

THE PARISH MAGAZINE

May 2023



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

£1

<p>Rector: Revd Dr Abbie Walsh</p> <p>Tel:: 07395 500745</p> <p>Email: rev.abbie.walsh@gmail.com</p> <p>DAY OFF—FRIDAY</p>	<p>Associate Minister (NSM Part-time): The Revd. Ruth Bull</p> <p>36 Broadlands Rise, LICHFIELD, Staffs, WS14 9SF</p> <p>Tel: 01543 252123</p> <p>Email: dkbrlcb@hotmail.com</p>
<p>Assistant Minister (PTO)</p> <p>The Revd Chris Baker</p> <p>15 Saddlers Close, Lichfield, Staffs. WS14 9ZW</p> <p>Tel: 01543 256320</p> <p>Email: C.J.Baker@bham.ac.uk</p>	<p>Assistant Minister (PTO)</p> <p>The Revd. Jeyan Anketell</p> <p>7 Wissage Lane, LICHFIELD, Staffs, WS13 6DQ</p> <p>Tel: 01543 268897</p> <p>Email: jeyan.anketell@ntlworld.com</p>
<p>Assistant Minister (PTO)</p> <p>The Revd. Helen Barton</p> <p>1 Seckham Road, Lichfield WS13 7AN.</p> <p>Tel: 01543 257692</p> <p>Email: helen@the-bartons.com</p>	<p>Assistant Minister (PTO)</p> <p>The Revd. Stephen Barton</p> <p>1 Seckham Road, Lichfield WS13 7AN.</p> <p>Tel: 01543 257692</p> <p>Email: stephen@the-bartons.com</p>
<p>Assistant Minister (PTO)</p> <p>The Revd Christine Polhill</p> <p>Little Hayes, Beaudesert, Cannock Wood, Staffs WS15 4JJ</p> <p>Tel: 01543 674474</p>	<p>Assistant Minister (PTO)</p> <p>The Revd Brain Rostill</p> <p>11 Goodwood Close, Lichfield, Staffs, WS14 9XZ</p> <p>Tel: 254067</p> <p>Email: brianrostill@gmail.com</p>
<p>Reader: Trevor James</p> <p>36 Heritage Court, LICHFIELD, Staffs, WS14 9ST</p> <p>Tel: 01543 258434</p>	<p>Reader: Alan Toplis</p> <p>Streethay Lodge, Streethay, LICHFIELD, Staffs, WS13 8LR</p> <p>Tel: 01543 414651</p> <p>E-mail: alan.toplis@toplis.co.uk</p>
<p>United Benefice Office</p> <p>St Michael's Church, Church St, LICHFIELD, Staffs, WS13 6ED</p> <p>Mon, Tues, Wed & Fri CLOSED Thursdays</p> <p>9.00 am to 12.00 noon.</p> <p>Tel: 01543 262211</p> <p>E-mail: office@stmichaelmaryjohn.org.uk</p>	<p>SAFEGUARDING CO-ORDINATOR FOR ST MICHAEL & ST JOHN</p> <p>Maureen Brand</p> <p>01543 264880</p> <p>For advice about safeguarding or to raise a concern please contact Maureen.</p>
<p>St Michael's Church</p> <p>Church Street, Lichfield, Staffordshire, WS13 6ED</p>	<p>St John's Church</p> <p>Green Lane, Wall, Staffordshire, WS14 0AS</p>

Reflection.....

This month we celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III. This will be a time when many people will be holding street parties and other celebrations to mark this historic event. Millions of people in this country and across the world will be watching the ceremony on



television, along with the processions with the ornate horse-drawn coaches which carry the new monarch to and from Westminster Abbey. Crowds will line the streets to watch as the procession goes by.

Many of us will be reminded of the funeral last year, of Queen Elizabeth II with not only the procession and the two moving services, in Westminster Abbey and later in St George's Chapel, Windsor, but also the Lying-in-State, where people queued for hours, often overnight, in order to file past the royal coffin. People from all walks of life and from many countries, joined in with this ritual.

But why do we have such rituals and ceremonies? After all, King Charles has technically been King since the death of his mother, Queen Elizabeth II, last year. So why this big event now?

There have been rituals and ceremonies since the earliest times of human existence. Some experts believe that some of the earliest cave paintings depict ceremonies or rituals. But why do people have such

events?

Along with the basic necessities of life – food, water, shelter and love – rituals and ceremonies give us a sense of belonging and of community. Ceremonies are used to mark significant milestones in our lives. Births, marriages and deaths all have ceremonies attached to them, which are important, not only to the family involved but to others in the community and further afield. Even birthdays have their own rituals, with cake, candles and singing.

Ceremonies and rituals are often full of symbolism and mark significant times in our lives and in the lives of our communities. They help us to connect with one another and preserve our culture and society.

We only have to look at the grief and anguish caused by the Covid restrictions on funerals, to know how important such ceremonies are. They are an important stage in the grieving process, an opportunity for healing.

Ceremonies and rituals also preserve traditions and culture. When visiting foreign countries, one can see the differences in culture in different parts of the world, even in different parts of one country and these are an important part of the history and tradition of a place.

When I talk with families as we prepare for a baptism, we talk about the symbolism of the water, the sign of the cross, the candles; all are important parts of this ceremony and all add to the significance of the event. They are often also impressed by the thought that they are taking part in a tradition that goes back to the baptism of Jesus in the River Jordan. Our font at St Michael's Church has the date 1669

engraved into it – just think how many people have been baptised there in well over 300 years.

When we come to church and take part in the Eucharist, we are again taking part in a rite that has been taking place since the time of Jesus. It also has its own important rituals and symbolism and is such an important part of our faith. Knowing that people all over the world are joining in with the Eucharist and have been for hundreds of years, is a wonderful thought.

So as we watch the rituals and ceremony of the Coronation, we pray that it will be an occasion that unites us in a celebration of tradition and stability and we pray that the reign of our new king will be one of peace and harmony in this country.

Ruth Bull

LARGE COPIES
of the
magazine are
available on
request

The Children's Society

Thankyou to all who contributed to St Michael's home box opening month. The final total this year was £520:20.

Many thanks also to Sonia for helping me to gather in the boxes.

When I get a letter of receipt and thanks I will put it on the church noticeboard.

Maureen Duff

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

Wednesdays

9.30am Holy Communion

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

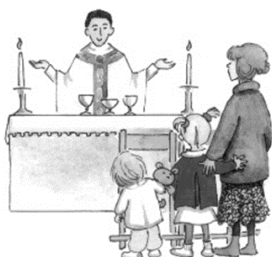
CHILDREN'S SERVICES & ACTIVITIES

Family Praise

Sunday

7th May

10am St Michael's



First Steps

Monday 5th June

10am—11.30am

NO MEETING IN MAY

Come and join us at our ...

MESSY CHURCH

for craft, story, song and food on

SUNDAY 14TH MAY

4.30 – 5.45pm

in St Michael's Church

Ages 0-11 yrs. welcome



Deadlines!

For June Magazine: Deadline is

SUNDAY 14th May

Please send articles to David Shiel

AND the Parish Office

shielfamily@gmail.com

office@stmichaelmaryjohn.org.uk

Pew Sheet:

every Thursday

7:30am

Contact

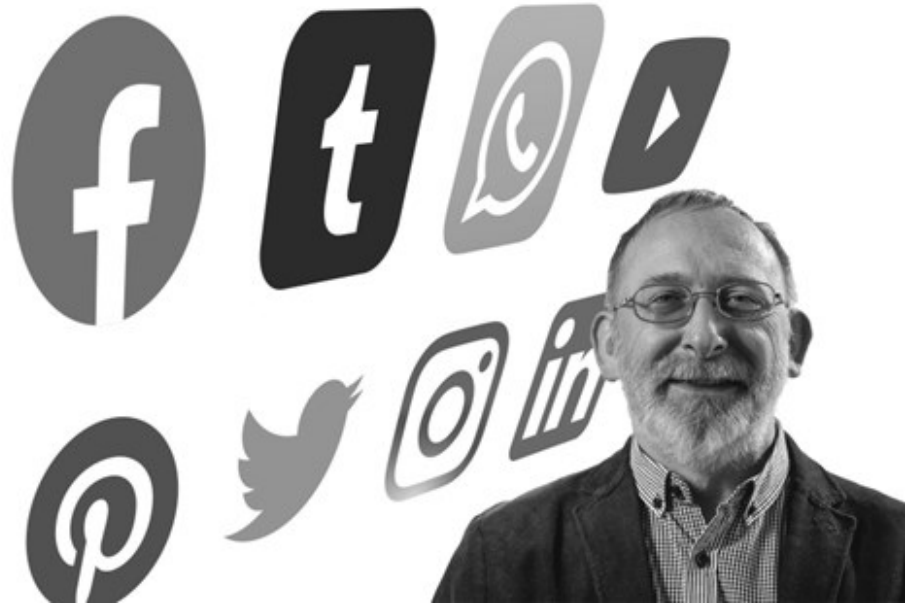
Parish Office



DIOCESE OF LICHFIELD

**Say
what?**

PUBLISHED 5th APRIL



One of the blessings of the Covid pandemic was that it inspired or forced a lot of people, churches, employers and others to take our online potential more seriously. Zoom and Teams software was rolled out to us staff in Lichfield Diocese in a matter of days at the start of the first lockdown, and we've appreciated the flexibility it offers as well as some of the downsides. Many churches too found new ways to keep in touch, whether with services streamed on YouTube or more interactively via WhatsApp groups, Facebook pages, Twitter, Instagram and the rest. Most will have seen occasions where harmony vanishes and tempers flare as the feeling of anonymity leads to the irrepressible urge to win an argument and put the internet right. We might even have added fuel to the fire. Or we might have taken umbrage, blocking the rogue or even taking ourselves offline.

Humans have been ever thus. We see it this month as we read the Gospel records of Good Friday. Luke writes that "The people stood watching... the rulers sneered... the soldiers mocked... the criminal hurled insults" (Luke chapter 23). Pilate was perhaps the shrewdest of

the characters – as a Roman governor tired of the squabbling between the Jewish leaders and upstart preacher from Galilee, he had a sign nailed above one of the crucified, saying ‘Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews’. There’s a good chance he believed it to be true; but having the sign added was perhaps also designed to troll the Jewish leaders after reluctantly giving them what they wanted to keep the peace. The predictable flame-war followed. An academic might describe this as post-modern irony; a teenager would add an eye-roll. There was some ambiguity in it, and people would talk. The priests tried to ‘correct’ the Roman governor. There’s no affirmation in the Gospels that any of those people would join Jesus in heaven. Just the second criminal crucified next to Jesus, who spoke plainly, admitted his own failings, expressing himself truthfully and kindly.

I’ve long held, tongue-in-cheek, to my belief in Bananarama Theology – sadly, most people reading this will be old enough to remember their hit, ‘It ain’t what you do, it’s the way that you do it – that’s what gets results’. The Church of England might agree, in other words. In 2019 it launched its Digital Charter and social media guidelines with the hope of tackling offensive behaviour and encouraging a positive atmosphere for online conversations. It asks us to treat online conversations the same way we should face-to-face – with truth, kindness, welcome, as good witnesses, togetherness and alert to safeguarding issues. It’s well worth taking a moment to read at www.churchofengland.org/charter before joining your local community, parish and our diocese online.

Simon Jones is Lichfield Diocese’s Creative Media Producer, with duties managing our website, social media and video production.

You can join conversations (nicely!) with others in and linked to the diocese online at facebook.com/groups/DioceseOfLichfield, twitter.com/Lichfield_CofE, instagram.com/lichfielddiocese/ and youtube.com/@LichfieldDiocese.

Bishop's drive to abolish two-child limit on benefits approaches final House of Lords stage

A Private Member's Bill brought by the Bishop of Durham, Paul Butler, to abolish the two-child limit on Universal Credit is on course to complete its passage through the House of Lords this week.

The Universal Credit (Removal of Two Child Limit) Bill would amend previous legislation which restricts the number of children counted when calculating benefit payments to a household.

The limit restricts means-tested benefits to the first two children in a family if they were born after April 2017.

The bill, introduced in the Lords in May last year, is due to have its third reading on Friday, May 24. It would then pass to the House of Commons for consideration.

Bishop Paul is the patron of the North East Child Poverty Commission and has worked closely with the Child Poverty Action Group in campaigning for an end to the two-child limit.

He said: "The Two Child Limit continues to be the most significant contributor to placing more children and families into poverty.

"Its removal would improve the lives of many families. It is time for it to be removed."

Research by the Child Poverty Action Group concludes that around 50,000 children every year across the UK are pushed into poverty as a result of the two-child limit, and a further 150,000 children who are already living in poverty see their circumstances deteriorate further.

Magazine Distribution Co-ordinator

Just as you have got used to me in this role, I am moving to Easingwold, N. Yorkshire to be nearer my daughter!

Would you be interested in taking over from me?

We have set up a database of distributors and subscribers which is updated by Angie in the Parish Office on my instruction. Direct computer access can be given but I prefer to have a hard copy file!

Most of the year, the role is updating the database and dealing with queries. Usually, this is a distributor going on holiday or a magazine drop missed.

In December/early January, the subscriptions are collected for the following year. We set up a system last year for doing this which worked very well. I have already set up the system for 2024 in anticipation of my move. You would have the responsibility for auditing and banking the cash collected.

I have thoroughly enjoyed the role, meeting lots of new people. Not all our distributors are church goers and some have been doing the job for a very long time, taking over from partners or neighbours. There is also an element of pastoral care as I try to keep tabs on people whom I know are not in the best of health.

Interested? Please speak to either me or Angie in the Parish Office.

Liz Clarke

PARISH MEETINGS ROOMS DEVELOPMENT

A previous version of this report went to St Michael's PCC 27.2.23. It has since been updated. The intention to have a regular report at every PCC depending upon whether there is anything to report. We thought it might be useful to put it in the church magazine as well.

Current Situation

Both Covid and the vacancy delayed our plans originally agreed in October 2019. Meetings between Greenwoods and the Parish Meeting Rooms Team continued to take place via zoom or in person where possible, to plan out the work. However since 2022 things have picked up. In the meantime building costs have gone up, funding opportunities have reduced and applications very competitive.

An application to HS2 community fund was submitted in the autumn 2022 but unfortunately was turned down as more information was needed. The Archaeological survey (we had a grant for this from the Edward Cadbury Trust) has been completed and they have said we can go ahead with our plans but any below ground structures will have to be designed to minimise disturbance to archaeological remains. Our current preferred design option addresses this.

Next steps

We are now at RIBA Stage 3 ([RIBA Plan of Work 2020 and specification | NBS \(thenbs.com\)](#)). To avoid incurring any more unnecessary costs we are going to go back to the architects to ask what building work could be achieved with the proceeds from the sale of the church hall (development costs so far have come out of St Mary's Trust). Fiona North at the diocese is very supportive of our plans and she is willing to offer her expertise and guidance. Greenwoods are continuing to

explore grant funding opportunities – they have already secured funding for us for the archaeological and the bat survey. They also got us a grant from Historic England but this was used towards funding repairs in the church roof. The Parish Rooms team are also planning to resubmit an application to HS2 once they have all the information required, including proof that we own the church land. This is being actioned through Anthony Collins Solicitors (without fee), with the help of Richard Brooks.

Reporting and invoicing arrangements with Greenwoods

These have been discussed both at Standing Committee and PCC and the view has been taken that we need a greater clarity on the links between the monthly invoices that come through and Project Management work. This is being progressed.

If you have any questions or comments about the proposals please talk to a members of the Parish Meeting Rooms Team. They are

Sue Jones

Alan Toplis

Richard Brooks

David Lingwood

Revd Abbie Walsh

Sue Jones (Church Warden) and Veronica Morris (PCC Secretary)

Mothers Union May 2023

March was a busy month for M.U. culminating with a meditation prepared and led by Lesley and Barbara. Some of our members are flower arrangers and helped to decorate the church for Easter.



On 24th April there will be an in-house meeting in church when we will no doubt also make arrangements for the Deanery Festival. We will be holding a service for all the M.U. branch members in the Deanery on May 22nd and take it in turn to be the host group.

Looking further ahead to June 12th we will be meeting Marion Standing for a visit to the Herb garden at the Cathedral where we can learn more about the work she and her team are doing. Her recent talk certainly whetted our appetites to find out more.

Betty Lyne

Film Club

at St Michael's Church

FREE ADMISSION AND REFRESHMENTS

Doors open at 2pm

Elvis

(2022, 12A, 2h 39 Biography/Drama/Music)

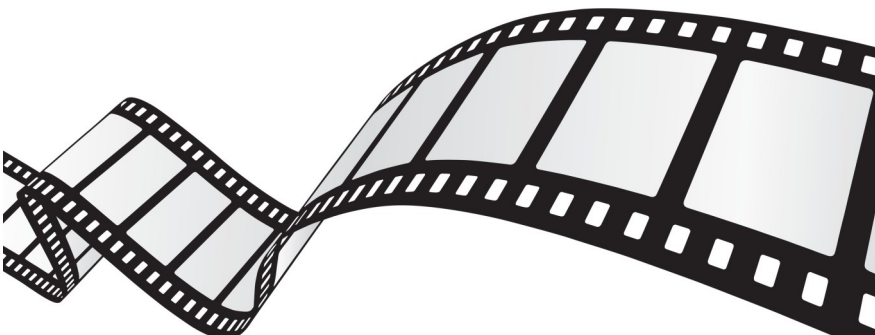
The life of American music icon Elvis Presley, from his childhood to becoming a rock and movie star in the 1950s while maintaining a complex relationship with his manager, Colonel Tom Parker.

Mon 15th May 2.30pm start

Tea/Coffee and Cake will be served

at the interval

All welcome.



Save the Date:

Next Film Club

5th June

TRAVELS WITH MY FATHER PART 3 – CAMBODIA
(WITH APOLOGIES TO JACK AND MICHAEL WHITEHALL)
BY TED GREEN

The first thing to remember about visiting Cambodia is to have 30 US dollars in cash available on entry for your tourist visa. It came as a shock to me, but my sons say that it's not unusual in SE Asia. And remember that it's going to be hot walking around those temples; even in the cooler months of October to December the temperature can still go over 30° C. We were there in late January and it was an unusually warm 33-35 degrees, which I found very difficult, although my son, Tim, was more comfortable after 13 years in Singapore.

We didn't have time for two stops in Cambodia and opted to stay in Siem Reap, the gateway to the vast Angkor temple plain. The city of Angkor Thom, and its predecessor, was the capital of the Khmer Empire from the 9th to 15th centuries when it was moved to the safer location of Phnom Penh. The Angkor temples are a confusing mixture of Hindu and Buddhist, with some temples being changed from one to the other. One of many disputed reasons for the end of the 'city and temple building era' is the conversion of the population to Theravada Buddhism in the 14th century, which made it harder for kings to have the vast numbers of servants and slaves needed to build and maintain massive structures.

Tim and I visited more than ten civic and religious buildings, but I'll confine my remarks to just a few. Our guide was Mr Vuon and he was delighted to hear that Tim and I were interested in history. Thereafter we were given the name and dates of the monarch responsible for every building we visited or drove by; many were called Suryavarman or Jayaraman and keeping track of their regnal numbers became impossible! We started at the East Gate of Angkor Thom (meaning Great City) built in the late 12th Century as a walled city in the form of a square with an area of about 9 sq. km. Its most famous temple is the

Bayon, which retains large areas of carvings that not only show battles and gods, but images of life at the time for ordinary people – a wonderful historical resource. It was originally Buddhist and over 1000 tiny Buddha images carved into the walls were changed to flora and fauna when it was converted to



Hinduism. Incidentally the Cambodian Buddha is much slimmer than the Chinese one that we are used to seeing in the West. The centre of the city contains a vast parade ground, with the Terrace of the Elephants situated close to the royal palace so that the king could review his troops and the columns of slaves taken after successful military campaigns.



Mr Vuon saved the best temple to the end – Angkor Wat. The temple complex, built in the 12th century, covers 400 acres, although much is open ground. It was built as a Hindu temple, unusually dedicated to Vishnu and not Shiva, but became Buddhist as time went on – even so there are many statues and images of Vishnu still visible. It is built in five zones, each becoming more holy as the centre of the temple is reached, and surrounded by a moat to represent the seas at the edge of the world.

It also reflects the idea of height to achieve holiness (Mount Meru was the Hindu mythological home of the gods) and I left the final climb up a very steep modern stairway to my much fitter son. Tim said that coming down was scarier than going up! I also left Tim and Mr Vuon to climb to the top of a temple on a hill to see the sunset.



I had always believed that the temples had disappeared into almost impenetrable jungle after Phnom Penh became the capital, but that was not so. Trees did grow in the ruins but they were always visible and well known to the local people. There are records of visits by Europeans, Chinese and Japanese before the French 'rediscovered' the area in 1863 and it is likely that Angkor Wat remained as a Buddhist shrine throughout the 'dark period'.

I'm ashamed to admit it, but the best bit of the Cambodia visit for me was a trip on the Tonlé Sap lake and river. It is part of the Mekong system, and in the rainy season the flooded Mekong forces the water backwards into the Tonlé Sap river, which then overflows the lake; raising the depth from about six to 45 feet and size from about 1000 to over 6,000 square miles. We started our boat trip about three miles up-river and passed villages on stilts about 40 feet high. Amongst them was a Christian Church, also on stilts, and I understood that many of the Christians in Cambodia are fishermen of Vietnamese descent. The riverside was lined with boats, some old, some new, which is part of a tradition of keeping boats until repair is impossible. It also points to the lack of tourists, but fishing kept the villagers in

work throughout the pandemic, with nearly 150 species of fish in the lake. Most of the boats we saw carried fishermen and not tourists. Once we got to the lake the villages were all built on rafts (nowadays old oil barrels) so that they can rise and fall with the water.



Our boat was crewed by two brothers, aged 11 and 10. They were absolutely confident and competent, probably having been in boats since before they could walk. We were amused to see that the younger one coveted his brother's status as captain and driver and was constantly trying to get behind the wheel. Mr Vuon told us that they had school in the morning and were free to work in the afternoon, but we had our doubts!

Thus finished ten wonderful and memorable days in Vietnam and Cambodia, something I never expected to enjoy at this time of life. Our experience of the few people we met was that they wanted to help and proudly show off their countries, and weren't solely after the tourist dollar. However it is well to remember that both countries are one-party states and low on the world lists for education, per capita income, corruption, modern slavery and human rights. Given their histories over the past 75 years it is amazing that the people are so resilient, and both countries have fast growing economies. It is to be hoped that further exposure to world infrastructure will improve the terrible statistics; the ordinary people deserve it, if not the governing classes.



WALKING GROUP :

Shenstone Village

Date: Saturday 20th May 2023

Start: 10.30 a.m.

Meeting point ; St John the Baptist Church **SHENSTONE** St Johns Hill
Shenstone, Lichfield Staffs WS14 0JB

For directions see the website St John the Baptist Church Shenstone.

Walk terrain Details; From the car park we visit The Old Church Tower which has recently been opened following extensive restoration. We then go down into the main street of the village to have coffee at the Community Library & Cafe. We then walk along the Lammass Land / The Little Holms a natural area maintained for the benefit of the village. This takes us to the Railway station and back to the Church car park.

Walking is on good pathways however in wet weather walking boots/shoes are recommended.

There are four public houses in the village that serve food for those wanting to stay longer for a meal.

Please inform the Parish Office if you plan to come on the walk so that we don't set off without you.

beneficewalkinggroup@gmail.com

01543 262211

Hilary Barker mob. 07714958559

email hilarymaybarker@gmail.com



GREENWAY PROJECT May 2023

*** **GOOD NEWS FOR THE CHURCH WALKING GROUP???**

Cllr. Doug Pullen the leader of the Lichfield District Council (LDC), has announced some exciting news about the proposed transformation of the disused railway line between Lichfield and Brownhills into a *Greenway*, for the enjoyment of families, walkers, cyclists, and nature enthusiasts.

Following some considerable time in negotiations and a £40K feasibility study by **Sustrans**, specialists in this area of community work,. and consultations between LDC and *Back the Track* (who have already successfully transformed the Brownhills to Pelsall section of this disused line in 2018) Their fantastic idea of opening up the entire track through to Darwin Park, Lichfield is now looking to become a reality.

The project aims to create a traffic-free route connecting Lichfield to Chasewater through a biodiverse Greenway which, it is envisaged, will provide families and the many local, and visiting, walking groups with the opportunity to enjoy outdoor activities in a safe environment well away from Lichfield's busy road network. The Greenway will have many positive environmental advantages, from increased biodiversity in providing a corridor in which local wildlife can thrive to a valuable habitat for the many types of native flora and fauna.

In addition, it will enable Lichfeldians, and our many visitors, to explore the natural beauty of the area with it's link to Chasewater, a local reservoir and Country Park.

The project has been a long time in the planning, but let's hope that with the involvement of two well-respected and proven organisations, work can be commenced, as planned, later in 2023 and that we'll soon be seeing many families and local groups enjoying the Greenway to the full.

Editor

SAINT MICHAEL'S CHURCHYARD

WORKING PARTY

We will be meeting on

Saturday May 13th.

from 10.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m.

**We will planting Summer Bedding Plants and other permanent plants
in the Church Tower Beds.**

**Refreshments (Tea/Coffee/Cake) will be provided during the Mid-
Morning Break**

For more information please contact

Ray Allen.

Email: lesley@existenz.org.uk

Telephone: 01543 251654

Tree Planting on Saturday March 25th.

A special event was held in the Churchyard on Saturday March 25th. Two years ago Ron Plimmer took 5 cuttings from the previous Johnson's willow situated next to Stowe Pool. The willow was eventually moved because of disease and a new one planted in its place. Ron carefully looked after the 5 willow cuttings, putting them first of all in water and then, when they had rooted, he planted them into their own individual pots. They grew well over the 2 years and were all planted by the Community Payback team. 2 representatives from the Johnson Society, John Winterton and his colleague Steve attended the event, which also included a photograph of the one of the trees being held next to the Johnson Family Memorial in the central aisle of the Church.



A Johnson Willow Tree by the Johnson Family Memorial in the centre aisle of the Church.

We are pleased to establish a link between our Church and Dr. Johnson. We very much hope the willow trees will thrive in the Churchyard for many years to come. John Winterton has produced a leaflet about Johnson's Willow. The original willow was planted around 1700. The latest willow, the fifth one, was planted on November 2nd., 2021. It is great to think that this willow is a descendant of the original willow frequently seen and enjoyed by Dr. Johnson over 300 years ago.



On the same morning a horse chestnut tree and an oak tree were planted, these 2 trees having been donated by 2 members of the Congregation, Betty Lyne and Lynn Rock.

Planting 1 of the Willow trees in the Churchyard.

Churchyard Nature Day.

On Saturday April 1st., we held our Churchyard Nature Day. Around 40 people came to hear herb talks followed by a herb walk led by Marion Standing and Val Lupton; and a lichen talk and walk led by Ivan Pedley. Val, a volunteer from Erasmus Darwin Herb Garden, gave a short summary of Darwin's life; and Marion explained the way in which she had established The St.



Val Lupton tells us about some of our Churchyard herbs.

Mary and St. Chad Herb Garden in Lichfield Cathedral Close. We were fortunate to have dry weather for the event, enabling Val to lead a Churchyard walk and give us some very interesting information about some of the wild herbs growing there, including foxglove, wild garlic, cow parsley and bramble. One particularly interesting point she made



was that all parts of wild garlic are edible. However, do not confuse this plant with lily of the valley as the leaves are very similar, but, unlike wild garlic, lily of the valley is poisonous. NEVER eat anything from the wild unless you are absolutely sure it is safe to do so. Back in Church Marion talked about the uses of herbs especially in medicine.

Marion Standing gave a very interesting talk in Church about the healing properties of herbs.

In the afternoon Ivan gave an excellent slide show. He explained the importance of clean air for the successful growth of lichens. It was pleasing to learn that there are 50 varieties of lichen in the Churchyard compared to only 17 when Ivan did his previous survey around 20 years ago.



Ivan Pedley pointed out some of the lichens that can be seen in the Churchyard.



We were pleased that a good number of children came to the Churchyard Day. Adult helpers guided them as they sowed sunflower and herb seeds in pots which they later took home.

Children's Activities: Seed Sowing in the Fellowship Corner.

***A PERFECT
PLACE FOR A
SUMMER
AFTERNOON
OUT WITH
FRIENDS &
FAMILY***



A much-loved favourite destination of mine for an interesting and enjoyable summer's afternoon outing with Family and friends is ***PACKWOOD HOUSE***, a short distance from Solihull, and a mere 25 miles from Lichfield.

First built around 1570 by the Featherston family and extended and restored over the centuries into the magnificent Tudor-style manor house we see today and now managed and maintained by the National Trust.

You will marvel at the many tapestries and items of furniture in the house, but watch your step, as centuries of wear and tear have taken their toll on the floorboards, on which teams of volunteers and conservationists spend their days working to preserve the rooms and their contents for future generations of visitors to enjoy.

After exploring the house take a pleasant walk through the splendid gardens and surrounding parkland, including the 13th. Century St. Giles Church. There are numerous, dog-friendly, walks ranging from "easy" to the more energetic 5-mile trail, taking in the large lake with its lively resident wildfowl population.

Following your pleasant walk around the estate you can relax in the Kitchen Garden Cafe with its varied menu, including Children's dishes,

adjacent to the gift shop. ***Allergen advice is available from the friendly and knowledgeable café assistants.*** Many of the dishes are prepared using ingredients from the House's own kitchen garden, a once neglected area, now restored, and recreated as it would have been in the 1700s.

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Editor


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Bishops: Easter message is one of hope in troubled world

Church of England bishops have highlighted the hope of the resurrection, as the world faces poverty, conflict and the climate change emergency, in a series of video and published messages ahead of Easter.

The Bishop of Lichfield Michael Ipgrave speaks of the example that Christ sets the world in leadership – the way of the cross, the way of service, humility and love.

“The resurrection of Jesus Christ, which his people joyfully celebrate at Easter, is the story of the vindication of one who exercised the greatest authority through the humblest of service,” he said.

“As such, it sets the best possible pattern for Charles our King at the outset of his reign. But it also speaks to all in our world and our society who are called to govern, to show leadership, to shape public opinion, to influence others.

“Too often our reality is otherwise: we see those in power trying to crush opposition, to silence dissent, or to attack those whose views differ from theirs.”

The Bishop of Rochester, Jonathan Gibbs, argues in his message that society could be at a “tipping point” where, amid multiple crises, people could again realise the need for faith.

Summing up the Easter story as one of apparent triumph followed by failure, opening the way for the resurrection, he explains: “As things stand in this country, it can feel as though faith is on the retreat, that the message of the crucified and risen Jesus is somehow irrelevant to the world of today, with its complex challenges, and its slick, hi-tech answers to its problems.

“But when we stop to think, we begin to realise that we human beings have not got things quite as sussed as we thought, with climate change and war and the refugee crisis and so many more issues

besides.

“Perhaps after all we are not as clever and as capable as we like to think. ... I think we are perhaps approaching a tipping point beyond which we will no longer be able to hide from the truth of what we have done to ourselves and the world in which we live.”

He adds: “Quite plainly, we human beings do not have the capacity to sort things out for ourselves. We need someone to come alongside us and save us from ourselves, someone who can offer us a new beginning and a better way.”

A number of bishops speak about seeing or hearing Jesus in others.

The Bishop of Chelmsford, Guli Francis-Dehqani reflects on the story of the road to Emmaus, where the risen Jesus is revealed to two disciples who do not at first recognise him. She draws parallels to modern Christians meeting with Christ “when we dwell in the Scriptures, meet with one another and break bread together.”

“Do we see him in the face of the person with whom we profoundly disagree, or the face of someone completely different to us?” she asks.

“The Christian journey is not one that we can undertake alone, but only with God and with one another.

“Through God’s grace, we are part of one body and each part of that body needs the other. It is together that we are sent out to love and serve the world, together that we build the kingdom of God, in the name of our risen Lord.”

In her message, **the Bishop of London, Sarah Mullally**, challenges people to listen for Jesus’s voice sometimes in unexpected places.

“This Eastertide may we hear Jesus’s voice in the clamour,” she says.

“May we listen for him in those who are unable to pay their bills; those who are relying heavily on food banks; those who find all talk of death and resurrection deeply painful as they struggle with bereavement and loss.

“And those who live in places of conflict and torture who feel that their hope and longing for a welcome elsewhere is diminishing.”

The Bishop of Dudley, Martin Gorick, reflects on the cost of living crisis and the climate emergency as well as the war in Ukraine.

"It's OK to admit to doubt, OK to say we are fearful and anxious, but these should never have the last word," he says.

"Afraid we may be, but filled with Joy!"

The Bishop of Dover, Rose Hudson-Wilkin, finds parallels between the sorrow of Mary weeping by the tomb of Jesus to the horrors of the war in Ukraine, including mass graves, and those affected by the earthquakes in Turkey and Syria.

"Lives snuffed out by Russia's cruel and unprovoked war; the entombed dead from fallen buildings in Ukraine caused by indiscriminate airstrikes and the entombed dead in Turkey and Syria following the devastating earthquakes."

For those who are not in the midst of war, she asks, what are the 'tombs' that they keep going back to, when they could instead look to the risen Christ: "Why are we so distressed? What are we looking for? Why are we looking for the living God in the place of the dead? He is risen, He is risen indeed. Alleluia!"

The Bishop of Truro, Philip Mounstephen, says in a video Easter message that the message of the resurrection showed the world that the "doors of heaven" had been "thrown open" and we are invited to into a "whole new way of being".

"The reason we celebrate Easter is that it's not just a change for Jesus. It's a change, potentially, for the whole world," he said.

"Up to that point death had had its own way. But at the point of resurrection all that stopped. Death was defeated.

"The doors of heaven have been thrown open and we're invited to step through them into a whole new way of being."

The Bishop of Leicester, Martyn Snow, and the **Bishop of Loughborough, Saju Muthalaly**, speak of how the story of the

resurrection shows that there is hope in seemingly impossible situations, citing the climate crisis, war and increasing poverty at home and around the world.

In a video message Bishop Martyn speaks about needing God's strength and the wisdom and the prayers and counsel of others in difficult situations.

“We found comfort in the resurrection story and how Jesus finds two disciples walking to Emmaus disciples who think the game is up, disciples who feel close to giving up and walks alongside them,” he says.

“In their despair he reveals himself in a new way in the breaking of bread and companionship on the road. This story invites us to look at the impossible situations from another perspective in the lights of the Resurrection.”

The Bishop of Worcester, John Inge, says that the hope of Jesus's resurrection can give people hope to confront the terrors of the situation in the Holy Land today, and others across the world, including Ukraine.

“As Christians we know that, through the resurrection, which we celebrate again this Easter, Christ is risen from the dead and that in doing so has conquered all that is evil, all that is painful and death itself,” he says.

The Bishop of Gloucester Rachel Treweek, encourages congregations to find time for quiet and stillness amid the noise and activity of Easter.

She says: “At the foot of the cross on Good Friday, may we pause to allow the noise of brokenness within us to be met by the mercy and grace of God; and on Saturday, when the world will be bustling, may we linger with the pain of loss and disappointment and recall Christ buried in the tomb, and his followers’ shattered dreams and hopes clamouring within them.

“Then, on Easter Day, may there be quiet space between the shouts of alleluias to hear Jesus speaking our name as we open ourselves again

to encounter in new and deeper ways the hope and life of the living Christ.”

The Bishop of Exeter Robert Atwell says in a video message that God is with us in the "muddle and murkiness" of life, including the dark times, sharing our pain with us.

“God doesn’t need the information to pay attention to the suffering in the world because God is already present in and with those who are suffering – in Ukraine, with those who are still homeless following the earthquake in Syria and Turkey, with the single mother, skimping on her own food this Easter to make sure her children have enough to eat,” he said.

“And here’s the grace. Once we have met Jesus Christ, crucified and risen, and embraced the mystery of his cross, then when sickness, betrayal, disappointment, failure and bereavement happen, we realise that God is not far from each of us.”

The Bishop of Durham, Paul Butler, said Jesus invites all of us to become his children and members of the family of God.

In a video Easter message, he said: “Jesus, the risen Jesus, creates a whole new family. He'd been doing that with his public ministry, and in the resurrection it becomes more obvious than ever.

“He invites all of us to become his children, members of the family of God, the household of God, and we’re to treat one another as family members in that household of God to love one another, care for one another.”

The Bishop of Carlisle, James Newcome, says that in the resurrection, he feels: “secure, in these turbulent and uncertain times, in the sure knowledge that God made me; loves me; and has a purpose for my life, not only here on earth but even – especially – after I’m dead. How do I know that? Quite simply because Jesus rose from death and promised that I will rise with him, and it’s with that future hope that

my present life is lived.”

The Bishop of Oxford, Steven Croft, draws on themes of forgiveness, saying that at Easter the whole world can share in the joy of transformation that forgiveness brings.

“Because of the resurrection of Jesus, everything changes,” he says.

“The Earth is filled with joy and new life. Men and women and children can share in that abundant life, and in eternal life we know that we can be forgiven and begin again.

“The church is not a community of perfect people; the church is a community of forgiven people who come to Jesus knowing our need of God and longing to be changed. That inner change and transformation is the real meaning of this Easter Day.”

In a video message recorded at Holy Island, off the north east coast, the **Bishop of Newcastle, Helen-Ann Hartley**, speaks of fossil hunting as a child on the island. Fossils are an ‘imprint’ of the animal that had been there, she says.

“In many ways I think that the resurrection is the imprint of Jesus on our lives and that is a wonderful thing to be celebrating this Eastertide,” she said.

She added: “Easter is that time in our lives when we relocate ourselves in the story of God.”

In her message, the **Bishop of Warrington, Bev Mason**, looks ahead to the resurrection.

“As Christians we’ll sometimes look to the butterfly emerging from the chrysalis as creation hinting of something of what the resurrection is like,” she said.

“Easter is a story of God overcoming the world and overcoming death itself and in doing so reveals that Jesus is the only true saviour of the world.”

MEMORIAL BOOK

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Weddings		
St Michael's	14th April	Sophie Sanders and Robert Bithell

Funerals		
St Michael's	4th April	Henry Teasdale

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Bible Readings

Sunday 7th May
5th Sunday of Easter
[White]
Acts 7.55-end
John 14.1-14

Sunday 14th May
6th Sunday of Easter
[White]
Acts 17.22-31
John 14.15-21

Thursday 18th May
Ascension Day
[White]
Acts 1.1-11
Luke 24.44-end

Sunday 21st May
7th Sunday of Easter
[White]
Acts 1.6-14
John 17.1-11

Sunday 21st May
7th Sunday of Easter
[White]
EVENSONG
2 Samuel 23.1-5
Ephesians 1.15-end

Sunday 28th May
Pentecost
[Red]
Acts 2.1-21
John 20.19-23

Sunday 4th June
Trinity Sunday
[White]
Isaiah 40.12-17, 27-end
Matthew 28.16-end

Sunday 11th June
Barnabas the Apostle
[Red]
Acts 11.19-end
John 15.12-17

St Michael's Rota – May 2023

Sunday 8.00 am	7 May	14 May	21 May	28 May
	Brian Smith	Brian Smith	David Bull	Brian Smith

Sunday 10.00 am	7 May	14 May	21 May	28 May
	Family Praise			Pentecost
Sidespersons	Viv and Stephen Oliver	Maureen Brand Brenda Liptrot	Judy and Mike Godfrey	Pat Toplis Enid Barry
Reader		Maureen Brand	Mike Godfrey	Angela Burgess
Servers		Kay Martin Elizabeth Salt	Kay Martin	Elizabeth Salt Elizabeth Allen
Communion Assistant		N/A	N/A	N/A
Intercessor		Elizabeth Salt	Ted Green	Trevor James
Coffee	Judy Godfrey Sonia Doidge	Elizabeth Allen Trish Jones	Angela Burgess Sylvia Burkinshaw	June Frayn Betty Lyne
Healing				TBA

Sunday 6.00 pm	7 May	14 May	21 May	28 May
	No service	No service	Evensong	No service
Sidesperson			Margaret Frean	
Reader			Margaret Frean	
Communion Assistant				

PROVERBS PRAYERS



Chapter 17.17

A friend loves at all times,
and kinsfolk are born to share adversity. (NRSVA)

A friend is there to help,
in any situation,
and relatives are born
to share our troubles. (CEV)

Friends love through all kinds of weather,
and families stick together in all kinds of trouble. (MSG)

~~~~~

### Chapter 17.9

You will keep your friends  
if you forgive them,  
but you will lose your friends  
if you keep talking about  
what they did wrong. (CEV)

<sup>9</sup> He that covereth a transgression seeketh love; but he that repeateth a matter separateth very friends. (KJV)

If you want people to like you, forgive them when they wrong you.  
Remembering wrongs can break up a friendship.

## Chapter 18:24

Some friends play at friendship

but a true friend sticks closer than one's nearest kin. (NRVSA)

One who has unreliable friends soon comes to ruin,

but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother. (NIV)

A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother. (KJV)

Some friends are fun to be with, but a true friend can be better than a brother. (ERV)

### Related Reading

**Old Testament**—Ecclesiastes 4:9–12

**Apocrypha**—The Book of Sirach Chapter 6 verses 5.17

**New Testament**—John Chapter 15

Dear Lord, thank you for the gift of friendship. Thank you for the people who walk life's path with me by choice rather than because of family duty. You've given mw friends I can count on. Thank you.

Jesus thank you for being a friend like no other. You always love me and are there when I need you. Jesus, show me how to be a good friend too.

God, help me to see you at work in the love and supporting actions of my friends. I ask this in Jesus' name.

*Angie King*

## And Finally

A heartfelt vote of thanks to Rev. Abbie and the Ministry Team for the wonderful programme of services and events in the run-up to Easter Sunday. Personally, the highlight was the Maundy Thursday “Bring Share Community Meal, followed by the moving Holy Communion service and Vigil, evoking the thoughts of Jesus and the disciple’s experiences in the Garden of Gethsemane on the night before Good Friday’s awful events.

Well done to all those willing hands who supplied and prepared the food, for the “Bring & Share Community Meal” catering admirably for our varied dietary needs and thoroughly enjoyed by all. The opportunity of catching up with friends was the order of the day and was grasped by many.

These events don’t “**Just happen**” they take a great deal of thought, planning and hard work in their preparation and eventual execution.

So, it’s a big **thank you** and well done to everyone involved for bringing our Church Community at St. Michaels together for the Holy season of Easter and beyond.

**Editor**

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