

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 2025

£1

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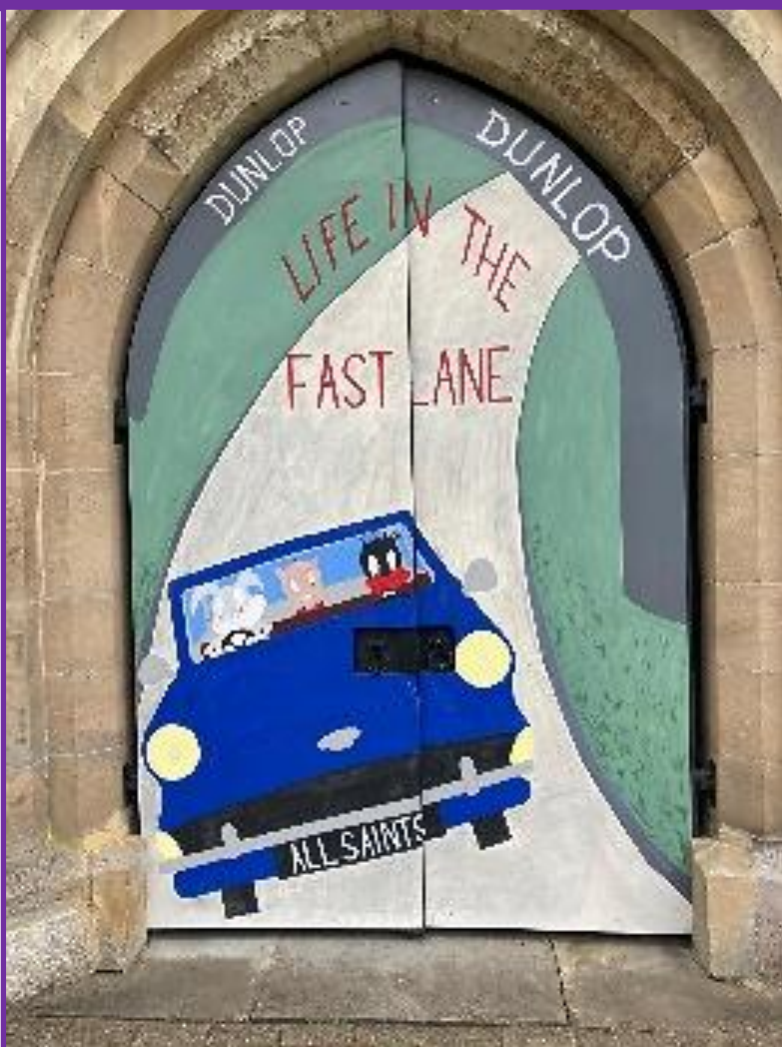
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in believing"
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from CGS



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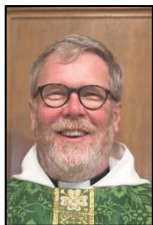
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Reflect God's love in your actions

By Preb. David MacGeoch

Dear All,

It is both an honour and a joy to stand before you today as the almost Team Rector of The Ouzel Team.

I do hope you are able to join us at All Saints Church on 14th September at 3pm, as we gather together as a community - one that is rich in history, diverse in its experiences, and united in our faith. As we reflect on the past months and look ahead to the future, I am reminded of the deep bonds that hold us together, not just as a congregation, but as a family in Christ.

As we enter the Autumn season, I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the incredible work that each of you does within our team. Whether you've been volunteering your time, supporting our outreach initiatives, or simply being a welcoming face to those who walk through our doors—your contribution matters. Your acts of kindness, your care, and your commitment makes Leighton Buzzard and our surrounding villages places where people not only feel welcome but truly feel at home.

We've had so much to celebrate in the past few months. From our vibrant Easter celebrations to the ongoing initiatives to support local charities, the generosity and spirit of this community never cease to inspire me. But perhaps, it's in the quieter moments—the small acts of service, the listening ear, and the shared prayers—that we see the most profound expressions of faith. As your new Team Rector, I am constantly in awe of how each one of you brings something unique to the table. From the youngest members of our church family to those who have walked with us for many years, your voices and your presence are vital. Together, we have shared laughter, challenges, triumphs, and moments of reflection that shape who we are and who we are becoming.

The summer is a time for rest, renewal, and refreshment. It is also a time to come together as a community to deepen our connection with each other and with God. I encourage all of you to take part in the events and services we have planned for the coming months. Whether it's joining a summer picnic, volunteering for holiday club, or simply coming along to our Sunday services, I promise there is something for everyone.

And as we embark on this Autumn, I want to leave you with a simple reminder. In every season of life, whether in times of joy or in moments of struggle, God is with us. We are never alone. His love surrounds us, and in Him, we find both rest and purpose.

So, let us continue to serve one another, to care for our neighbours, and to reach out in love to the wider community. Let us live out our faith in such a way that all whom we meet know that they have met people who reflect Christ's love in their words and actions. Thank you for all that you do. May this Autumn be filled with moments of peace, joy, and grace for you and your families.

Yours in Christ,

Preb. David, Team Rector of The Ouzel Valley

Our present pattern of services across the Ouzel Valley Team

All Saints

Sundays:

8.00am 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

6.00pm 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

10.00am Thursday

9.00am Saturday

(Service of Healing on 4th Saturday each month)

Morning Prayer:

9.00am Tuesday – Friday in the Chancel

St. Barnabas, Linslade

Sundays:

8.00am Said Eucharist

10.00am Parish Eucharist

6.00pm Evensong

www.stbarnabaslinslade.uk

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: 'Chapel Time':

Lead reflection and discussion

3rd Sunday: Holy Communion & CGS Juniors

4th Sunday: 'Morning Break':

Informal service with sermon and discussion.

Free pop-up café every Sunday from 9.45am

*Community Cafe every Wednesday at Astral Park
10am - 12noon with a Music, Rhythm and Rhyme
session from 10am - 10:30am.*

St. Leonard's, Heath & Reach

Sundays:

8.00am 1st & 3rd Sundays: Holy Communion

11.00am Holy Communion

1st Sundays: Family Service

Tuesdays: 7.00pm Holy Communion

Morning Prayer via Zoom:

9.00am Monday – Saturday

www.saintleonardschurch.com

St. Michael's, Eggington

9.30am 1st & 3rd Sundays: Holy Communion

4th Sundays: Café Church 3-4pm

St. Nicholas', Hockliffe

9.30am 2nd Sundays: Family Communion

4th Sundays: Holy Communion

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.

£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, 6.30pm Trebles; 7.30 – 8.30pm Full choir.

Bellringers: Practice on Monday, 7.30 - 9.30pm.

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

Saturday 10am - 12noon for drinks & cakes only.

Contact Details on Page 2.

News Roundup

The Coffee Shop reopens at 10am on Tuesday 2nd September.

*** **

Toddler Time restarts on 3rd September with morning sessions only. For more information, please contact the Parish Office.



Worth a smile

Book titles from Life in the Fast Lane:

Highway Travel by Dusty Rhodes

The Open Road by I. B. A Freeman

Winning the Race by Vic Tree

Why Cars Stop by M. T. Tank

Car Maintenance by Ivor Leak

What are Indicators by B. Emdubbyew

Winning the Grand Prix by N. O. Chance

Are We There Yet? By Miles Away

Fuelling Your Racing Car by Pete Trollium & Gus O'Lean



- 😊 Why do race cars make terrible comedians?
Because they're always racing through the punchline!
- 😊 What do you get when you cross a racing car with a spud?
Crashed potatoes
- 😊 Why did the bicycle not enter the car race?
It was too tired.
- 😊 What's the difference between a velodrome and a palindrome?
For one, you have to use a bicycle. For the other, you can use a race car.
- 😊 What do you get when dinosaurs crash their cars?
Tyrannosaurus wrecks.
- 😊 I was in a bar the other day, when a girl asked me, "what do you do?" I responded, "I race cars." Screeching with excitement, she shot back, "do you win many races!?" I sighed, "no, the cars are much faster..."
- 😊 You know you're a bad driver when Siri says, "In 400 feet, pull over, stop and let me out."
- 😊 I keep trying to watch the Grand Prix on my computer, but every time I press the F1 key, it just opens a Help window.

Parish Registers

Holy Baptism, July:

13: Zander George Roger Birdsey

'One Lord, one faith, one baptism'

R.I.P. July:

4: Laurence Webster at All Saints; 11: Margaret Winters at St. Mary's;

17: Eileen Naples at All Saints; 18: Graeme Lockhart at All Saints;

29: Catherine Morris at St. Leonard's; 30: Brenda Rock at Bierton; 31: Ida Karner at Bierton

'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, Bryan Gilbert; 5: Betty Hill, Jim Bright; 6: Brenda Burchell; 8: John MacDonald;

9: Les Wood; 10: Edith Boyce, Leslie Scheu, Edward Pyman, Milbrough Mary Morgan;

11: Peggy Wallace; 13: John King; 14: Rose Magee, Zoltan Bodacs;

16: Peggy King, John Tennant;

18: Stuart Mead, Leslie Howard, Vernon Jessup, Bryan Fleckney;

21: Jim Wright, Margaret Austin; 22: Frederick Whatling;

24: Joyce Pim; 26: Freda Goodger; 28: Sandra Keen;

29: William Brantom, Gordon Durrington, Maureen Comber; 30: Margaret Madigan



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On a musical note.....



Going for Gold

In the choir, we follow a medal system which allows trebles and adults to improve their musical knowledge and also to be able to showcase their growth over their time in the choir.



Trebles first join the choir as probationers, just wearing a cassock, and after a few months in the choir, take a test to be able to receive their surplice, symbolising their full admission into the choir.

The next two medals, light blue and dark blue, include singing tests and aural tests; these are assessed internally by our organist Paul. The final three medals are the RSCM bronze, silver and gold awards. All three are examined externally and the medal tests include singing, aural, and knowledge of the church and the bible.

So far, I have completed every medal up to the silver award, completing that one last November, and I am now preparing to move onto the gold award. For this I have to choose a hymn consisting of 8 lines, a psalm sung to an Anglican chant, a plainsong psalm and three anthems, all from lists provided by the RSCM. Some of the music I chose - the hymn "Love Divine" and two of the anthems "Hosanna to the son of David" (Weelkes) and "God is gone up" (Finzi) I already know from singing with the choir; but the two psalms and the last anthem I am having to learn from scratch for the exam.

The anthem I have picked is called "How lovely are thy dwellings fair" by Johannes Brahms. When I read the list of pieces that I could choose from, I realised that I knew one of the pieces, but I would rather learn something new to challenge myself with repertoire I don't often sing. This piece was recommended to me, and I've really been enjoying learning it as it's a beautiful piece.

Also for the exam, I have to complete aural tests such as clapping the beat of an excerpt of music played to you, and singing back a melody that the examiner plays for you.

The final part of the exam is your knowledge of the church and liturgy. I find this section of the exam very interesting because although I have heard lots of readings and gospels from sitting in services, I've learned lots of completely new things for every medal I have done.

I am going to take my gold exam next term so that I can complete my medals before starting to focus on my A-levels.

Olivia Olleson, Head Chorister



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Calendar of Events

3rd September

Lunch Club in the North Transept, All Saints 1pm.
Tickets £6.00 available from the Coffee Shop.



7th September

Services as usual including Messy Mass All Saints 11.30am

Bereavement Support Café

Coffee Shop, All Saints 2.30pm – 4pm



12th September

Bible Book Club, in the Saunders Room,
St Barnabas Church Hall 7pm
discussing the book of Isaiah,
chapters 1-9; 11-12; 20; 25; 28-30; 35-44;
48-49; 52-55; 58; 60-65
(Bible Book Club is a regular event at St Barnabas.
For details, please contact Fr. Bernard.)



14th September

Licensing of the new Team Rector for the Ouzel Valley Team Ministry
with Bishop Richard, All Saints, 3pm

19th September

Crafty Natter All Saints 1.30pm



21st September

Services as usual including Pet Service All Saints 11.30am



28th September

Morning Services as usual at All Saints – no evening service

Licensing of Bill Webb as a Reader St. Albans Abbey, 4pm, all welcome.

Good Shepherd, Sandhills

Vicar: Rev'd Steve Marsh

Tel: 01525 838450

Churchwardens:

Stuart Blofeld; Katharine Reedy



**CHURCH of the
GOOD SHEPHERD**

Resurrection Hope

Hebrews 6:19-20 talks about our hope in Jesus as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul.

Life has its rhythms, with ups and downs, and like a tide it ebbs and flows. We have to be able to survive dark and difficult times as well as celebrating light and joy. How do we hold onto that anchor? One of the things that can keep us grounded and secure is a habit and rhythm of prayer. Through this we are reminded that whatever is happening, each one of us is loved by God and he never leaves us.



Recently on one of our summer Sundays we focused on the Resurrection. We reflected on this through words, in our informal 'Chapel time' and also visually, through crafts and art. The Celtic-style cross shown here with the light shining through it is the work of one of the children who attended the craft session.

For our short service we used a form of Celtic daily prayer¹, which on Sundays celebrates the resurrection.

Together we reminded ourselves that Christ our King is risen from the dead, he is the resurrection and the life, and at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow. Although life may be tough right now, God's kingdom WILL come and he will wipe away every tear from our eyes (Revelation 21:4).

We asked the risen Christ to give us hope and finished with this blessing from Hebrews 13 verse 20, which has particular resonance for our church:

"The God of hope, who brought again from the dead that great Shepherd of the sheep, Jesus Christ, fill us with all joy and peace in believing."

And we pray the same for all of you too.

Katharine Reedy

¹ David Adam, "The rhythm of life: Celtic daily prayer." SPCK, 1996.

St. Nicholas, Hockliffe

Vicar: Rev'd Noel McGeeney

Tel: 01525 237633

There are no churchwardens at present.

For all information, please contact the vicar.



September is the beginning of Autumn, and with all the hot weather we've had, the plants and grass have suffered, but as the rain appears, for however short a period of time, everything begins to look a little fresher.

We need to refresh ourselves, not only by having a holiday, or a short break (if possible), or to try something new!

The village school had their end of year performance which was excellent, and we wish all the children moving onto another school the best of luck for the future.

Here at St. Nicholas Church, we will be introducing a special service (Cafe Church) for children and parents, and we would love to welcome everybody to come and join us. It will take place once a month on the 3rd Sunday, and starts on Sunday 21st September from 3pm till 4pm. Everybody is welcome (whatever age you are).

May we start Autumn with an open heart, so that we may listen to the Lord's words, and spread them near and far.

Dates for your diary.

Sunday September 7th: Cream Teas 2 – 4pm.

Sunday September 21st: Cafe Church 3 - 4pm.

Saturday October 4th: Pet Service 3pm.

Sunday October 12th: Harvest Festival 9.30am.

Carol Speller

St. Nicholas' Church, Hockliffe

21st September

Children's Service ages 4-9yrs

THEME

"One more step along the road we go"

Join us for songs and stories

3-4pm





on ...

The Growing Church

On the morning of Monday 11th August 2025, 103 eager participants were witnessed entering the church yard only to be met by road signs saying “FAST LANE”, being urged to keep to a speed of “30mph”, and being warned that those not obeying the limit would be named and shamed by the new “speed camera” installed further down the path.

Building on the legacy of stories and plays written and devised by Fr. Grant, Holiday Club 2025 promised to be yet another resounding success.



Entering “Life In The Fast Lane” via the West Door, the children were directed to their groups: Whistle Stop Wanderers, Pitstop Pals, Dazzling Donkeys and The Classic Car Company.

A series looking at youth work in our churches.
This month: Life in the Fast Lane
Summer Holiday Club

The children's crafts were based around the 5 Bible Stories: Luke 16.19-29 Dives and Lazarus; Luke 10.25-37 The Good Samaritan; Luke 15.1-10 The Lost Sheep/Lost Coin; Luke 19.11-26 The Talents; and Luke 15.11-32 The Lost Son.



The play took place in “Amos Motors” comically acted by Amos (Preb. David) and Joe (Fr. Dave). The characters acted out the daily Bible Readings using props from the garage before they both sat down to simplify that day’s story to the listening children.





Huge thanks for helping this year's holiday club to be a fun week must go to the many volunteers (too many to name individually!) for their amazing help, with special features: this year's theme song written by Ed Price; tune composed by Philip Stopford; backing track added by Paul Whittington; pianist and songs led by Sian Price; sound technician Phil Tingay; set designer Chez Pike; and the Gudgeon and Otterway families.

Very special thanks must go to Colin Fox for his excellent carpentry skills in designing the outside games and cars; to Lindsay, chief co-ordinator and boss; and as ever to Fr. Grant for writing the original stories and scripts for all these Holiday Clubs.

Sally Kerr

(Photos by Sally Kerr and Andrea Cox)

St. Michael & All Angels, Billington

Vicar: Rev'd Steve Marsh

Tel: 01525 838450

Churchwardens:

Julia Haviland 850380; Tina Thompson 378411



First a most joyful announcement. On 29th June Laura and Christopher Thompson were blessed with healthy twin boys, Arlo and Elliott. We send congratulations to them and our very best wishes also to the thankful grandparents, Tina and David.

In September we will be honoured and delighted to join a treasured member of the Ouzel Valley Team in celebrating her very special birthday. Molly Bowerman, for many years a Reader in the Team, is holding her birthday party with family and friends in Billington Village Hall. Molly is very dear to us at St Michael and All Angels, and we look forward eagerly to the times she takes part in leading the service.

We cannot thank you enough, Molly, for all that you have given us in prayer, in friendship and in being among our congregation.

Molly has asked for no presents but near to her heart is the wonderful charity Water Aid. She would be delighted to be able to mark her birthday by us all joining in giving a generous donation to this worthy cause.

As we have noted in previous pages, Billington is blessed with no less than 3 orchards. This year there is a bumper crop of apples and pears. During the autumn, the trees were pruned well by Reuben Redfern. Now in late summer some of the branches are breaking with the weight of fruit. We encourage you to forgo the supermarket apple for a season and come and help yourselves to this bounty.

On Sunday 7th September from 2.30pm all are welcome to a CREAM TEA in the Church and Churchyard.

Sandra Brewin

(photos of the orchards by Julia Haviland)



St. Michael's, Eggington

Vicar: Rev'd Noel McGeeney

Tel: 01525 237633

Church Officers:

Carol Hart 384634; Paul Brown 751861



July was a very busy month for us as we had a Hog Roast, which was very well attended, even though it was on one of the hottest days of the year! Many thanks go to Suzie and Ollie for letting us use their grounds and marquee. Our thanks also go to Richard Sears and his team for the hog and for cooking it so deliciously, and all the other people who helped to make the day such a success.

Two weeks after the hog roast, we had our annual cream teas in the churchyard. Thankfully it was a dry day (which was not forecast!) and it wasn't as nearly as hot as for the hog roast! It was very well attended and we all enjoyed the music provided by Roger Spalding and his group.

It is really nice when everyone comes together as a community to support events in the village and a great chance for new residents to meet and chat.

After a very hot summer, our thoughts are now turning to the mellow months of autumn. We are celebrating Harvest Festival at our 9.30am Service on October 5th. Donations of tinned and dried goods will be given to the Leighton Linslade Helpers.

Also, we are now taking bookings for our Quiz Evening on October 18th starting at 7.00pm with teams of up to 6 people. All places must be pre-booked as this is a very popular event. Tickets are £8.00 and will include a ploughman's supper but you must bring your own drinks and glasses. Please contact Martine on 07826 905009 to book your place.

Diary dates at a glance:

5th October: Harvest Festival

18th October: Quiz Evening

Paul Brown



**QUIZ
NIGHT**

Moving this Summer?



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All Saints Bellringers help to mark all the big occasions

All Saints bellringers have managed to ring for most of the important events this year. The tenor bell was tolled half muffled on Good Friday, and again to mark the death of the Pope.

We were delighted to be able to ring almost all twelve on Easter morning when we welcomed two unexpected visiting ringers who were passing through.



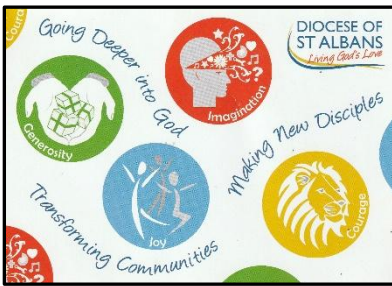
Recently we celebrated 25 years as a Priest of Preb. David, and all twelve bells were rung at the end of morning service to mark this auspicious occasion.

Finally, it gave great pleasure to ring for Kevin and Fiona's wedding, and recently the wedding of Saffron Pughe. Thank you to all those who support us.



Barry Eglesfield





Living God's Love

A series exploring
the St. Alban's Diocese Vision Statement

This month:

Courage

By Rev'd Alison Davies

It falls to me this month to address how we might “live God’s love with courage”. And so I wonder what we think of when we hear the word “courage”?

In an instant, I am transported back to the old hymns in my school hymn book: “*He who would valiant be*” and “*Onward Christian Soldiers*”. Courage is what is required when we are facing a battle of some kind.

Indeed, the Concise Oxford Dictionary offers this definition: *the ability to do something that frightens one or strength in the face of pain or grief*. To be courageous is to have courage or to be brave. We call a young child about to be vaccinated, “a brave little soldier” and offer them a sticker if they don’t cry too much! The fearsome diagnosis of cancer often invokes the use of the word “battle”.

The New Bible Dictionary tells us that the Hebrew word most commonly translated as “courage” means “to show oneself strong”.

When my husband Steve was ordained, some friends gave him a framed representation of the Lord’s charge to Joshua. It sits in our living room to this day.

[The Lord says] I hereby command you:

Be strong and courageous;

do not be frightened or dismayed,

for the Lord your God is with you – wherever you go.

Joshua 1 v. 9

Joshua was about to enter the Promised Land. He had taken on the mantle of Moses to lead the Hebrews into a new life and a new land. Although there was promise of “milk and honey”, here was an indication that life was not always going to be easy.

Perhaps contrary to popular opinion, choosing to be a Christian is not always easy. Being called into any kind of Christian Ministry is challenging. We need God’s encouragement to be strong.

Looking again at my old school hymn book, I note that there is a whole section devoted to “courage” under the umbrella heading of “Christian Discipleship”. There are 10 hymns. Some of them have definitely fallen out of favour but maybe we need a reminder that life in all its guises, religious or otherwise, can be taught and yet God can help see us through.

Only recently, a government minister suggested that our school children needed more “grit”!

Courage is required as we embark upon living as a follower of Jesus. Those of us who have been on this pilgrim journey for a long time forget just how difficult it can be to walk into a church and participate in a service. How easy do we make it for those “just looking”? People are given books and booklets but may have no knowledge of how to use them. Where do they sit? When do they stand? It can indeed be both frightening and bewildering.

It takes courage to explore what it is to know God. Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting at the side of the road. He called out for Jesus to have pity on him. Some told him to be quiet, but Jesus asked for him to be brought to him.

“Courage,” the disciples said to him *“get up; he is calling you”*. (Mark 10 vv. 46-52, Jerusalem Bible)

His desire to see again gave Bartimaeus the courage to address Jesus. He came close to Jesus and his life was changed forever.

The journey takes many twists and turns and is not always straight forward. Charles Wesley penned the words:

“Soldier of Christ, arise, and put your armour on; Strong in the strength which God supplies, through his eternal son”.

St. Paul gives us a very clear picture of what we must do in his letter to the Ephesians (chapter 6 vv. 10-17).

“What else is there to say? Just this: be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his power. Put on God’s complete armour....and stand firm”.

(You will have to read the whole passage yourselves!)

Again, the old hymns encourage us to persevere. *“Be our strength in hours of weakness, in our wanderings be our guide”* and *“Faint not nor fear, his arms are near”*.

At the beginning of this series of articles on Living God’s Love, Fr. Bernard wrote, *“going deeper into God is a risky business: it is safer to stay in the shallows”*. If we are to risk being devoted Christians, we need courage. We need courage at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of our pilgrim journey.

*Since, Lord, thou dost defend us with thy Spirit,
We know we at the end shall life inherit.
The fancies flee away! I’ll fear not what men say,
I’ll labour night and day to be a pilgrim.*

Percy Dearmer (1867-1936) after John Bunyan (1628-88)

Rev’d Alison Davies

***Saturday
13th September***

Can you join the team?

Join the All Saints team for the Bike 'n Hike on Saturday 13th September and get sponsored to have a day out walking in lovely countryside and visiting historic churches en route. We like to stop for a pub lunch too. We have not yet finalised the route for this year, but it may be part of the Greensand Ridge.



Last year All Saints Bike 'n Hike team, Abby, Chris, Emma and Katrina took the train to Bedford, walked 20 km on a glorious sunny day, visiting 13 historic and interesting churches. The route followed part of the John Bunyan trail, including the Bunyan Meeting church which was founded in 1650. It has the most lovely stained glass windows depicting scenes from Pilgrim's Progress and had a long association with John Bunyan. Other highlights included St Paul's and St Peter's. After strolling through beautiful parkland the team enjoyed a pub lunch before reaching Biddenham village where we were very warmly welcomed at St James's - a sweet Norman church with a fine stained-glass window celebrating the millennium. Then on to a pretty walk along the river Great Ouse and across a re-wilded golf course before heading back into town past an enormous Sikh temple before stopping at the Moravian Church.



They raised over £1,200 and were awarded a silver certificate. The sponsorship money is divided between Beds & Herts Historic Churches Trust which gives grants to repair churches in the two counties, and your nominated church. (i.e. All Saints for us). The Trust has been very generous to All Saints, giving over £120,00 to our church over the years.

Please let Katrina Grant know if you would like to join the team this year. It would be great if any cyclists would like to take part too. Sponsor forms are available to pick up in church.

Katrina Grant





REPAIR CAFE LB 2025 DATES



JAN 25	FEB 22	MAR 22	APR 26	MAY 24
JUN 28	JUL 26	SEP 27	OCT 25	NOV 22

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