

# 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*

**March 2023**

**70p**



*Some of our peal of 13 bronze bells hanging in the belfry*

## **Inside:**

Focus on All Saints Bellringers

Pulled apart: Lent Reflection with Mother Cate

Tour guide, Cultural Commentator or Prophetic Comic:

Steve Marsh looks at styles of preaching

Looking forward to Fair Trade Fortnight, MU "Make A Mother's Day",  
& the Schools' Easter Trail,

And making the best of a bad job –  
when struck by lightning, All Saints rebuilt better, in 1852!

# 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

### 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  
Katharine Reedy 07932 359815  
Frank Reedy 07777 659128

### Pioneer Missioner

Tom Button 07530 346700

### Churchwardens

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

### PCC Secretary

Judith Lakin pccsecretary@allsaintslb.org.uk

## 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

### Head Verger

Lindsay Bevis 01525 381418

### 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

Mark Jeeves treasurer@allsaintslb.org.uk

### 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

### Toddler Time

Julie Dolton 07954 148128

### All Saints Preservation Trust

30, High St, Leighton Buzzard LU7 1EA  
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; [stephenjury21@btinternet.com](mailto:stephenjury21@btinternet.com)

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# ***Pulled apart – reflection for Lent***

***By Rev'd Cate Irvine***



In March we continue our journey through the season of Lent and at All Saints we are exploring the season under the title “Pulled Apart”. Lent is traditionally a time for self-examination, looking at our lives and opening ourselves up to the searching gaze of God’s love. Perhaps to speak of pulling things apart can sound destructive, but sometimes it what we need to do to find out how things work.

It’s so easy, in every area of our lives, to fall into patterns and habits that go unexamined. We do things in the way that we always have and don’t think too much about it. That may be fine, but, like spring cleaning our houses to get to the bits that we don’t often manage, it is good to spring clean the soul.

The process of moving the furniture and getting to the dusty corners of our inner lives can, if we do it properly, be quite a painful process. It may indeed feel like being pulled apart as we open ourselves to the recognition that sin marks each of us in one way or another. Taking down the barriers that we have built out of self-protection, or just from habit, can make us feel vulnerable. That’s why it’s so important to know that, whether we are engaged in the business of pulling apart our habits to see if there are things we need to change in our lives, or whether something in the world has pulled us apart like it or not, all is held in God’s love.

We can be brave enough to pull things apart and look into the dark corners of our souls, not because God will approve of everything we do or believe, but because God knows and loves us. Jesus came into the world, not to save people who had everything sorted out, but to look for the lost, the anxious and the uncertain. We can confidently look at our doubts and our failures knowing that God’s love will gently draw us onward into a deeper knowledge and understanding, a deeper relationship with the one who created us and in whom we find the source of our being.

So this Lent, whether you are risking the venture of pulling apart your life to see what is there underneath your habits and routines, to reflect on what you believe and why or whether you are trying to make sense of a feeling of being pulled apart that is beyond your control, know that you are loved and precious to God.



The one who walked in the wilderness is with us wherever we go. And as we look to the cross, where death and new life are held in tension, we begin to understand that what may at first look like failure and shame can, through God’s transforming love, be the source of that resurrection life to which we are all called.

***Mother Cate***

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

### **All Saints**

#### **Sundays:**

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 Evening Prayer

1<sup>st</sup> Sunday: Choral Evensong Plus

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.

**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, Friday & Saturday 10am-2pm.

*Contact Details on Page 2.*

# Mothers' UNION

Christian care for families

Members of Mothers' Union in our team will be selling small gifts during the week before Mothering Sunday (11-19th March) to raise funds for:

## “Make a Mother’s Day”

The Mothers' Union raises funds for its projects by means of Make a Mother's Day ethical gift range. It is possible to purchase the gifts throughout the year but there is always a particular focus on Mothering Sunday by encouraging people to buy for or in memory of someone who has been an important influence.



Please see the Mothers' Union noticeboard in the north transept for details and personal stories of the successes in recent years.

More information from [www.makeamothersday.org](http://www.makeamothersday.org)

*After Mothering Sunday there will also be Easter cards for sale as well as small gifts. The proceeds of the sale of these items will be given to All Saints Church.*



## Musings on daily life

- ❖ 'Ecclesiastic' is material used to fasten a clergyman's robes.
- ❖ A day without sunshine is like, well, night.
- ❖ I am in shape. Round is a shape.
- ❖ I plan on living forever. So far, so good.
- ❖ I am having an out of money experience.
- ❖ What's the leading cause of dry skin? Towels.
- ❖ A cashew is a peanut with back trouble.
- ❖ A gesticulation is any movement made by a foreigner.
- ❖ What's a perfect gift for a person who has everything? Storage space.



# Parish Registers

## Holy Matrimony, January:

No Weddings

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

## Holy Baptism, January:

22: Harry Andrew Tricker, Hector Andrew Taylor, Kaleb George Ross Deathe

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

## R.I.P. January:

10: Monica Major at St. Leonard's; 17: Stafford Poole at Crownhill; 24: Michael Sharratt at Bierton; 27: Louis Chellenbron at St. Leonard's; 30: Ernest Kinnaird at Bierton; 31: Betty Harris at St. Nicholas

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

## Years Mind, March:

2: Frederick Fleming, Cecil Cleverley; 3: Madge Taylor, Betty Wille; 4: George Perry, Mary Dimmock; 5: Bunny Winter; 6: Keith Irvine; 7: Beryl Button, Ivor Prewett, Audrey Cooper; 8: Alfred Bolton; 9: Norman Rumbelow, Richie Prince, Raul Montanana, Dorothy Cleverley; 10: Florence Waddington; 11: Marian Wallis, Julia Bicknell; 12: Margaret Nash; 13: Sylvia Allsop; 15: Arthur Robinson, Bertha Raymond; 16: Walter (Jim) Dell; 17: Rodney Austin; 18: Amy Rumbelow; 19: Paul Hayes; 20: Cora-Anne Ingram; 21: John James Frank Scammell, Laura Maskell, 21: Peggy Heyward; 23: Susan Lennard; 28: Beth Durrington, Albert Inwards; 30: Norman Barnard, Richard Greensted, Malcolm Alder



## LEIGHTON BUZZARD MUSIC

### LIVE PROFESSIONAL CONCERTS

Leighton Buzzard Library Theatre, Lake St, LB. LU7 1RX

**Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2023 at 7.30pm**

### Alkyona String Quartet

Emma Purslow, Marike Krup *violins*

Claire Newton *viola*

Jobine Siekma *cello*

#### Programme to include

Haydn Quartet in G Op 76 No 1

Henriette Bosmans (1927)

Janacek Quartet No 2 (Intimate Letters)

*Making Music Selected Artists*



Please note: Book via TicketSource or at the door. 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: Rev'd Dave Heather, MBE***

***Office Manager: Mrs Alison Quick***

***Tel: 01525 372188***

***Website: [www.pulfordschool.org](http://www.pulfordschool.org)***

A church school for  
a whole community



Hundreds of  
children from  
Lower Schools  
all over town are  
looking forward to  
the Easter trail:  
**20<sup>th</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> March**





## The Gentleman Gardener

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## Eileen M. Naples

BSc., AMCST  
Ryecroft, Plantation Road, Leighton  
Buzzard, LU7 3HT  
**01525 377384, or 07774 901293**  
email: eileennaples50@outlook.com

## St Leonard’s Church Hall Heath and Reach

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Capacity approx 130  
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stleonardheath@gmail.com



36 High Street, Leighton  
Buzzard, Beds, LU7 1EA  
01525 372 204

## *Selections*

*Pet, gift and garden.  
Household, kitchen tools and  
electrical items.  
Calor Gas, DIY and repairs.  
Memorial.*



*selections\_pet\_garden*



## On a musical note.....



On Saturday, 18<sup>th</sup> February, well over a hundred people were treated to a magnificent recital of European organ music through the ages given by Sam Kemp. Sam has been our Organ Scholar since September 2021, and has become such a part of the musical life of the church that we are really going to miss him when he leaves in July to take up an Organ Scholarship at the Chapel Royal, Hampton Court.



He opened his recital with a lively performance of the Prelude from J.S. Bach's *Prelude and Fugue in G major* (BWV 541), a Barry Eglesfield favourite. Sam's careful phrasing and articulation were a real pleasure to listen to.

Next, we jumped back in time a few years to hear Georg Böhm's *Vater unser im Himmelreich*. It is likely that the young J.S. Bach was a pupil of Georg Böhm in Lüneberg. This was played sensitively and with much musicality.

A Stanford postlude was followed by the first of three movements from César Franck's *Prelude, Fugue and Variation*, played at a lively pace – too often we hear this piece dragging and with far too much rubato.

After two pieces from Louis Vierne's *24 pieces en style libre*, beautifully played, Sam concluded this excellent recital with three movements from Jean Langlais's *Suite Médiévale*. The music of this 20<sup>th</sup> century French organist and composer is not to everyone's taste, but whatever you make of it, you are forced to listen.

Sam generously requested that the proceeds from the retiring collection should all go to church funds. Well over £500 was raised. Thank you, Sam, and very well played.

On another matter, if you like your music to paint a vivid picture of the underlying text, don't miss the Liturgy of the Cross at 2 pm on Good Friday. We are hoping to sing the Sanders Reproaches with its poignant dissonances representing, inter alia, the pain of grief.

And finally, do come to Stainer's "Crucifixion" at 7 pm on Good Friday at All Saints. I am deliberately not calling it a "performance". It is offered by the combined voices of some of the town's choirs (Festival Singers, All Saints, St Barnabas, Heath & Reach, Church of the Good Shepherd and maybe others) as an act of worship. There will be no processing, no announcements and no organ voluntaries; "Crucifixion" and nothing else.

The two soloists will be our own Edward Price, and David Emerson, Director of Music at St Barnabas Church, Linslade. Sam will be playing the organ accompaniment. There are a number of well-known congregational hymns scattered throughout the piece so there will be plenty for you to join in with.

**Paul Dickens**

# Calendar of Events

27<sup>th</sup> Feb – 12<sup>th</sup> March

**Fairtrade Fortnight:** see page 22 for details.



1<sup>st</sup> March

**Lunch Club** in the North Transept, All Saints 1pm.

Tickets £5.00 available from the Coffee Shop.



5<sup>th</sup> March

Services as usual at All Saints including Messy Mass 11.30am

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



17<sup>th</sup> March

**Crafty Natter** All Saints 1.30pm - 3.30pm



11<sup>th</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup> March

**“Make a Mother’s Day”** to raise funds for Mother’s Union projects. See page 5 for details.



19<sup>th</sup> March

**Mothering Sunday**

Services as usual including All Age Communion

All Saints 11.30am



20<sup>th</sup> -24<sup>th</sup> March

**Schools Easter Trail** All Saints: see page 7

29<sup>th</sup> March

**Pulford School Passiontide Service** All Saints 10am

31<sup>st</sup> March

**Leighton Middle School Easter Services**

All Saints 11am and 1.30pm



# Leighton Buzzard Market

A thriving market for today and into the future

Every Tuesday & Saturday,  
8.30-3.00 with special events:

## March

- Tue 7 - International Women's Day stalls
- Sat 18 - Farmers and Producers Market
- Sat 25 - Handmade and Craft Market
- Sun 26 - Street Food Heroes visiting mkt

## April

- Tue 4 - Children's Easter event
- Sat 15 - Farmers and Producers Market
- Fri 21 - Visiting French Market
- Sat 22 - Handmade and Craft Market
- Sun 30 - Street Food Heroes visiting mkt

**LEIGHTON BUZZARD MARKET**



07812 088116

[markets@leightonlinlade-tc.gov.uk](mailto:markets@leightonlinlade-tc.gov.uk)



on ...

# All Saints Bellringers



*Looking up the spire from the belfry.*

*Anatolii Kushch in Ukraine  
with his adopted stray cat Kapsul*



No doubt you have all heard the church bells ringing before every Sunday service? The purpose is to call the faithful to worship. The bells are also rung throughout the year to mark important occasions such as weddings, special services at Easter and Christmas, New Year, national and local civic occasions, and are rung half-muffled to create a mournful sound on Remembrance Day.

We rang recently for Ukrainian Unity Day, which was particularly significant for us, as Anatolii Kushch, one of our former ringers, is now fighting on the front line defending his country against Putin's aggression. We pray for a just peace and his safety, and that he can return to ring with us once again.

We are a friendly social group, and regularly welcome visitors from other churches locally and across the country. We are always keen to recruit new people to learn to ring, to maintain an old English custom and service to the Church, which can also keep you active physically, mentally and socially.

The bellringers ring on Sundays from 8.55 am-9.30 am. Practice night is Monday at 7.45pm and visiting ringers and those wishing to learn are most welcome.

For more information contact Emma Birtles, Kevin Pughe or Barry Eglesfield.

***Kevin Pughe,  
on behalf of the Tower Team***

## *Groups and activities, sustaining the Christian community of The Ouzel Valley Team*



*Father Olaf's group from Sweden all came up to the ringing chamber to have a go at learning to ring*



*All Saints bellringers and visitors ringing at the Monday evening practice.*



***Good Shepherd, Sandhills***

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

***Tel: 01525 838450***

***Churchwardens:***

***Stuart Blofeld & Katharine Reedy***



**CHURCH of the  
GOOD SHEPHERD**

### ***Dealing with difference and being peacemakers***

What do Justin (an Anglican archbishop), Sami (a Palestinian Christian) and Ray (an indigenous Australian minister) all have in common? Apart from their Christian faith, they all feature in a course we're undertaking at CGS! It's entitled "The Difference Course". The brainchild of Archbishop Justin Welby, it is a course that explores what it means to follow Jesus in our complex and divided world, by seeing a transformation in our everyday encounters.

The Archbishop has a vision for us, the church, to be a reconciling presence in the midst of conflict. Navigating a divided and complex world can be hard. We encounter this challenge in our relationships, in our communities and in our wider systems and structures. Many of us long to make a difference, but often we don't know how to respond or where to start. This is why Justin Welby brought together leading practitioners and thinkers to create "Difference" which can equip us to cross divides, navigate disagreement, and in that way make our contribution to bring about a just and flourishing world.

This course is designed for both large and small groups, meeting online or in-person. It is held over five 90-minute sessions, entitled: God's Call, Crossing Divides, Navigating Disagreement, Practising Forgiveness, and Risking Hope. Drawing on some of Jesus's encounters in the Gospels, and the wisdom of expert peacemakers, the course identifies three habits that can transform everyday relationships. These are: practising being curious about the other's story, being present in our conversations and encounters, and reimagining the future of difficult relationships. The course gives participants the chance to develop these habits and start applying them to our own lives.

Going back to Sami and Ray: hearing of their experiences navigating their way through long-standing, fractured community relationships using these practices, has made a significant impact on those of us at CGS doing this course. As has reading afresh the accounts of Jesus's conversations with some of those outcast from the society of his day, in which we can see Him using some of these same practices.

There are big and small ways we can practise the habits of being curious, being present and reimagining the future, not just on an individual basis but together with others in community. Probably all of us can think of situations where we would want to see people be reconciled and united, rather than continue to exist with division and misunderstanding. This course is giving us the tools to make a start, with God's help, where we are. If you are interested in finding out more, get in touch! More information online at: <https://difference.rln.global/>

***Clare Nichols and Katharine Reedy***

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

***Vicar: Rev'd Noel McGeeney***

***Tel: 01525 237633***

***Churchwardens:***

***Brian Speller: 210565;***

***Roger Spalding: 07451 877501***



### ***Signs of Growth in the Village***

By the time you read this article there will hopefully be signs of spring in our gardens and the hedgerows beside the roads we journey along. There are already the green shoots of bulbs coming through in our garden that we planted last autumn, despite the recent icy cold ground. Growth in our churches is also so pleasing to see and be involved with. During late 2021/early 2022, Fr. Noel was sowing the seeds of a family service for the families of children he had baptized in his parishes. Last September we held our first Café Church in Eggington Village Hall. We have 5 families including 12 children. Our service is always on the fourth Sunday of the month from 3pm to 4pm. The worship team includes Fr. Noel, Roger Spalding (from Hockliffe), Linda Morris and Martine Tournay (from Eggington), and myself. We recently invited our Pioneer Minister Tom Button to join us. After four services we have developed a powerpoint that can be adapted for the theme, the songs and the story with time for prayer. The children particularly enjoy the craft activity and the refreshments; the parents even bring the most delicious home baked cakes. The children also get stuck in sweeping up the hall floor which has normally been sprinkled with glitter, stickers and cake crumbs. If any families are interested in coming to this service, please get in touch with Fr. Noel, Linda or myself.

Turning to the matter of the fabric of St Nicholas, the PCC recently met with Ann Wise (Advisory Officer) from the Diocesan Pastoral and Advisory Team on site at the church. Ann was very supportive and encouraging with our endeavours for fundraising and is putting all the wheels in motion to ease the faculty applications we will at some point make when we have raised sufficient funds. The cost of the first phase of the Quinquennial work is £115,000 plus professional fees. With a £10,000 grant secured from Beds & Herts Historic Churches Trust we have a long way to go but the PCC are pursuing various sources of grant funding.

With Fr. Noel on his three-month Sabbatical, the associate/retired clergy in the Team are supporting us in presiding at our Family and Parish Communion. Thank you to Canon Grant Fellows, Fr. Steve Davies and Canon Malcolm Grant.

#### ***Dates for your diary for key services and events at St. Nicholas:***

***Mothering Sunday: Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> March 2023, Parish Communion (Eggington)***

***Easter Day: Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> April 2023, Family Communion***

***Coronation Picnic: Monday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2023 (more details to follow)***

***Geoff Marchant***

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

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

***Tel: 01525 838450***

***Churchwardens:***

***Sandra Brewin 373644;***

***Julia Haviland 850380***



Well indeed, the infamous Billington Winter Walk was reintroduced at the beginning of February after a Covid pause of a couple of years. It meant that the 'Tina's Kitchen Team' was busy with breakfasts although the wintery conditions deterred all but the most intrepid of equipped walkers. Later in the morning, numbers mysteriously swelled, as breakfasts began to be served and some that claimed to be 'a little lame' then appeared with suspiciously clean boots. We're now considering a late summer ramble with tea to see if that's a more-popular alternative, so stay tuned for news. Nevertheless, the attraction of Tina's delicious platters effected a revenue of over £300 for church funds, so all credit to her team of providers (and generous givers!).

Christmas is but a memory now and all of Nobby's 550 Christmas trees were sold in a flash. Go for the 1000 next time Nobby! It's good to have the Baa Bar and the shop handy and not many in the village can now remember anything else. Nobby's is well signed from the road and it's a fairly safe turn into the farm drive. Not so for the church! Virtually hidden at the far end of Church Turn, itself on the brow of the hill, the PCC is discussing how to raise the awareness that a church is indeed there. Posters should be arriving soon to brightly add to the shiny new notice board on the roadside but, despite the mostly-unobserved speed limit, traffic whizzing by has no time to notice anything and there are no official 'council-type' road signs pointing to where the church is sited. Perhaps we can rattle the Council's cage?

It was a treat to have our new(-ish) Mission Minister, Tom Button to speak to us when it was our turn to host the Joint Villages '5<sup>th</sup> Sunday' service on 29<sup>th</sup> January. Tom spoke to a pretty full church and filled us in with his so-pertinent observations on the potential that still exists within the Ouzel Valley Team area to add to the projects that are already going on.

We're hoping that at some point this year, you might be able to hear our bell ring out again. It seems that it had a bad attack of laryngitis (the bearings have bust) and we are hoping that an Ellacombe chime can be installed. This will, in effect, be an electric hammer that will 'ting' the bell that will be fixed safely, instead of it being swung and 'tanged'.



However, scaffolding is necessary and this will move the cost up by several thousand pounds. We're exploring funding but it's the scaffolding that's over half the cost! Any offers??



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

**Vicar: Rev'd Noel McGeeney**

**Tel: 01525 237633**

**Church Officers:**

**Carol Hart 384634**

**Paul Brown 751861**



As I write this the weather has just taken another turn into cold wintery not quite sub-zero temperatures after a week or so of plus nine to twelve degrees. It is these changes which make the season, I believe, but I am still looking forward to slightly warmer temperatures once more when we get into March. But who knows, it might be a heatwave, it might be vicious March winds or snow storms the likes of which we have never seen before!

However, in November, we held a working party in the churchyard to plant lots of spring bulbs: daffodils, narcissi, snowdrops, crocus, and hyacinths... I am looking forward to seeing them all raise their heads through the grass and the gravel to show their beautiful colours and glorious brightness. At the moment, there aren't too many signs of them coming through, but the church year will progress into Lent through February and March when there are no flowers in church. However, if they are not out yet, then maybe they will come out in March and still be in flower for Easter at the beginning of April! A positive thought for sure.

On the fourth Sunday of Lent, 19<sup>th</sup> March, we celebrate Mother's Day or Mothering Sunday. I am sure that you all know that this observance originated in the Middle Ages, when children who had left their families to work in domestic service were allowed to go to their home – or “mother” – church. The journey home morphed into a spring occasion for families to reunite, which eventually adopted the custom of children picking flowers on the way home as a gift to their mothers.

So the new spring flowers which we planted in the churchyard may become the spring flowers to decorate the church – and give to mum! To finish, I looked for poems to celebrate Mothering Sunday and found this cute rhyme. It struck me that it could apply to our Mother church as well as our own dear human mums! See what you think.

*My Mother, my friend so dear,  
Throughout my life you're always near.  
A tender smile to guide my way,  
You're the sunshine to light my day.  
Of all the special joys in life,  
The big ones and the small,  
A mother's love and tenderness  
Is the greatest of them all.*

**Anne Sheppard**





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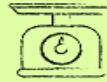


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## *An article from the Illustrated London News, 31<sup>st</sup> July 1852:*

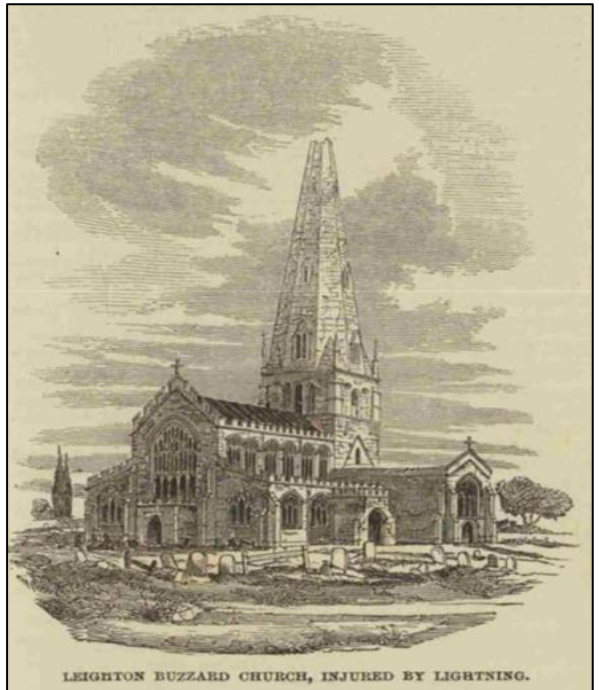
*All Saints has been struck by lightning more than once, most recently in August 2019, during Holiday Club. And, as we know from work done after 1985 fire, has more than once taken such catastrophe and used it as an opportunity to make better. Here is the report of an incident in July 1852:*

“In the great storm of Friday evening, the 16<sup>th</sup> instant, the spire of the parish church of Leighton Buzzard (so well known by travellers on the North-Western railway) was struck by lightning, and seriously injured. The electric fluid was attracted by the iron cross and weathercock on the summit; and, striking downwards from thence, displaced about twenty-five feet of the masonry; but from that point its progress was arrested by the conductor, and no further damage was done in this portion of the church. The massive stones, however, which fell – some few internally, but the greater portion externally – caused considerable havoc in each of the four limbs of this fine cruciform church. The chancel escaped most lightly; but the two transepts and the body of the church betray, in very many places, visible tokens of the damage done by the falling masses. Large stones dashed through the roof in all directions, carrying with them in their descent huge oaken beams and cross-rafters; and these, falling on the seats below, crushed all before them; in some instances penetrating even into the vaults beneath the flooring of the church. It is believed that the damage may be calculated at about £500; but the inhabitants of the town, naturally proud of their beautiful church, are resolved to restore it to at least its late condition, if not to take this opportunity for removing certain injudicious alterations, which tend neither to the beauty nor the convenience of the fabric.”

JULY 31, 1852.]

### LEIGHTON BUZZARD CHURCH.

In the great storm of Friday evening, the 16th instant, the spire of the parish church of Leighton Buzzard (so well known by travellers on the North-Western railway) was struck by lightning, and seriously injured. The electric fluid was attracted by the iron cross and weathercock on the summit; and, striking downwards from thence, displaced about twenty-five feet of the masonry; but from that point its progress was arrested by the conductor, and no further damage was done in this portion of the church. The massive stones, however, which fell—some few internally, but the greater portion externally—caused considerable havoc in each of the four limbs of this fine cruciform church. The chancel escaped most lightly; but the two transepts and the body of the church betray, in very many places, visible tokens of the damage done by the falling masses. Large stones dashed through the roof in all directions, carrying with them in their descent huge oaken beams and cross-rafters; and these, falling on the seats below, crushed all before them; in some instances penetrating





## ***Tell out my soul:***

*A series exploring how elements of our worship:  
what we do and why we do it.*

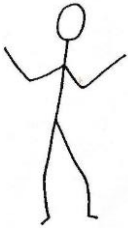
*This month:*

### ***Preaching ...***

***by Rev'd Steve Marsh***

Tour guide, Cultural commentator, Prophetic Comic: these are some of the roles that a preacher can fulfil. In this series, looking at preaching as a part of our worshipping life, I will unpack these three models.

#### **Tour Guide**



One way that a preacher can unpack scripture is to act like a scriptural tour guide. They can highlight the themes of a piece of scripture and then be our theological guide through it. They can draw our attention to the context of the scripture, its historical, political, social, and economical situation. They can introduce us to the characters, explain who they were and why they are important. The preacher can also explain where this piece of scripture fits into the overall story of the Bible.

Once the preacher has taken us on our scriptural tour, their job is to bring us back home safely. Help us to notice the elements that have caught our attention and to see what this scripture teaches us about God and how it informs our own faith journey.

#### **Cultural Commentator**

John Stott, theologian and minister of All Souls Langham Place, London, encouraged preachers to prepare their sermons with the Bible in one hand, and that day's newspaper in the other. Today, this is most likely to mean having both your Bible app and News app open on your phone whilst you prepare your sermon. John Stott's encouragement is a good prompt for our preaching to connect with our world today. However, as the recent discussions within the Church of England around same-sex marriage demonstrates, interpreting scripture for today's world is not always easy, though this shouldn't deter us from attempting to do so.

One helpful method for interpreting scripture for today is to ask 'What?' 'So What?' And 'What next?' Asking 'What' is like our scriptural tour guide, setting out the themes of scripture and its context. Asking 'So What?' is thinking about how the message from scripture matters to us today. Asking 'What Next?' is helping us to apply what we have learnt in our everyday lives.

#### **Prophetic Comic**

A development of John Stott's encouragement is for the preacher to prepare their sermons with the Bible in one hand, and a copy of Private Eye in the other. An updated version of this could be having your Bible app open on your phone and the BBC Radio 4 'News Quiz' or the TV comedy show 'Live at the Apollo' on in the background whilst you write your sermon.

At Vicar School, I wrote an essay entitled '*Comic as Prophet and Using Humour in preaching*'. I perceive that a comedian has a potentially prophetic view of our culture. Comics help us to see the unusual elements of our culture and often spot cultural shifts before they are commonly recognised. Sometimes comics even form and influence these shifts. The comic creates a liminal space, an in-between space, where the listener, recognising the truth in the comic's observations, is open to changing their viewpoint and worldview. This is exactly what a preacher is trying to do, especially a preacher with an evangelistic gifting. They are offering the listener an opportunity to move into a liminal space where they will hopefully move closer to God and align their worldview with God's values.

Jesus also used humour in his teaching, though because of the different context of Jesus' time and our over-familiarity with the Gospels, we often miss it. The theologian Kenneth E. Bailey in his book '*Through Peasant Eyes*' has a theory that many of Jesus' parables have origins in well-known stories of his time. However, Jesus often changed the ending in a way that would have been comical, memorable and attention grabbing. An example is the parable of the Prodigal Son. The idea of the Father running to meet the returning son, Bailey suggests, would have been hilarious to the original hearer, a bit like the idea of King Charles III doing break-dancing during his Christmas speech. Having caught the listeners' attention with this comical scene, Jesus then delivers the powerful, worldview-changing, grace-filled punchline.

Jesus' saying '*it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God*', Bailey also suggests, has lost its comic edge today. A contemporary translation, reviving its humour, is offered by the evangelist J. John: '*It is easier to get a Porsche through a revolving door than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of heaven*'.

Using humour in preaching has its pitfalls as people's humour can be very different and there is a danger that the preacher can be drawn into the role of entertainer. However, if you can gauge your congregation well, humour can slip into people's minds a truth that may not have been received otherwise.

My recommendations from my essay in using humour in preaching were that humour can be very helpful in engaging people and creating a liminal space where they are open to reviewing and changing their worldview. However, the use of humour should not become an entertaining distraction and should always be used in a way that enlightens and enchants people in their relationship with God, as I think all good preaching should.

I hope you have found this short exploration of preaching useful, and maybe even entertaining. I would be interested to hear from you about other models of preaching you find helpful.

**Steve Marsh**

*Illustrations for this series by Judith Muskett*



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