

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

November 2023

70p



Inside:

Faith and hope – a recurrent theme for centuries past

It's all about you – Steve Marsh seeks hope and assurance through his faith

CGS shares faith and hope to connect with their local community

A Pulford Governor reflects on '*Growing God's family, through faith, hope and love*'

Roger Collor describes how worship has changed in the last 750 years

All Saints Leighton Buzzard

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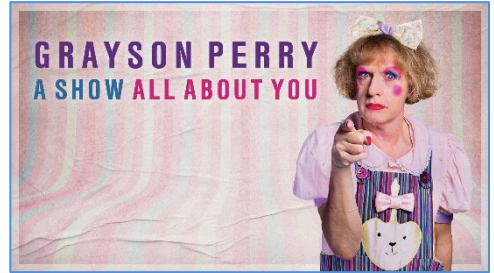
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It's all about you: *By Rev'd Steve Marsh*

Recently I went to see a live show by Grayson Perry, the famous English contemporary artist, writer, and broadcaster. He came to public attention by winning the Turner Prize in 2003 with his ceramic pots that explored issues of sexuality. He is also well known for his cross-dressing alter ego Claire. Earlier this year Grayson Perry became a 'National Treasure', receiving a knighthood, dressed as Claire!!

The show I went to see was called 'A show all about you' and looked at the elements that make up our identity. I was intrigued to see this show, because as a priest I assist people to work out their 'worldview' from a Christian perspective through sermons and teaching, and I wanted to see how Grayson Perry, as an artist, would assist people work out their worldview as a 'show'.



One critique Grayson Perry made about forming our identity was around the topic of certainty. He felt that a strong level of certainty has the potential to cause problems in forming an identity, personally and nationally, as it creates a very dualistic view on life, black and white, right and wrong, in and out.

I felt quite challenged about this, because as a person of faith I have nailed my colours to the Christian mast, presenting a level of certainty about my views on life and identity based on Christian teaching, ethics, and values. However, I could also see Grayson Perry's point and agree that a high level of certainty can cause unhelpful issues in society and discourage people from seeking to understand and have compassion for the 'other' who holds a different point of view from them.

In discussing this challenge with various friends, I felt reminded of the words from the book of Hebrews in the New Testament, Hebrews 11: 1 *'Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.'*

This verse helped me process the disquiet raised by that Grayson Perry's concerns about certainty and being a person of faith.

I feel that concentrating on the fact that our faith gives us assurance, rather than an unhelpful level of certainty, is a much more positive way of communicating my faith. Assurance does not express a dualism, an in or out, rather it talks of a hope giving confidence which is inclusive and attractive rather than exclusive or judgemental.

I pray that your faith brings you great hope and assurance and your expression of this is attractive and welcoming to those in our culture and society seeking and looking for hope and assurance in their lives.

Rev'd Steve Marsh

Our present pattern of services across the Ouzel Valley Team

All Saints

Sundays:

8am Holy Communion

9.30am Parish Eucharist

11.30am (usual pattern but can vary occasionally)

1st Sunday: Messy Mass

3rd Sunday: All Age Service

2nd & 4th Sunday: Holy Baptism

6pm Evening Prayer

1st Sunday: Choral Evensong Plus

3rd Sunday: Sung with hymns
(NO choir) followed by Benediction

2nd & 4th Sunday: Said Evensong

Weekdays:

Holy Communion

7.30pm Tuesday

(Service of Healing on 3rd Tuesday)

10.00am Thursday

9.00am Saturday

St. Barnabas, Linslade

Sundays:

8am Said Eucharist

10am Parish Eucharist

6pm Evensong

www.stbarnabaslinslade.uk

St. Leonard's, Heath & Reach

Sundays:

8am: Holy Communion

11am Holy Communion (in church & via Zoom)

1st Sundays: Family Service

Tuesdays: 7pm Holy Communion

Morning Prayer via Zoom:

9.00am Monday - Saturday

www.saintleonardschurch.com

St. Michael's, Eggington

9.30am 1st & 3rd Sundays: Holy Communion

St. Nicholas', Hockliffe

9.30am 2nd Sundays: Family Communion

4th 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:

1st Sunday: Holy Communion & CGS Juniors

2nd Sunday: 'In the Community', at Astral Park

3rd Sunday: Family Service

4th 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.

1st 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, 7.30 - 9.30pm.

Spire Coffee Shop: Tuesday, Friday & Saturday 10am - 2pm.

Contact Details on Page 2.

News Roundup

Fresh handmade Christmas door wreaths made by All Saints Florists, £25 each, all proceeds to the Church Flower Fund. Orders in by 26th November with payment please. We cannot accept any orders after this date. Please put your name and money into an envelope marked for the attention of Kerry Sykes and leave in the Parish Office.



Today I saw a man distributing poppies stop a lady and ask if he could reposition her poppy.

While doing so he told that lady she should wear the poppy on her left side (over her heart); the red represents the blood of all those who gave their lives, the black represents the mourning of those who didn't have their loved ones return home, and the green leaf represents the grass and crops growing and future prosperity after the war destroyed so much. The leaf should be positioned at 11 o'clock to represent the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month, the time that WWI formally ended.

On the other hand, the British Legion have always said there is no correct way to wear it, so long as you wear it with pride.

[From Parish Pump]



Worth a smile

Signs found outside churches:

- ❖ Church carpark sign...FOR MEMBERS ONLY. Trespassers will be baptised.
- ❖ No God – No Peace. Know God – Know Peace.
- ❖ Searching for a new look? Have your faith lifted here!
- ❖ Outside one church is a picture of two hands holding stone tablets on which the Ten Commandments are inscribed. A headline reads: 'For fast relief, take two tablets.'
- ❖ When the restaurant next to a church put out a big sign with red letters that said, 'Open Sundays', the church reciprocated with its own message: 'We are open on Sundays, too.'
- ❖ Come in and pray today. Beat the Christmas rush!



A Sunday School teacher was teaching how God created everything, including human beings. One little boy seemed especially intent when she explained how Eve was created out of one of Adam's ribs. Later in the week his mother noticed him lying down as though he were ill. The little boy explained worriedly: "I have a pain in my side. I think I'm going to have a wife."



A small boy returned from Sunday School in floods of tears. When questioned by his mother about his distressed state, he sobbed: "We sang 'Jesus wants me for a sunbeam', but I want to be a train driver!"

Parish Registers

Holy Matrimony, September:

2: Oliver Ward & Rosaria McDiarmid at All Saints;

23: Lee Rixon & Samantha Corkett at All Saints

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

Holy Baptism, September:

10: Charlotte Elizabeth Gallagher;

24: Isla Willow Wilsmore, Sookie Appalachia Sturridge,

Oliver Joseph Stewart, Ayla Karen Stewart, Gerard Leslie Hedges

'One Lord, one faith, one baptism'

R.I.P. September:

4: Ursula Smith at All Saints;

19: Philip Harding at All Saints

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

Years Mind, November:

1: Christopher Austin; 2: Doris Pughe; 4: Laurie Thompson, Revd. Len Lack; 5: Alistair Grant; 6: Janet Wood; 8: Eric Corkett; 9: Charles Wallace; 10: Andrew Audas, Alistair Cursons, Geoffrey Stopford; 11: Harold Palmer, Margaret Prewett; 12: Doreen Peck; 13: Edith Palmer, Leslie Cook; 14: Leah Perrott, Harry Jones; 15: Michael Munford; 16: Iain Smith; 17: Ray Croxford; 18: Eileen Sandifer; 19: Jim Jury, Snowie Mead; 23: Bessie Plummer, Revd. Peter Lymbery, Gillian Macfarlane; 26: Norman Johnson; 28: Derek Dykes; 29: Joan Bester



LEIGHTON BUZZARD MUSIC

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Saturday 25th November 2023 at 7.30pm

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Pulford VA Lower School

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Office Manager: Mrs Alison Quick

Tel: 01525 372188

Website: www.pulfordschool.org

A church school for
a whole community



Reflections from a School Governor

I love harvest time. The leaves start changing colour as the days get shorter, and I find myself looking forward to Christmas and the New Year and feeling grateful for so much. Within the school calendar, however, the new year has begun, and children are already settled into their new classes and routines. As a seasoned governor at Pulford School, I know our rhythm too. We visit the school and talk to the children about what they enjoy, we reflect on last year's achievements and consider areas to enhance over the coming year. We then observe and ask questions as the staff interpret these targets across many curriculum areas, all 4 seasons, and for every child's needs: not an easy task.

Three years ago, I heard a child read who was very behind his age-related expectations. The book had phrases like "Sam is on a seesaw". The pictures helped to suggest what the words might be. It became clear that he didn't know what a 'seesaw' was. Not only did the school need to improve his reading through targeted interventions, they also needed to bridge the gap in his 'cultural capital'. Here that would mean taking him to see a seesaw in real life. Fast forward three years and without knowing, I listened to the same child reading to me last term. I was impressed with his reading and pronunciation of words that I might struggle with at first glance. It was only during a reflective conversation with a teacher that I realised it was the very same child. What a journey he'd been on!

Whilst academic achievement will be life changing for a child's future, the overarching vision of the school points to gifts that will remain forever:

'Growing God's family, through faith, hope and love, dedicated to realising the potential of each person'.

This vision makes me consider how I use my faith, hope and love for the benefit of others. Do I show God's love when it is difficult? Do I demonstrate my faith and hope in Him when times are tough? Do I show gratitude to God for them, and thank those who have helped me on my journey?

I therefore take *this* opportunity to say thank you to the school staff, and also the Church who support so closely. They want every person to flourish by giving experiences, imparting knowledge and developing skills to help them in this lifetime and beyond. As a governor I am proud; as a parent I am eternally grateful.

Beci Morley



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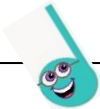
Selections

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



selections_pet_garden

On a musical note.....



What do jokes tell us?

We laugh at jokes all the time. Some are just amusing in their own right, and nothing more need be said. But often there is an underlying truth which forms the basis of the joke which we would do well to take on board. Here are a few musical jokes – you can decide if there's anything to be learned.

To be clear to the members of the choir and others, none of these is aimed at anyone in particular!!

Who needs a conductor?

An American choir had just arrived in Europe for a two-week tour. One hour before the first concert, the choir director became very ill and was unable to conduct, and the choir suddenly had to find a substitute. The choir manager asked everyone in the choir whether they could step in and conduct, and the only person who was willing was an alto on the back row.

The manager was very nervous about this. "We can't audition you," he said. "No problem," replied the alto. "There's no time to rehearse. You'll have to do the concert cold." "I know. It'll be all right."

The alto conducted the concert, and it was a huge success. Since the director remained ill for the duration of the tour, the alto conducted all of the concerts, getting rave reviews and standing ovations at each one. At the next rehearsal, the director had recovered, and the alto took her place at the back of the alto section. As she sat down, her partner asked her "Where have you been for the last two weeks?"

How many does it take to change a light bulb?

Sopranos - Just one. She holds the bulb and the world revolves around her.

Altos - None. They can't get up that high.

Tenors - Five. One to do it, and four to say, "It's too high for him."

Basses - None. They're so macho they prefer to walk in the dark and bang their shins.

Conductors - Nobody knows because no one was watching.

And finally:

Why was the choir locked out of their rehearsal room?

What do choruses use to pay for things?

What did the choir director say to the nervous singer?

What is the favourite TV show of the choir singers?

They missed the key change.

Har-money.

He advised her to b natural.

'The Sopranos'!

Paul Dickens

Smiley notes from melodysoup.blogspot.com



Calendar of Events

1st November

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

Tickets £5.00 available from the Coffee Shop.



All Saints' Day Holy Communion with hymns, All Saints 7.30pm

2nd November

Commemoration of All Souls Holy Communion, All Saints 10am;

All Souls' Service, All Saints 7.30pm



5th November

All Saints' Sunday Services as usual

including Messy Mass All Saints 11.30am

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



Festal Evensong All Saints

NOTE THE SPECIAL TIME OF 5pm

followed by soup and fireworks



10th November

Schools Remembrance Service

War Memorial 11am



12th November

Remembrance Sunday Services as usual

including Remembrance Service All Saints 11am

17th November

Crafty Natter All Saints 1.30pm



19th November

Services as usual including All Age Communion

All Saints 11.30am

24th – 26th November

Tree Festival All Saints. See opposite page for details

3rd December

Advent Sunday Services as usual

Advent Carol Service All Saints 6pm



*All Saints Parish Church
Leighton Buzzard*

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"twas on a starry night"

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Saturday 25th November 10am to 5pm

Sunday 26th November 12pm to 5pm

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



For over a year now we have been running a community drop-in on a Wednesday morning at Astral Park Community Centre. We are fortunate to be partnering with NHS colleagues from the Leighton-Linslade Health Connections team, who can point those people towards us who may benefit from a regular connection point.



During school holidays the focus is on children and families, providing a relaxed space with Lego, crafts, games & free refreshments.



Church of the Good Shepherd Connecting with the community

Our Sunday café has been going for even longer and provides hot drinks and snacks to the footballing community who are out on the field in force on a Sunday morning. On both Sundays and Wednesdays, all refreshments and activities are free of charge. (Those people who wish to 'pay it forward' can make a financial donation if they like but there is no obligation).



*Photos left page:
Wednesday Morning
Drop-in and
Holiday Drop-In*

Why do we do it? Because we believe in a generous God who has given us everything we need, and we want to share that loving hospitality with those around us. We want to bless our community in the context where we are and to provide opportunity for our CGS community, especially youth, to serve the wider community. Jesus went out to those on the edges. We aim both to represent Jesus to others and to serve Him in those we meet, recognising that all of us are made in the image of God.

Katharine Reedy



*Photos this page:
Sunday Café, including
biscuit decorating activity
for children of footballing
families.*

Good Shepherd, Sandhills

Vicar: Rev'd Steve Marsh

Tel: 01525 838450

Churchwardens:

Stuart Blofeld & Katharine Reedy



**CHURCH of the
GOOD SHEPHERD**

Walking in the fog – and remembering

Recently I went with three of my family members to Dunstable Downs for lunch out and a chance to admire the beautiful and inspiring scenery, as two out of four of us needed a bit of cheering up. The lunch was nice, but the view wasn't available because thick fog covered everything. We had to laugh – and then bring to mind what the view looks like at its best, knowing that the light was still out there somewhere even if we couldn't see it at that moment.

In life, it can sometimes feel as if we are walking in fog, not able to see the light or even very far ahead on the path. This can be lonely and discouraging. In our CGS church community we travel alongside others and look out for those who are struggling. There are times when any one of us is not able to see the light and that's when we – the church - can really help by drawing alongside and reminding each other of the reality of God's love. We bring to mind the light even when we can't see it. Hebrews 11 puts it like this:

“The fundamental fact of existence is that this trust in God, this faith, is the firm foundation under everything that makes life worth living. It's our handle on what we can't see.” [Message version]

At this time of year, on Remembrance Day, we think of those who have given their lives to defend our freedoms and protect our way of life. It reminds us of all we are grateful for and is a time of solemn reflection when we pay our respects to those who have made such sacrifices on the battlefield.

Remembrance Sunday is poignant, but as Christians, we remember every Sunday the greatest sacrifice of all. Jesus's death was a terrible event, yet his resurrection offers unlimited hope for the future. We might feel as if we are walking through the fog, with battles raging on all sides, but when we take communion together, we are reminded that no amount of darkness can overcome God's love. In the words of John 1:

“The Life-Light blazed out of the darkness; the darkness couldn't put it out.” [Message version]

That's something to remember and hang on to as we imagine and pray for a better future.

On Sunday 12th November we'll have a short service of remembrance with two minutes silence out on the football pitches at Astral Park. Please join us if you would like to.

Katharine Reedy

St. Nicholas, Hockliffe

Vicar: Rev'd Noel McGeeney

Tel: 01525 237633

Churchwardens:

Brian Speller: 210565;

Roger Spalding: 07415 877501



As the nights draw in, I always think of how my mum, would sit and read her poems and books. Looking through the bookcase, I found this poem (written by Helen Steiner Rice) which would be appropriate for this time of Remembrance.

A Remembrance Day Prayer

They SERVED and FOUGHT and DIED
So that we might be SAFE and FREE
Grant them, O LORD, ETERNAL PEACE
And give them 'THE VICTORY'!
And in these days of unrest,
Filled with grave uncertainty
Let's not forget THE PRICE THEY PAID
To keep OUR COUNTRY FREE.....
And so, on this REMEMBRANCE DAY,
We offer up a prayer-
May the people of ALL NATIONS
Be UNITED in THY CARE.



I have many memories of my father, wearing his medals, and announcing the names of the people on the board who died in Service.

We will be having our service in the Church on Sunday 12th November at the usual time of 9.30 p.m. followed by a procession from the lychgate up to the Commemorative War Graves, where the Last Post will be played, echoing over the fields.

Carol Speller

St. Nick's Supper **2nd December at 7.30pm** **at Hockliffe Grange**

Tickets £15 in aid of St. Nicholas Church, Hockliffe
Include supper, wine, music and good company.
Booking essential - please contact Julia Dickens
juliaedickens@gmail.com, 07791 394284 or 01525 210210

St. Michael & All Angels, Billington

Vicar: Rev'd Steve Marsh

Tel: 01525 838450

Churchwardens:

Sandra Brewin 373644; Julia Haviland 850380



Looking back to last month we can see how blessed we have been at S Michael and All Angels. Not only did the sun shine brightly and warmly for the Cream Tea last month but also the weather was so mild on 1st October that we were able to enjoy our Harvest Ploughman's Lunch outside in the Churchyard. David Thompson and Karl Jeeves had brought tables up from the Village Hall and set them out in suitable sunny spots. We helped ourselves to crusty bread, with a variety of cheeses and salads which were provided by members of the congregation.



As usual the congregation were very generous with their gifts for Harvest and many boxes of non-perishable food and toiletries were taken next day to the Leighton Linslade Food Bank.



The very next weekend the sun shone again for the Church and Churchyard Clear Up day (see photos). Several adults and children put their energies into the work of cleaning the church. Molly kindly tackled the dreadful job of polishing the brass lectern; David, Tina and James managed to reduce the four huge laurel bushes in size while Geoff Weldon and Mike Lennard opened up the view of Leighton Buzzard which can be seen from the WI bench. Isabelle dusted and polished the wood inside while Samuel helped his Nan and Grandpa. We are grateful that Rev Steve was able to join the workforce. All was organised by Julia Haviland who not only worked hard but also provided refreshments. It seemed important to us as we look forward to Bishop Alan who will be visiting us on 22nd October for the first time ever.

Next month we will be celebrating Remembrance Sunday on 12th November at 11.15am and I am sure in our hearts and prayers will be the wretched people of Palestine and Israel. It is to be hoped that by then some sanity will have descended on that war-torn part of the world.

Sandra Brewin

St. Michael's, Eggington

Vicar: Rev'd Noel McGeeney

Tel: 01525 237633

Church Officers:

Carol Hart 384634; Paul Brown 751861



A trip to remember:

I have just returned from a fantastic holiday in South Africa. I had no idea that it was such a large country, with so many different aspects to it. The countryside is completely different in every region, from fields of vines to forests of pines; mountains to flat ground for miles.

We started off in Cape Town, a very busy, cosmopolitan city with lots of lovely shops and restaurants in the V and A Waterfront. We went up Table Mountain - what a view - the ride up was a bit scary as the cable car turns as it is ascending to the top, but well worth the trip.

We went to the Cape of Good Hope where the Dutch first landed trying to find the Spice Route. It is the most south-western point of the African Continent.

The Botanical Gardens in Cape Town are amazing, with so many different plants and flowers, all so beautiful and colourful; and walked over the bridge in the middle of its jungle garden to get a fantastic view of Cape Town.

We went to the township of Langa, it is the oldest in Cape Town. Our guide had grown up here and now works to promote the local Arts and Craft Centre where people can learn new skills and promote them. The artworks and handmade jewellery were lovely.

We went whale watching in Hermanus, and saw lots of males and females with their calves. They come into the bay for a few months to feed the calves up for the long journey north.

One of the most exciting places we went was Kruger Park for a safari. We were so lucky, seeing elephant, rhino, hippo, lion, buffalo and leopard, all in their natural surroundings. Kruger is as big as Wales apparently, and you cannot see it all in a day. We had 2 days and didn't see it all but it did make you realize how small we are as a country.

We also visited the Zulu Battlefields, where lots of battles were fought over the land with the British Army. One site we visited was Isandlwana, where a great many lost their lives. There were piles of white stones all over the area, each marking a mass grave. There is now a permanent Memorial monument, and I was pleased to see that they are remembered by the Royal British Legion with poppy wreaths. The Zulus don't believe in monuments though they have one also, but they plant a tree as well.

We will remember our adventure for many years to come.

Remembrance Day service: 2.30pm on 12th November

with refreshments in the village hall after.

Carol Hart



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Tell out my soul:

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

This month:

The Story of a Congregation ...

by Roger Collor

It was a Saturday morning and market day. The beer was brewing in a wooden vat near the door and nearly ready for drinking. As the weather was fine, there were stalls inside and out, doing a roaring trade. Raised voices of the stallholders selling their wares mixed in with those of the farmer's hens awaiting sale. The farmer's stall also had meat and eggs. Inside, the baker had already gone – his bread went quickly, but the knife-grinder was still there on his monthly visit. In a corner, a few men were waiting for casual work, even though the harvest was not yet ready. It was a busy time here with the regular local stalls – and a noisy one!



The next day, all of the stalls were gone but there were even more people crowded in there, in fact most of Leighton Buzzard. Whole families were making the most of chatting together on a Sunday morning for this was the congregation gathered in the nave of All Saints church and the year was 1338, ten years before the Black Death struck. The church had been in use for 50 years now with the nave serving as the town's gathering place. The nave was the 'town hall' and was the responsibility of the townspeople whilst the chancel was the responsibility of the church authorities. The nave itself would have been bare of seating apart from a long stone bench against the south wall for those who were unable to stand (the origin of the term we now use for firms 'going to the wall').

On this Sunday, as with all Sundays at that time, the Vicar and his assistants would already be in the chancel and through much of the service whilst the gathered congregation continued their socialising. Then a chancel bell would ring three times. That meant that it was time for the people to break off and rush into the chancel to receive their communion, handed to them over a rough barrier erected to prevent their accompanying dogs from entering the sacred area of the sanctuary. In later years, those fences gradually became our altar rails.

The inside surfaces of these early churches - and All Saints would be no exception - would have been ablaze with colour. The arches and columns would have painted patterns applied but the main feature would have been the pictures of biblical scenes hand-painted on the walls by local or travelling artists. These would be used as teaching aids as preaching gradually came into more general use.

But here, there is a local mystery. Why was this church built with transepts to the north and south, each allowing for two side altars to supplement the main Sanctuary altar? Those in the South transept still exist but those in the North transept are gone although the 'piscina' drains for them can still be seen in the east wall. This would then allow up to five priests to concelebrate the Mass and cater for an even larger number of communicants as the local population increased. But the mystery deepens with the question of the presence and layout of the ancient chancel stalls. These were not originally made for All Saints but for a cathedral or monastic building. Why were they brought here? Was there a monastic community – including four extra priests - that we know nothing about, worshipping with the 'lay' congregation?



At that time, the present chancel screen was probably added, but then it had a 'rood loft'. As congregational singing was introduced, this upper-storey would house a rough orchestra of local musicians playing drums and viols, simple early versions of fiddles. The musicians would climb the stairs – parts of which you can still see cut into the south-east pier - and would accompany psalms set to a metric music.

As the years went by, and the Church of England took over the functions of the Catholic Church, sermons were preached from high-mounted nave pulpits – and these sermons were often of some considerable length and deep theology! It was perhaps the origin of the phrase “over my head”. Some pulpits even had an hour-glass (like an egg-timer) fitted and there are records of them being turned over for a second hour! Even if the Vicar became too tired, an assistant – eventually called a 'Reader' - was called upon to read out the Vicar's notes. Seating was introduced into naves, allowing congregations some relief but also making them more orderly and respectful of the occasion. Indeed, the wealthy could rent a pew, and provide cushions and other comforts!

The Puritan years of these middle times had painted over the bright colours of the walls, and by the later introduction of the new Prayer Book for the Church of England in the 17th Century, worshipping practices were already changing in now-recognisable ways. Non-Eucharistic services – Mattins and Evening Prayer (Evensong) then became more popular. Pipe organs became the more common instrument of choice, to support congregational singing more powerfully, often led by a more specific choir of singers. Stained glass artistry began to flourish once more and started to fill the educational gaps for lack of wall paintings. Later congregations became more involved, with smaller groups taking on specific duties whilst worship itself began again to swing to a more-eucharistic focus.

These days, our worship and service opportunities are almost limitless but whether we identify as a member of a large town or small village congregation, we know that we each bear a heavy responsibility. It is to assist in handing on the continuing work of our congregational forebears in centuries past so that those who are indeed our future congregations benefit from the rich lessons of history of which we are the guardians.

Roger Collor

Rise Up Campaign: 16 days of Activism to end gender-based violence and abuse



1 in 3 Women

will suffer from gender-based violence in their lifetime.

1 in 7 Children

will have lived with domestic violence at some point in their childhood.

This problem worsened during the Covid 19 epidemic as families were forced to spend more time together, isolated from the support of the wider community.

Each year Mothers' Union joins with 6000 other organisations in 187 countries in the UN 16 Days of Activism to End Gender Based Violence and Abuse. Beginning on 25 November which is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women until International Human Rights Day on 10 December, the campaign highlights all forms of gender-based violence and abuse, calling for its elimination. MU in St Albans diocese support 4 refuges by providing Christmas and Easter gifts for children and start up packs of domestic items (kettle, pans, utensils, bedding and towels etc) when women are able to move into their own home. This year our toddlers plus siblings raised a fantastic £118 to help those in need of the refuges.

There is more information about how Mothers' Union is enabling change in attitudes and behaviour around the world on the noticeboard in the north transept. Also there are leaflets about the Rise Up campaign against domestic abuse in the UK.

For more information and resources please see

www.mothersunion.org

or

www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/unite/16-days-of-activism

Alison Dobbie



Orange the World: The UNiTE campaign has proclaimed the 25th of each month as "Orange Day". A group of graffiti artists (all young women) painted orange murals in Zone 18 in Guatemala City in support of UN Women and the UNiTE campaign to End Violence against Women.

Photo: UN Women/Carlos Rivera

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