

THE PARISH MAGAZINE

December 2023

*For God so loved the
world that he gave his
only Son, so that
everyone who believes
in him may not
perish but may have
eternal life.*

John 3.16

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

£1

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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

It's that time again! Christmas is coming, the Goose is getting fat...

This December through the season of Advent we will do lots of preparing, and hopefully a bit of pausing and praying as well, as we think about the world's need for Jesus – and once again, there is so much need. And then we will once again together look into the manger and see the baby Jesus there.



I think Christmas is the closest that God gets to explaining to us the mystery of life, the universe and everything. In Jesus, we can see what it really means to be God, and we can see what it really means to be human. At the heart of what it is to be God is to be wrapped up in humanity, and at the heart of what it is to be human is to be wrapped up in God. And that, if you like, is our Christmas present. God doesn't force us to love him, he invites us to welcome him into our lives like we would welcome a child into our arms.

Just as in the Christ child we see a glimpse of what God is all about, I hope that through our community this year we will see a glimpse of what being a Christian is all about. I think just as God's glory is revealed by a baby born to poor parents, not even indoors, so it is revealed by shared cups of coffee and mince pies, a hug between friends, all the preparations that go unseen – the cleaning, printing, restocking and delivering. It's revealed by a cake delivered to someone who needs to know they're loved this Christmas, by hymns sung loudly together and prayers prayed quietly alone. We can see it in donations to charity, presents bought thoughtfully for friends and family or just a knock on the door and a kind word.



In God's kingdom everything is upside down. The birth of a tiny baby saved us all. Weakness is strength. Small acts of kindness have great power. God uses all we do together to build up his kingdom and with him nothing is wasted.

Together may we have a blessed advent and a happy Christmas – I look forward to spending it with you.

Revd Abbie Walsh

SAFEGUARDING

DIOCESE OF LICHFIELD Working with children and adults at risk

Safeguarding Good Practice Guidelines in Lichfield Diocese

What to do if...

You have concerns about possible abuse (including allegations):

1. In an emergency, respond immediately.
2. Consult the person to whom you are responsible.
3. Decide together whether to seek advice or to make an immediate referral.
4. Keep a record of what happened, your concerns and your actions.
5. Tell your minister and/or safeguarding co-ordinator.
6. Only tell others who need to know.

A child, young person or adult wishes to disclose they have been abused:

1. Listen. Keep listening. Do not question or investigate. Do not promise confidentiality; tell them we need to share this. Assure them they are not to blame.
2. Tell them what you are going to do and that they will be told what happens.
3. Make careful notes of what is said, record dates, times, events and when you are told.
4. Report it to the person to whom you are responsible and your minister or safeguarding co-ordinator.
5. Only tell those who need to know.
6. If a child is in imminent danger report to the Police or Social Services.

Things to remember...

- Treat everyone with respect, setting a positive example for others.
- Respect personal space and privacy.
- Ensure another adult is present or within sight or hearing of any activity.
- Ensure any actions cannot be misinterpreted by someone else.
- Challenge unacceptable behaviour.
- Do not put anyone, including yourself, in a vulnerable or compromising situation.
- Do not have inappropriate physical or verbal contact with others.
- You must not keep allegations or suspected abuse secret.

Useful contacts

NSPCC
0800 800 5000, www.nspcc.org.uk

Stop It Now
0800 1000 900, www.stopitnow.org.uk

Childline
0800 1111

Minister and Clergy Sexual Abuse Survivors
0800 010340, www.macsas.org.uk

Thirty One Eight (formerly ECOS)
PO Box 133, Swanley, Kent BR8 7UQ
0303 003 11 11, www.thirtyoneeight.org

Domestic Violence Support Refuge/Women's Aid
www.womensaid.org.uk
helpline@womensaid.org.uk

Samaritans
Counselling for those in despair or suicidal
116123, jo@samaritans.org

Victim Support
0800 168 5293, www.victimsupport.org.uk

NAPAC – National Assoc. for People Abused in Childhood
0800 801 0331, www.napac.org.uk

National Domestic Violence Helpline
0800 2000 247

Elder Abuse Helpline
0800 8008 8141

Family Lives Helpline
0800 800 2222

RESPECT Men's Advice Line
0800 801 0327

If you need to contact your local Children's Services Safeguarding team please check your local authority website.

Resources

Promoting a Safer Church (CHP 2017)
The Parish Safeguarding Handbook (CHP 2018)

Your church's safeguarding co-ordinator:

Name: MAUREEN BRAND
Tel: 01543 264850

www.lichfield.anglican.org/safeguarding

Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers

Neil Spring
Head of Diocesan Safeguarding
Reg Social Worker (SWE 39995)
T: 01543 306147
E: neil.spring@lichfield.anglican.org

Peter Hurd
Assistant Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser
Registered Social Worker (SWE 113321)
T: 01543 221105
E: peter.hurd@lichfield.anglican.org

Kim Hodgkins
Diocesan Safeguarding Officer
T: 01543 306099
E: kim.hodgkins@lichfield.anglican.org

There is a new Safeguarding poster. It sets out what to do if you have concerns about possible abuse and the things to remember, with useful contact numbers.

At St Michael's you can find it in the porch.

At St John's you can find it displayed on your left as you enter through the inner glass doors.

Maureen Brand

SPECIAL SERVICES at St Michael's

ADVENT

Sunday 3rd December

10.00am Advent Family Praise (Toy Service) led by children from St Michael's school

Sunday 3rd December

6:00pm Advent Carol Service

Monday 4th December

10.00am Advent First steps

Wednesday 6th December

6:30pm Memorial Carol Service

(For those finding Christmas difficult this year)

Sunday 10th December

4:30pm Advent Messy Church

CHRISTMAS

Sunday 17th December

6:00pm Lessons and Carols with collection for Angel Tree

Sunday 24th December

10.00am SEE SPECIAL SERVICE AT ST CHAD'S

4:00pm Christingle Service with collection for the Children's Society

6:00pm Christingle Service with collection for the Children's Society

11:15pm Midnight Holy Communion - *special joint service for St Michael's and St Chad's congregations at St Michael's church*

Monday 25th December

8:00am BCP Holy Communion

10:00am Holy Communion with Christmas Carols

EPIPHANY

Sunday 7th January

10.00am Epiphany Family Praise

Sunday 21st January

6.00pm Epiphany Carol Service

SPECIAL SERVICES at St. John's Wall

Friday 22nd December

5.00pm Carols and Christingles
with collection for the Children's Society

Sunday 24th December

10.00am Christmas Carols and Holy Communion

Sunday 7th January

10.00am Epiphany Holy Communion

SPECIAL SERVICE at St. Chad's Lichfield

Sunday 24th December

10.00am Holy Communion

*Special joint service for St Michael's and St Chad's
congregations at St Chad's Church.*

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

3rd December

10am St Michael's



First Steps

Monday 4th December

10am—11.30am

Come and join us at our ...

MESSY CHURCH

for craft, story, song and food on

SUNDAY 10TH DECEMBER

4.30 – 5.45pm

in St Michael's Church

Ages 0-11 yrs. welcome



Deadlines!

For January 2024 Magazine: Deadline is

SUNDAY 3rd December

Please send articles to the Parish Office
office@stmichaelmaryjohn.org.uk

Pew Sheet:
every Thursday
7:30am
Contact
Parish Office

MAGAZINE SUBSCRIPTIONS 2024

Thank you all for subscribing to the magazine in 2023.

For 2024 the subscription is held at the special price of £10 for the year (£1 per copy for non-subscribers). Subscriptions will be collected from December onwards and we would like all subscriptions paid, please, by **Monday, 8th January 2024**. Please try to **avoid paying by cheque**, as we have to pay a significant banking charge.

May I ask you, please, to **pay via your distributor** who will come to collect the money from you. With the December magazine, you will receive an envelope with your name, address and name of your distributor. Please put your subscription into this envelope and hand it back to your distributor when asked.

For those few subscribers who collect their magazine from church, you, too, will get a personalised envelope. Please use this for your subscription and place on the collection plate at the back of church.

For those subscribers who worship at St John's, please use your personalised envelope and hand to Paul Wright, treasurer.

We welcome new subscribers. Please contact me, if you would like to subscribe.

Steve Oliver

GREETINGS FROM EASINGWOLD

Wishing all my United Benefice friends a very happy, peaceful Christmas and a healthy and prosperous New Year.

AND.....

Don't forget to pay your magazine subscriptions on time!!!

Good luck, Steve.

With all good wishes,

Liz Clarke

Notes from the music department at St Michael's

We are pleased to report that the music department is going from strength to strength at St Michael's, at a time when many other musical and choir activities have sadly struggled to return post-pandemic.

Music Group

The music group plays for Family Praise on the first Sunday of each



month. We currently have Sheila on flute, Leo, Richard and Brigid on Violin, Peter on bass, Matt or Thomas on Drums, Ruth, Sophie and Jenny on cello, Steve on clarinet, Cynyr on Euphonium, Jo or Claire occasionally guest starring on guitar and last, but not least, Dudley on piano. We always welcome new players – realistically it would be helpful to be grade 2/3 or equivalent in order to sight read some of the last minute alterations or additions to the service. We rehearse on the last Friday of the month, with a trip to a local hostelry

afterwards (for the adults!) for sustenance and socialising! If there are any children or grandchildren who wish to join, please contact Richard for more information. It is important for children who are learning an instrument to gain the skill of playing with others, and means they are much more likely to continue playing in general.

The Music Group is supported by the adult choir – which can lead unaccompanied singing or can support the congregation with less well known hymns and songs.

Junior choir

The junior choir is just starting its musical journey. Every Wednesday evening, just after homework club has finished, around 25 members of junior choir descend on church, making a joyful sound. The Church has worked together very effectively with St Michael's school to recruit the majority of the junior choir - which includes 5 boys contrasting with the previous "girls' choir". The choir now attracts children from a number of primary schools and King Edwards.

The junior choir has made a good start learning its repertoire – and has just made its wedding debut, supporting a happy couple getting married at St Chad's to great acclaim. Normally, the junior choir will be singing at the third Sunday of the month which is the Family Communion service. It was delightful to see nine children singing at the October service, and we were equally delighted to welcome many of their parents. If you have children or grandchildren who are aged 7-18 who want to sing in the choir, please do contact Dudley who would be only too pleased to hear from you.

Much hard work goes on behind the scenes to run the junior choir. We are blessed with a wide range of helpers, including music leads (Dudley, Joe, Sophie, Peter and Brigid) along with our food and beverage coordinator (!) (Harriet) together with several teenage helpers. Safeguarding is a top priority, with all leaders being DBS checked – and helpfully at least 3 are teachers, making the safeguarding requirements less daunting than they otherwise would seem.



Adult and evensong choir

The adult choir has been the mainstay of singing for services for the last five years and its members' dedication and service are greatly appreciated. The choir practises on Wednesdays and we are starting to explore recruitment. The adult choir is to cover all main services with an evensong choir focussing on the different repertoire needed to support choral evensong with psalms and the beautiful sung liturgy. If you would like to join the adult choir, do contact Dudley.

Generally

All of the music department is dedicated to helping the ministers and congregation glorify God by supporting musicality within our services. It would be remiss not to mention the hard work of Dudley Ray, our director of music, who always goes above and beyond to lead us with great sensitivity, flexibility and skill. We are all looking forward to the construction of the Elizabeth Logan Parish Centre as this will give us the facilities needed to develop the choir and music group in more conducive surroundings.

Richard Brooks

Music Group - Richard – richard.brooks@anthonycollins.com

Junior and Adult Choir - Dudley - dudleyrayuk@yahoo.co.uk

St Michael's Church Christmas flowers

We will be decorating the church for Christmas on **Saturday December 23rd from 9.30am** and would welcome all who would like to help. If you wish to make a donation in memory of a loved one, please put the money, the name of the person and your message into a blue gift aid envelope and mark it

Christmas flowers

Many thanks

Anne Lingwood



Sex and Gender in the Light of Christ

Sermon preached at St Michael's Lichfield, 22.10.2023

(Readings: 1 Cor 7.1-9; Jn 4.5-15)

J.K. Rowling, the famous author of the Harry Potter stories, has been in a spot of bother. What triggered the upset was a blog she wrote in 2020 defending the right of biological women to have their own space—such as separate facilities in the public domain. The controversy is a bit complicated; but at its heart, it has to do with the politics of sex and gender—which means that it's also about matters to do with inclusion and exclusion.

On the one hand, there are those like J.K. Rowling who believe that the biological differences between males and females are fundamental to being human, and therefore that it's important to preserve what's proper to women and what's proper to men. For Rowling, the hard-won gains of the feminist movement giving women social and political equality, including not least, the right to be protected from *male violence*, are being put at risk by those who want to play down sexual difference. So, in practical terms, women's changing rooms should be for women only; women's dormitories, hostels and prisons should be for women only; women's sports should be for women only. And so on.

On the other hand, there are members of the 'trans' community who argue that 'trans women' (that is, men who have transitioned to become women) are real women and therefore should not be excluded from women-only spaces. On this view, J.K. Rowling's position is discriminatory and transphobic.

The consequence of this kind of controversy is a *culture war* between those seeking to defend the gains for women made by nineteenth and twentieth century feminism, and those in the

twenty-first century seeking to advance the cause of those who self-identify as LGBTQI: that is, people who self-identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, and Intersex.

Now, we may think that this is all a bit of a minority sport, but it's not. It really does have to do with people's wellbeing and the good ordering of society. It really does have to do with countering the prejudice directed, not only towards women, but also towards gays, lesbians and other sexual minorities—prejudice often intensified by differences of race, class and wealth. And it really does have to do with social policy and government legislation which affects us all—I'm thinking here of the UK Gender Recognition Act (of 2004) and the Equality Act (of 2010).

If we step back a bit, there are, underlying all this, some basic questions: Doesn't the simple binary of sexual differentiation—male and female—*really matter*? Isn't it important in relation to what it means to be human, including sexual orientation, biological reproduction, and social institutions like marriage and family? Is gender—including our ideas of masculinity and femininity—only a matter of inner feeling and personal choice, or is it also an identity *given to us* in our chromosomes—an identity we discover over time?

What about people born with ambiguous genitalia—now identified as 'intersex'—who don't fit very well into the male/female binary? What about people who suffer from gender dysphoria, the overwhelming feeling that there's a mismatch between their biological sex and their sense of the gender they are or want to be? And, related to that, is so-called 'conversion therapy' acceptable, or should it be outlawed, as people in the 'trans' community believe?

At a more general level, how should society respond to exceptional cases? Is there a wisdom and a mature curiosity which encourages giving such cases proper attention *without*

requiring that we start all over again with a clean slate?

These are current questions; and they are important, not least in a ‘liberal’ society like ours, which aims to be as inclusive and non-discriminatory as possible, protective especially of the rights of minorities and of people whose sex or gender identity render them vulnerable.

Against this background, let’s consider, then, how to ‘do’ sex and gender today in the light of Christ—how to live today in our sexed and gendered bodies as the Body of Christ. Recent history shows that we in the Church haven’t done this well. Think of the centuries-long battle over the place of women in the Church including, in the present, the divisions over the ordination of women. Think of the scandal of clergy sexual abuse, often perpetrated by men in positions of power. Think of the scandal of homophobia and the consequent ostracism of homosexuals. Think of the current controversy over the blessing in church of same-sex couples, a controversy so apparently irresolvable that—as with the ordination of women—it divides the Church.

But *why* are matters of sex and gender so important and so hard to get right? It’s because the natural body is a symbol of the social body and therefore to do with power and politics. It’s because how we ‘do’ sex and gender is a potent symbol of how we ‘do’ relationships generally. And it’s because we in the West are part of the modern world; and in the modern world, biology is no longer destiny, and individual identity—including sexual identity—is much more a matter of *choice*.

The Enlightenment has bequeathed ideals of freedom and equality. The feminist movement has won equal rights for women. The advent of artificial contraception has given women control of their fertility. The development of reproductive technologies has separated reproduction from male-female sexual intercourse. And discoveries in the biological sciences have given us a better

understanding of sexual differentiation and diversity, including the biological basis of homosexuality.

Now, it's important to say that attempts are being made at all kinds of levels in the Church to do better. To guard against abuse, safeguarding has been embedded in church life and in the training of leaders. To offer sexual minorities a place of welcome, safe from prejudice, movements like Inclusive Church have come into being; and we ourselves are giving thought to becoming an institutional member. And to try to find a way forward over the blessing of same-sex couples and the solemnization of same-sex marriage, the Church has embarked on a listening process called 'Living in Love and Faith' (2020), for which we had our own study groups not so long ago.

All this is positive: but the question remains: Are there, in our faith and practice, resources for seeing and doing things even better? I think there are.

First, let's acknowledge that you and I share the perplexities about sex and gender of the world around us. We're in this together. That means it's good to have a *space* for honest conversation, for listening to each other and learning from each other. I think of church as such a space. Indeed, we can think of church, not as any old space, but as a *curated* space.

Think of *what we do*. To adapt the language of the gay community, we *come out*! Whoever we are, whatever our sex or gender, we come together as a people and stand side by side as (significantly!) sisters and brothers, a special kind of family. In the act of gathering, our sex or gender both matters and doesn't matter. What really matters is affirming that I am part of a people loved into being by God.

Not only do we come out and gather together, we use *material things* to express something deep and sacred about who we are and want to be. We use water for baptism to say that we belong

to Christ in his death and resurrection—and that we belong irrespective of whether we're male or female, gay or straight. For in Christ, says Saint Paul, we are a 'new creation'.

As well as being washed in water, there's the eating of bread and drinking of wine. We *take Christ in*, both in the eating and drinking and in the remembering of his death for us: and in taking Christ in, we become one with Him. In other words, our *identity*—however we may think of ourselves in gender terms—is oriented again and again towards Christ in His self-giving love.

So this curated space we call church is, in principle and in practice, by the grace of God, *already open, already inclusive*. But, as the history and present circumstances of the Church show, there's no room for complacency. It's so easy to put limits on God's love—but the cross and resurrection show us that God's love is boundless.

I love that comment that the Evangelist makes in our gospel story when the disciples return from their shopping trip to find Jesus at Jacob's well, in conversation: 'They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman' (Jn 4.27)!

There's inclusion for you!

So to the God of all love who is Love, be all honour and glory, now and forever. Amen.

Revd. Stephen C. Barton

LARGE COPIES of the magazine are available
on request

Film Club

at St Michael's Church

FREE ADMISSION AND REFRESHMENTS

Doors open at 1.30pm

The Bishop's Wife

(Cert U, 1hr 49 mins., Comedy 1947)

Starring Cary Grant, Loretta Young and David Niven.
A debonair angel comes to Earth to help a bishop and his wife in their quest to raise money for the new church.

Monday 4th December 2.00pm start

Tea/Coffee and Cake will be served

at the interval

All welcome.

The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry

(Cert 12A 1hr 48 mins., Drama 2023)

Starring Jim Broadbent and Penelope Wilton

Harold is an ordinary man who has passed through life, living on the side lines, until he goes to post a letter one day...and just keeps walking.

Monday 8th January 2024, 2.00pm start

In early November we enjoyed a very informative talk from one of our local firemen, who gave us many tips on Home Safety. James had plenty of advice and was open to our questions. Much of which we already knew (or should have known) but it was good to be reminded.

It is necessary to keep our homes warm during cold weather, preferably with gas central heating, not with coal or log fires. Make sure your boiler is serviced regularly and that you install smoke alarms upstairs and down. These need testing weekly. When cooking it can be distracting to receive a visitor or phone call. If so, turn off the hob or oven, deal with the caller then resume cooking.

A very important piece of information especially for people who cannot use stairs quickly is to keep a spare key, and phone in the bedroom. If you are woken by smell of burning block any gaps by the door with bedding, phone for help and sit on the floor. When help arrives drop the key down to the rescuers.

In these days when everything seems to be powered by batteries it is tempting to charge them up overnight but there is a chance that they can ignite so make sure that you charge phones, computers etc when you are at home and awake.

Copies of a booklet on Home Safety are available from the fire station.

The following day some members attended an Advent service at St Chad's church. Our next meeting on 27th November will be an Advent Meditation with Tai Chi led by the husband of one of our members.

Betty Lyne

GIVE THE GIFT OF FINANCIAL FREEDOM THIS CHRISTMAS

Once again, MU are taking part in this year's Big Give Christmas Challenge. All donations, up to £50k, made online between midday 28 November and midday 5 December 2023 will be doubled. If you would like to support this

appeal go to www.biggive.org and look for Mothers' Union Campaigns. Thank you.

Nearly 26 million people live in extreme poverty in Tanzania. An average Tanzanian household saves less than £80 annually, amplifying financial insecurity and poverty, disproportionately affecting women and girls. Due to this, women lack the skills, knowledge and confidence to advocate for themselves, to provide shelter, nutrition and education for their families and take on leadership roles in their communities.

This year we are raising money through our Christmas appeal for our savings and credit groups in Tanzania, known as 'Awakening Groups'. These support churches and dioceses in mobilising their resources to bring change from within their communities. Awakening is combining two processes: Church and Community Mobilisation and Village Savings and Loans groups.

Since the start of the project in 2018, we have successfully engaged over 8,000 participants to achieve spiritual, social and economic transformation. Notably, 89% of elected Awakening Group leaders are women. These women have reported improved family life and livelihoods, increased household decision-making, and increased spiritual engagement in Mothers' Union and the church.

One MU Awakening member in Kanyimbi parish, Diocese of Masasi, said: 'Before Awakening, we didn't know how to pray, and we never read the bible – only in the church service. But now we ask the pastor if we can borrow the bible and read it at home. We can do the readings and even lead the prayer book service if the pastor is away.'

With your help, the programme could expand to enable 3,000 more people to participate within the three existing church regions of the Anglican church of Tanzania. This would enable the programme to reach even more people in the community and eventually self-replicate itself across Tanzania.

'It used to be that every time my husband and I had to pay school fees we would fear and that fear would turn into arguments. Now, we have peace. When it comes time to pay school fees, we know that we will manage because we both can contribute something. We are free now.' (female group participant)

SAINT MICHAEL'S CHURCHYARD WORKING PARTY

We will be meeting on

NO MEETING IN DECEMBER

Next meeting—SATURDAY 20th January
from 10.00 a.m. to 12.30p.m.

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

*We will be meeting every third Saturday,
so the dates going forward will be*

January 20th, February 17th
March 16th April 20th
May 18th, June 15th,
July 20th, August 17th

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



WALKING GROUP

NO WALK IN DECEMBER

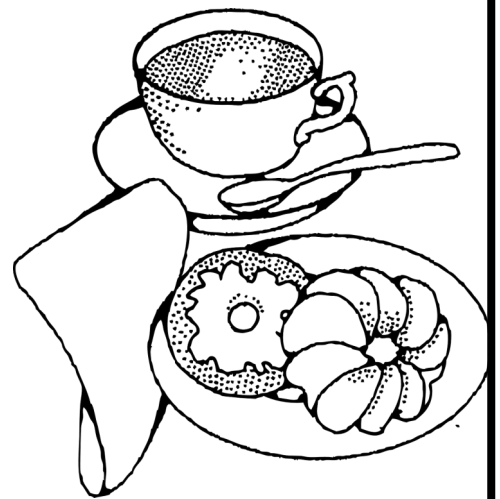


FELLOWSHIP MEETING

We warmly invite you to a
Fellowship Meeting to be held in

St Michael's Church
Thursday 28th December
2:30 to 3:30pm.

We hope you will come along
for a chat and a cuppa.



If you need transport please
contact Sue on 01543 415242 or
Brenda on 07980 011150.

Looking forward to seeing you on the 23rd!
Sue and Brenda

Fungus Foray at St. Michael's Churchyard

We had a very successful Fungus Foray in the Churchyard on Saturday October 28th. After lots of rain earlier in the week, we were very fortunate to have a sunny afternoon for this event, led by Beverley Rhodes. 23 species were collected and identified on the day. The foray was well supported, a total number of 75 people attending, the largest number we have ever had for a Churchyard wildlife event. Here are photographs of 4 of the fungi seen, with their scientific and English names. Many thanks to Pete and Lin Norbury from Lichfield Wildlife Group for organising the fungus foray.

Ray Allen



Artist's Bracket



Glistening inkcap

<i>Amanita muscaria</i>	Fly Agaric	MYC
<i>Auricula auricula judae</i>	Ear Fungus	
<i>Boletus pulverulentus</i>	Inkstain Boletus	MYC
<i>Clitocybe gibba</i>	Common Funnel	
<i>Clitocybe geotropa</i>	Trooping Funnel	
<i>Clitocybe rivulosa</i>	Fools funnel	
<i>Coprinus atrementarius</i>		
<i>Coprinus comatus</i>	Shaggy Inkcap	
<i>Coprinus plicatillis</i>	Pleated Inkcap	
<i>Cortinarius spp</i>	Webcap	
<i>Crepidotus variabilis</i>	Oysterling	
<i>Diatrype disciformis</i>	Beech barkspot	
<i>Exidia plana</i>	Jelly Brain	
<i>Ganoderma applanatum</i>	Artist fungus	
<i>Gymnopilus junonius</i>	Spectacular rustgill	
<i>Gymnopus peronatus</i>	Wood Woollyfoot	
<i>Hebeloma</i>	Poison Pie	
<i>crustulineforme</i>		
<i>Hyphodontia sambuccii</i>	Elder Whitewash	



Giant Funnel



Red edge brittlestem

Identification made by Beverley Rhodes BSc MCIEEM BMS FCT	Hypholoma fasciculare	Sulphur Tuft
	Inocybe sindonia	Fibrecap
Total 40 species	Laccaria laccata	The Deceiver
	Leucopaxillus giganteus	Giant Funnel
	Lycoperdon perlatum	Common Puffball
	Lycoperdon pyriforme	Stump Puffball
	Mycena galericulata	Common Bonnet
	Nectria cinnabarina	Coral spot
	Panaeolus acuminatus	Mottlegill
	Panaeolus papillionaceus	Bell shaped mottlegill
	Peniophora spp	
	Pleuteus cervinus	Deer Sheild
	Pleuteus inquilinus	Pinkgill
	Postia stiptica	Bitter Bracket
	Psathyrella corrugis	Red edge Brittlesstem
	Russula fellea	Geranium scented
	Rhytisma acerinum	Russula on beech MYC
	Scleroderma citrinum	Tarspot on Sycamore
	Scleroderma verrucosum	Common Earthball
	Trametes versicolor	Scaly Earthball
	Tremella mesenterica	Turkey Tail
	Tricholoma ustale	Yellow Brain fungus
	Xylaria hypoxylon	Burnt Knight MYC
		Candlesnuff

News from St Michaels' PCC

There have been 5 PCC meetings since the last news – 27 March, 5 May, 17 July, 31 July (Special meeting on the new Parish Centre) and 25 September. The main items covered were:

Ministry.

Worship – providing feedback on special services and seasons in the church calendar are regular items of the agenda; both services that have taken place and those that are planned. In addition, PCC is working with the Rector on developing the Family Communion service.

Mission.

Following are the key issues PCC have considered:-

Inclusive Church – this concerns welcoming and opening church doors to a wider range of people. A series of services started in September to give more information on what inclusive church means.

Faith Places of Sanctuary - this initiative targets new people to the city through providing support and welcome.

Links with St Michaels CofE School continue to grow – in the summer some older children were prepared for confirmation with a special confirmation service held in church led by the bishop. Both communion services and a harvest service had been held at the school. The Rector and the School Head have spoken at few events to talk about the strengthening of the partnership between the church and the school. Young people from the school are also involved in leading family praise services. The Rector hopes to get more people from the congregation involved in school/church activities.

Junior Choir – there are now between 15 – 20 young people in the choir; they will support the Family Communion services. They are

supported by a number of people and their families and held a concert in July.

Camas – this trip took place over the summer with 25 young people in total attending.

Shaping for Mission – PCC are happy to support proposals to share some services and other activities with St Chads whilst they were without an incumbent.

Pastoral Matters.

All PCC members have undertaken or are undertaking DBS checks and safeguarding training. In addition checks have been arranged for people working with young people at Camas and those working with junior choir. Risk assessments for church activities are being carried out, for example, Camas.

PCC also gave its support to holding a social activity at least once a term. There has been a very successful quiz held in September and a barn dance earlier in the year.

Church Buildings.

Another leak was identified in the church roof which has been repaired and further work to repair flashing has been arranged. This will include removing the tree growing out of the guttering round the back of church.

Further to concerns raised about the heating system PCC approved further investigations into how additional heating could be provided to supplement what we already have – ‘heating the people’ rather than ‘heating the building’. Options being explored include providing under pew heating and having individual seated heat cushions. Quotes are being obtained for the under pew heating and some the heating cushions will be bought for trying out. The under pew heating will not

be like what we have in the chancel now.

PCC has continued to receive updates on and discuss the Parish Centre development and a special PCC was held on 31 July to approve a vision statement for its name, use and also the design of the Centre. It will be known as the Elizabeth Logan Parish Centre. PCC also considered costings and securing funding. It approved progressing to the next stage of development in advance of applying for planning permission. The Parish Centre Team have had several meetings with Greenwoods and the Architects to discuss what needs to be done including reviewing the internal layout.

The installation of new AV equipment has been delayed pending securing a further quote for the installation of blue tooth technology. Work on the electrification of the clock in the tower has moved towards a Faculty application.

Churchyard.

PCC has received reports and approved actions where appropriate on the following items:

- Following Faculty approval, the installation of a new bench by the church door in memory of Mr Chowdhury

- The installation of prayer boards in the churchyard

- Churchyard nature days

- The work of the Community Payback Team and churchyard working party

- Updating maps of the churchyard

- Various tree works

- The purchase of new tools

- Funding for the new coronation tree

The development of a new tree planting scheme
The restoration of the Elizabeth Logan gravestone
The installation of a bat box

Finance

PCC have received reports from the Treasurer on the preparation and approval of the annual accounts to the diocese. The 2021 accounts have now been approved and the 2022 accounts should have been approved at the end of October. The diocese is moving on to an upgraded financial package which will be used for 2023 accounts. PCC approved the purchase of a license for the new system.

Energy costs are also being discussed and how these could be managed better to reduce our carbon footprint and kept affordable.

Our next meeting is 20 November 2023.

Veronica Morris
PCC Secretary

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



PROVERBS PRAYERS

Proverbs Chapter 23 verse 20 and 21

Don't be among ones
drinking too much
wine, or those who
gorge themselves on
meat:

for the drunkard and the glutton shall become poor; and drowsiness
clothes them in rags.



Advice from the Apocrypha

Ecclesiasticus—The Book of Sirach 31:20

Healthy sleep depends on moderate eating; he rises early, and feels fit.
The distress of sleeplessness and of nausea and colic are with the
glutton.

Ecclesiasticus—The Book of Sirach 37:30

for overeating brings sickness, and gluttony leads to nausea.

Ecclesiasticus—The Book of Sirach 37:31

Many have died of gluttony, but one who guards against it prolongs his
life.

3 Maccabees 6:35-37

The Jews, as we have said before, arranged the aforementioned choral
group and passed the time in feasting to the accompaniment of joyous
thanksgiving and psalms. And when they had ordained a public rite for
these things in their whole community and for their descendants, they
instituted the observance of the aforesaid days as a festival, not for
drinking and gluttony, but because of the deliverance that had come to
them through God.

During this Advent and Christmas season help us, Lord, to focus on our worship of you whenever we are gathered together with our congregation, friends and families.

Jesus, help us to resist the temptations to over-indulge that surround us at this time of year and remind us to give to those in need now and throughout the year.

We pray for your blessings on all people, throughout the world. May there be food and drink for the hungry, love for the unloved, healing for the sick, protection for our children, wisdom and self-control for our youth and reconciliation for those in conflict.

Holy Spirit, fill our hearts with unconditional love and guide us to support all those in need.

We ask this in Jesus' name.

Angie King



**LICHFIELD
WILDLIFE GROUP**



A talk by Heather Lomas

Tuesday 5 December 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**



A guided walk at Chasewater Country Park led by Graham Evans

Saturday 6 January 10:00 a.m.

Meet in the car park on Pool Lane, Brownhills WS8 7NL

Free admission / Donations welcome

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		

Funerals		
St Michael's	16th October	Alison Staines (interment of ashes)
St Michael's	19th October	Renee Wellings
St Michael's	26th October	Henry Teasdale (interment of ashes)



Bible Readings

Sunday 3rd December

1st Sunday of Advent

[Purple]

Isaiah 64.1-9

Mark 13.24-end

Sunday 10th December

2nd Sunday of Advent

[Purple]

Isaiah 40.1.11

Mark 1.1-8

Sunday 17th December

3rd Sunday of Advent

[Purple]

Isaiah 61.1-4, 8-end

John 1.6-8, 19-28

Sunday 24th December

Christmas Eve

[Purple]

2 Samuel 7.1-11,16

Luke 1.26-38

Sunday 24th December

Christmas Eve

Midnight Service

[White]

Isaiah 9.2-7

Luke 2.1-14

Monday 25th December

Christmas Day

[White]

Hebrews 1.1-14

John 1.1-14

Sunday 31st December

Baptism of Christ

[White]

Acts 19.1-7

Mark 1.4-11

Sunday 7th January

Epiphany

[White]

Isaiah 60.1-6

Matthew 2.1-12

Sunday 14th January

2nd Sunday of Epiphany

[White]

1 Samuel 3.1-10 [11-20]

John 1.43-end



St Michael's Rota – December 2023

Sunday 8.00 am	3 December	10 December	17 December	24 December	31 December
Sidesperson	David Bull	Brian Smith	Brian Smith		Brian Smith

Sunday 10.00 am	3 Dec Advent Sunday Family Praise	10 December	17 December	24 Dec Joint service at St Chad's 10.30 am	31 December
Sidespersons	Mike Jones Anne Watson	Pat Toplis Maureen Brand	Enid Barry Audrey Dudley		Judy and Mike Godfrey
Reader		Angela Burgess			Mike Godfrey
Servers		Kay Martin Elizabeth Allen	Kay Martin		Kay Martin Elizabeth Salt
Intercessor		Ted Green			Elizabeth Salt
Coffee	Elizabeth Allen Trish Jones	Angela Burgess Judy Godfrey	June Frayn Betty Lyne		Sonia Doidge Lesley Allen

Advent services	Sunday 3 December 6.00 pm Advent Carols	Wednesday 6 December 6.30 pm Memorial Carols	Sunday 17 December 6.00 pm Lessons and Carols
Sidesperson	Ted Green	Ted Green	Judy and Mike Godfrey

Christmas Eve and Christmas Day	24 Dec 4.00 pm Christingle	24 Dec 6.00 pm Christingle	24 Dec 23.15 Communion	25 Dec 08.00 Communion	25 Dec 10.00 Communion
Sidespersons	Maureen Brand David Bull	Maureen Brand Ted Green	Pat Toplis	Brian Smith	David Bull
Reader					Kay Martin
Servers	Kay Martin Elizabeth Allen	Kay Martin	Elizabeth Allen		Kay Martin
Intercessor					Helen Barton

ADVANCE NOTICE

Recycling of empty tablet Bubble packs

Lyn and I are spending three months in Australia with our son, Adrian, and wife; from the end of November 2023 until the end of February 2024 (*the Aussies call it SUMMER*).

Consequently, there will be no facility for the recycling of empty tablet Bubble packs from Sunday 26/11/2023 until Sunday /2/2024 (both dates inclusive). During this period, you can continue saving your empty tablet Bubble packs in your garage/shed in a supermarket carrier bag and bring them along to church on Sunday 3/3/24.

May I take this opportunity to thank everyone who has supported this worthy project over the past months; and to inform them that **SIX LARGE** bags of Bubble packs were sent ff for recycling on Saturday 16/9/2023 (see photo of my car boot packed ready for despatch).



I eagerly anticipate a similar consignment shortly after my return from the Antipodes in 2024!!!

Editor



WALL WI

CHRISTMAS CAROLS

AND

QUIZ EVENING

SATURDAY, 2ND DECEMBER, 2023

7.30 pm

at

Wall Village Hall

£5 per ticket

Sausage rolls/Mince pies/Mulled wine

Tickets available from Committee members

or at the door

WALL NEWS

CHRISTMAS SERVICES

Friday 22nd December

5.00pm Carols and Christingles

Sunday 24th December

10.00am Christmas Carols and
Holy Communion

Sunday 31st December

10.00am Baptism of Christ Holy Communion

Sunday 7th January

10.00am Epiphany Holy Communion

PLEASE NOTE—***no services*** will be held at
St John's on Christmas Day

St. John's Church, Wall – Charitable Giving

This time last year I wrote in the Parish Magazine to explain that the PCC of St. John's had agreed to resume the practice of giving a proportion of its income to mission and relief charities. The PCC also agreed to review this annually at their autumn meeting.

We are a small, rural church but as with all Christians, we are called to support the work of the wider Christian community in mission and relief work. I know that the need to suspend charitable giving over the previous few years had been a cause of sadness to a number of people.

Whilst there have been great demands on the finances this year – not least from massively increased gas bills, (given that we came out of a fixed-rate contract last December) I am pleased to say that the PCC has agreed for St. John's to continue in its support of 'Tearfund' and 'Christians Against Poverty'.

On their website, Tearfund states: 'We believe that poverty is not God's plan, and an end to extreme poverty is possible. We work with local churches and organisations in more than 50 countries to tackle the complex challenges of poverty.'

Those of you who watch 'The Martin Lewis Money Show' may have seen the episodes which addressed the issue of personal debt. Martin recommended four support agencies and 'Christians Against Poverty' (CAP) was one of these. On his website he says that CAP 'provides debt help and also specialises in supporting those who are struggling emotionally. The religious focus is why they do it, not how they do it.'

While giving our donations to these two Christian charities may seem like a drop in the ocean, we know and pray that God will use them to help transform lives.

Should you wish to find out more about our chosen charities, their web addresses are:

<https://www.tearfund.org/> and <https://capuk.org/>

If you do not have access to the Internet, please feel free to contact me if you would like further information.

Paul Wright

Treasurer, St. John's Church, Wall

.....and FINALLY (Yes Finally)

The December magazine will be my last as editor after 3 very interesting years in the role.

Consequently, a new editor will be needed with effect from January 2024.

Anyone wishing to assume the role of magazine editor should contact the Rector and/or Angie King as soon as possible for full details of the requirements and responsibilities of the post.


David Shiel.

ADVERTISING IN THIS MAGAZINE

If you would like to advertise here, the prices per year are:

Full page	£280
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