

# Saints ALIVE

*The magazine of:*  
*All Saints, Leighton Buzzard*  
*St. Nicholas, Hockliffe*  
*St. Michael's, Eggington*  
*St. Michael and All Angels,*  
*Billington*  
*The Good Shepherd, Sandhills*

*September 2022*

*70p*



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**Round the Team: Jungle Fever comes to All Saints' Holiday Club**

**Celtic Spirituality – thin places, an invitation by Fr. Noel**

**Asking good questions – Fr. Steve**

**Roger Collor discusses Encountering God in Learning**

**With news and views from around the team**

# All Saints Leighton Buzzard

## Team Rector & Vicar of All Saints:

### Rev'd Cate Irvine

The Vicarage,  
Pulford Road, LU7 1AB 01525 373217

### Curate:

Rev'd Kirsty Borthwick 07865 748966  
138 Brooklands Drive, LU7 3PG

### Team Vicars:

Rev'd Noel McGeeney 01525 237633  
Rev'd Dr. Bernard Minton 01525 372149  
Rev'd Steve Marsh 01525 838450

### Associate Priests:

Rev'd Wyn Jones 01525 373638  
Canon Malcolm Grant 01525 372771  
Canon Don Brewin 01525 373644  
Canon Grant Fellows 01525 381418

### Diocesan Readers

Roger Collor 01525 376430  
Geoffrey Huskisson 01525 757013  
Geoffrey Marchant 01525 371797  
Linda Morris 07943 053793  
Tricia Humber 01525 381184  
Laurelin Burge 01525 371849

### Churchwardens

Sam Smith 07414 620754  
Bill Webb 01525 383356  
John Sykes 01525 852218

### PCC Secretary

Sharon Fryer [pcsecretary@allsaintslb.org.uk](mailto:pcsecretary@allsaintslb.org.uk)

### Head Verger

Lindsay Bevis 01525 381418

## All Saints Parish Office

All Saints Church, Church Square,  
Leighton Buzzard LU7 1AE  
Open Tuesday - Friday 9.30am - 2.30pm  
Tel: 01525 381418

**Website** [www.allsaintslb.org.uk](http://www.allsaintslb.org.uk)  
**Email:** [parish@allsaintslb.org.uk](mailto:parish@allsaintslb.org.uk)  
**Facebook:** All Saints Leighton Buzzard

### Office Manager & Vicar's PA

Jo Waller

### Director of Music & Choir Master including Leighton Young Singers Club

Paul Dickens 01525 210210

### Free Will Offering Scheme

Jenny Huskisson 01525 757013

### Sunday Saints Co-ordinator

Alison Dobbie 01525 759259

### Mothers' Union Branch Co-ordinator

Janet Wenborn 01525 370987

### Tower Liaison

Margaret Birtles 07949 141211  
Kevin Pughe 07402 233022  
Barry Eglesfield 07967 755148

### ACTIVE Youth Group

Lindsay Bevis 01525 381418

### Toddler Time

Julie Dolton 07954 148128

### All Saints Preservation Trust

30, Hockliffe St, Leighton Buzzard LU7 1HJ  
E-mail: [enquiry@allsaintspreservationtrust.org](mailto:enquiry@allsaintspreservationtrust.org)  
Website: [www.allsaintspreservationtrust.org](http://www.allsaintspreservationtrust.org)

**Saints ALIVE: Items for publication to the Editors:** Jo Waller & Julia Dickens, preferably by e-mail [magazine@allsaintslb.org.uk](mailto:magazine@allsaintslb.org.uk)

**Advertising:** Please contact [magazine-advertising@allsaintslb.org.uk](mailto:magazine-advertising@allsaintslb.org.uk)

**Distribution:** Stephen Jury 01525 381936; [stephenljury21@btinternet.com](mailto:stephenljury21@btinternet.com)

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## ***Celtic Spirituality: a thin place; an invitation by Rev'd Noel McGeeney***

If you have ventured into the world of Celtic spirituality you will have heard the term 'a thin place'; a place you can walk in two worlds – where the worlds are fused together or knitted loosely or where the two worlds become one. Thin places aren't perceived with the senses. Experiencing thin places takes us beyond the usual limits of space and time.

In Celtic lore 'thin places' are those locales where the veil between this world and the other world is porous, where there is mystery in the landscape. In thin places the earth takes on the hue of the sacred among people whose connection to place has remained unbroken through the ages.

The ancient pagan Celts and later, Christians, used the term to describe mesmerising places like the wind-swept isle of Iona off the coast of Scotland. But the sages of old also referred to our inner worlds as thin places. The more we develop a contemplative approach to all our activities, especially to the beauty of creation around us, our psyche becomes a thin place of holiness and sacred revelation. There is a fusion going on between our inner and the outer world(s) – so birth and death are the ultimate thin places.

I love the story of the 4 year old girl waiting for her new born brother to be brought home from hospital. As soon as he was set up in the crib she asked if she could have a word alone with him and of course the parents agreed but listened in. She said to her brother, "Quickly tell me what is it like where you came from. I am beginning to forget."

The Celtic tradition had a refined sense of the miracle of death; for the Celts, the eternal world was so close to the natural world that death was not seen as a terribly destructive or threatening event. When you enter the eternal world, you are going home to where no shadow, pain or darkness can ever touch you again. There is a lovely Celtic prayer on this theme that I often share at funerals.

*"I am going home with thee, to thy home, to thy home,  
I am going home with thee, to thy home of winter.  
I am going home with thee, to thy home, to thy home,  
I am going home with thee, to thy home of autumn, of spring, and of summer.  
I am going home with thee, thy child of my love,  
to thy eternal bed, to thy perpetual sleep".*

In that prayer, the whole world of nature and the seasons is linked up beautifully with the presence of the eternal life.

I am planning a Zoom group: *A Biblical understanding of Death*, open to all, a six week programme. If you would be interested, please let me know.

***Noel McGeeney***

## *Our present pattern of services across the Ouzel Valley Team*

### **All Saints**

#### **Sundays:**

**Please note new times which allow for cleaning between services**

8am Holy Communion

9.30am Parish Eucharist

11.30am

1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays: All Age Service

2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday Holy Baptism

6pm Said Evening Prayer

3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday: followed by Benediction

#### **Weekdays:**

#### **Holy Communion**

7.30pm Tuesday

(Service of Healing on 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday)

10.00am Thursday

9.00am Saturday

**Morning Prayer:** St. Hugh's Chapel

9.00am Tuesday – Friday

### **St. Barnabas, Linslade**

#### **Sundays:**

8am Said Eucharist

10am Parish Eucharist

6pm Evensong

[www.linslade-parish.org.uk](http://www.linslade-parish.org.uk)

### **St. Leonard's, Heath & Reach**

#### **Sundays:**

8am: Holy Communion

11am Holy Communion (in church & via Zoom)

1<sup>st</sup> Sundays: Family Service

**Tuesdays:** 7pm Holy Communion

#### **Morning Prayer via Zoom:**

9.00am Monday - Saturday

[www.saintleonardschurch.com](http://www.saintleonardschurch.com)

### **St. Michael's, Eggington**

9.30am 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays: Holy Communion

### **St. Nicholas', Hockliffe**

9.30am 2<sup>nd</sup> Sundays: Family Communion

4<sup>th</sup> Sundays: Holy Communion

### **St. Michael's and All Angels, Billington**

11.15am Holy Communion

### **Good Shepherd, Astral Park Sports & Community Centre, Johnson Drive, Sandhills, LU7 4AY:**

**Sundays** at 9.45am:

1<sup>st</sup> Sunday: Holy Communion & CGS Juniors

2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday: 'In the Community', at Astral Park

3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday: Family Service

4<sup>th</sup> Sunday: Bring and share breakfast and Holy Communion

Free pop-up café every Sunday from 9.45am

**Sunday Saints:** for age 3+ year olds, meets during 9.30am Sunday service at All Saints.

**All Saints Toddler Time:** All Saints every Wednesday during term time, at 9.30am & at 1.30pm. £1.50 per parent / carer & child; 50p extra per child; refreshments included.

**ACTIVE:** (Senior Youth Group for age 11+) **not meeting at present because of a lack of leaders. If you could help, please contact the office.**

**Leighton Young Singers Club:** for children in Years 2-6, meets on Fridays at 6.30 - 7.30pm.

**Bereavement Café:** a support group offering friendship and understanding.

1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month, 2.30-4pm The Spire Coffee Shop, All Saints

**Choir Practice:** Friday evenings, 6.45 trebles; 7.30 adults.

**Bellringers:** Practice on Monday, 7.30pm-9.30pm.

**Spire Coffee Shop:** Tuesday & Saturday 10am-2pm; Friday 10am-12noon (drinks & cakes only)

*Contact Details on Page 2.*

## ***News Roundup***

**Advertising Manager for Saints Alive:** For the last year or so, June Ayres has done a wonderful job of managing the advertising in this magazine. However, she would like to retire, and pass the baton. The role involves invoicing advertisers once a year, and handling requests from new advertisers. If you would be prepared to take this on, please contact the office, or Julia Dickens [magazine@allsaintslb.org.uk](mailto:magazine@allsaintslb.org.uk)

\*\*\* \*\*

**The Coffee Shop** reopens on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> September at 10am, following the summer break.

\*\*\* \*\*

**Evensong:** There will be a change to Sunday Evening Worship from September. The first Sunday of each month will be Choral Evensong with a social event following and the third Sunday will be Sung Evensong and Benediction (unless otherwise stated).



### ***Worth a smile***

It was the first day of school. As the new Head made his rounds, he heard a terrible commotion coming from one of the classrooms. He rushed in and spotted one boy, taller than the others, who seemed to be making the most noise. He seized the lad, dragged him to the hall, and despite his protests, told him to wait there until he was excused. Returning to the classroom, the Head restored order and lectured the class about the importance of good behaviour. "Now," he said, "are there any questions?" One girl stood up timidly. "Please sir," she asked, "May we have our teacher back?"



Young James finished his summer holidays and went back to school. Two days later his teacher phoned his mother to tell her that James was misbehaving. "Wait a minute!" protested his mum. "I had him here for weeks and I never once called YOU when he misbehaved!"



A wise schoolteacher sent this note to all parents on the first day of school: "If you promise not to believe everything your child says happens at school, I'll promise not to believe everything he or she says happens at home."



A little boy opened the big Family Bible. He was fascinated as he fingered through the old pages. Suddenly, something fell out of the Bible. He picked up the object and looked at it. What he saw was an old leaf that had been pressed in between the pages. "Mum, look what I found!" the boy called out, turning the leaf over and over. "What is it, dear?" asked his mother. With awe in his voice, the young boy ventured: "I think it's Adam's underwear."

# Parish Registers

## Holy Matrimony, July:

16: Stephen Walton & Chelsea Barker at All Saints

*'Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate'*

## Holy Baptism, July:

10: Willow Annalise Ellen Wilkinson; 24: Jude James McGiff, Eleanor Dempsey, Annabelle Dempsey, Poppy Marie Rowstone, Cillian Frazer Maclean

*'One Lord, one faith, one baptism'*

## R.I.P. July:

1: Douglas Thorpe at St. Barnabas; 4: Henry Tomlinson at All Saints, Nigel Goddard at All Saints; 5: James McLeod at Berton; 6: Brian Puddle at Berton; 7: Michael Nash at All Saints; 15: Edith Cipullo at All Saints; 26: Frances Peers at St. Barnabas; 27: Anthony Frasi at All Saints; 29: (Frank) Russell Stannard at St. Barnabas

*'Everyone who lives and believes in me will never die'*

## Years Mind, September:

1: Peter Rolls, Ruth Cursons, Christopher Mawer; 2: Sheila Binns; 3: Stella Aris, Ben Reeve, Irene Hillis, Leslie Slater, Charles Moore, Bryan Gilbert; 5: Betty Hill, Jim Bright; 6: Brenda Burchell; 8: John MacDonald; 9: Les Wood, John Eggleton; 10: Edith Boyce, Leslie Scheu, Edward Pyman, Milbrough Mary Morgan; 11: Thomas Grant, Peggy Wallace; 13: John King; 14: Clive Slater, Winifred Weeden, Rose Magee; 16: Peggy King, John Tennant; 18: Stuart Mead, Leslie Howard, Vernon Jessup; 21: Jim Wright; 22: William Kingham; 23: Audrey Corazzi; 24: Joyce Pim; 25: Ruby West; 26: Freda Goodger; 27: Beatrice Thompson; 28: Sandra Keen; 29: William Brantom, Gordon Durrington; 30: Margaret Madigan



## LEIGHTON BUZZARD MUSIC

### LIVE PROFESSIONAL CONCERTS

In St Barnabas Church, LU7 2NR 7.30pm

**Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> September 2022**

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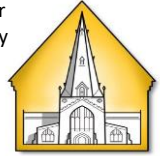
Please see links on the website, [www.lbmusic.co.uk](http://www.lbmusic.co.uk)

Leighton Buzzard Music is a registered charity no: 1183681



***Pulford VA Lower School***  
***Head Teacher: Mr Dave Heather***  
***Office Manager: Mrs Alison Quick***  
***Tel: 01525 372188***  
***Website: www.pulfordschool.org***

A church school for  
a whole community



Hello everyone! I write this as we begin Holiday Club week at All Saints and I have to say what an amazing stage setting for Jungle Fever - I'm sure you'll all agree! We have quite a lot of our Pulford children in attendance and are also pleased to see returning ex-pupils as helpers to join the fabulous Jungle Fever crew!

Sadly this will likely be the last article I write for Saints Alive in my role as Chair of Governors as I plan to step down next month subject to a suitable fresh new ~~victim~~ candidate being found! I wanted to say how proud I am to have been involved with such a wonderful school and Governing Board over the past seven years and to celebrate how far we've come in our time together.

Obviously we've weathered some tough times due to Covid and I have been in awe of the courage, dedication and steadfastness of all the Pulford staff and supporting family. I can only say 'thank you' from the bottom of my heart. Pulford has proudly remained, through all adversity, a place of stability and support in the community under the leadership of David Heather MBE, who as many of you know is now ordained Father David Heather as he continues his journey with the church.

In spite of the challenges in the outside world I am proud to say our work between Board and School has continued and our working relationship has become ever stronger and closer. We have established Subject Link-Support Governor roles who meet termly with the staff Subject Leads and review Curriculum Design and Delivery. We develop a plan together of Intent through to Implementation and later in the school year assess its Impact on the teaching and learning in each subject. It is highly rewarding to be a part of building the very best education for our children. At the same time the Governing Board is providing active support to staff directly and in person. We share this work between all of us so there is no Governor who isn't engaged with the school on a regular basis in addition to our regular visits and learning walks. After all, that's why we signed up!

We are mindful of a pending Ofsted inspection which can happen at any time but we feel confident in where we are in relation to the Ofsted framework which has changed A LOT since our last inspection. We seek external scrutiny and advice from the Department for Education Schools Improvement team and we welcome criticism both positive and where we can do better. We are an ever evolving and improving school, just as we should be.

So that's it from me. It is a parting of sweet sorrow, but the time is right for our family as our youngest, Katie, enters year 5 at Leighton Middle School. It is the right time for someone with fresh new ideas to join the Best Lower School and Governing Board in Leighton Buzzard!!! I really mean that and I wish my successor the very best of luck in her/his new role!

***Paul Whittington, Chair of Governors.***





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## Selections

*Pet, Gift and Garden.*  
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*[www.selections-web.co.uk/petandgarden](http://www.selections-web.co.uk/petandgarden)*



## On a musical note.....



There were two great services on July 17<sup>th</sup> 2022. In the morning we said farewell to Grace Webb who has been a member of the treble section of the choir for at least 11 years. She was Head Chorister for the last two of these and Deputy Head chorister before that. In accordance with tradition, Grace chose the music for the service. There were some fabulous hymns, including a jazzy version of “Here I am, Lord”, with treble descant on verse three and, of course, we could not let the occasion pass without singing “Amazing Grace” as a communion hymn.

The anthem was the trio “Lift thine eyes” from Mendelssohn’s *Elijah*, sung by Francesca Price, Olivia Olleson and Grace herself and the recessional music was Andrew Lloyd-Webber’s “Pie Jesu”, sung by Francesca and Grace. As usual, there were tears all round. We are very much hoping that Grace will move to the alto line next year as she intends to live in Leighton Buzzard whilst at university.

At 6 pm, the choir sang its last Choral Evensong for the year. The canticle setting was Noble in B minor with Preces and Responses by William Smith (the 5 part version). The anthem was Fauré’s *Cantique de Jean Racine*, a wonderful setting of a French religious text. Here is the translation:

*Word, equal to the Almighty, our sole hope,  
Eternal day of the earth and the heavens,  
We break the silence of the peaceful night.  
Divine saviour, cast your eyes upon us.  
Pour on us the fire of your powerful grace  
so that all hell flees at the sound of your voice.  
Dispel the sleep of a languishing soul who lives forgetful of your laws.  
O Christ, look kindly on your faithful people Assembled now to glorify you.  
Receive the songs that we offer to your immortal glory,  
and let us depart, crowned with your gifts.*

Amazingly, Fauré composed the piece at the age of only 20. Not so amazingly, it won first prize in a competition held just before Fauré graduated from the *École Niedermeyer*, a school in Paris for training in classical and religious music.

The choir was augmented by past Director of Music John Wearmouth and 2020 Chorister of the year Alexander Olleson with his father Andrew.

**Paul Dickens**

# Calendar of Events

**3<sup>rd</sup> September**

**Hog Roast** at Eggington House, 12 - 5, in aid of St Michael's Eggington.

Tickets must be purchased in advance on line.

Contact Angela on 01525 210420.



**4<sup>th</sup> September**

**Services as usual including Messy Mass** All Saints 11.30am

**Bereavement Support Café** Coffee Shop, All Saints 2.30pm – 4pm



**7<sup>th</sup> September**

**Lunch Club** All Saints 1.00pm



**16<sup>th</sup> September**

**Crafty Natter** All Saints 1.30pm



**18<sup>th</sup> September**

**Services as usual including Pet Service** All Saints 11.30am



**Many congratulations to several people from around the team, taking up new roles in ministry:**



- To Mthr. Kirsty Borthwick, ordained priest on 1<sup>st</sup> July at Dunstable Priory;
- To Fr. Dave Heather ordained Deacon at St. Albans on 2<sup>nd</sup> July; he will serve his curacy with Rev. Nicola Lenthall at Kensworth, Studham and Whipnade whilst continuing in his role as Headteacher of Pulford Lower School.



- And to Katharine and Frank Reedy, members of Church of the Good Shepherd, who will be licensed as Lay Readers at St Albans Abbey on 24<sup>th</sup> September at 4pm.

There is an open invitation to the Readers' Licensing Service, and Katharine & Frank would warmly welcome anyone from Leighton Buzzard who could support them on this occasion. Please let them know by 10th September if you would like to attend:

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

**Each of these people brings very special gifts to their roles; and we wish them all every blessing.**



## CAN YOU HELP?

With the war in Ukraine raging, it reminds us particularly this year of the poverty felt continuously in Eastern Europe (Bulgaria, Moldova, Ukraine and Romania) and the hardships that a great number of people suffer in that region.

The Link to Hope charity identifies those in the greatest need and delivers shoeboxes filled with essential items, for the elderly and families alike.

The whole process is designed to coincide with Christmas to give the recipients reassurance that the world has not forgotten them and to bring a little joy to their lives.

If you feel you would like to take part, on your own or with a friend, please pick up a leaflet in church that will explain everything, including a list of suggested items to send.

Return any filled shoeboxes, to Robin or Rosie Dawson, or contact them for a collection, by 23<sup>rd</sup> October. Please note, we need a £3 donation with each shoebox to cover the cost of shipping.

Zen80081@zen.co.uk, 01525261425

### What makes our Shoebox Appeal 2022 different?

1. Your shoeboxes will go to the poorest people in Ukraine, Moldova, Bulgaria and Romania.
2. Unlike many other shoebox appeals, our scheme collects boxes for entire families and the elderly, so nobody's left out.
3. We are small, yet established enough to have personal relationships with the individuals in Eastern Europe who work hard delivering your boxes. For transparency, we also carry out spot-checks to confirm that the right people are receiving your boxes.
4. We believe that sending shoeboxes shows love from British people to those in war-torn or poverty-stricken circumstances, regardless of their background, colour, creed or religion.



Thank you for your support.

***Robin and Rosie Dawson***



***Holiday club history:***

Sally Kerr has been helping since she was a teenager. She writes: My children & I went to our first Holiday Club in summer 1989 organised by Christine Stopford. Based on "God's Gift: The animal", and with a song written by Philip Stopford, it even made it into the LBO when all kinds of animals ... cats, dogs, rabbits, hamsters and a grasshopper came into the church, and were blessed by Canon Anthony Hulbert.

Over the years, numerous people have taken responsibility for it: Rev'd Elaine [Constantine], Hilary Sczepanski & myself; Canon Anthony & Nicola; & so it goes on, with a 2 year gap only due to the Pandemic. But finally this year it was back.







Above: Wiggly Worms – to be caught with a pair of chopsticks.

Below Left: Throw a bag

Right: the Stretcher Game. All the groups enjoyed this. The older children carried their friends whilst the littlies carried “Teddy Casualties”!



## ***Around the Ouzel Valley Team***

***Eight churches, each special in their own way, but all being Christian witness to the whole community of Leighton Linlade & the villages of the Ouzel Valley***



A week of songs, games, crafts, and a play based on daily bible readings: The Lost Sheep; The Good Samaritan; The Two House Builders (Rock or Sand); The Talents; & The Lost Son/Daughter as it was told to the children.





## ***This month, Jungle Fever at All Saints***

*Successive generations of children have experienced the joy of exploring bible stories through drama, games, songs and crafts in the annual Holiday Club*

*(Photos by Sally Kerr)*

Thanks to all those who helped to make this happen, including music by Sian, ably assisted by Lindsay; all the actors; the team of ladies & George who made refreshments, generously donated by Morrisons; the shifty crew & set builders, team leaders, helpers, all those who make a week like this possible... too many to name – but each and every one invaluable.

An extra big thank you to Lindsay as coordinator, working all year round; & a special mention to Fr Grant who wrote the play pre lockdown ready for Holiday Club week 2020, which due to the Pandemic had to be held over to 2022.

***THANK YOU ALL.***

*Next year: Circus Time.  
Put it in your diaries now!*







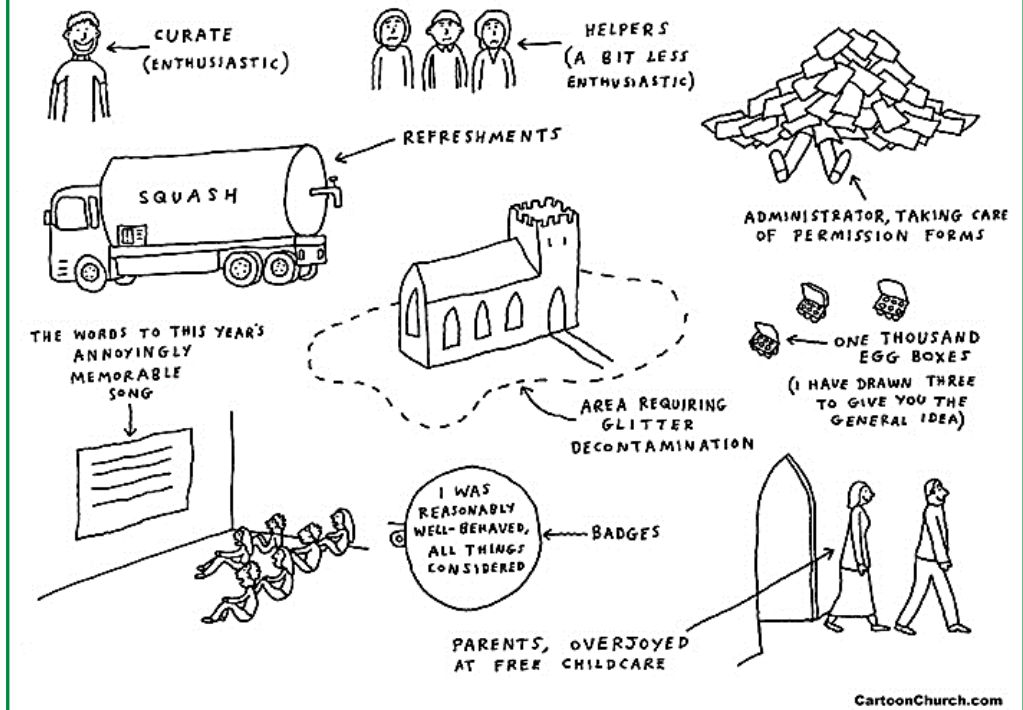
### The Jungle Fever Song

I woke up this morning,  
 Got out of my bed;  
 Looked in the mirror  
 And I got myself dressed  
 With a stretch and a yawn  
 And a scratch of my head  
 'Life is a wonderful thing,' I said,  
 'Life is a wonderful thing!'





# THE HOLIDAY CLUB





## ***Good Shepherd, Sandhills***

***Vicar: Rev'd Steve Marsh***

***Tel: 01525 838450***

***Churchwarden:***

***Steve Nixon***



**CHURCH of the  
GOOD SHEPHERD**

### ***Asking good questions***

My year is punctuated by three New Year markers. There is the 1<sup>st</sup> January calendar New Year, which everyone experiences. As a Christian, I mark the start of the church year with the season of Advent. Being connected to the academic schedule through my son and wife, the start of the school year in September is also an important New Year.

At the moment the CGS community and I are caught up in the start of the academic year. All of the CGS youth have moved up another school year. Some have started school and some have moved up to middle or upper schools. We also have a significant number of adults in CGS who are teachers or work in schools, for whom this is the start of a new work year.

As the CGS community looks to support those for whom the start of the academic year is significant, this 'New Year' invites us all to think: 'what is important for us to learn in our faith this year?'

Earlier in the year CGS moved to the Astral Park Community and Sports Centre, to connect with the Sunday morning sports community. In the Ouzel Valley Team, we all have the excitement of our new Pioneer Missioner, Tom Button, starting work with us all. Building on these two developments, this particular New Year for CGS will be about us learning to listen to the communities within the new estates to find out what people living there care about and what they would appreciate being invested into their communities. This will then inform CGS and the Ouzel Valley Team about how we can connect with these communities and be a vibrant and attractive Christian presence within them.

So many of Jesus' meaningful encounters with people in the Gospels start with Jesus asking people a question. To some Jesus asked very simple questions: 'What do you want?', 'What do you want me to do for you?' Sometimes Jesus asked for help: 'Will you give me a drink?' On other occasions Jesus asked people questions that invited a deep response 'Why are you afraid?' 'What are you discussing together as you walk along?' All these questions opened up a dialogue with the other person that enabled Jesus to connect with them and often led to a conversation that changed them.

As we start this particular New Year at CGS, one important skill we will be developing is to ask good questions to the communities in the new estates, enabling us to get to know them and engage with them as Jesus did with the people he met.

What will you be learning in your faith this particular New Year?

**Rev'd Steve Marsh**

## **St. Nicholas, Hockliffe**

**Vicar: Rev'd Noel McGeeney**

**Tel: 01525 237633**

**Churchwardens:**

**Brian Speller: 210565;**

**Roger Spalding: 07451 877501**



### **Through all the changing scenes of life, God is working his purpose out: we must accept change**

September is the start of autumn, and children and students everywhere will be receiving their exam results, and making changes to their lives, as they start a new school, college or apprenticeship.

This year the weather has been so warm, with the fruits of the earth giving the best they can, in extreme conditions, without much water. We have to adapt to a new way of living, whether we like or dislike the thought of having to change.

We are all different in many ways, but as Christians we listen to “God’s Plan” for us. To some people that maybe debatable, but life can change quite suddenly, which leaves us reeling! With Jesus, he knew what was going to happen to him. With us we have to try (however hard) to embrace whatever comes our way, and we either accept it or reject it.

We as a nation are very blessed and we must make the best of our lives, and thank God for whatever plans he has for us.

In St. Nicholas, we will be celebrating Harvest on the 9<sup>th</sup> October, with our usual service at 9.30 a.m. – followed by a Harvest lunch at 12 noon, which was very successful last year. Everybody welcome.

When I was school (a long time ago) we used to sing hymns every morning, and when writing this article, I was reminded of these hymns:

*Through all the changing scenes of life,*

*In trouble and in joy,*

*The praises of my God shall still*

*My heart and tongue employ.*

*God is working his purpose out,  
as year succeeds to year.*

*God is working his purpose out,  
and the day is drawing near,  
Nearer and nearer draws the time,*

*the time that shall surely be,  
When the earth shall be filled  
with the glory of God*

*As the waters cover the sea.*



**Carol Speller**



## ***St. Michael & All Angels, Billington***

***Vicar: Rev'd Steve Marsh***

***Tel: 01525 838450***

***Churchwardens:***

***Sandra Brewin 373644;***

***Julia Haviland 850380***



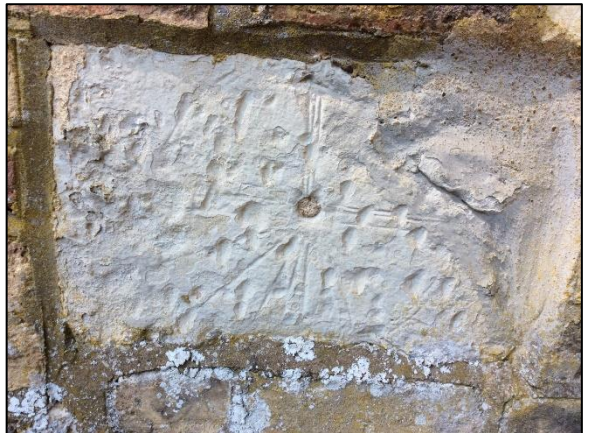
On 9th August, we had a good talk with Archdeacon Dave when he came to St. Michael and All Angels for the annual inspection. It was a helpful and encouraging visit, very pastoral in tone.

Naturally he asked how things were going in the church and we had very little to report apart from the fact that the congregation, although regular and committed, is small. One thing that the Archdeacon said to us very firmly was: "The Church is not money, the Church is people. If your congregation prioritises raising money rather than missionaries, your numbers will never grow ". He told us that in churches in which he has served, he insisted on spending most of the time at PCC meetings discussing mission, with matters dealing with fabric and funds given 20% of the time. Certainly something to think about.

A few Sundays ago, before the service began, Roger Collor seemed to be very excited about something. "Did you know that you have a Mass Dial on the side of the Church?" he said.

"What on Earth is that" we all asked.

"Come and look," he said. Sure enough, scratched into the stone on the buttress of the Church is a dial with a small hole in the middle. Apparently the priest in charge in the 15th or 16th century would put a stick in the hole and turn it to the time of the next Mass being said. Roger was excited because it's one of very few in the Diocese.



An event on 21st August will have happened by the time you read this article. Once again Julia Haviland is going to leap from the Spinnaker Tower in Portsmouth. (This is the second time she has made this jump.) She is raising money to build a reconstruction of the very first Riley car. On the day, all sorts of Riley cars will be parked at the base of the tower, encouraging people to donate to this project. People are also invited to sponsor Julia's brave act by donating to St Michael and All Angels. It is not too late to give even after the event. Julia's number is 01525 850380.

***Sandra Brewin***

## **St. Michael's, Eggington**

**Vicar: Rev'd Noel McGeeney**

**Tel: 01525 237633**

**Church Officers:**

**Carol Hart 384634**

**Paul Brown 751861**

*Rt: the Rose Window*



### **Not bats in our bell turret – but jackdaws!**

Having noticed that jackdaws appeared to be getting into the bell turret, we decided to see what was going on up there. No one could remember the last time anyone had managed to get up and through the small trap door into the bell turret.



Our local builder, Said, was able to set up a ladder then make a platform over the font from which another ladder could be placed and then into the bell turret. The sight that greeted us was a mass of twigs, which had built up over many years. Said did a great job cleaning out all the twigs and other debris, filling 20 black rubbish bags before putting up wire mesh to stop the jackdaws returning! So there maybe a number of jackdaws looking for a new home!

In the bell turret, there are two bells although only one, dated 1622, is ringable; the other, dated 1677, is cracked and therefore cannot be rung.

The platform above the font gave a good view down into the Chancel, and a close up view of the Rose window, (see above). This window is believed to date to the restoration of the church in 1882-3 following a serious fire in 1876.



On a very hot and windy Sunday in July, we had our annual cream teas, which was a tremendous success. It was so nice to see people coming and enjoying themselves not only with a delicious cream tea but being able to sit and chat. They were entertained with music and songs provided by Andy and friends. It was such a success that we almost ran out of scones! At the last count, we had raised £457. Our thanks go to all the helpers, including the Guides who provided table service, and to all who came along and supported us and enjoyed the cream teas.

Forthcoming events include the Hog Roast on September 3, the tickets for which must be purchased in advance on line. Also our Quiz evening on October 1<sup>st</sup>, who will be the quiz master, Andy or Martine? You will have to come to find out! You can book your place by telephoning Angela on 01525 210420.

**Paul Brown**



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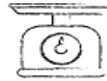


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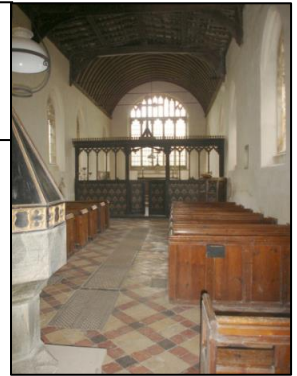


## *A Local Visit*

### *St. Mary's, Potsgrove*

Picture the scene: lunch is over and you feel like doing something with the afternoon.

Here's a suggestion: what about a visit to an almost secret country church just a few miles from Leighton Buzzard? It is in need of some friendly company and has a story to share with you, spanning perhaps a thousand years? I am talking of St Mary's church in Potsgrove.



Potsgrove or "Pottesgrove" as it is historically known, is a hamlet just a few minutes' drive from Leighton. Whenever I have been there, it has always been open. It is not an active church, although still consecrated. Closed by the diocese in the 1960s it was destined for demolition but a visiting delegation from The Council for the Care of Churches, which included Sir John Betjeman, prevented this from happening by declaring its history and architecture to be "too good to lose". And so it was handed to the Redundant Churches Fund to care for.

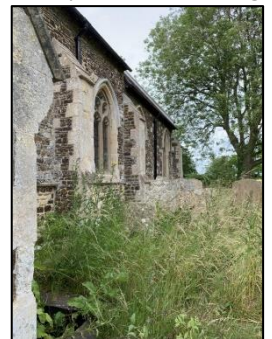


Last time I visited was in 2008 and I was amazed to see how good it looked, better than many "active" churches. It had well-tended stonework and roof, the grass had been cut, and inside all was neat and relatively clean and tidy.

My wife and I visited again this year in early summer and the contrast was most marked. With a hugely overgrown churchyard it was hard to find our way through long grass to the entrance on the north side. The porch door was unlocked as before, but clearly few had made their way there for a long time.

Inside it was cool and still and all was in order, but much dustier than before. Guttered candles on the altar signified worship there a long time ago, oil lamps hung from the ceiling festooned with cobwebs, the 14th century rood screen stood intact, its Victorian decorations still clear to see.

Above was the 19<sup>th</sup> century barrel roof. The glass in the church windows, a mix of medieval and Victorian, was letting in a mellow light. Some 16th century brasses glinted in the sanctuary.



Put an hour aside one afternoon to visit St Mary's and whilst you are there, pause and breathe in its past. It needs your company and it is well worth meeting. Take your camera along too.

**Terry Warburton**



## *... Learning* *by Roger Collor*

*A series exploring some of the ways  
we encounter God in the world and in our lives.*

Some of you may have heard that, for some years now, I have followed an American blog site that concentrates on the political happenings in that vast country. (The Palmer Report, if you really want to know. Google if you must but don't believe Wikipedia!) I wasn't in the least interested in American politics and fell upon it by accident, but sometimes it is quite riveting in what it comes up with. It is a left wing site, be warned, and its format is that a short article is written – rather like in this series here in Saints Alive – but then people comment on it. The articles themselves tend to be fairly mild opinion pieces but the commenters then often elaborate on them, delving into the detail and offering their own opinions, ranging from 'for' to very much 'against'. It's a format that is, I understand, not uncommon on the internet.

After some time, I began to realise that my knowledge of America in terms not only of its politics but also its geography, history and its actual political system of government were practically non-existent. I also began to realise that the commenters themselves were an interesting bunch and a few were just fascinating in what they could analyse. They often do it in great depth, sometimes building on the initial work of one of the others until, jointly, they have built up a whole compendium about a particular news item (in these cases, mostly about ex-President Trump!). I can't say that I now have a vast knowledge of America, but I now have enough knowledge – through the worthy endeavours of these dogged commenters, or I might now call them 'researchers' in the literal sense of that word, that I can form my own opinions about various aspects of the American scene – and about ex-President Trump!

You might now begin to realise that I'm going to draw a parallel here! At school, in my Religious Knowledge lessons, I was once reported as being 'Divinely Ignorant' – a phrase which I cannot argue with, for I found the subject totally uninteresting. But shortly afterwards, I did happen to read a fairly concise article about Saint Paul. Don't ask why!!

The article laid out that St. Paul himself had an intricate knowledge of the cultures of the different places he visited and the developing churches within them. Thus, he 'fine-tuned' his Christian message to the communities in which he preached, such that what he said made sense to those who were listening, and did not upset their cultural 'norms'. The final message was the same but the angles were different. I thought that was a very clever thing to do but was it right for him to do that? Was he correctly preserving the message?

Now, this thing laid dormant for some time at the back of my mind until I came across a book called 'St. Paul and his letters' by a Canadian, F.W. Beare. It's a 1960s book but it's still worth reading because it's based on a radio series of short articles, each devoted to one of Paul's letters. From there I bought individual books – commentaries – on Paul's Epistles and these analysed things in greater detail, giving me much more depth of understanding of what Paul was getting at and how he managed to get his meaning over to the different communities.

The thing is that in each of these two scenarios – the American blog comments and the Bible commentaries - I have become drawn in to a particular and specialised subject by using the knowledge and opinions of others. I would suggest that this is a form of 'learning', not necessarily the only form but certainly a labour-saving one because they, the 'commenters', are doing a large part of the work for me.

However! There is a danger that anything like this has bias. This is why I refer to this learning as only 'a large part of the work' because it is then necessary to take care to analyse what we have been reading.

It is easy to read my Bible Commentaries and learn from them but it is also necessary to apply the same critical thinking to them as I do to my American blog. If we are to be true Christians, we must ask questions of the information we are fed with. It is only then that we can truly 'learn'. We must be open to the opinions of others and to 'learn' to accept or reject them, but only after we have put in some appropriate work ourselves, to see what is really meant.

It is one of the means of encountering God, because we have to accept that God can encounter us through others, whether it is by listening to other opinions or by reading about them in books and other literature or perhaps in a discussion group. The person sitting next to you might just be the person who is motivated by God to speak words that help you to understand.

'Learning' is thus a complex accumulation of facts, be they other peoples' opinions that must be analysed – perhaps with outside help – or by simple 'truth or lies' scientific-type facts. Perhaps it is not so much 'Encountering God in Learning' as much as by us learning to allow God to encounter us so that we can learn more.

***Roger Collor***



## *The Buzzword*

Long live the queen!... a familiar sentiment, but in this instance... we refer to the queen bee, and her importance as summer turns to autumn.

September in the Bee Team's Great Brickhill apiary...and whilst we are still enjoying warm days and late summer holidays, the bees are already in winter mode.

They've had their queen laying as many eggs as possible since August to create the longer-lived 'winter bees', that will keep the colony warm during cold winter months, as they move with the queen in a cluster around the honey filled frames to feed.



Thus, the worker bees are now seriously harvesting every available food source of pollen and nectar they can find. No waste. Spill a drop of honey, and it'll be sucked up in a trice. The colony tries to fill all their available comb space with larvae and nutritious food stores.



The sensible beekeeper takes no more honey away from them this month, and even gives a helping hand by feeding sugar syrup if necessary. If, by the end of the month, you can lift the hive box an inch off the stand with one hand, they'll not yet likely have enough stores to last them till they can forage again in the spring.

Now is not the time to lose a queen bee, she is integral to successful wintering. She'll most likely continue to lay a few eggs, enough to keep the colony ticking over in January and February, as the winter bees slowly start to die off. A strong, healthy queen increases her egg laying around February, enabling a colony to build up quickly in early spring as they re-emerge.

So, thank you bees, for the harvest of honey that we have enjoyed, and happy foraging for your queen and her brood.

Long live the queen!

***The Bee Team***

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