

Saints ALIVE

Ouzel Valley Team
All Saints, Leighton Buzzard
St. Barnabas, Linslade
St. Nicholas, Hockliffe
St. Michael's, Eggington
St. Michael and All Angels, Billington
The Good Shepherd, Sandhills

March 2026

£1

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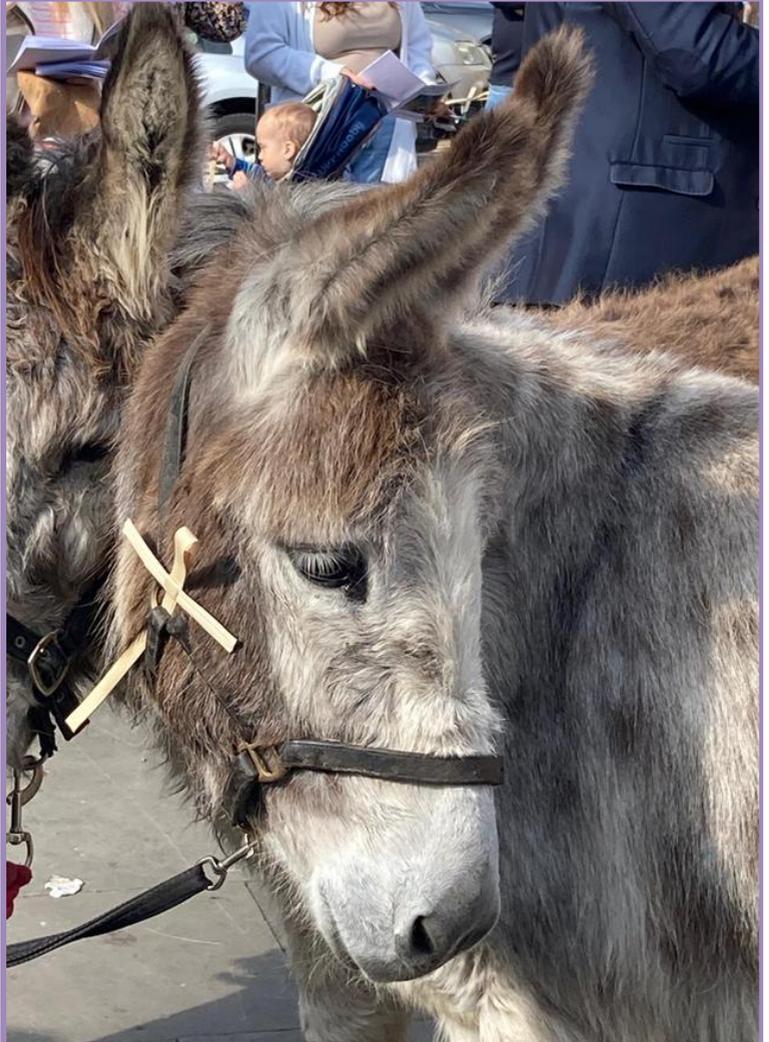
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All Saints Leighton Buzzard

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Come up to the mountain

By Rev'd Topé Aregbesola



“Now after six days, Jesus took Peter, James and John his brother, led them on a high mountain by themselves.” Matthew 17:5



Mountains in the Bible always symbolize a place of divine encounter, a place of covenant and a place of revelations which can also be referred to as the meeting point between humanity and divinity. There are over 500 mentions of the word mountain in the Bible. In the scripture quoted above, Jesus took His three close disciples to come up to the mountain and they followed Him without complaints or excuses, leading them to a life-changing experience of them witnessing the transfiguration of our Lord Jesus Christ. This shows the glory of God the father being revealed in the Son.

As we continue our journey of Lent this year, God is inviting us to come up hither to have a mountain-top experience, just like He invited Moses to come up to the mountain in Exodus 24.

That invitation led Moses to see the glorious majesty of God in the cloud on Mount Sinai and God spoke to him from the cloud. Moses and these three disciples of Jesus were ordinary men who responded to the invitation of an extra-ordinary God; and they witnessed His glory in an extra-ordinary way. Climbing the mountain requires determination, dedication and personal resolve to embark on the journey, just the same as we need to enjoy a close walk with God in this season and beyond.

We serve a God who is always welcoming His people to a deeper walk and closer relationship with Him. So as we continue in Lent, we are being encouraged to seek God in the study of the scriptures, in a life more devoted to prayer and meditation, alms-giving and charitable works, and worship in this season. In doing these, we too will encounter God in a unique and personal way which will represent our own mountain-top experience with God, though we do not need to go to any physical mountains like Moses and the three disciples.

‘The hour is now that those who worship God must worship Him in spirit and in truth.’ [John 4:23], not necessarily on physical mountains again.

And doing that, we can share the Joy of Eastertide with all our neighbours at the end of the season.

May the God of all grace supply us with all the needed grace and strength to go through the season and enjoy a mountain-top experience with God at the end through the merit of Jesus Christ our lord. Amen.

Fr. Topé

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

All Saints Annual Parochial Church Meeting 26th April 11am.

Please send your APCM Reports to the Parish Office as soon as possible.

*** **

All Saints Holiday Club 17th – 21st August – “Cornerstone Castle”.

Application forms available after Easter.

*** **

St. Barnabas will no longer be producing a monthly magazine. Instead, they will continue to use the weekly Cross & Crown newsletter, which is e-mailed to a circulation list, and posted on their website. However, there will be a monthly page in this magazine for St Barnabas; and if any subscribers would like to continue to have a monthly magazine, you are very welcome to subscribe to Saints Alive. Please contact: Stephen Jury 01525 381936; stephenljury21@btinternet.com



Worth a smile

A grandmother was taking her young grandson for a walk in the park. The daffodils were in bloom, and it was a beautiful spring day. Wanting to encourage her grandson’s spiritual understanding of the world, she said: “Doesn’t it look like an artist painted this scenery? Did you know God did all this?”

Her grandson replied: “Oh yes, and God did it left-handed, too.” In astonishment, the grandmother asked what he meant. “Well, He must have done,” said her grandson, “because we learned at church last week that Jesus sits on God’s right hand.”



An irritated mother complained to her friend: “When I was a kid, my parents sent me to my room without supper if I misbehaved. But my son has his own TV, smartphone and computer in his room!”

“So how do you handle it?” her friend asked.

“I send him to MY room!”



A teenager was always asking his parents if he could borrow the family car. Pushed to the limit one day, the father demanded of his son why he thought ‘The Almighty’ had given him two feet. Without hesitation, the son replied: “That’s easy, one for the clutch and one for the accelerator.”



Your child has started growing up when he stops asking you where he came from and starts refusing to tell you where he’s going.



“Just cleared out some space in the freezer” sounds so much more productive than “I just polished off another pint of ice cream.”

Parish Registers

Holy Baptism, January:

11: William Peter Valbonesi, Mila-Rose Belle Basta;
25: Evie Alice Alexandra Murray

'One Lord, one faith, one baptism'

R.I.P. January:

8: Wendy Lugsden at All Saints; 9: Susan Revis at All Saints;
14: Ross Cunliffe at Hemel Crematorium; 23: Charles Kaye at All Saints

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

Years Mind, March:

1: Ron Colbert; 3: Madge Taylor, Betty Wille, John MacGeoch;
4: George Perry; 5: Bunny Winter;
7: Ivor Prewett, Audrey Cooper, Jean Goodyear;
8: Alfred Bolton; 9: Norman Rumbelow, Richie Prince;
11: Marian Wallis, Julia Bicknell;
12: Margaret Nash; 15: Arthur Robinson;
16: Walter (Jim) Dell, Laura Fox;
17: Rodney Austin, David Wheeler; 18: Amy Rumbelow;
20: Cora-Anne Ingram; 21: Frank Scammell;
23: Susan Lennard, Muriel Chandler;
28: Beth Durrington; 30: Richard Greensted



LEIGHTON BUZZARD MUSIC

LIVE PROFESSIONAL CONCERTS

St Barnabas Church, Linslade, LU7 2NR

**Saturday 21st March 2026
at 7.30pm**

Trumpet & organ duo
**CRISPIAN STEEL-PERKINS
HILARY DAVAN WETTON**



Programme to include trumpet tunes and voluntaries by Purcell, Handel and Stanley, together with music by Haydn, Gershwin and Howard Goodall. There will also be solo items to demonstrate the range and colours of the organ by Couperin, Samuel Wesley and Karg-Elert.

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

A church school for
a whole community



Facing up to challenges

A question that Governors are often asked at formal reviews such as an OFSTED inspection is 'what are the current challenges facing your school?'. If I'm honest, as a naturally optimistic person, this is a question with which I struggle a bit. This is particularly true at a school such as Pulford where the vibe is one of love, fun and positivity.

But challenges there are, and it is one of the main roles of the Governing Board to identify them and plan strategies to mitigate them.

When Joshua Pulford, Vicar of All Saints, died in 1710 leaving money in his will to educate the poor of the parish he was identifying a need which still remains today. Pulford in 2026 has pupils from a huge range of backgrounds, including socio-economic. Ensuring that all pupils are offered the same opportunities from their education is one of the challenges which is fundamental to the school's vision and ethos. Indeed our Vision Statement is explicit in this regard.

***"Growing God's family through faith, hope and love,
dedicated to realising the full potential of each other."***

Vision Statements are all well and good, but what does this look like in practice? First and foremost, it is focussing on making sure the curriculum delivers for all. In common with all schools, we see an increasing number of pupils with Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) and English as an Additional Language (EAL) and this means strategic shifts in the way teaching staff are deployed and lessons structured. This needs to be monitored and reviewed constantly as pupils come and go and different cohorts present different priorities.

There are also specific examples of where offering the same opportunities to all can be challenging. On March 17th, children from years 3&4 have been given the chance to take part in 'Proms Praise', a mass schools event at the Royal Albert Hall celebrating hope and unity through music. For events like this, the school has to ask for parental contribution to meet the cost and for many of our families this is just not possible. So, to make sure that no child who wants to take part misses out, we put on a fundraising concert on 31st January in All Saints, which was a joyous occasion!

This was just one of many events supported or organised by the school's wonderful PTA which seeks to support the school in living its vision and ethos. For me, it gets to the heart of how we approach meeting our challenges - collectively and with God's grace.

Ed Price, Chair of Governors.



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On a musical note.....



Tenebrae explained

Lent, Passiontide and Holy Week have inspired some of the greatest music ever written, particularly choral music, and for choral singers Holy Week is usually the busiest time of year. Even when singing in cathedral choirs, as I did in both Birmingham and Durham, it can be easy for the true meanings of Jesus' betrayal, suffering and death to be lost amongst the business.

There was one service which we sang every year at Birmingham Cathedral, however, that I always left with both a great sense of musical satisfaction and a deep feeling of the sacrifices our Saviour made, and what they mean for us. This service was called Tenebrae (the Latin word for darkness), and it's been a great joy to bring a version of it to St Barnabas.

The original Tenebrae services were celebrations of matins and lauds for Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday, transferred to the evening of the preceding day. They usually concluded around the time that darkness was setting in, which is where the name comes from. They featured readings from Psalms and Lamentations which foreshadow Christ's Passion, and later in the service, readings from the epistles describing the institution of Holy Communion and Christ as the great high priest.

These services were widespread throughout the Roman Catholic Church for centuries, with a great tradition of music written specifically for them, but in 1955 a papal document restored the timings of matins and lauds on those days in Holy Week to their usual morning times with only a small allowance to move them to the evening before. By 1970, Tenebrae services had nearly died out with only a handful of churches still celebrating them, but versions of the service, typically considerably shorter than the original formats, are kept in various Christian denominations around the world.

There are two striking features of the Tenebrae service – one is the gradual extinguishing of 15 candles throughout the service. The second is a loud noise, the 'strepitus', made towards the end of the service representing the earthquake that followed Christ's death.

St Barnabas' Tenebrae this year will use readings for the evening before Good Friday, on Wednesday 1st April at 7:30pm. Everyone is warmly invited to join us to experience this unique service.

The music is all unaccompanied, my favourite way of singing in a choir, sung mostly by a group of invited singers alongside the regular St Barnabas choir. It is this unaccompanied singing that I think makes this service particularly affecting, allowing both the choir and the congregation to focus more closely in on the words being sung, and therefore their meaning.

David Emerson

Calendar of Events

1st March *Bereavement Support Café*

Coffee Shop, All Saints 2.30pm – 4pm



4th March *Lunch Club* in the North Transept, All Saints 1pm.

Tickets £6.00 available from the Coffee Shop.



7th March *Barn Dance* in aid of All Saints Preservation Trust

7.30pm at St Leonard's Church Hall. See P22 for details and QR code



8th March Services as usual at All Saints including *Civic Service 3pm*

15th March *Mothering Sunday* Services as usual at All Saints including *All Age Communion 11.30am*



20th March *Crafty Natter* All Saints 1.30pm - 3.30pm



St Barnabas Events

29th March *Open University Choir concert* 3.30pm

Zoltán Kodály: *Missa brevis* for chorus and organ;
Benjamin Britten: *Rejoice in the Lamb*



Wednesday 1st April *Tenebrae Service*

St Barnabas 7.30pm



5th April: *Easter Day.*

'Vigil' Service with New Fire and readings,
St Mary's, Old Linslade 5am.



Open Plate Giving

While we are grateful for all donations, we are trying to reduce the amount of cash that the Church has to manage. Please scan this QR code to securely donate to the Church on your phone – all donations are used to maintain the church and its services in the community. There is an option to increase your giving by Gift Aid if you are a UK taxpayer.



ALL SAINTS PARISH CHURCH

Holy Week And Easter

PALM SUNDAY 29th MARCH

8.00am Holy Communion

10.00am Procession with donkey from the Market Cross followed by Sung Eucharist*

6.00pm Stations of the Cross with Readings

MONDAY, TUESDAY AND WEDNESDAY HOLY COMMUNION

7.30pm Addresses by Rt Rev'd Richard Atkinson, Bishop of Bedford
and Acting Bishop of St Albans

MAUNDY THURSDAY 2nd APRIL

10.00am Holy Communion

7.30pm Sung Eucharist and ceremony of foot-washing
followed by Watch of Prayer until midnight*

GOOD FRIDAY 3rd APRIL

12.00 noon A time for reflection*

12.45pm -1.50pm Preaching on the Passion - Bishop Richard*

2.00pm - 3.00pm The Good Friday Liturgy*

HOLY SATURDAY 4th APRIL

9.00am A quiet service of reflection

9.00pm Easter Eve Vigil and First Eucharist of Easter*

**Services will be live-streamed on the
You Tube Channel, All Saints Church Leighton Buzzard*



EASTER DAY 5th APRIL

8.00am Holy Communion

9.30am Festal Eucharist for Easter Day*

11.30am Messy Mass for Easter Day

6.00pm Festal Evensong



on ... The Saints



St. David, or *Dewi Sant*, as he is known in Welsh, is the patron saint of Wales. His feast day falls on 1st March, and in Wales is celebrated with parades, traditional singing, poetry recitals, folk dancing, the wearing of daffodils and leeks, and the eating of bara brith (a Welsh tea bread) and griddled Welsh cakes (a spiced fruit bread, somewhere between a biscuit, scone and pancake). So who is the man that inspired this celebration?



David was born in the 5th century in the Welsh kingdom of Ceredigion (roughly in the area known as Cardigan Bay today). The story goes that his mother Nonita (St. Non) was a nun but fell pregnant as a result of a rape, leading to the birth of David. During her pregnancy, a local preacher found himself unable to preach in the presence of her unborn child, and this was taken as a sign that the child would become a great preacher. During Non's labour, the house she was in was reportedly bathed in light while the surrounding area was ravaged by a storm.

This month:

Saint David by Laurelin Burge

“Gwnewch y pethau bychain.”

“Do the little things”



It's said that when St. David died (thought to have been on 1st March 589AD,) the monastery was filled with angels as Christ received his soul. The current Cathedral of St. David in Pembrokeshire sits on this earlier monastic site founded by David himself. (If you are interested in learning more, our choir is planning a trip to sing at St. David's later in the year.)



David grew to be a renowned preacher and teacher and founded monastic settlements throughout Wales, the southwest of England and Brittany in France. At the Synod of Brefi, he is reported to have eloquently opposed Pelagianism, one of the leading heresies of the day - that we can save ourselves from sin, without the need for the grace of God.

The main miracle attributed to him occurred while he was preaching at that synod. Apparently, the ground ruptured and a hill formed where he was standing. A white dove, which later became the emblem of St David, came and settled on his shoulder. After this, his fellow monks appointed him to be archbishop of the region.

While renowned as a preacher, David was drawn to the simple things in life. The Monastic Rule of St. David, on which his monasteries were founded, was a simple life of asceticism. His followers refrained from eating meat – living off bread, vegetables and water. They were prohibited from using animals in labour – the monks were required to pull the plough themselves, and their days were spent in constant prayer and contemplation, focused on the spiritual life over physical comfort.

In his final sermon St. David said, “Be joyful, keep your faith, and do the little things that you have heard and seen me do”. Those words have gone on to become a famous Welsh proverb and greeting on St. David's Day: “*Gwnewch y pethau bychain*” or “Do the little things” - encouraging small, simple meaningful acts of kindness instead of grand gestures. So, this March, this Lent, be encouraged by St. David to do the little things, because little things can make a huge difference!



Laurelin Burge



***St Barnabas, Linslade
& St Mary's Old Linslade***
Vicar: Rev'd Dr. Bernard Minton
email: parish@stbarnabaslinslade.uk

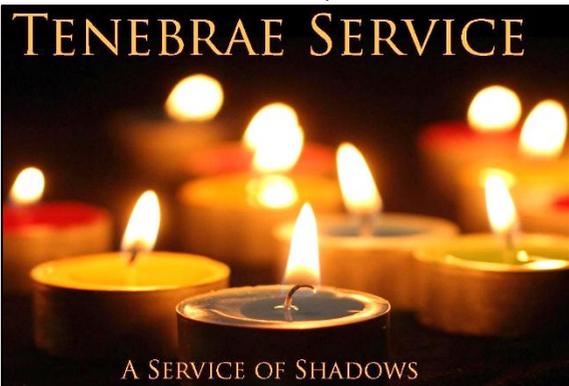


Across the Ouzel

With the sad death last year of our dear friend Pam Morris, editor of the Linslade Parish magazine for a number of years, Linslade PCC has decided not to continue to publish a paper magazine. Instead, we will rely on our weekly pew sheet 'The Cross and Crown', and regular updates on the Parish website and Facebook page. A few paper copies of the Cross and Crown are left at the back of St Barnabas each week, but it is also emailed by Fr Bernard every Saturday morning to all those who have requested it, and posted on our website. Please contact him if you would like to be added to that list.

However, we have also gratefully accepted Julia's offer of a page in Saints Alive, so that we can still reflect on recent Parish events, and publicise those that are forthcoming. With regard to recent events, the most noteworthy is perhaps our new Children's Service, held at 4 pm on the first Sunday of the month. The first one celebrated the Feast of the Epiphany, and we burnt some myrrh, and some frankincense, and shared out chocolate coins; much more fun than gold! On the first Sunday of February, we celebrated Candlemass, and waved glowsticks around in a dark(ish) church, while thinking about Simeon and Anna. The next one will be held on the 1st of March, and St David and Lent will be vying for our attention!

Other forthcoming attractions, aside from the Children's Service, include our Spring Jumble Sale at 2 pm on Saturday 7th March at 2pm in the Church Hall, and the Heath Band Spring Concert in St Barnabas at 7:30 pm on the same day. Tickets for that are £10 each. We have more trumpets a fortnight later on 21st, when Leighton Buzzard Music presents the acclaimed trumpet and organ duo Crispian Steele-Perkins and Hilary Davan Wetton in a concert at 7:30 pm in St Barnabas.



Lastly, a plug for a couple of Holy Week/Easter celebrations in Linslade. We will hold a service of Tenebrae on Wednesday 1st April at 7:30 pm (it's like a Holy Week version of the Advent 9 Lessons and Carols) and our Easter Vigil service will begin at 5am on Easter Day in St Mary's. All are welcome to both!

Fr Bernard

[See the music page for more about the Tenebrae Service. Ed.]

St. Nicholas, Hockliffe

Vicar: Rev'd Noel McGeeney

Tel: 01525 237633

There are no churchwardens at present.

For all information, please contact the vicar.



We are now once again into the season of Lent and are reminded of its penitential and reflective nature by our purple altar coverings. In our liturgy we say or sing the Kyries in place of the Gloria. We are reminded of Christ's temptation early in his public ministry. We are also reminded of his commitment to living out His Father God's declaration: 'This is my Son the Beloved, listen to him!' For forty days, we too are called to the observance of a holy Lent. I hope you are finding time to draw closer to God through prayer, fasting and self-denial; and perhaps by reading and meditating on the holy words of God in action in the Bible.

This month is also characterised by the beginning of Spring and many bulbs are breaking through transforming the bareness of our gardens. St Nicholas Church will be having an additional service for Mothering Sunday, the 4th Sunday of Lent (Refreshment Sunday), on 15th March at 9.30am. We hope that in addition to our regular Family Communion service on the 2nd Sunday of the month, we can welcome some new families from the village. As we celebrate the joy of family life and the importance of motherhood, it is even more poignant this year as the Mothers' Union celebrates 150 years of Christian influence.

The Mothers' Union is a women-led, international Christian movement dedicated to ending poverty, violence and social injustice in communities in the UK and around the world. Active for 150 years, with over 4 million members in approximately 84 countries, they work with people of all faiths and none, transforming lives, strengthening families and communities, and advocating for meaningful change. Rooted in kindness, faith and compassionate action, they strive to create a better future where everyone has the opportunity and resources to thrive.

This month the Liturgical Calendar also provides for the celebration of The Annunciation of Our Lord to The Blessed Virgin Mary. Let us ponder then the busyness of our village, the residents, the farmers, those who come here for their employment, those who drive through on the A5, their minds set elsewhere, and our Church family gathered on the second and fourth Sundays of each month in the church up on the hill.

In her encounter with the angel Gabriel, Mary herself pondered what sort of greeting Gabriel had for her. Yet she would become the Mother of Our Lord as we recall her wonderful 'yes'.

After fellowship with our parishioners, I look across the landscape in front of me from the top of the hill. I feel no less a sense of awe that Christians have gathered to share in worship in the village - to follow in the footsteps of Jesus whose Mother Mary said 'yes' to Gabriel.

Thanks be to God for all we do as part of the mission of the Ouzel Valley Team.

Geoff Marchant

St. Michael & All Angels, Billington

Vicar: Rev'd Steve Marsh

Tel: 01525 838450

Churchwardens:

Julia Haviland 850380; Tina Thompson 378411



Despite the constant rain the snowdrops and a few brave daffodils are appearing in the churchyard to encourage us to look forward to the better weather which surely cannot be too far away.

We hope the better weather will be with us by 21st March when the annual Spring walk and breakfast will take place. All are welcome to join us at the village hall at 8.00am for the easy walk round the village and then go to March House for breakfast which will be available from 9.00am. Those who do not feel like walking are still welcome at the breakfast and donations will be for the Church Fabric Fund.



On 8th February George Roff was baptised in church and a large congregation of family and friends joined the service. George is the great grandson of Clem and Beryl Adams who farmed at Summerleys Farm in Billington for many years and were keen supporters of the church. I understand George is the fourth generation of the family to be baptised at St Michaels & All Angels. We welcome him to the Church and wish him and his parents Lizzie & Joe the best for the future.

Marjory Grant has recently had a number of incidents which have led to her being in hospital at present. We hope she makes a full recovery soon.

We have to thank Michael Riley who kindly removed the metal stump which was creating a trip hazard in front of the Churchyard gates. This appeared last year, possibly as a result of the very dry weather (do we remember that time?) We think the stump must have been the remains of metal gates or a fence, but we have no record of this. It is good it has been dealt with and appreciate Michael's help.

As a conclusion to the long running saga of the Garden of Rest, it has now been arranged that Bishop Richard will be in Billington on 7th June to dedicate the new memorial wall. The old hedge has now been removed, and the replacement should be planted as soon as weather permits. With the support of our local councillor, Philip Spicer, Central Beds have agreed to contribute £500 towards the cost of the work.

Everyone is invited to join us on this occasion but particularly those who have relatives or friends interred in the Churchyard.

David Thompson.

St. Michael's, Eggington

Vicar: Rev'd Noel McGeeney

Tel: 01525 237633

Church Officers:

Carol Hart 384634; Paul Brown 751861



We are well into the New Year now and all the wonderful Christmas Celebrations we had at St Michael's are just a lovely memory. We have been through Epiphany and Candlemas and now are preparing for Lent. I wonder how many of you will have given up something for the season of Lent.

I always find it very difficult to think of something to give up, and this year is no exception, so I am trying to give up doing too much worrying about it and seeing where that leads me.

I always love the spring season and all the build up to Easter with all the promise it brings our way. New life springing up everywhere, spring flowers in the hedgerows and churchyard. Lambs in the farmers' fields all around us here in this area.

By the time you read this, we would have had our Quiz night on March 7th, and I am sure it will be a great evening in the village hall.

On March 15th we will have a Mothering Sunday Service at 9-30am.

I am sure there will be cake and flowers.

On Sunday April 5th we will have our Easter Day service at 9.30am.

The churchyard continues to look beautiful with the spring flowers coming up. The monthly working party members are worth their weight in gold, for all the work they do. The next dates for these are 14th March and 18th April at 10.30am for about 2 hours. If anyone would like to help, just turn up. You will be very welcome. Thank you to you all and Paul for organising it.

As usual we have a whole calendar of events planned to keep St. Michael's running smoothly, and we owe a big "thank you" to the small band of people who do this work behind the scenes to enable us to have a beautiful church and churchyard.

Events in Eggington:

Elevenes first Wednesday of each month.

March 7th Quiz Evening, 7.00pm, Village Hall.
Booking via Martine on 07826 905009.

March 14th Churchyard Monthly Working Party, 10.30 – 12.30am

March 15th Mothering Sunday Service, 9.30am.



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“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 their mother or someone who has been an important influence.

This year the focus is on the gift of Belonging that helps families flourish. Your gift of Belonging this Mothering Sunday can help families move from isolation and rejection into communities of care and hope.

Please see the Mothers’ Union noticeboard in the north transept for details and the personal story of Grace from Rwanda.

More information from www.makeamothersday.org

A Prayer for Mothering Sunday

Father God, we thank You for mothers and caregivers in our own lives, and in the lives of all those we love. We thank you for their strength and dignity, for their attentiveness and care, and for the love that underpins all they do.

We pray for the safety of mothers around the world. We ask for your protection for mothers trying to raise their children in places of conflict, food insecurity, or abuse.

We pray for all who work to support mothers in their duties, including the staff and volunteers furthering the work of Mothers’ Union.

Please equip them with strength and wisdom to persevere in carrying out their good work. Please equip all mothers, in our own lives and around the world, with the grace and fortitude to meet the challenges of each day. We pray that you would protect them, strengthen them, and heal them. May you grant them the peace that surpasses all understanding, this day and always. Amen

All Saints Parish Church
MOTHERING SUNDAY
March 15th

HOLY COMMUNION - 8am
PARISH EUCHARIST with
Sunday School - 9.30am
ALL AGE COMMUNION - 11.30am
STATIONS OF THE CROSS - 6pm

All are welcome at any of our services.



Getting to know your clergy in a different way

***This month:
Rev'd Topé Aregbesola***

“Arrested from the womb”

The journey of my life has been a unique and interesting one which can be described as Grace personified and for that I give all glory, honour, praise and adoration to the almighty God whose hands have brought me this far. I was born in Ekiti state, in the southwestern Nigeria to the AREGBESOLA family. My father was a military officer and my mother a trader. I am the fifth of six wonderful children of my mother, but my father had other wives with other children.

Growing up was fun with my siblings and step-siblings but my life was unique and different from other children as I see them around me. The first thing I personally observed as different about me has to do with my appetite and interest. What other young people find interesting does not always interest me; and the ONLY things that give me real joy and peace of mind are things that have to do with God and His church, to the point that my friends called me a Church Boy or Pastor from a very tender age.

A profound event that I can never forget is a story told to my family and myself several years ago.

An elderly woman came to our house to share with my mother something that really surprised her about me: according to her story, our local church was having a harvest thanksgiving service. As usual, the whole church was packed full with members and invited guests, and the guild of stewards (or sidesmen and women as we call them in our churches here) had to send the children out of the church to make space for the adults to have seats. One woman had also taken her baby out, to look after her baby because it was crying during the service. This woman was surprised to see me very upset with the fact that we were sent out of church and that I said, “How can they send us out of our father’s house?”. I immediately gathered all the children together, right outside the church, and started to preach and pray with them. She finished her story by saying she was more blessed and happy listening to the little boy, and she refused to go back into the church. This was me at age 4, can you imagine? What could I possibly be saying to the innocent children like me who were gathered and listening to a novice. According to the storyteller there were about thirty children that day, between the ages of three and ten years old, and all of us seated on the concrete stairs of the church. Ministering at age 4! When my mother heard this story, she then decided to tell me that there was a prophecy given to her when she was pregnant with me, that I will be a Priest later in life no matter what kind of job I choose to do. This is why I describe myself as *“a man who has been arrested from the womb”*.

So, unlike other children and young people who could enjoy playing football and other extra-curricular activities after school, the only thing I enjoyed doing after school was either going to church or being engaged in one mission work or the other. As a matter of fact, I was going to church every day of the week, as I was in Drama group, Choir, Youth fellowship, PCC at age 13 and engaging in all sorts of activities in the church; and I found them absolutely fun and fulfilling for me. In my Primary and Secondary school, both teachers and students always call me Pastor. At University, even though I was studying an Engineering course, which was always very demanding, I didn't miss my attendance in the Anglican Students' Fellowship, of which I later became one of the most prominent members of the leadership on campus.

This leads me to the second uniqueness of my simple journey: the fact that I have never attended any other denomination, except by invitation to a function, and I always return to my Anglican church thereafter. I have always been a very proud Anglican.

After graduation during my national youth service in the far Northern part of Nigeria, I located the Anglican church and worked with the Diocesan Bishop in leading services in one of the churches in the Diocese. I joined the Anglican Corpers' Fellowship and later became the president of the fellowship. I also became a Church Warden when I moved to Lagos; and served as the youth coordinator in one of the churches in the Diocese of Lagos West. This was the church I was attending, and God came again to remind me of His divine agenda, for me to become a Priest.

So I put myself forward to go through the selection conference and, to His glory, I was selected to attend the Immanuel College of Theology for my theological education. I was made Deacon in 2019 and ordained as Priest in 2020. During this period, I was the vicar of a small church, and God really worked with us to expand and grow the church before I relocated to the United Kingdom as part of His divine agenda for our lives and ministry.

For my work experience, the first place I worked at was in the Judiciary where I served as a Clerical Officer; then I worked as a teacher in a Secondary school; and later was employed by the Government as an Air Traffic Safety Systems Officer in the Aviation industry, and also a support Worker with Children and Young people.

Therefore, with the little I could share about my journey in life until now, one will agree with me that indeed I am *"grace personified"*, and *"a man arrested from his mother's womb"* to fulfil divine agenda here on earth.

Just as God said to Jeremiah: *"Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you; before you were born, I set you apart and ordained you as a Prophet to the nations" [Jer 1:5]*

God Bless you.

Rev'd (Engr.) Topé Adewale Aregbesola.

**All Saints Preservation Trust
invite you to our fundraising**

BARN DANCE

**Saturday March 7th at
St Leonards Church Hall**

**Ticket price £15.00 to include Ploughmans
Family tickets on request**

**Dancing to commence at 7.30pm
Bring your own drinks and glasses**



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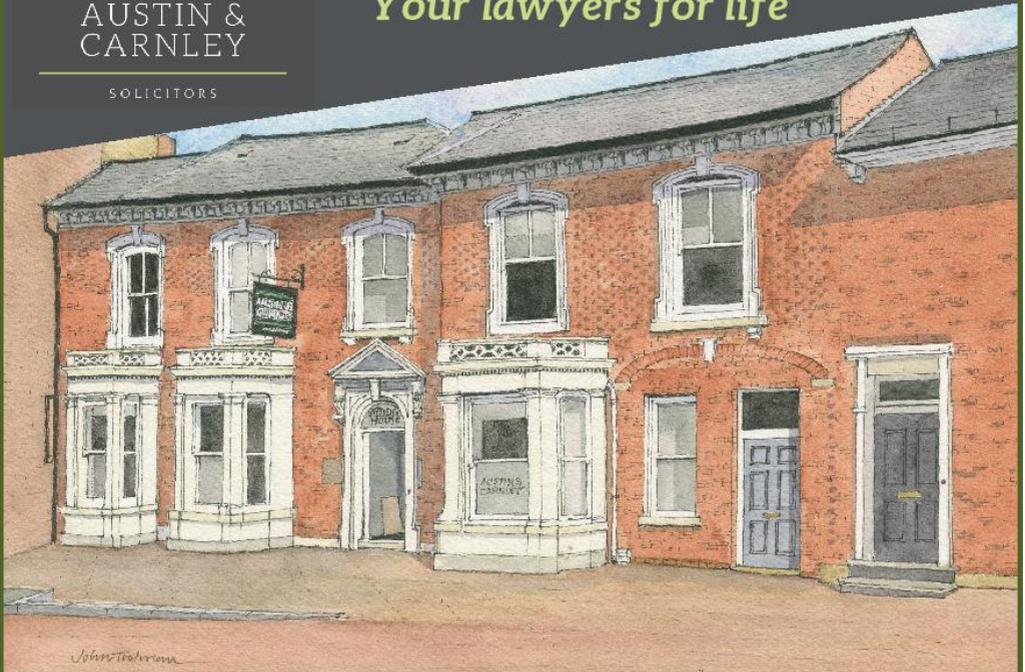
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