSS) through their adult Literacy & Financial Education Programme (LFEP) has been working with those who are most vulnerable and hard to reach.

The LFEP participatory way of working is effective in changing mindsets and challenging fatalism and dependency, which so often trap individuals, families and whole communities in poverty and cycles of violence. The philosophy behind the approach is people first identifying and valuing themselves, recognising that they have the potential to change their situation and finding the resources that they can draw on to do this.

The MUSS project not only enables the transfer of skills for preventative measures against gender based violence and other cases of violence, it also establishes important community groups and associations as critical agents of change within their own communities. Challenging social norms, it enables a long term focus on supporting the community, the Church and MU as well as individual group members and their families. 'The striking empowerment and strength of LFEP women and the respect paid by men is an important counter-factual to South Sudan's internal and external narrative of conflict and destruction' (MU, LFEP Evaluation).

Since 2018, a component has been incorporated to help participants recover from conflict related trauma. This is currently piloting in the Dioceses of Renk, Juba and Terekeka, funded by Five Talents, with project participants and community leaders sharing stories of real impact.

The pilot scheme in Renk has also focused on involvement of men

including leaders from the police and army. Colonel William Deng shares his perspective: ‘When I took this training, I realised that I was suffering from traumatic stress – we never knew about this thing. Sometimes as the army, we have been forced to do many terrible things – go here, shoot this person! This was like a trauma to me, because I could not say no. This training helped me a lot and I have shared it with my brothers in my division. In Northern Upper Nile, we have a lot of rebels, but since we have had this training, we have not heard the sound of a gun’.

One of the literacy circle members, Rhina, also from Renk, longs for peace in South Sudan so that she can extend this knowledge to other communities. She says: ‘I was displaced, but this project has given me the strength by God to stand firm.. it has shown me how to find peace even though there is a war. I want to share these skills with others, I want to be an example to my family and community. I am now called upon by other community members to advise them on how to resolve arguments and disputes.’

From September 2021, with funding from Episcopal Relief & Development (ERD), MUSS will be expanding their literacy and trauma programme to two more dioceses – Juba and Rejaf. This will enable 24 more communities to become literate whilst learning about the harmful traditional and conflict-related effects of violence. In this, the healing process can begin and help them overcome all they have experienced, so that they can reach their full potential and flourish in life.

OUR POTENT UNION

‘The MU is uniquely placed because it is not regarded as a disruptive social force; it is “under the radar” as an organisation; it is politically and socially agile. Its emphasis on family relationships make it acceptable and potent. Its relationship with the Church brings it to populations who are “hard to reach” and its gentleness of approach means that it can address questions which are hard to touch, including power relations, ethnicity, tribalism, gendered and interpersonal violence.’ *Independent assessor for Comic Relief*

What is a Tree? *G. Thomas Dunlop*

What is a tree?

Well doubtless he

who dwells in city streets by choice may never know.

But souls that breathe expanding life outdoors

know trees as brothers, friends; and feel aglow
with kindred fellowship and common voice.

Yes, bees do know

and birds have made the trees their lifelong homes

And what is nearer or more intimately ours than home?

What is a tree?

The soul of God!

Whose budding leaves and blossoms in the Spring
bespeak Creation.

Whose shade in Summer cools

the burning heat of life and brings us peace;

Whose bronzing colours in the Autumn landscape glow
with pride of fruitfulness, God's bounty, man's maturity.

Whose bare strong arms in Winter steadfast hold

against the ice and storms of life when courage sags;

When green and sap of youth have lost their bold firm power
and interest lags.

What is a tree?

Oh! Yes, I know! 'Tis God.

'Tis His own way to speak His majesty,

His voice, His power, His love, His mystery.

LARGE COPIES of the magazine are available on request

St. Michael's Churchyard

At our January Working Party new tree guards were fixed round some of the young trees we planted last year. These tree guards are sturdier than the old ones and we hope they will give added protection to the trees. We also pruned the bases of some of the mature trees, resulting in a much more open aspect which will enable more light and air to get to the trees.



On of the new tree guards protecting a young Silver Birch Tree.



The Bible Reading Fellowship Centenary Rose is called Cream Abundance.

A **new rose** was also planted in the corner of The Tower Bed. This year is the

Centenary of The Bible

Reading Fellowship, an organisation that produces quarterly booklets containing Daily Bible Readings and a Commentary. St. Michael's Church has supported the Bible Reading Fellowship for many years. It is interesting to note how the Bible Reading Fellowship began in 1922. It all started in a church in Brixton towards the end of 1921 when the Vicar, The Reverend Leslie Mannering, was talking with a member of the congregation about the spiritual needs of the

Church. In January 1922, the fellowship of St. Matthew was launched with the aim of encouraging spiritual growth. A new monthly leaflet provided Bible passages for daily reading with brief explanatory notes and prayers for the parish, the wider church and the world. And so, from small beginnings the Bible reading Fellowship began and continues today enabling people of all ages to grow in faith and understanding of The Bible.

On **Sunday February 6th.** a large congregation came to the Family Praise Service on the **70th. anniversary of the Queen's Accession.** Towards the end of the Service we went into the Churchyard and the **Hornbeam Platinum Jubilee Tree** was dedicated by The Reverend Chris Baker.

A young boy holds the hornbeam tree trunk. A tree guardian of the future?



It was interesting to read quite recently that the original trees that were planted to form the avenue to the Church door were lime. We do have a number of lime trees in the Churchyard and there is a splendid line of them on the border of the Old and new Churchyards. I have also checked how many native trees there are in the Churchyard. There are 18 out of a possible 33. It would be good to obtain all 33 at some point. We will be making a start by planting **5 more native trees new to the Churchyard** as part of our **Working Party session this month.** **We meet on Saturday March 26th., from 10.00 a.m. until 1.00 p.m.** Please join us as we plant the new native trees, continue our clearance of overgrown areas and undertake early Spring jobs. You will be made very welcome. **Tea/Coffee/Cake** will be provided during our **Mid-Morning Refreshment Break.**

Ray Allen 251654

Benefice Lent Course

Through the Wilderness

Last month we advertised Living in Love and Faith for Lent this year. However, when we met as a ministry team, we felt that the work level required and the substance of the course did not fit where we are now.

Instead, we offer Through the Wilderness,

This will be on **Wednesdays, 9th; 16th; 23rd March, at 2pm to 3.30pm in St. Michaels.**

There will also be a connected session in Holy Week on Wednesday 13th April 2pm to 3.30pm. A guided meditation to be with Jesus before the great days of this special week in the Christian calendar.

Whether we are aware of it or not, all of us have been in a wilderness for the last two years, a very different experience from the normal life we had. So our plan is to use these Lent gatherings to journey together, exploring where we are with God, what we can learn from the wilderness experience and how our faith resources us.

There will be drinks and there will be cake.

All are welcome.

Chris Polhill and Helen Barton

Introducing Our New Rector



It is with great pleasure that we are able to tell you that Revd. Dr Abbie Walsh has accepted Bishop Clive's offer of the position of Rector of St. Michael and St Mary Lichfield with St. John Wall. Abbie is at present in her 4th year of a curacy at St. Peter's Collegiate Church and St. John's in the Square in the parish of central Wolverhampton. Before her training for the ministry she worked as a GP in Stockport for some years. Those of us who were present at her interview saw that she had a real sense of vocation, not just to the ministry but also to our churches in the United Benefice. We look forward to helping and supporting her in her new role. We thank God for her and pray for her ministry among us.

More details to follow, but you can see Abbie in a video from 2018 she talks about her vocation to be a priest - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QV8ka2y_vCs&t=6s

There are more recent short videos on the Diocese of Lichfield Chad Living web site. in which she talks about a variety of topics including helping others deal with covid and the importance of trees! See <https://www.lichfield.anglican.org/our-faith/chad-living/>

Sue and Lyn, St Michael's Churchwardens

RACIAL JUSTICE SUNDAY ST MICHAEL'S 13th February 2022

Lectionary Readings : ISAIAH 58;5-10 ; ST.LUKE 6: 17-26

Thank you for your welcome & inviting me to preach on this day which is marked in the church's calendar as racial justice Sunday.

I wonder if you had been present on that day when Jesus preached the sermon on the plain. How would you have felt if you had been one of the poor? We've heard it often ..it tends to go over our heads so that we can so easily miss the point Jesus was trying to make! So here is part of it in a modern translation of the NT: Good as new, commended by Rowan Williams.

***You're the important ones NOW; those of you who haven't got much
You're citizens of God's new world!***

You're the important ones NOW , those of you who are hungry.

You're going to have plenty to eat!

To the back of the queue those who are loaded with money! You've had your prizes!

To the back of the queue those who are over-fed! There won't be any food to spare for you

Jesus is not saying its a good thing to be poor, but that this is not God's will for you. You matter to God **who loves and cherishes you**. There is nothing good about poverty. Poverty is scandalous, obscene, de-humanizing. Only those who have never been poor think otherwise. I was brought up in a Lancs cotton town during the war.(2nd) and though we weren't well off, I don't remember ever going to bed hungry, or missing a meal because there wasn't enough food..

Now, in 2022, I read of homes in this country where parents are missing meals so that their children can eat and, in the hell that is Afghanistan today, people are less afraid of the Taliban than the

monster of starvation facing them and their children. Poverty is created. So Jesus is shining a powerful light on this condition, exaggerating if you like to make a vital point. Poverty is created and like most social issues, it's a matter of justice. 'One thing God requires' says MICAH 'DO JUSTICE, not just think or talk about it – but do it. The God of love is passionate about restorative justice.

So when we hear the words BLACK LIVES MATTER what is our reaction? Well, so do white lives, so do all lives matter, which is to spectacularly miss the point. When, during the days of apartheid in South Africa the phrase BLACK IS BEAUTIFUL was coined, it was not implying that all the varied colours of God's creation are not beautiful too, or that God does not delight in diversity - but that this colour which is so often associated with darkness, evil and negative values is beautiful and so you can hold your head high.

When George Floyd, a black man who was held by the throat by a white policeman in Minneapolis some 2 years ago said the words, 'I can't breathe' they were a desperate cry for help. The scene was captured on camera by a passer-by, was seen all over the world and thousands turned out to protest. The shocking truth was revealed again - that people of colour are far more likely to be arrested, ill-treated, murdered, than white people and that is the point so often spectacularly missed. This is about prejudice & discrimination, which is fundamentally about injustice...it is to accentuate the positive - Black lives matter!

We may say that we are not racist or prone to racial discrimination; but there is such a thing as low-level racism. The snide remark the judgmental innuendo which goes unchallenged. and like a virus the poison may be transmitted until it gets into the bloodstream. We need to make sure it stops.

I want to tell a story, and in doing so highlight a form of injustice which

is often racial and experienced by growing numbers of people here and across the world. IT IS HOMELESSNESS .

You may have heard the story, if so I hope you won't mind hearing it again.

It begins in 1948; the partition of India. In that terrible time a Sikh family flee to find safety in Kenya...where the father finds work on the railway. After almost 20 years, now a family of five, following independence the Bhogal family are told they are no longer wanted, so they leave again along with hundreds of others this time for England. They arrive on a cold winter's day in Dudley wondering about the future. The next night there is a knock on the door. At first reluctant to go for fear of attack, when they finally open, to find an elderly man on the doorstep with a bag of food, who says: 'I'm Bert Bissell, welcome to Dudley and if there's anything I can do to help please let me know'.

Inderjit is eleven at the time; he and Bert become friends; at school and in the street he is like many others the target of racial and sometimes physical abuse.

But at the Sunday afternoon Bible class for young people at Vicar Street the young Inderjit finds acceptance, security, a place of sanctuary. He becomes attracted to the person of Jesus of Nazareth, and (in his own words) becomes a Sikh follower of Jesus, eventually training to be a local preacher and candidating for the Methodist ministry. His family virtually disown him, though there is reconciliation when later he becomes the first black president of the Methodist Conference.

In Sheffield, where he lives, he draws the attention of the local authority to the large numbers of refugees coming into the City and together with a Quaker Friend founds, in 2004, the first City of

Sanctuary to provide welcome and practical hospitality to these families. There are now more than 110 cities, towns and villages of Sanctuary in the UK. It is a growing movement. AND IT ALL BEGAN WHEN BERT BISSELL ARRIVED ON THE DOORSTEP OF THE BHOGAL HOUSEHOLD ON THAT COLD JANUARY NIGHT AND SAID: 'YOU'RE WELCOME IN DUDLEY'.

Here in Lichfield we are seeking recognition as a City of Sanctuary, working to support a culture of welcome and hospitality for all. We support 4 refugee families, two from Syria and lately 2 from Afghanistan, and we seek to provide practical support for all marginalised, excluded people and groups. We are a charitable organisation with a Board of Trustees of which Helen Barton is chair. We are building a membership base of individuals and organisations – which include churches as 'Faith Places of sanctuary'. We would love you to join us!

Of course this is deep in our DNA as the Body of Christ. We recall that he said;

I was a stranger and you welcomed me into your home...when you did it to one of the least of these my sisters ..my brothers.. you did it to ME

Is not this the fasting I require, says God, to loose the fetters of injustice, set free those who are oppressed tearing off every yoke; is it not sharing food with the hungry, taking the homeless poor into your house. Then your light will break forth like the dawn.

In the end we are members of one race, part of the same humanity, equally fashioned in the likeness of God, each one loved and cherished. Our calling is nothing more or less than to try to make that vision a reality.

1230

Revd Warren Bardsley

Synod calls for protection for child survivors of trafficking

News from



The General Synod has given unanimous backing to a call for the Government to ensure the protection of child survivors of trafficking after hearing of fears that the Nationality and Borders Bill could leave more children unprotected and at risk.

Members voted 331 in favour, with no votes against and no abstentions, both to acknowledge the ‘leading role’ that the Government has played internationally in challenging slavery - while calling on the Government to ensure the proper protection of minors who are trafficked and enslaved.

The Synod also voted to encourage all dioceses, deaneries and parishes in the Church of England to raise awareness of modern slavery. Members further called on people to pray for the victims and survivors of slavery and trafficking and all those organisations who work to help and support them.

General Synod member Alistair Bianchi, introducing the debate at the Synod, said progress that had been made in tackling modern slavery and protecting children who have been trafficked risked being endangered as a result of measures in the Nationality and Borders Bill.

There are ‘considerable concerns’ that the lack of attention paid specifically to protecting children in the Bill – currently before Parliament - could have a negative impact both on child survivors of trafficking and children subject to the immigration system who are at risk of exploitation, he told the Synod.

“This can be seen in the Bill’s creation of a new ‘slavery or trafficking

information notice’ which would be issued to potential victims of modern slavery claiming asylum, setting out a limited time in which a potential victim must provide information to ensure they don’t damage their credibility.

“This disregards the impact of trauma on the ability of victims, especially children, to recall relevant details. In addition to this, the proof required for a reasonable grounds decision will likely increase with the bill, further excluding children from support.”

Mr Bianchi was speaking on behalf of Durham Diocese, which campaigned successfully in 2018 to prevent a young man ‘Stephen’ - not his real name - from being deported back to Vietnam after he was trafficked into the UK as a child to work on a cannabis farm.

“While there have been developments in government policy since this motion was first raised in 2018, there remains a great deal of concern about the outcomes for trafficked children, particularly as they transition to adulthood – as exemplified by Stephen’s case,” he added.

In his speech, he highlighted the work of the Clewer Initiative, the Church of England’s campaign to raise awareness of modern slavery and help support survivors and vulnerable groups.

More information:

Other partners with resources addressing slavery issues include International Justice Mission (IJM) (which works closely with churches in providing a Christian response to modern slavery), Stop the Traffic, Justice & Care, Hestia, Anti-Slavery Partnership

The wording of the Synod motion, approved unanimously:

‘That this Synod:

(a) acknowledge the leading role that Her Majesty’s Government has played internationally in challenging slavery; and

(b) ask Her Majesty’s Government to ensure the proper protection of

- minors who are trafficked and enslaved is enshrined in law including updating the 2018 Working Together to Safeguard Children Statutory Guidance in accordance with the request from the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner, and to implement the other findings of her Annual Report in particular around effective access to support, accommodation, work and education for victims of modern slavery.
- c. encourage all dioceses, deaneries, and parishes in the Church of England to raise awareness of modern slavery in our communities in the UK and internationally, working with the resources from partners such as the Church of England's **Clewer Initiative** and others *, helping individuals and congregations to address this evil by:
 - i. seeking to identify potential victims of modern slavery in the community, and
 - ii. offering services to victims and survivors,
 - iii. supporting organisations which already provide services to help people leaving exploitation and/or with preventative work.
 - d. encourages dioceses, safeguarding leads, and training institutions and organisations in using resources like these within existing training, especially where individuals hold roles in authorised ministry, embedding understanding of modern slavery and equipping them with ways to respond.
 - e. ask that the issues of challenging human trafficking and modern slavery are raised at the global gathering of bishops of the Anglican Communion at the 2022 Lambeth Conference, and that the conference consider the international Church's role in tackling injustice and violence around the world and address the factors which create vulnerability to exploitation; and
 - f. call on all individuals to pray regularly for victims and survivors of modern slavery and for those organisations working to help and support them both in the UK and overseas, that we may come closer to fulfilling Jesus' injunction to 'proclaim release of the captives.'

An update on the Hawksworth Family

We're officially living in Chengdu! After completing two weeks' quarantine in Shanghai, we were then allowed to fly to Chengdu to complete a week of home isolation.

We have moved to an area called TianFu. Our closest Metro station is called QiLong on Line 5 for anyone who has been here before! Our house is situated within a gated community. It has 4 floors (Basement, Ground, 1st and 2nd). It's the complete opposite to what we had been living in, in Hong Kong. There are some lovely parks nearby. DaYuan is particularly nice as it has climbing frames and a digging area for the children. Our landlady lives next-door to us and is lovely. She has a daughter who lives in Toronto, Canada. On the other side is a family with 3 children. They speak English, which is great, and are very friendly!

English isn't widely spoken here. A dialect of Sichuan is spoken as well as Mandarin. I'm going to do a Sichuanese language course at the local university. I've found it quite isolating and sometimes frustrating that I'm often unable to make myself understood or understand what people are asking me. Milo speaks some Mandarin so has been helping me out, which is great.

Gabriel and Rupert started their new school on Monday, 14th February. Rupert's teacher is Welsh and Gabriel's teacher is Irish. Both classes have Chinese assistants who encourage the children to speak Mandarin at breaks and lunchtimes. Their classmates are Chinese speakers with some English language. Their school, SPGS International School, Chengdu, follows the English schooling system which is good.

Ellie and Milo are in the process of entering LeMan school, Chengdu. This is another English system school. Both Milo and Ellie will have to sit an entrance exam before they're allowed to start. We're just waiting for the date to come through. They're both very keen to be

finally going back to school.



We spent the lunar New Year exploring our local neighbourhood. We spent some time exploring JinCheng lake. It's an area of paths and lakes with lots of wildlife. We saw a lot of different birdlife. The children really enjoyed being outdoors again.

The weather here is much colder than in Hong Kong. Daily temps are around 3-10 degrees. We've had quite a lot of rain as well. The climate here is more like that of England

although we don't get snow here, only on the mountains. I've been informed that Chengdu is approximately 500 metres above sea-level, so although we're on the same latitude as the Mediterranean, it's much colder in winter.

We've been experimenting with some Chinese recipes. Ellie, Milo and I made Jiaozi (pronounced Jow (like pow) zah); these are steamed dumplings filled with minced pork, Chinese cabbage, garlic, chives and assorted spices. We steamed them for 20 minutes and ate them with Chinese greens, ribs and noodles. The children are really embracing the Chinese culture and enjoying the new foods we're making.



The children all have scooters again so Peter takes them out every day

for a scoot along the paths outside our house. The roads here are much wider and there seems to be a lot more traffic here, but then again Chengdu is twice the size of Hong Kong. The footpaths are wider and it's safe for the children to scoot along.

I rented a bike last week. You pay for everything with an app on your phone here. This includes renting bikes and buying food. It's so much easier than carrying cash or bank cards with you. The bike I rented was from a company called Hello Bike. You often find bikes at the side of the road. You scan the barcode, pay, when payment has been accepted the bike will then automatically unlock and off you go. Once you've finished with it, you simply leave the bike in a safe place and relock it ready for the next person to use it! A lot of people here use them and they're very cheap. I had my bike for about an hour and it cost me 50p.

Everything is very cheap here. Our cost of living has dramatically reduced. However, gas is very expensive and is piped in instead of having it delivered in bottles. We're still working to make our house into a home. Although it came with a lot of furniture, there are a few additional things that we need to buy. I'm off to IKEA with Milo shortly to buy a few bits and pieces! We hope everyone is doing well! We miss you all.



Take care, much love,
The Hawksworths' xxx



**LICHFIELD
WILDLIFE GROUP**



**A talk by Derek Crawley,
Chair of the Staffs. Mammal Group**

Tuesday 1 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



**LICHFIELD
WILDLIFE GROUP**



Piggott's Bottom Daffodils



**A guided walk led by
Pete and Lin Norbury**

**Saturday 26 March at 10:00 a.m.
Thorley's Hill, Upper Longdon WS15 4LW
Meet in the car park.**

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

Contact (01543) 257812

 www.facebook.com/lichfieldwildlifegroup

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 pages are turned twice a week, so that names are visible through the glass on the date nearest their death.

It costs £10 to insert a name. Please complete the form below and return it to a member of the Ministry Team with the remittance.

Memorial Book

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
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From the Registers

Baptisms			
St Michael's	30th Jan 2022	Isla-Rose Hurst	2 yrs
St Michael's	30th Jan 2022	Freya Vaughan	9 mths

Weddings			

Funerals			
St Michael's	26th Jan	Doreen Russell	94
St Michael's	28th Jan	Dorothy Hill	85
St Michael's	2nd Feb	David Duffy	81
St Michael's	4th Feb	Barbara Homewood	74
St Michael's	15th Feb	Betty Richmond	90
St Michael's	15th Feb	Audrey Sharrod	
St Michael's	18th Feb	Suzanne Cragg	31

Bible Readings

Wednesday 2nd March

Ash Wednesday

[Purple]

Joel 2.1-2, 12-17

Matthew 6.1-6,16-21

Sunday 6th March

1st Sunday of Lent

[Purple]

Deuteronomy 26.1-11

Luke 4.1-13

Sunday 13th March

2nd Sunday of Lent

[Purple]

Genesis 15.1-12, 17-18

Luke 13.31-end

Sunday 20th March

3rd Sunday of Lent

[Purple]

Isaiah 55.1-9

Luke 13.1-9

Sunday 20th March

EVENSONG

3rd Sunday of Lent

[Purple]

Genesis 28-19a

John 1.35-end

Sunday 27th March

4th Sunday of Lent

Mothering Sunday

[Purple]

1 Samuel 1.20-end

Luke 2.33-35

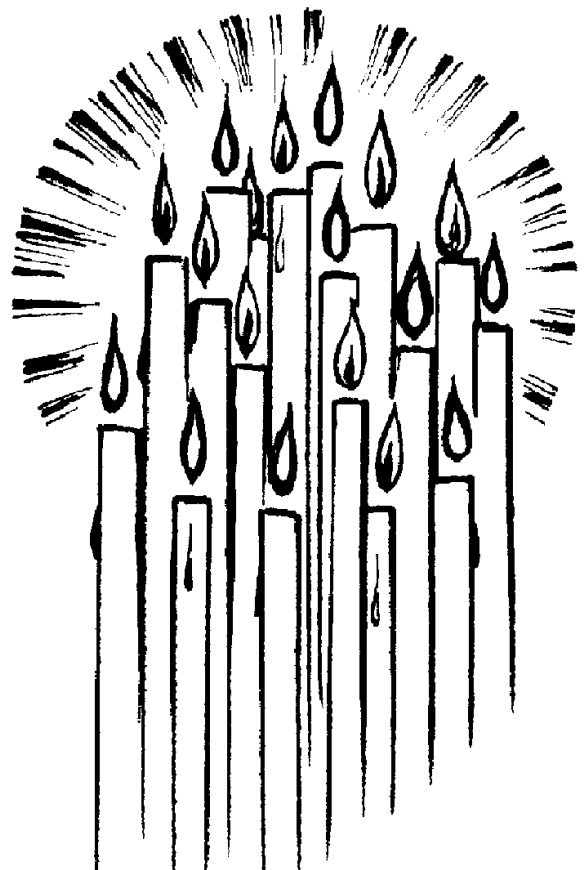
Sunday 3rd April

5th Sunday of Lent

[Purple]

Isaiah 43.16-21

John 12.1-8



PROVERBS PRAYERS

Proverbs 6.20-22

My child, keep your father's commandment,
and do not forsake your mother's teaching.

Bind them upon your heart always;
tie them around your neck.

When you walk, they will lead you;
when you lie down, they will watch over you;
and when you awake, they will talk with you.

Proverbs 22.6

Train children in the right way,
and when old, they will not stray.

Proverbs 31. 26

She opens her mouth with wisdom,
and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue.

New Revised Standard Version, Anglicised (NRSVA)



Angie King



An Irish blessing

*There is but one and only one,
Whose love will fail you never.
One who lives from sun to sun,
With constant fond endeavour.*

*There is but one and only one
On earth there is no other.
In heaven a noble work was done
When God gave us a Mother.*

St Michael's Rota

Sunday 8.00 am	6 March	13 March	20 March	27 March
Sidesperson				

Sunday 10.00 am	6 March Family Praise	13 March	20 March	27 March Mothering Sunday
Sidespersons	Maureen Brand David Bull	Pat Toplis Ted Green	Judy and Mike Godfrey	Brenda Liptrot Enid Barry
Reader		Alan Toplis	Trevor James	Alan Toplis
Servers		N/A	N/A	N/A
Communion Assistant		N/A	N/A	N/A
Intercessor		Alan Toplis	Trevor James	Alan Toplis
Coffee		Elizabeth Allen Trish Jones	Brenda Eley Audrey Dudley	Veronica Morris Betty Lyne
Healing				Alan Toplis
Transport				
Flowers	No flowers	No Flowers	No Flowers	No Flowers

Sunday 12.30 pm	27 March Baptism	Reader	Intercessor

Sunday 6.00 pm	6 March No service	13 March No service	20 March Evensong	27 March No service
Sidesperson			Ray Allen	
Reader			Ray Allen	
Server				

A New Year blessing for the SHIEL Family

What a Great way to Kick-start 2022!!! On Sunday 13th.February David and Lyn Shiel received the wonderful news of the birth of their second Grandson - , a Brother for Joshua, whose 7th. Birthday was on the previous day,

Weighing in at 7lbs.15 ozs at 5.15 pm at Gloucester General Hospital Maternity Unit.

Proud parents, Christopher and Clare and new Grandson, Master Shiel , at time of going to print, are all doing well and recovering from the momentous event of the 13th. February.

During these strange Covid times it is wonderful to be so blessed, and to share with our friends at St. Michaels, this wonderful, happy and joyous news to lift and brighten our days.

Heartfelt thanks to all our friends at St. Michaels for their good wishes, especially on the day of the announcement of another new arrival to lead and guide us all in the coming years!!

EDITOR

..... Finally

“THAT RINGS A BELL !!”

The ‘Service’ or Tantony Bell (pictured) was returned to its rightful place at Lichfield Cathedral on 20th.January 2022

You will, no doubt, have heard this small, but mighty, bell being rung for 5 minutes prior to the start of each service to call the people of our city to prayer every Sunday at the Cathedral, as it has done for over

200 years and after some time away being repaired it has been re-installed high up in the south side of the central tower of the Cathedral to ring out across the city once again. It is the only bell visible from outside the Cathedral; it has a diameter of 47 cm. and weighs approx..75 kg.

The name Tantony is derived from St. Antony of Egypt (251 to 356) who was an immensely popular saint in the Middle Ages being regarded as a Patriarch of monks and a Healer. The diminutive of his name 'tantony' was given to the smallest of the bells of the peal.

The Tantony Bell at Lichfield Cathedral is believed to have been cast around c.1500 and was likely installed in Lichfield Cathedral during the post -English Civil War restoration by Bishop John Hackett, around (1666-1667), around the time of the Great Fire of London

After centuries of constant use the bell was in need of extensive repair, along with the fittings that suspended it in the central tower.

The Tantony Bell is available for visitors to view during the Cathedral's normal visiting hours: (visit the website at www.lichfield-cathedral.org for the latest information)

EDITOR





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Who's Who

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<p style="text-align: center;">St Michael's Church</p> <p>Verger: <i>Lynn Rock 252634 or 07765 312411</i></p> <p>Sacristan and Head Server: <i>Maggie Easton</i> 255308</p> <p>Organist and Choirmaster: <i>Dudley Ray</i> 07847 643373 dudleyrayuk@yahoo.co.uk</p> <p>Music Group: <i>Richard Brooks 07918 906</i> 350</p> <p>Pastoral Care: <i>June Frayn 264920</i></p> <p>Flowers: <i>Brenda Liptrot 251863</i></p> <p>Safeguarding: <i>Maureen Brand 264880</i></p> <p>Junior Praise: <i>Viv Oliver 258054</i></p> <p>Bell ringers: <i>Gillian Eastwood 07568134115</i> Thursdays, 7:30pm to 8:55pm. gillieastwood@gmail.com</p> <p>Mothers Union: <i>Elizabeth Allen 304938</i></p> <p>Social Team: <i>Contact via the office 262211</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">St John's Church, Wall</p> <p>Verger: Hilary Barker 01543 482027</p> <p>Pastoral Care:</p> <p>Safeguarding: Maureen Brand 264880</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">Other Useful Numbers</p> <p>St Michael's School: 227425</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">Parish Magazine</p> <p>Magazine Distributor: <i>Liz Clarke 268862</i> liz.clarke@virgin.net</p> <p>Magazine Editor: <i>David Shiel</i> 01543320437" shielfamily@gmail.com</p>
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