

THE PARISH MAGAZINE
October 2023

*There is neither Jew
nor Greek, there is
neither slave nor free,
there is no male and
female, for you are
all one in Christ Jesus.*

Galatians 3.28

**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 (SSM Part-time):</p> <p>The Revd. Ruth Bull</p> <p>01543 252123</p> <p>dkbrlcb@hotmail.com</p>
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<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>Tel: 01543 674474</p> <p>christine@reflectiongardens.org.uk</p>	<p>Assistant Minister (PTO)</p> <p>The Revd Brian Rostill</p> <p>Tel: 01543 254067</p> <p>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</p> <p>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

Where am I?

It's a quiz! Where can you find all these in one place –

Gordon Brown; Handbell Ringing Workshop; Laura Mvula; Angels; Catholic Mass; a Drag Queen called Barbara; Granny, Mum and Daughter doing AMAZING acrobatics (look up “Casting Off circus show”); Milton Jones; Festive Hat Making; John Bell; Julian of Norwich; Yoga; Messy Church at night; Yasmin Alibha- Brown; Life Drawing..... and, as they say, so much more! Including a presentation by a woman (deliberately not identified!), described by a friend as “either brilliant or bonkers”, with my response being “probably both!”

The answer is over the Bank Holiday Weekend at Greenbelt Festival, held in the grounds of the beautiful Boughton Hall estate near Kettering. You may not know some of the names mentioned, but Laura Mvula is a local girl become superstar, and you can always look the rest up. What you do get a sense of, even from this meagre list of all that was on offer, is the unimaginable diversity of “stuff” available. That's without a mention of the Sunday Eucharist with thousands of folk, from all denominations, faiths and none, gathered in worship.

Camping at Greenbelt, glamping, visiting for the day, the portaloos, possible torrential rain may not be your thing – though the family/ child friendly activities are amazing! But its aims, principles and values may be. So, if you can, go online to www.greenbelt.org.uk/talks and fill your boots. My highlight was Gordon Brown who was a complete revelation to me – an excellent communicator, warm, inspirational,

personable and passionate. Speaking about “A Country Where Poverty Does Not Exist” he explored the growing movement “Let’s End Poverty” – a coalition of individuals, charities, communities, faith groups, organisations putting difference aside to unite behind this urgent need. www.letsendpoverty.co.uk to see more. Remember “Make Poverty History” and its impact in cancelling debt? I was in Trafalgar Square with Revd Geraldine Grainger (aka Dawn French, Vicar of Dibley), and a large cohort of women priests.

Greenbelt began life in 1974, celebrating its 50th year this time. To illustrate the breadth, speakers have included Pussy Riot, Bob Geldof and Justin Welby. It began small and with a perhaps somewhat narrower outlook, and has constantly matured and evolved, into something I’d like to describe as unique, diverse, creative and where heaven is a place on earth (apart from the portaloos.....). In its early days issues of race or disability were hardly on the agenda, whereas now it is intentionally striving to be inclusive on every front, including issues of gender and neurodiversity.

Greenbelt describes itself as: *“firmly rooted within a Christian tradition which is world-affirming, politically and culturally engaged. Ours is a belief that embraces instead of excludes. And, as such, the festival is an inter-generational celebration, inclusive and accepting of all, regardless of ethnicity, sexuality, gender, background or belief. We stand for an inclusive and progressive Christian faith, which means we are committed to: transforming life for the common good, working for justice, challenging oppression, listening to those with no voice and standing with people on the margins.....*

These might sound like fine words, and indeed they fail to capture the incredible sense of the movement that is Greenbelt, because that is impossible to do with words. Which is why Greenbelt is this eclectic treasure chest of continually evolving art, music, poetry, debate, comedy, story telling, theatre, worship, circus, activism, life size pigeons, hula hoop shows and.....

And each of these unwrap (maybe not the pigeons or hula hoops), with so many layers of difference, yet held together in a place where all are worthy of respect. For example “Worship” could be - Goth Eucharist; Catholic Mass; Out@Greenbelt Eucharist; Devotional Dance; Taize; Quaker Meeting; The Sacred Energy of Trees....

Like me, your first reaction to one of these might be “not for me” or “just plain weird”. Then I remember, while we are *all* “fearfully and wonderfully made” in God’s sight, all of us (and all those “others”) are made just a bit weird in some way, and all loved and held by God.

Linda



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

3rd 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

1st October

10am St Michael's



First Steps

Monday 2nd October

10am—11.30am

Come and join us at our ...

MESSY CHURCH

for craft, story, song and food on

SUNDAY 8TH OCTOBER

4.30 – 5.45pm

in St Michael's Church

Ages 0-11 yrs. welcome



Deadlines!

For November Magazine: Deadline is

SUNDAY 8th October

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



THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

‘Parishes at the very heart of Church of England's mission’ – response to article in Sunday Telegraph

The short comment below was provided to *The Sunday Telegraph* ahead of an article which appears today on “parish closures”. The article omits almost the entire comment.

William Nye, the Church of England's Secretary General, said: “Local parish churches are at the very heart of the Church of England's mission and over the next nine years we are investing £3.6 billion of Church Commissioners funds in front-line ministry up and down the land, focussing particularly on those communities most in need.

“It is early days but we are seeing our efforts bear fruit - and local projects funded by the national church have already brought 27,000 new disciples into our congregations.

“Of course, churches do sometimes close - but the truth is that the number of closures is the lowest it has been for fifty years and we are starting new worshipping communities all the time. In fact, earlier this summer General Synod has formally committed the Church to revitalising our parishes.”

Closures

The number of consecrated churches closed has decreased in each of the last five decades. The figures, provided to the Sunday Telegraph but omitted, are as follows:

1969-1979: 760

1980-1989: 485

1990-1999: 274

2000-2009: 243

2010-2019: 209



Published 03/09/2023

FLOODLIGHTING

Sponsor St Michael's floodlights to mark a special occasion or remember a loved one! Your donation will brighten up the skies over Lichfield for the night.

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



INCLUSION WITH A BIAS

Sermon preached at St Michael's Lichfield, 10.9.2023

Readings: Ephesians 2.11-20; Mark 7.24-30

One of my favourite shows on TV is The Repair Shop where people bring in items of sentimental value which have been damaged or have seen better days. The other evening, two people came into the Shop. One was holding a small teddy bear. Its colour had faded, its dungarees were threadbare, and its stuffing had gone all wonky. 'Not worth bothering about', you'd think: but it clearly meant a lot to the one cradling it carefully. It turns out that the person concerned was a 'trans man', born a biological female but now in the process of transitioning. The teddy bear had been his life-long friend, accompanying him on his very challenging journey. What struck Helen and me was the apparent *normality* of it all. How natural it seemed that this 'trans man', in the company of his mother and his teddy, were included in the programme's line-up. And we wondered if this would have been possible say, a decade earlier.

In Western societies such as ours, 'inclusivity' has become a benchmark of what it means to be a liberal, tolerant, multi-racial community. More than ever before, attention and resources are given to individuals and groups who suffer injustice or who feel excluded.

So it's good for us to ask what it might mean to be a more inclusive *church*. What I want to say has two parts. First, I want to issue some health warnings. Second, I want to go back to our gospel story in search of Christian wisdom. Overall, I want to offer a vision of inclusion which, paradoxically, has a distinctive *bias*. It's a vision of inclusion shaped by our faith and life as Christians.

Here, then are some health warnings! First, we can't talk about 'inclusion' without asking what we really mean. The context is all-important. If we want to take being 'inclusive' seriously, it has to be more than a kind of fashion statement! It has to be more than accommodating to the cultural trends of the day.

Especially as Christians, we have to be aware of a too easy tendency to 'go with the cultural flow', when we should be asking: Does being inclusive *fit* with what it means to be a Christian?

Or, to put it another way: Was *Jesus* inclusive? ... and if so, *in what way*? Certainly, as we consider the gospels, there's plenty to say that Jesus *was* inclusive—but that he was inclusive in a particular way.

For example, *women* were among his followers and supporters, but they were not among the Twelve, the men chosen to symbolize the twelve tribes of Israel. What about Jesus and *Gentiles*? On a few occasions, Gentiles benefit from Jesus' healing ministry (as we shall see), but they're not his primary focus which is his own people, the Jews.

So Jesus' prophetic ministry had a distinct bias. He was inclusive in a particular way; and he was not reluctant to pronounce judgement, especially on those who spurned his message.

Second, being inclusive cannot be a matter of anything goes. Proper judgement is required. Appropriate distinctions have to be made. Boundaries may have to be re-drawn, but the need for boundaries will remain. Being inclusive does not mean that exclusions of certain kinds have no place.

Think of marriage. Marriage involves a restriction of love to *one* other. By its nature it is exclusive. It's a matter of 'forsaking all others', as the Marriage Liturgy says. So it's not necessarily the case that inclusion is 'good' and exclusion is 'bad'. Very often in life boundaries are necessary to avoid confusion and harm. Even more, boundaries *create space*: they make room for human flourishing.

Third, because talk about inclusion often involves talk about identity—about who I am or who we are—it's likely to stir deep emotions. A lot is at stake. Tell-tale here is the feeling that someone is treading on our metaphorical toes, or that our rights are being infringed, or that our basic values are under threat.

Think, for example, of the power of emotions like fear or disgust, often linked with ideas of contamination if the wrong kind of mixing is allowed. Jews in Nazi Germany were to be exterminated because, in the propaganda of the day, they were stigmatized as 'vermin'. In England, recall those signs on the front doors of boarding houses:

‘No Irish, no blacks’. These days, the equivalent might be: ‘No poor, no asylum-seekers’. In all this, our emotions often play a big part. So we need to ask, Are our fears justified?

Fourth, wisdom about inclusion and exclusion changes over time. That may be because of new knowledge. It may be because of developments in moral awareness. Take matters of *race and ethnicity*. Knowledge from the science of genetics has shown that we are all ethnically mixed; and knowledge from the history of colonialism and race relations has revealed how ideas of ethnic superiority and racial purity have been used to justify the annihilation of people viewed as social pollutants.

All this has helped us to see that discrimination and exclusion on racial grounds is immoral. And with that new insight, our ways of imagining the world can change. We can become *open to the other* in ways not possible before.

A fifth and final health warning has to do with our Christian inheritance. We cannot escape from the realization that it’s not just the religion of others, but our own as well, that has a checkered history when it comes to practising inclusivity.

In fact—and it’s a reflection which should make us truly humble—it’s often developments outside the Church which have made possible the greatest strides in inclusivity. I’m thinking of contributions to do with human rights, along with movements for overcoming discrimination and achieving justice in areas like race,

gender, and disability.

That's not to say, however, that there weren't what we might think of as 'seeds growing secretly' which came to flower in these movements of liberation. Some of those 'seeds growing secretly' have their origins in Judaism and Christianity.

That brings us to the second part of what I want to say, which has to do with *the faith of the Church*.

Consider *Jesus*. In Christian faith, Jesus is God incarnate, God in human flesh, God present in the world as the revelation of God's *all-inclusive love*. This is the story of salvation: and what's important is that the shape of the story has aspects both particular and universal. In the Old Testament, God brings blessing to all nations through *one* nation, Israel. And Israel exclusively, has a special calling: to be 'a light to the nations.' In the New Testament, Israel's role is fulfilled in *one* person, Jesus the Messiah. Now *Jesus* is 'the light of the world': for Jesus uniquely reveals God's all-inclusive love.

We see that in Jesus' teaching: 'People were bringing little children to [Jesus] in order that he might touch them; and the disciples spoke sternly to them. But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the children come to me; do not stop them, for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs' (Mk 10.13-14). See here how unconfined in Jesus' teaching is the scope of divine love! Little children *matter*!

But as well as Jesus' teaching, there is his work of healing. Our gospel reading of the story of the healing of the daughter of the Gentile woman from Syrophenicia, in Mark chapter 7 is a provocative example. It looks like Jesus is being hurtfully exclusive! 'He said to her, "Let the children be fed first, for it is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs"' (v.27)! Now, given that 'dogs' is a derogatory way of referring to Gentiles, why does he respond to the woman in such an apparently offensive manner?!

The answer has to do with what I said a moment ago about the particular and the universal: how the shape of the story of salvation is that blessing on all comes through the agency of a particular people or a particular person. That explains the notion of priority: 'Let the children [i.e. Israel] be fed *first*'.

So it's as if Jesus is making a point about how God works. God's love is *not love in general*: for that's not really love at all. Rather, it's love for a particular people—and a rather marginal, minority group at that! As in a marriage, it's love for *one*, the people of his choice, the people of Israel, which then radiates out through Israel to the nations.

For her part, the woman shows a kind of feisty humility, turning the canine metaphor to her advantage: 'Sir, even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs' (v.28). In so saying, she implicitly acknowledges the priority of Israel as God's elect: but at the same time, she pushes back: 'even the dogs eat the children's crumbs'!

Her response is rewarded: ‘For saying that, you may go [says Jesus] —the demon has left your daughter’ (v.29).

What this story suggests is something important. We usually think of a bias as something negative, a barrier or limitation. But here, the fact that God’s love has a bias seems to work to make God’s love more imaginative, more unpredictable, more astonishing!

The healing of the Gentile woman’s daughter is not the only Markan story which gestures towards the ultimate inclusion of Gentiles. In fact, the very next episode (Mk 7.31-37) is the healing of a deaf-mute in the Gentile region of the Decapolis. Even more remarkable is the fact that the person at the crucifixion who bears witness to Jesus’ true identity as ‘God’s Son’ is a *Gentile* centurion (15.39)! There could be no clearer hint that the good news of the gospel is for Gentiles as well as Jews—that it is for all, especially *for outsiders*, people like those described in our reading from Ephesians 2: ‘*aliens* from the commonwealth of Israel’ and ‘*strangers* to the covenants of promise’ (2.12).

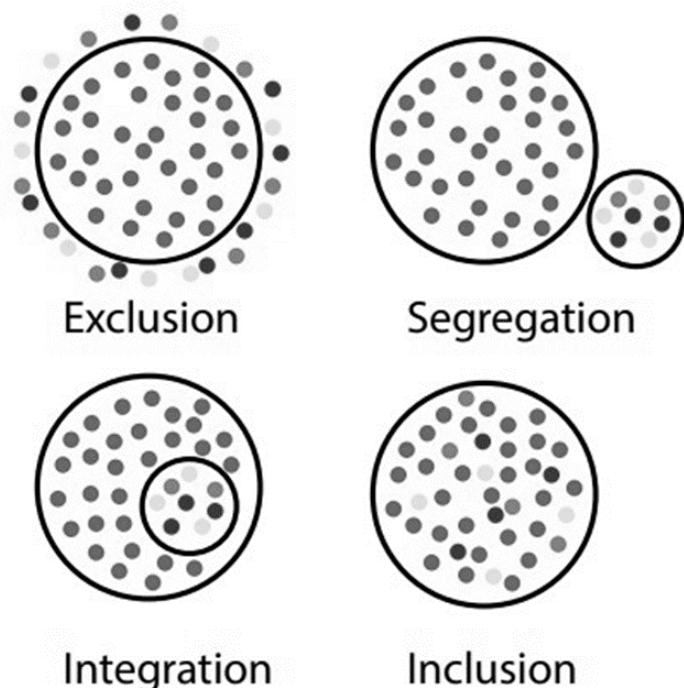
But—and this is my last point—how are outsiders brought in? The clue is in the centurion’s witness to the death of Jesus. Mark’s Gospel comes to a climax with the death and resurrection of the Messiah. The Ephesians reading speaks of Gentiles being ‘brought near by the blood of Christ’ (Eph 2.13). The amazing thing is that outsiders are brought in *because Jesus himself became an outsider*. By occupying that place of ultimate dereliction, by giving himself

over to death-dealing exclusion, and doing so as God's beloved Son, the place of dereliction and exclusion becomes, by God's grace, the place of homecoming, the place of acceptance—for all.

If the Christian Church has a contribution to make in the shaping of a more inclusive culture, it won't be primarily on the basis of liberal principles of justice, tolerance and equality, important as those principles are. Rather, it will be on the basis of what makes the Church the Church. It will be on the basis of the *particular* story of revelation, judgement and salvation which, by grace, makes us who we are, able to affirm that God is over all; that Christ died for all; that baptism is open to all who believe; and that people of faith from every tribe and nation are welcome at the table of our Lord.

So come to that table! You and I, whoever we are, by the grace of God, are included.

Stephen C. Barton



BIRDSONG IN OUR CHURCHYARDS

I was recently asked by a dog walker what was making that squawking noise when I was looking up to the sky during my lunchtime walk with Immy in St Michael's Churchyard. I was wondering the same, although I didn't hear it as squawking I heard it as a bird of prey that I didn't recognise.

So I set about finding out. First of all I turned to the RSPB website and listened to various recordings but I couldn't make my mind up which matched the sound I had heard earlier. Then I found an app that I could download to my phone. It records the sounds as they are happening and then matches them to birdsong in its database. This was much easier than trawling through the recordings on the RSPB website.

I tried it out in my garden and discovered that the various birdsongs that I knew belonged to blue tits and great tits (but couldn't have told you which were which) were identified and highlighted as they sang. After about 10 mins I could start to tell the difference without the aid of the app. Wonderful!

Next day, I took my phone (and Immy) for a walk around St Michael's. There was the 'squawking' again and the app told me that it was a Sparrowhawk.

Again, someone stopped and asked what I was looking up at. I explained and this time she spotted the Sparrowhawk but I didn't (too slow looking up from my phone, ironically). Together we decided that it was actually a pair of sparrowhawks calling to each other.

I am now using this app wherever I go for a walk and it has added a whole new layer to my enjoyment of walking.

On Wednesday 6th September I decided to take a longer, slower walk around St Michael's as it was quite warm and I didn't want Immy to scamper about as much. I spent almost half an hour recording the birdsong and the number of birds I heard staggered me.

- Robin
- Great Tit
- Blue Tit
- Coal Tit
- Wood-Pigeon
- Long-tailed tit
- Goldcrest
- Chiffchaff
- Wren
- Crow
- Treecreeper
- Blackbird
- Song Thrush
- Dunnock
- Magpie



The next day, I was at St John's, marking a grave for an interment of ashes, and I turned on the app again after I had finished. This time the list was smaller, but I only stayed for 5 minutes. At St John's I heard a Jackdaw, Magpie, Wood Pigeon and a Robin. I might have heard more if I had stayed longer, but I doubt the variety would have been as great as at St Michael's because the habitat is so different.

I can thoroughly recommend downloading a bird ID app to your smartphone if you have one. It really brings the soundscape alive.

Angie King

SAINT MICHAEL'S CHURCHYARD WORKING PARTY

We will be meeting on

Saturday 21st October
from 10.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m.

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

For more information please contact
Brenda Liptrot.
Email: brendaliptrot@outlook.com



WALKING GROUP

Cathedral Close and Beacon Park

Leader: Linda Gillion

Date: Saturday 21st October

Start: 10:30am

Meeting Point: Speakers Corner, Dam Street

Walk Details;

We will walk around to approach the Cathedral from the West End. We will then have a walk around The Close taking a look at the various buildings before walking to the Peace Garden in Beacon Park. From there we will walk to Bird Street to have lunch.

Lunch - to be agreed on the day when we finish at Bird Street.

I'd be grateful if you could let me know if you plan to come so that we don't set off without you.

Linda Gillion

beneficewalkinggroup@gmail.com

01543 262211



MACMILLAN. CANCER SUPPORT

Coffee Morning



Saturday 7th October

10.30am – 12noon

St Michael's Church



Have a coffee and cake



and donate to a great cause!

Film Club

at St Michael's Church

FREE ADMISSION AND REFRESHMENTS

Doors open at 2pm

Allelujah

(2022, 12A, 1h 39 Drama)

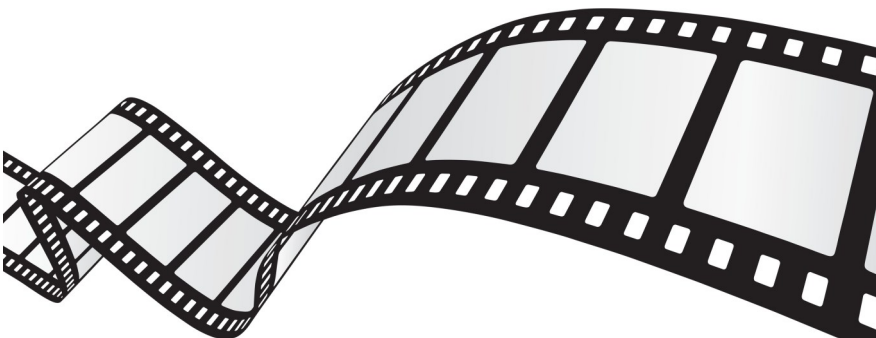
The story of a geriatric ward in a small Yorkshire hospital threatened with closure. .

Mon 2nd October 2.30pm start

Tea/Coffee and Cake will be served

at the interval

All welcome.



Save the Date:

Next Film Club

6th November



FILM CLUB

September 4th

The Lost King

We are all familiar with the phrase “rain stopped play” but “sunshine delayed events” is a new one. Arriving at church to watch the film “The Lost King” on a brilliantly sunny day it was a treat to sit in the cool building. Then as Ron prepared to show the film, we were aware of a dazzling shaft of light on the screen. It was moving slowly but we realised that it would take a while for it to disappear, so it was decided to start with the interval and enjoy tea and cake by which time the screen had cleared.

The Lost King was Richard the third, subject of many legends and rumours. Was he as wicked as many historians believed? Had Shakespeare told the truth? Was he really a hunchback? Philippa Langley, brilliantly portrayed by Sally Hawkins had never thought much about him until she saw Shakespeare’s play, but her interest was aroused, and she began attending lectures and reading everything she

could find about him. To say she became obsessed was not an overstatement, but she refused to be put off, continuing her research backed by a few (a very few) scholars and her frequent hunches. Lack of financial support and a deal of mockery from the University and local authority in Leicester did not put her off. The trail was long and complex, worthy of an Agatha Christie novel but eventually, on the site of the long demolished Greyfriars Priory, now a car park for the local authority a body was unearthed. D.N.A. testing proved that it was Richard and suddenly all the naysayers and mockers from the university and the local authority found money to continue the project and laid claim to the whole project.

Philippa seemed to have the grace to let them get on with their grandstanding. Her friends and the archaeologists knew who had done the work. She later was awarded an MBE. A splendid, belated funeral in Leicester Cathedral, worthy of a king.

Throughout the film King Richard made frequent appearances, wordlessly inspiring her. This, alongside details of her family relationships were probably invented for the film. No matter, it was a thoroughly absorbing film.

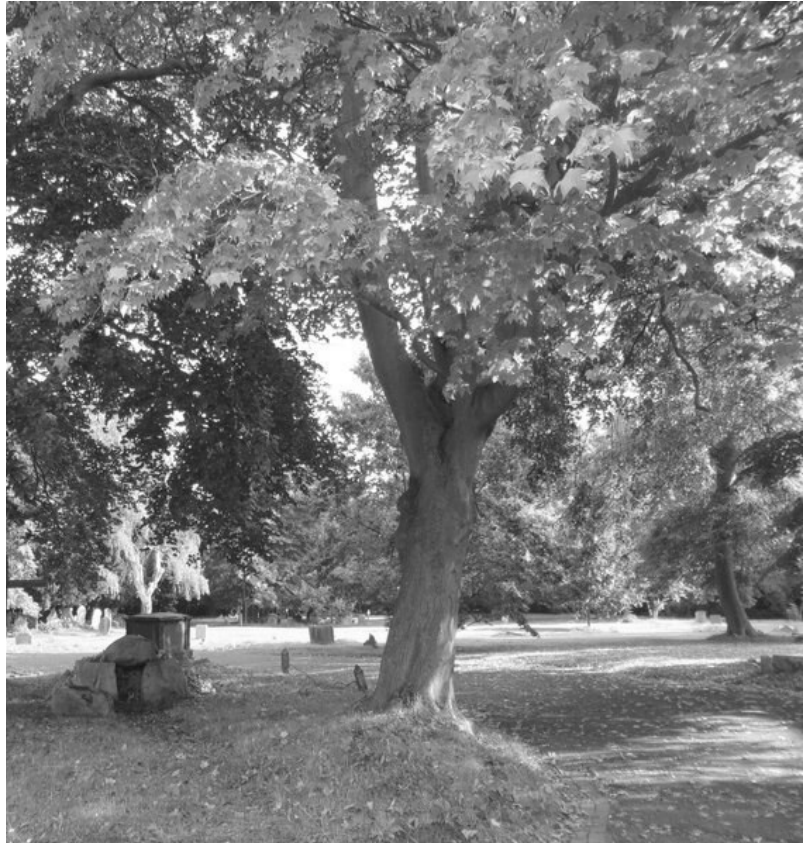
Betty Lyne

LARGE COPIES of the magazine are
available on request

ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCHYARD IN THE AUTUMN

The Churchyard is beautiful at all times of the year but especially when we see the lovely colours of Autumn. Here is a selection of photos for the Autumn months of September, October and November.

They are all from the archive on the Church website and they were taken by Maureen Brand.

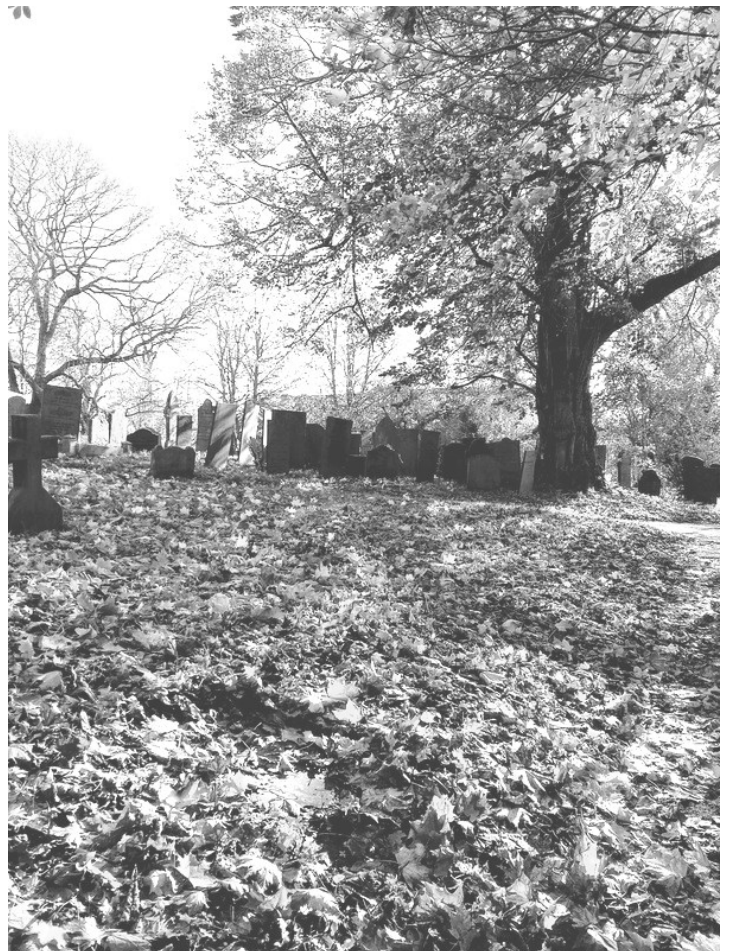


Tree leaves turn into fabulous reds, oranges and golds.



We have lots of fungi in the Autumn. Join us for a Fungus Foray, organised by Lichfield Wildlife Group, on Saturday October 28th. at 2.00 p.m.

The display continues into November which can often be the most colourful Autumn month of all.



Alison Staines 1963-2023: A Tribute.

Alison was a much-loved and active member of St. Michael's. She represented the school on the PCC, organised the Christingles for many years, and was a great supporter of Messy Church, amongst other things. The tribute below is taken from the words Tony, Alex and Amy spoke at her funeral.

Tony

Alison was born in Sale, Greater Manchester where she lived with Mum, Jean, Dad, Geoff and Sister, Ann. They subsequently moved to Timperley with Alison attending Withington School for Girls. Alison had at one point wanted felt she wanted to play football but Jean wasn't happy with this as a career prospect. She did well at Withington and after getting good A-levels was the first in her family to go to University.

I met Alison some 40 years ago and whilst we had noticed each other about the Halls of Residence at Birmingham University we had never actually spoken. She was attractive, intelligent, had a good sense of humour and very large glasses, of Deidre Barlow ilk. I was never quite sure what she made of our first evening out, but over the coming months we became good friends and started to go out together

After University, Ali joined NatWest as a graduate management trainee, working up in Wigan and St Helens, where she made many good friends.

We married at Timperley Parish Church in the spring of 1989. Alison was radiant. We settled into married life and started to enjoy all of the benefits. It was great to have Alison as my wife, there was no yours and mine everything was ours; it was a partnership of equals.

She did a number of roles at NatWest including small business advisor, productivity analyst, manager of the training and development team for the West Midlands and Wales before finally ending up as an HR

consultant supporting the West Midlands region. Whatever her role Alison always gave it 100% with a smile on her face, she enjoyed being with people and liked nothing more than a good project.

In 1995 we welcomed Alex into the world followed 2 years later by Amy. Without a doubt Alex and Amy are Alison's greatest achievement, they provided us with lots of laughs and tears over the years, and she was incredibly proud of the two rounded adults they have become. They have inherited many of her attributes and like me they will miss her greatly.

Alex

I think mum very quickly realised that even she couldn't manage a full time job as well as two young children under the age of 3, so in 2000 she went part time. Unfortunately for me, this also gave mum the time to take up the Chair of Governors position at St. Michaels, where all aspects of my progress, good or otherwise, came to her attention...

Following redundancy in 2007, mum made the decision to take a step back and retrain as a teaching assistant. For me this exemplifies mum as a human being and I think it was at this point she found her true calling in life which was to help others; whether it be the food bank, primary students, the church, St. Michael's governors, her friends and family, she really was here for us all. Me and my sister will always be grateful for the amount of time mum spent ferrying us and our mates to various sports practices and matches, music lessons and exams, band practices.

I think it's important to talk about mum's illness and her unwavering perseverance and determination throughout. I remember vividly the day Dad and Mum walked through the door in 2012 and told me and my sister that mum had cancer, I felt numb. Fortunately it was not her time and a week before my 18th birthday we were told that the treatment had worked, it was the best birthday present I could have asked for.

I'm incredibly grateful for the 10 years that followed as we were lucky enough to have some amazing family trips to places such as New York, Portugal, Spain and the west coast of America to name a few. In a weird kind of way I'm thankful for mum's illness in 2012 as it gave us the kick up the backside we needed not to take any days for granted and to do the things we had always put off.

My mum was amazing and I'm immensely proud to be able to call her that. She was one of the kindest, most selfless people I know and her ability to remain positive even when the cards were stacked against her was inspirational. Mum, as I said to you on that final evening, we love you so much, we'll miss you so much and we'll make sure that everyone knows what an amazing woman you were.

Amy

I thought I'd talk a little about some of the other things mum spent her time doing, because she did so much in between the milestones and achievements that you've already heard about.

Before Dad retired, lots of mum's time was spent looking after our lovely dog, Chester. Mum was always a dog lover, having grown up with Jasper and Tizzie, but she still had sleepless nights about getting our own dog. But we committed, and brought him home in the summer of 2010. We chose a border terrier because, naturally, it had to be a breed that didn't moult. Taking Chester out for a walk was always a highlight of Mum's day (as long as it wasn't raining!). Mum adored Chester, and of course Chester adored mum, barely leaving her side over her final days.

Mum also spent lots of time looking after our lovely family home on Lawrence Way. It was in our home that mum taught us so much...how to clean a bathroom to her own high standards, how to master the wiping round and of course, how to cook. But believe it or not, her speciality was definitely the cauliflower cheese that went on our Sunday roast dinner. No one else could do it quite like her. Mum spent years teaching me how to make a perfect cheese sauce and I will take

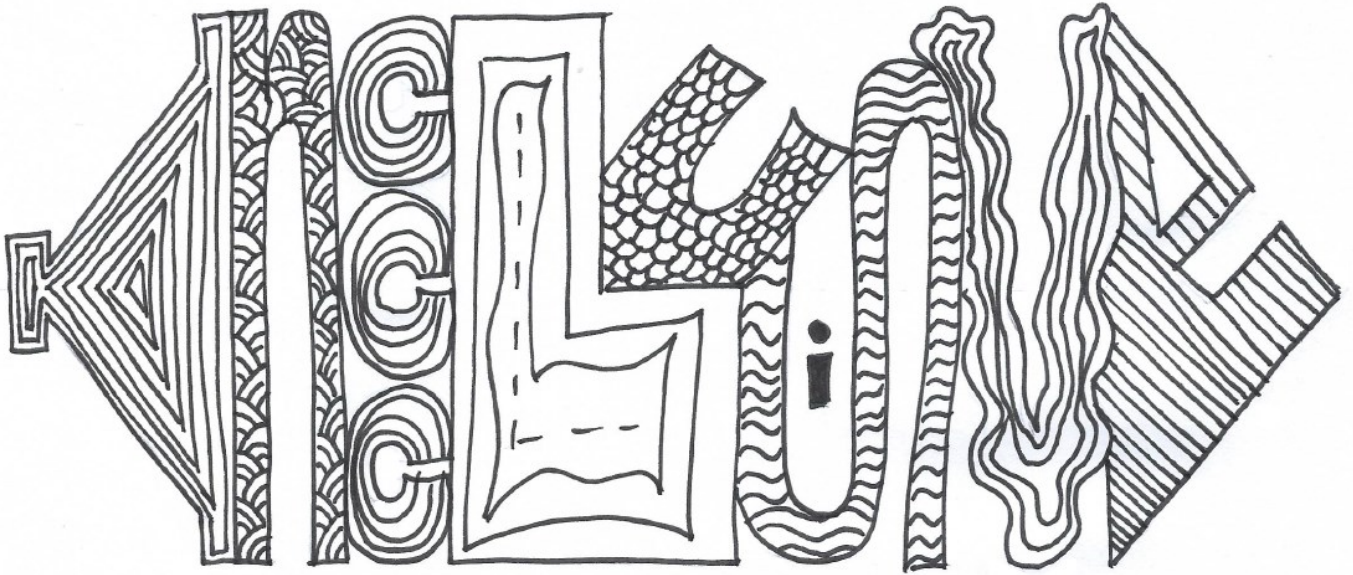
this duty very seriously going forwards.

Mum was my first port of call in a crisis and the first person I wanted to tell when things had gone well! The first to know my degree result, the first to get a photo of the new house, the first person I called when Isaac asked me out! Even just chatting about the day or debriefing on our favourite trash TV. No matter what she was going through herself, mum was always there to celebrate the highs, provide support during the lows and everything in between. And I know I'm not the only one she did that for...Mum always had time for others and was always right there when you needed her.

Finally, I want to talk about the fact that mum loved her music. Music brought her joy throughout her life and peace in the hardest times. A lot of my core memories are tied to songs that mum and I listened to together. Her 'Power Ballads' Spotify playlist was our go to whilst doing the washing up...she'd wash, I'd dry and we'd sing our hearts out and dance around the kitchen

Whilst mum achieved so much and we did so many amazing things together, it is arguably the little things that we'll miss the most. Washing up after dinner and belting our hearts out to Whitney, sitting down for a Sunday Roast together, walking the dog around Darnford Park, evenings in watching tele, daily facetimes sharing any notable gossip. It breaks my heart to think we won't have those times with mum again, but it warms my heart thinking of the memories we share.

So mum, thank you for all that you have taught us. Thank you for your advice and your listening ear. Thank you for singing your heart out with us. Thank you for making us laugh until we cry. Thank you for loving us so deeply. Thank you for always protecting us and keeping us warm. Thank you for being the most incredible mum and the best friend anyone could wish for. Thank you in advance for always sitting on our shoulders, guiding us and being in our hearts every single day. We will always set you a place at the table. We couldn't love you more and we'll miss you forever. God bless.



PROVERBS PRAYERS

Chapter 9 verses 1-6

Lady Wisdom has built and furnished her home;
it's supported by seven hewn timbers.

The banquet meal is ready to be served: lamb roasted,
wine poured out, table set with silver and flowers.

Having dismissed her serving maids,

Lady Wisdom goes to town, stands in a prominent place,
and **invites everyone** within sound of her voice:

“Are you confused about life, don't know what's going on?

Come with me, oh come, have dinner with me!

I've prepared a wonderful spread—fresh-baked bread,
roast lamb, carefully selected wines.

Leave your impoverished confusion and *live!*

Walk up the street to a life with meaning.”

The Message

- ¹ Wisdom has built her house.
She has carved out her seven pillars.
- ² She has prepared her meat.
She has mixed her wine.
She has also set her table.
- ³ She has sent out her maidens.
She cries from the highest places of the city:
- ⁴ "Whoever is simple, let him turn in here!"
As for him who is void of understanding,
she says to him,
- ⁵ "Come, eat some of my bread,
Drink some of the wine which I have mixed!
- ⁶ Leave your simple ways, and live.
Walk in the way of understanding."

*In this context simple means a person who is in the early stages of growing towards **spiritual** maturity*

World English Bible

Loving creator of all people. thank you for your unfailing love and forgiveness, accepting me as I am. Help me to accept all those around me as you do. I know that the world is full of a wide variety of people but that through faith in Christ we all have the right to come to you God, in one Spirit. We can all be one body, fully part of and belonging to the whole.

Jesus, help me to show the same loving kindness to those around me that you did. Help me to cast aside feelings of fear, anxiety, uneasiness, loathing, dislike or hatred when meeting people who are unlike me. I know that you died to bring us all to God and that in you we are all one. Help me to act on this knowledge at all times and in all places.

Holy Spirit, remind me that the most significant thing I can do in this life is simply to love God and to choose to love others.

I ask this in Jesus' name.

Angie King



Staffordshire
Wildlife Trust

**LICHFIELD
WILDLIFE GROUP**



A talk by Graham Evans

Tuesday 7 November 7:45 p.m.

Wade Street Church

Frog Lane, Lichfield WS13 6HL

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

Contact (01543) 257812



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Staffordshire
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**LICHFIELD
WILDLIFE GROUP**



Fungal Foray

led by Beverly Rhodes

Saturday 28 October 2:00 p.m.

Saint Michael's Churchyard

Church Street, Lichfield WS13 6ED

Admission: £3.00 (under-16s free)

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 the pages are turned twice a week, so that names are visible through the glass on the date of their death. It costs £10 to insert a name.

Please complete this form and return it to

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

✉ office@stmichaelmaryjohn.org.uk

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

Date of Death:

Age at Death:

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

Telephone Number:

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

If you wish to pay by bank transfer the details are

Bank: Lloyds

Sort Code: 30 95 04

Account Number: 00114488

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

From the Registers

Baptisms		

Weddings		
St Michael's	8th September	Chelsea Partridge and Christopher Baldwin

Funerals		
St Michael's	21st August	Alison Staines
St John's	11th September	Josephine Hartley (interment of ashes)



Bible Readings

Sunday 1st October

HARVEST

17th Sunday after Trinity

[Green]

Deuteronomy 28.1-14

Luke 17.11-19

Sunday 8th October

18th Sunday after Trinity

[Green]

Isaiah 5.1-7

Matthew 21.33-end

Sunday 15th October

Luke the Evangelist

[Red]

Isaiah 35.3-6

Luke 10.1-9

Sunday 15th October

EVENSONG

Luke the Evangelist

[Red]

Isaiah 61.1-6

Colossians 4.7-end

Sunday 22nd October

20th Sunday after Trinity

[Green]

1 Thessalonians 1.1-10

Matthew 22.15-22

Sunday 29th October

Last Sunday after Trinity

[Green]

Leviticus 19.1-2,15-18

Matthew 22.34-end

Sunday 5th November

All Saints Day

[White]

Revelation 7.9-end

Matthew 5.1-12

Sunday 12th November

Remembrance Sunday

[Red]

Amos 5.18-24

Matthew 25.1-13



St Michael's Rota – October 2023

Sunday 8.00 am	1 October	8 October	15 October	22 October	29 October
Sidesperson	David Bull	Brian Smith	Brian Smith	Brian Smith	David Bull

Sunday 10.00 am	1 October Family Praise Harvest	8 October	15 October	22 October	29 October
Sidespersons	Judy and Mike Godfrey	Pat Toplis Maureen Brand	Enid Barry Mike Jones	Viv and Stephen Oliver	Ted Green Audrey Dudley
Reader		Maureen Brand		Nigel Oakley	Angela Burgess
Servers		Kay Martin Elizabeth Salt	Kay Martin	Kay Martin Elizabeth Allen	Kay Martin Elizabeth Salt
Intercessor		Elizabeth Salt		Trevor James	Ted Green
Coffee	Sonia Doidge Lesley Allen	June Frayn Betty Lyne	Elizabeth Allen Trish Jones	Judy Godfrey Brenda Eley	Anne Watson Angela Burgess
Healing				TBA	

Sunday 6.00 pm	1 October	8 October	15 October Evensong	22 October	29 October
Sidesperson			Ray Allen		
Reader			Margaret Freaan		

And Finally

This month takes the form of an abject apology for my Brainteaser (Ramble Scramble) in last month's magazine which I am reliably informed was WRONG!! I can only apologise for making such a pig's ear of it. I put it down to a serious bang on the head (requiring hospitalisation) which I sustained recently, and to that end here is a revised (correct) list of the Scrambled items to test your brain once again!!


- | | | |
|--------------------|-------------|-----------|
| 1. SLEKAFTAFO | ----- -- -- | (5, 2, 3) |
| 2. RATNIDNSASHEI | ----- | (4,9) |
| 3. ITNNSAELCLTERPE | ----- | (6,9) |
| 4. SGRNGIBCITUESI | ----- | (6,8) |
| 5. TWLOHYLOA | ----- -- | (6,3) |
| 6. OHCNOP | ----- | (6) |
| 7. LEWTRBTEOTA | ----- | (5,6) |
| 8. NARSUMEC | --- ----- | (3, 5) |

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