

# SOLIHULL PARISH NEWS

**800**  
YEARS OF  
CHRISTIANITY  
IN SOLIHULL  
**2020**



# SERVICE TIMES IN ALL THE TEAM CHURCHES

## St ALPHEGE - The Square, Solihull B91 3RQ



**SUNDAYS** 10.30am Parish Eucharist in church

To book call the Parish Office 0121 705 5350  
or email [office@solihullparish.co.uk](mailto:office@solihullparish.co.uk)

*The Church is open on Thursdays 10am-12 noon for private prayer.  
(Access for 10 people at a time)*

## St HELEN - St Helen's Road, Solihull B91 2DA

**SUNDAYS** 10.00am Eucharist or Morning Prayer (said)  
6.00pm Eucharist or Evening Prayer (said)

Please book online: <https://www.trybooking.com/uk/eventlist/sthelsenueucharist>  
or phone Beryl Moppet on 0121 705 0337



*The Chapel is open on weekdays 2.00-3.30pm for private prayer.*

## St MICHAEL - Bryanston Road, Solihull B91 1BS and Sharmans Cross School, Solihull B91 1PH

The St Michael congregation is currently worshipping jointly with the St Helen congregation at St Helen's Church on Sundays at 10.00am and 6.00pm. Booking arrangements are shown above.



*St Michael's Chapel is open on Wednesdays 9.30-12 noon for private prayer.*

## ONLINE - [www.solihullparish.org.uk](http://www.solihullparish.org.uk)

<b>SUNDAYS</b>	9.15am	'The Junction' service on Zoom Please contact <a href="mailto:L.hicks@solihullparish.org.uk">L.hicks@solihullparish.org.uk</a> for details.
	10.00am / 10.30am	One of our main Sunday morning services will be streamed live online - see website for details.
	6.30pm	Sung Evensong, streamed live from St Alphege
<b>DAILY</b>	12 noon	Midday prayer (not Sundays)
<b>WEDNESDAYS</b>	10.00am	'Dwell' reflective service, broadcast from St Michael's Chapel
<b>FRIDAYS</b>	9.30am	Praise & Play

Recordings of past recitals and services are also available via the website or social media channels.

### WEDDING AND BAPTISM ENQUIRIES

Please contact the Parish Office:  
[office@solihullparish.org.uk](mailto:office@solihullparish.org.uk)  
0121 705 5350 / 0121 270 9740

**If you need help of any kind, please do phone the pastoral care helpline: 0121 661 6343.**

One of us is on duty each day.

# *C o n t e n t s*

<b>Editorial</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Roundabout</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>News from Team Churches</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>St Alphege</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>St Helen</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>St Michael</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>The Guardians of St Alphege</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Music Matters</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Pioneer Diary</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Church for Families</b>	<b>23-26</b>
<b>Youth Stuff</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Let us Pray</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>Matters of Faith</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>For Your Diary</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>Address Book</b>	<b>48</b>



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**Want to email the Editor?**

[parishnews@solihullparish.org.uk](mailto:parishnews@solihullparish.org.uk)

*Cover picture*

**'The light shines  
in the darkness'**

# *H e a d l i n e s*

<b>News from St Alphege CoFE Schools</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Looking after St Alphege Churchyard</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Mysterious Person in a Muddy Mess</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Purple for Polio</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Mothers' Union</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Taking the Long View</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Stories for Bible Sunday</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Should Christians Care about Climate Change?</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>The Earth is the Lord's</b>	<b>41</b>

# ***Editorial***

*My Dear Brothers and Sisters,*

## **Worshipping online**

It is now my privilege to have been licensed as your SSM Associate Priest here in the parish of Solihull for several weeks. As most of you will know by now, I was licensed back in July by Bishop Ann, via Zoom. And, whilst this was not exactly how I had envisaged my licensing, this 'online' world is something that many of us have had to learn quite a lot about over the last six months or so. We have had to find new ways to work, to contact loved ones and, in our case, to share worship with our brothers and sisters in this parish, and beyond. A huge amount of work has been put in by so many people across the parish, to enable us to offer worship on both a daily and weekly basis.

For those of us who find using IT a challenge, and I include myself in this number, the curve has been not so much a steep one, as practically vertical! I for one shall be eternally grateful to Isabel Baumber, who has led me through the world of Zoom, WhatsApp, Enabley and all sorts of other amazing 'Apps'. And yes, as well as some anxiety about my lack of experience, there has been joy in the process too.

We have been able to share worship with so many people online. Perhaps among them, those who would not make it to church on Sundays, but who have been able to access our services via Facebook. We are told to preach the Gospel to each generation. And it seems that we have discovered a new way to do this which, I suspect, will play a part in our ongoing mission in years to come. That does not mean that we will cease to meet on Sundays in church obviously, but that we may be able to reach those who, for whatever reason, cannot be with us there. Surely a positive thing.

## **The year that never was**

My youngest daughter coined a phrase the other day, something that really struck a chord with me, but perhaps not in the way that she intended. She said "2020 mum, the year that never was".

As Christians we experience God's story, and our own, through the yearly festivals and feasts, times of deep reflection and times of great joy. The seasons are marked by different colours in our churches, Green for ordinary time, Red for Good Friday, Pentecost and the feast days of Christians martyrs, Purple for Lent and Advent and, of course, White or Gold for the great celebrations of Christmas, Epiphany and Easter. It is the pattern of our year, familiar, comforting and deeply spiritual. We experience it with our hearts, our minds, our souls and our eyes.

The colours of the year remind us vividly of those who have gone before, and those to come, as we share that continuity of worship. This year we were not able to physically come together for much of Lent, and not at all for Easter or for Pentecost. And that has been a source of great sadness I know. On Easter Day though, many of us were able to watch a very moving service led by Fr. Simon and Sarah from their garden. The Christian year, with its message of hope and salvation, continued. And many of us were able to mark the great feasts and festivals by tuning into our online services.

So perhaps it is not so much "the year that never was" as "the year that was really different". And yet, we continued to worship, we continued to be a community of faith.

## Shine as a light in the world

We are very aware that it has not been possible for everyone to access these services. And the staff and ministry team are acutely aware of this, and have tried and continue to try, to think of as many ways as possible to maintain contact with members of the congregation in other ways. And we, as part of the universal church, will continue to find ways to 'come together' if not always physically, then certainly spiritually. We are, as we have ever been, the body of Christ. Joined with Christians throughout the world in Christian love, through and in Christ. Whether at home or in church we continue to worship as one, united as members of the universal church. Covid 19, as awful as it is, simply does not have the power to separate us from the love of God, or the love of our fellow Christians.

As we look towards the coming Autumn and Winter, perhaps it is worth remembering that, at the very darkest time of the year, we celebrate the coming into the world of the light of Christ. When at the turning of the year, we remember how God turned the world on its head and changed everything. And perhaps this is a good time to remember that wonderful verse from the Gospel of John.

*The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. (John 1:5)*

Together or apart, online or in person, may we continue to be beacons of that light for all people.

Sue

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## A Harvest Prayer-Poem

+

Lord, there are many of us,  
We thank you for farmers and sound farming;

Lord, there are many of us,  
We thank you for Harvest produce of every kind;

Lord, there are many of us,  
We ask for wisdom to protect our climate and our soil;

Lord, there are many of us,  
We remember those whose harvests sadly fail;

Lord, there are many of us,  
We are lifted up in heart by the fruits of your faithfulness;

Lord, there are many of us,  
We are in awe of your goodness ~ and of the Bread of Life:  
*accept our gratitude and praise!*

*Amen*

*Revd John Bradford*

## 800<sup>th</sup> Prayer

Gracious God,  
we praise you for eight centuries of good news  
for the people of Solihull;  
inspire our hearts and ready our hands,  
that together we may continually proclaim in word and deed  
the gospel of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.



## News from St. Alphege CofE Schools

Despite the problems caused by Covid 19, the children of the St. Alphege Schools have returned to classes happily and enthusiastically, and those starting in Nursery and Reception have all settled well into their new environment. In addition to any "catching-up" required, teachers are continuing to provide the rich curriculum that is always offered, continuing to meet the standard recognised by the Religious Education Inspection, which awarded the top grade (Excellent) in February - noting that "The school's highly distinctive Christian vision, founded on inclusivity and doing the best for every child....is transforming lives and breaking down barriers to academic success and well-being."

Governors are inviting parents to apply for places at these excellent schools. Very unusually, places are available now in Years 2,3,5 and 6, largely as a result of a reduction in the birthrate. If parents of pupils at other schools would like to transfer their children immediately to the St. Alphege Schools, this is possible; please contact Schools Admissions and the appropriate School at once.

The application process has now begun for places for the next academic year starting in September 2021. Please telephone the schools for further details; Mr. Morrissey, the Head Teacher, is very happy to talk to any interested parents. Open Days are, sadly, not possible under present restrictions.

Applications for the Infants and Junior Schools (Reception and above) should be made through:-

School Admissions – <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/admissions>

Applications for Nursery should be made directly to the School.

More information is on the St. Alphege Schools' website:-

<http://www.stalphege.solihull.sch.uk>

Contact telephone numbers are:

St. Alphege Nursery and Infant School: 0121-705-0443

St. Alphege Junior School: 0121-704-2714

**Carol Southworth**

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Richard & Margaret Stoye - Proprietors

## **Looking after St Alphege Churchyard**

### **St Alphege Churchyard fights back the effect of Coronavirus**

When the current Coronavirus situation first reared its head over six months ago the implications for churchyards were considerable. The first instructions issued to all churches included that churchyard gates where fitted should be locked! This was amended twice – eventually accepting that external contractors who had their own Health and Safety risk assessments and the necessary protective equipment would be able to carry on working as normal. But this did not include volunteers.

Fortunately, one of the few external contracts we had in place was for grass-cutting so the churchyard, Benefice area and Oliver Bird Hall were able to have their scheduled twice monthly mowing visit which allowed us keep up general appearances. As rules relaxed a bit further, volunteers who did not consider themselves in the vulnerable category (appropriately protected and obeying self distancing requirements) were allowed to return if they wished.

Firstly, I would like to thank all the volunteers from across the Parish – including Parish Youth members under Joe Minall – who turned out for the organised churchyard tidy up mornings (generally planned prior to Covid 19 restrictions) on 21<sup>st</sup> March, 6<sup>th</sup> June, 15<sup>th</sup> August and 12<sup>th</sup> September. (The last of these is reported below). These planned sessions enabled everything from the removal of storm debris from trees, dead flowers/containers, collecting leaves and sweeping paths to the collection of Christmas and Easter wreaths where relatives were unable to visit to tend graves. This in turn allowed the mowing contractors access to all areas to keep the churchyard safe for visitors.

Secondly, I would like to acknowledge and thank the many more individuals whose names are not always known who have also carried out general tidying up work to specific areas. Your efforts are clearly visible to those who visit on a regular basis even though you may not be!

We still have a large number of visitors each week, both church members and relatives from near and far who have expressed how pleased they are not only with the way the churchyard continues to look but also how they feel it is safe to enter and easy to access. So, volunteers (known and unknown): their comments are down to all your work (as well as that of GR Mowing). Thanks to everybody concerned and no matter how long this virus situation may continue it seems like it will not defeat our efforts to look after churchyard despite some of the worst summer storms on record.

### **VJ Day observance**

Our 15<sup>th</sup> August tidy-up session occurred on VJ Day and, much to our surprise, we were the only people around the War Memorial at 11am observing the



two-minute silence! We then listened to the (Covid 19 permitted) fifteen minutes of bell ringing as we returned to work.

## Thanks for September churchyard tidy-up day



Our most recent opportunity to meet in a socially-distanced way as well as helping maintain the churchyard occurred on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> September.

Eleven adults and five youth from across the parish – adopting a suitable socially-distanced approach – accomplished some much needed work in St Alphege churchyard whilst catching up with friends not seen for many months.

Thanks to the efforts of Andrew, Keith, Richard, David, Paul, Susan, Chris, Joe, Alan, Michael, Youth leader Joe + Lilly, Mary, Will, Isaac and Paige, we managed together to:

gather up old flowers/grave goods, tend flower beds, sweep paths, and collect up more debris and leaves from recent high winds. We also collected and disposed of all the many lime tree shoots and prunings cut off by Tony in advance of the tidy-up day. As can be seen from the picture, the quantity of bits collected required us to take special measures in order to maximise our use of the church waste bin!

Special thanks are due to Susan who not only provided the external refreshments (shown in the second picture being enjoyed by the youth group), but also prepared everything, served, and cleared up afterwards. (There were individually wrapped jam doughnuts straight out of the oven and I got one this time!)



## Looking forward to the October churchyard tidy-up

For those of you who may still have very little in their diary the final churchyard tidy-up session of this year is on 31<sup>st</sup> October 1000 – 1300hrs. This will be the annual leaf gathering to prepare the churchyard for the Remembrance Day services and winter. This can be great fun especially for families.

Are you able to help? Please contact me for details on 0121 711 1726

**Michael Rumball (Church and churchyard committee member)**

## Mysterious Person in a Muddy Mess

**W**ho is this person? What is she doing? Why is she doing it?

Can any of us say that we have never walked through or used the Oliver Bird Hall (OBH) car park? The OBH is a great asset to be used by the Parish and also for use by the local community.

Normally it would support itself each year solely by the external income from the user's hire fees and whilst this would usually pay for any specialist maintenance work by external contractors it does depend on voluntary help in its general running and organisation as well as some tender love and care to its surroundings to make it attractive to potential hirers.

We are now desperately short of support both on its management committee and also for general help on occasions for external jobs like gardening, sweeping and general tidying. No special skills are required.

Would you be able to help out at a time and frequency to suit you on a limited basis in these difficult times? You can act by yourself or as part of a team for this work if required.

For further details without any commitment on your behalf please let the Parish Office have your name and telephone number by e-mail to [office1@solihullparish.org.uk](mailto:office1@solihullparish.org.uk), or telephone 0121 705 5350 leaving a message if necessary and we will come back to you.

So going back to the picture above – answers (which need to be capable of being published) please to the Parish News editor by e-mail to [parishnews@solihullparish.org.uk](mailto:parishnews@solihullparish.org.uk) or on a postcard to the Parish Office, St Alphege Church, Oliver Bird Hall, Church Hill Road. Solihull B91 3RQ.



## Advertising in the Solihull Parish News

*If you advertise here you will reach over a thousand households in Solihull each month, as well as supporting your church.*

**Contact our Advertising Manager, Tim Drakeford**

**TELEPHONE: 0121 705 4494**

## Purple for Polio

**W**ild Polio or Poliomyelitis is an acutely infectious disease, the effects of which are virtually unheard of or unknown by the majority of younger people in this country. Even for some older people, its only significance may be a memory of having a polio vaccination orally with a not so nice tasting drop of liquid on a sugar cube.

The World Health Organization on 25<sup>th</sup> August announced that transmission of the wild poliovirus has officially been stopped in all 47 countries of its African region. This is in stark contrast to the situation in 1996, when 75,000 children there were paralyzed by the disease which often passes through contaminated water attacking the spinal cord and has no cure. This means that 90 percent of the world's population are now free of Polio with only two countries – Afghanistan and Pakistan – having the wild virus still endemic.

Rotary International worldwide has very much been involved for over 20 years with fundraising and organising volunteers and health workers to enable this immunisation programme to continue and succeed. This year's fundraising campaign is based on the number 1240 – the notional length in miles of the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan. So if you see any kind of local fundraising involving this number you will now know why.

Once again this year St Alphege Church will be lit up in purple as part of the "Purple for Polio" initiative for the evening of Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> October to mark this achievement and in support of the work still ongoing to ensure that every child in the world is vaccinated not only initially but also receives the ongoing immunisation necessary even during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Further information about the fight against polio can be found at <https://www.endpolio.org> where parts of this article were sourced from.

**Michael Rumball**

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## Face Coverings for Christmas

Pat and Susan are making Christmas themed face coverings in aid of MU charities. There are several festive fabric designs as shown in the pictures.

They have a pocket for a filter and an adjustable wire over the top of the nose that creates a good seal and prevents your glasses from steaming up.

The coverings are washable and re-useable.



The cost is £3 and if you'd like to order some contact :

Pat Marshall (0121 705 8761, [patmarshall\\_1@hotmail.com](mailto:patmarshall_1@hotmail.com)) or Susan Leach (0121 270 6132, [esleach@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:esleach@blueyonder.co.uk)).



## Half Marathon Fundraising

Elaine Diskin had planned to take part in the Birmingham half-marathon (13.1 miles) in October. Now that this has been cancelled she has decided to run her own half-marathon, on Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> October to raise money for Mothers' Union. So we hope our members and friends in the parish will support her. She has set up a **JustGiving** page for donations:

<https://justgiving.com/crowdfunding/elaine-diskin-1>

Details are also available from Elaine (0121 705 3265, or [elainediskin@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:elainediskin@hotmail.co.uk))

If you prefer, you can write a cheque payable to '**St Alphege Mothers' Union**' and post it to:

Mrs Elaine Diskin, 8 Cransley Grove, Solihull, B91 3ZA

Or you can put cash in an envelope (with your name) through her letterbox.

## Mothers' Union Diary

Elaine is taking orders for the 2021 Mothers' Union Diary. Let's hope this one will be able to have a few more entries!

The cost is £4.25 and this year's cover is a grey suede-effect - very attractive. Elaine's contact details are above.



## From the St Alphege Register

**D**ue to the Covid-19 restrictions, there have been no baptisms, weddings, memorial services or interments in the past month.

### Funerals

5<sup>th</sup> August              Eric John Morton

21<sup>st</sup> September      George Ernest Mullis

### Names taken from the Chantry Book for Remembrance in October

Mabel Griffiths  
Frank Leach  
Muriel Leach  
Chris Collenette

Michael Simcock  
Carl Hampson  
Ruth Humphrey  
Margaret Fenwick

John Roberts  
Peter Brotherton  
Ian Herd  
Nicola Blakeman

### St Alphege Pre-School

We welcome you to apply for a Pre-School place for children who will turn 3 in the academic year beginning September 2021. The closing date for applications is 31<sup>st</sup> January 2020. Application Form and Admissions Policy are available online (paper copies can be requested). St. Alphege Pre-School offers highly experienced and qualified staff. The last Ofsted Inspection result rated us 'Outstanding'.

#### **Little Treasures** (baby, toddler and pre-school age)

Every Wednesday in term time in the OBH : 1pm until 2.30pm. Children accompanied by parent/carer. Drop-in session, no need to book, just turn up!

#### **Little Movers** (in the academic year the child turns two)

Every Monday in term time in the OBH : 9.30am until 11am. Children accompanied by parent/carer. Drop-in session, no need to book, just turn up! The activities are aimed at children who are approaching 2 years old and is an ideal opportunity for them to develop their physical, social and language skills.

**Further information available : [www.stalphege-preschool.org.uk](http://www.stalphege-preschool.org.uk) or email  
Pre-School Manager, Meryl Homer : [manager@stalphege-preschool.org.uk](mailto:manager@stalphege-preschool.org.uk)**

## Worship Notes October 2020

This month we continue with the current pattern of services: a celebration of the Eucharist on Sunday at St Alphege at 10.30am, and at St Helen's at 10am and 6pm. Evensong will be broadcast from St Alphege each Sunday evening. We also see the return of 'The Junction' service this month. Also, a new reflective service, 'Dwell', will be broadcast from St Michael's Chapel at 10am each Wednesday. Links for Evensong and Dwell are available on the parish website.

### Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> October

Today the Church remembers William Tyndale, translator of the scriptures. His work in the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century became the basic working text for those who were to produce what became known as the Authorised Version of the Bible.

### Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> October

10am: At the 'Dwell' service from St Michael's Chapel, Saint Francis of Assisi will be celebrated (his feast day is Sun 4<sup>th</sup> October). We will give thanks for his life and ministry, and we remember and give thanks for the former church of St Francis in our parish.

### Sat 10<sup>th</sup> October

Today is the feast day of the poet Thomas Traherne who lived in the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. His life was illuminated by an intense vision of happiness and he communicated this joy and mystery in his extensive writings, which are works of great depth and beauty.

### Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> October

'The Junction' service returns today! It will now meet every Sunday via Zoom at 9.15am. If you would like to join in with the Junction you will need to contact Linda in advance via email for the Zoom link: [l.hicks@solihullparish.org.uk](mailto:l.hicks@solihullparish.org.uk)

### Wed 14<sup>th</sup> October

10am: At the 'Dwell' service from St Michael's Chapel, we will celebrate the life of Teresa of Avila (her feast day is Thurs 15<sup>th</sup> Oct). Teresa travelled throughout Spain founding many new religious houses for men as well as women. Her writings include *The Way of Perfection* and *The Interior Castle*, which are still acclaimed.

### Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> October

The feast day of St Luke the Evangelist. Today there will be a celebration of the Eucharist at St Alphege at 10.30am, and at St Helen's at 10am and 6pm. Evensong takes place from St Alphege this evening.

### Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> October

Many churches keep this day as Bible Sunday, an opportunity for churches to celebrate the effect the Bible has on individuals and communities in the UK and throughout the world. For more information, visit: <http://www.biblesunday.org/>

Some of the material from this website is reproduced on pages 34-36 and page 39 of this magazine. Also, Martin Tunnicliffe has provided an article 'How I read the Bible' on page 44."

<b>Event</b>	<b>Who?</b>	<b>Where and when?</b>	<b>Further information</b>
<b>Sunday morning services</b>			
<i>St Alphege</i>	Everyone is welcome, though spaces are limited due to social distancing measures.	St Alphege Church 10.30am	Book via parish office – telephone 0121 705 5350 to or email office@solihullparish.org.uk
<i>St Helen's</i>	Everyone is welcome, though spaces are limited due to social distancing measures.	St Helen's Church 10am	Book online at <a href="http://www.trybooking.com/uk/eventlist/sthelenseucharist">www.trybooking.com/uk/eventlist/sthelenseucharist</a> or phone Beryl Moppett on 0121 705 0337
<i>Online</i>	Everyone can view online – <a href="http://www.facebook.com/SolihullParish">www.facebook.com/SolihullParish</a>	(either from St Alphege or St Helen's).	As well as being streamed live, a video of the service will be accessible via a link on the home page of the parish website later in the day.
<i>Junction (online)</i>	On Zoom - contact Linda Hicks (l.hicks@solihullparish.org.uk) if you want to join.	Junction 9.15am – on Zoom	The Junction will be restarting on Zoom from October 11 <sup>th</sup> . More information on the Junction Facebook page ( <a href="http://www.facebook.com/TheJunctionSolihullParish">www.facebook.com/TheJunctionSolihullParish</a> ).
<b>Sunday evening services</b>			
<i>St Helen's</i>	Everyone is welcome, though spaces are limited due to social distancing measures.	St Helen's Church 6pm	Book online at <a href="http://www.trybooking.com/uk/eventlist/sthelenseucharist">www.trybooking.com/uk/eventlist/sthelenseucharist</a> or phone Beryl Moppett on 0121 705 0337
<i>Choral Evensong (online)</i>	Everyone can view online – <a href="http://www.facebook.com/SolihullParish">www.facebook.com/SolihullParish</a>	Live at 6.30pm on Facebook and YouTube (and afterwards via a link on the parish website.	Streamed from St Alphege Church – look out for information about when we are able to welcome a congregation.
<b>Midweek</b>			
<i>'Midday Prayer (online)'</i>	Everyone, by clicking the link on the home page of the parish website.	Every day except Sunday, you can watch Midday Prayer on Facebook	Or you can click the link on the home page of the parish website.
<i>'Dwell' service (online)</i>	Everyone, by clicking the link on the home page of the parish website.	Live at 10am on Wednesdays on Facebook and YouTube	Streamed from from St Michael's Chapel. Also available afterwards via a link on the parish website.
<i>St Alphege Choir</i>	Boys and girls from Year 3 upwards, ladies and men of any age	Zoom and in person sessions on Tue, Wed and Fri.	Email Isabel Baumber (isabel@solihullparish.org.uk) to find out how to get involved.
<i>Praise &amp; Play</i>	Families with children aged under 5 (also suitable for infant-school-aged children)	Online every Friday morning at 9.30am	View on Facebook or via the Children & Families page of the parish website. Email Linda Hicks (l.hicks@solihullparish.org.uk) to find out more.
<i>Youth</i>	Young people in Year 6 and above.	Zoom sessions on Mon, Wed and Fri.	Email Joe Minall (j.minall@solihullparish.org.uk) for more information. Covid-19 compliant in-person sessions are being planned.
<i>Parish pewslip</i>	Everyone - via email from the parish office, or downloaded from the parish website.	Published on Fridays	Email parish office to be added to email distribution list. Phone the office to ask for a hard copy to be posted to you if you don't have a computer.



## *The Guardians of St Alphege Parish Church*

### **FLOODLIGHTING**

The Guardian's Floodlighting Scheme is available for anyone who would wish to celebrate or mark an occasion, or to commemorate a date. The cost is £8.00 for 2 hours; £14.00 for 4 hours. Please give 14 days' notice. Forms are available from the Guardians notice boards in St Alphege Church or in the Oliver Bird Hall.

Names are displayed on monthly lists on these notice boards and also in the Parish magazine and acknowledged with a card sent to the donor. For further information please contact the Scheme organiser: Sheila Payne, 0121 706 0520; or email [sheilaepayne@aol.com](mailto:sheilaepayne@aol.com)

#### **The Church was floodlit to remember the following:**

6<sup>th</sup> September In loving memory of Peggy Oswald.

7<sup>th</sup> September In loving memory of Jean McDonough on her birthday.

10<sup>th</sup> September In loving memory of Edward (Ted) Corbridge, beloved husband of Wendy.

18<sup>th</sup> September The birthday of Margaret Oswald.

18<sup>th</sup> September Noreen Porter. Treasured memories of a dear wife, mother and grandmother. David and family.

21<sup>st</sup> September The anniversary of the death of Laura Patricia Clark.

22<sup>nd</sup> September In loving memory of Mabel Victoria Florance on this her birthday.

22<sup>nd</sup> September In loving memory of Susan Hewitt.

23<sup>rd</sup> September In loving memory of Rebecca Davies.

25<sup>th</sup> September The 49th anniversary of the marriage at St Alphege of Chrissie and the late dearly loved Robert Lamble.

28<sup>th</sup> September To commemorate the birthday of the late Canon Harry Hartley.

### **Music Recitals : Wednesdays at 1:10pm**

We are investigating whether it might be possible to safely restart live recitals before too long.

Please keep an eye on our social media channels for updates:

[www.facebook.com/FriendsofStAlphegeMusic](https://www.facebook.com/FriendsofStAlphegeMusic) and Twitter @StAlphegeMusic

# J ob A dvice C lub S olihull

## Are you job Hunting?

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As is my normal custom, I want to start by hoping that all readers of the Parish News remain safe and well – at the time of writing, we have just heard about the changing situation in Birmingham, Solihull and Sandwell – so we must certainly remain vigilant and take good care of our community.

With updated research about singing, we were able to have a solo chorister singing at Sunday morning services at St Alphege, followed by members of the same household contributing musically to the morning Eucharist during the latter part of August. The live-streamed Evensongs from St Michael's Chapel have been well received with high viewing figures. Officiants have been clergy and readers from across the parish, and singers have been either soloists or sibling pairs.



In September, we were delighted to be able to welcome back our choirs – but in a very different way to normal. We have been following government and Church of England guidance extremely carefully and have put in place additional mitigations over and above national guidelines, to support the safety of our community. We have strict two-metre social distancing in place throughout rehearsals and services, meaning numbers are limited. We are wearing masks at all times when we are indoors including when singing, and we have a rigorous cleaning regime in place. Choir members and families have been supportive of these measures and it has been wonderful to see everyone in person again.



We hope that our musical offer is enhancing worship for members of the congregation, whether they are able to attend church in person or viewing the services online.

If anyone wishes to get in touch about choir activities or any of the parish online services, please send me an email ([isabel@solihullparish.org.uk](mailto:isabel@solihullparish.org.uk)) and I will do my best to help.

**Isabel Baumber**

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**T**imes at St Helen's continue to be challenging and unpredictable, as they are for us all. Returning to socially distanced worship has been a great success, with numbers often at capacity. Sterling work by our technical experts has greatly helped. They have managed to produce inspiring images and beautiful music which has greatly enhanced our worship.

Andrew Williams has worked hard on recording and streaming our services, we want to reach as many of our congregation as possible. We have been very happy to share our worship with St Michael's, this has further cemented our already strong and longstanding friendship, thank you to all our St Michael's friends for your support in organising, cleaning, and stewarding over the weeks.

Many people have been enquiring about the resumption of activities such as, Wednesday lunches, Messy Church and Forget Me Nots. They, like us, would love to be able to resume "normal service". We continue to pray for this time to come.

Church lettings have recommenced with the return of the Montessori School and other regular lettings, such as Ballet, Dance and the Art Class, with some adaptations to conform to present Government rules.

St Helen's has now started an **appeal for shoes**, in serviceable condition, for children and young adults currently using unsuitable shoes (which can cause bullying and ridicule), together Rough Sleepers without shoes, it is understood that within this group the severe medical condition of Trench Foot is now rife (See separate advertisement for Shoe Aid).

**Jean Fewins & Phil Godfrey**

## Shoe Aid

**Trying to help to provide shoes, to people who are too poor to be able to buy shoes:-**

- Children who cannot go to school, or play sports because they have no suitable shoes to wear, which often this makes them a target for ridicule or bullying.

*4m children. Taking an average across the British Isles, this equates to 4 children out of a class of 30*

- Young adults unable to go for an interview due to lack of suitable shoes
- Rough Sleepers without shoes, "Trench Foot" is now rife amongst these people

So Children's to Adult Shoes, Trainers to Formal wear, all are welcome



**If you have any unwanted shoes in good condition, please contact Phil on 07770 406870**

### **A real 'team effort'!**

As we are still unable to return to our usual Sunday venue of Sharman's Cross Junior School, we continue to worship alongside St Helen's Church in their building. Since we joined with them in July, we have developed a good system of sharing the liturgical and practical tasks of running our joint worshipping life.

Members of both churches read the Bible reading and lead the intercessions. The wardens from both churches also share the duties of setting up, welcoming and overseeing the tidying and cleaning after each service. A member of St Helen's and a member of St Michael's also coordinate the use of the projectors and screens, and the live-streaming of the 10am service on the first Sunday of the month. The Readers of both churches also take a regular turn in the preaching rota, providing a wonderful variety of wisdom and insight.

The congregation of St Michael's is very grateful to the DCC and people of St Helen's for their kind and generous welcome, and for making us feel so much at home during this time of challenge and change.

### **Where two or three gather together...**

The restrictions of the Covid-19 pandemic mean that the capacity of St Michael's Chapel is limited to only four people. However, the chapel has been in use for private prayer since the beginning of July and, more recently, for the live-streaming of Evensong with Joe Cooper and various individual members of the St Alphege choirs.

However, now that Evensong has been able to return to the St Alphege church building, there is a new creative venture taking place at the chapel. Each Wednesday morning at 10am, we are 'broadcasting' a live service via the internet.

The service is called 'Dwell', and offers Bible readings, time for contemplation and reflective music. The name of the service comes from the idea that both the chapel and the worship offered there are a 'dwelling place' for God and God's people (see *Psalms 84:1*). I hope that this service will feel like a place to rest and to stay for a short while each week, despite the fact that we must participate at a distance.

Everyone is very welcome to view the service - the internet link to join it can be found on the parish website.

### **Only 85 sleeps (or thereabouts!) until Christmas...**

Although it's too early to give away any details, we are already deep into the planning stage of the annual St Michael's Nativity Play! We're taking a completely new approach this year, and working on a way to bring the play to, well, the whole world (in theory, at least)! More details will follow soon!

**Simon.**

## 'The Spotlight'

As I type this Pioneer Diary I am very aware of how the nights are drawing in. It's been a strange year and, in so many ways, it could be seen as a very 'dark' year. However, now the physical darkness is beginning to build and, in just seven weeks' time (as I type, and even less for you reading this), we will be putting the clocks back one hour and our everyday life will be darker still for a while. As Sue suggests in this month's editorial, it's a good time to remind ourselves of St John's words:

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. (John 1:1-5)*

We are still in the throes of a pandemic and so chances are that Advent and Christmas will be a bit different this year. With that in mind, at the moment I am looking at possibilities for Advent in my role as Pioneer minister and, because of that, I have my Advent books out already and have begun looking through them for inspiration. One favourite book of mine is one that I bought some time ago, called 'On the Way to Bethlehem' by Hilary McDowell\*. In that book is an Advent meditation called '*The Spotlight*', that talks about you and I as 'tiny lights, miniature copies of the spotlight (Jesus – my bracket)'.

Of course we don't have to wait until Advent to reflect the light of Christ into our local communities. So, as the nights draw in and we head into the darkness of autumn and winter, let's turn our faces to the light of Jesus' amazing love, and as we look at it there it will start doing its shining work in us.

### The Spotlight

A spotlight shone onto the earth  
Illuminating the darkness,  
Revealing crevices and corners no one had ever seen before,  
Combing the world in search of cobwebs,  
Zooming in on specks of dust  
So that all could see them for what they were –  
Mountains of dirt.

But the people were angry,  
Angry and frightened.  
'Give us back our darkness,' they said.  
'In the darkness we didn't see the dust – we want no light.'  
So they destroyed that spotlight,  
Snuffed it out as one would a candle.  
Darkness once more!

But it was darkness with a difference.  
For everywhere along the edge of the world  
Appeared lights, tiny lights,

Miniature copies of the spotlight, not nearly as strong,  
But each shedding tiny beams of light onto the dust.  
They began to multiply – slowly,  
Then faster and faster.  
They were the spotlight's hope  
And the spotlight was their reason for existence.  
And they waited for the light.  
  
And the light looked down upon the globe  
And saw the tiny sparks of light.  
Some were flickering,  
Some were dim,  
Some were bright as the North Star,  
And in-between there was darkness.  
And the Light prepared to shatter that darkness – forever.

Keep safe, *keep shining* and thanks for listening!

**Suzette ☺**

*\*On the way to Bethlehem* by Hilary McDowell; BRF 1998 ISBN: 781841 010168

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# CHURCH 4 FAMILIES

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Is Back!!

We're delighted that the Junction will be returning every Sunday at 9.15am from 11<sup>th</sup> October.

Unfortunately it won't be possible to meet in person at present but instead we will meet over Zoom so that we can worship together as a community with our usual mix of songs, bible stories, prayers and activities.

If you would like to attend you will need to register with Linda in advance via e mail

[l.hicks@solihullparish.org.uk](mailto:l.hicks@solihullparish.org.uk) to receive the Zoom link.



# 800 Acts of Kindness

As part of the various activities being carried out to celebrate 800 years of Christianity in Solihull, Messy Church in March focussed on the 800 Acts of Kindness project.

Alivia made a promise to make a card for someone and to feed the birds. She fulfilled these promises during lockdown along with her sister Ivy.



These are the bird feeders that they made and hung around the park.

And these are the VE Day cards and presents that they delivered to elderly relatives and to the teachers at school but it didn't stop there.....



They also made bug hotels for minibeasts to live in and planted flowers to deliver to their relatives for Easter.




Alivia worked hard with Daddy to make a habitat for butterflies to live in in their garden.




Alivia also decided that she would use their daily walks as an opportunity to help nature and set herself the challenge of walking 200 miles to raise money for the RSPB. She completed her challenge over a two month period and was very proud to raise £170. Wow what an amazing achievement!

Linda would love to hear about your Acts of Kindness.



# Prams to Preschool - Praise and Play



Normally every Friday in the main Hall of the Oliver Bird Hall from 9.30am. A time of fun and fellowship for all.

Come along and chat, have a Cuppa, play, eat biscuits, sing action songs, explore a bible story.



Currently we're not able to meet in person but instead we are bringing Praise & Play to your homes on Friday mornings at 9.30am with the familiar format of songs, a story, Craft and prayers. The You tube link goes live shortly before 9.30am and can be accessed via the parish website [www.solihullparish.org.uk](http://www.solihullparish.org.uk) or you can watch via the Parish Facebook page (bring your own cuppa and biscuits!)

No need to book but if you want to know more ring  
Linda on

0121 270 7390 or 07838 670772  
or e mail [l.hicks@solihullparish.org.uk](mailto:l.hicks@solihullparish.org.uk)

# Youth Stuff

## Youth Zoom Meetings

Open to young people in Year 6 and above, the Parish Youth meet over the Zoom app between 4pm-5pm on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays every week. Prayer reflections, scripture analysis, games and open discussion, everyone is welcome. These sessions allow the youth to 'meet', interact and support each other during this difficult period. If you have a prayer request these can be shared anonymously with the group or prayed for by name.

We are also looking at the possibility of starting in-person sessions (in line with Covid-19 protocols!) soon.

Email Joe Minall ([j.minall@solihullparish.org.uk](mailto:j.minall@solihullparish.org.uk)) to find out times of sessions, plans for coming weeks and how to get involved. You can also find the youth on Instagram @solihullparishyouth.

*Keep safe, God Bless*

**The Youth Team**

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# Taking the Long View

I was reminded recently that when an individual is ordained Deacon, Priest or Bishop, or when an individual is licensed as a Reader or other Lay Worker, she or he has to make the Declaration of Assent. The words which introduce the Declaration begin in this way:

*The Church of England is part of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, worshipping the one true God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It professes the faith uniquely revealed in the Holy Scriptures and set forth in the catholic creeds, which faith the Church is called upon to proclaim afresh in each generation.*

This call to 'proclaim the faith afresh in every generation' is the task of the whole Church, and not only of its ordained and licensed leaders! It requires us to:

- Understand, as much as we can, the teachings and practices of the Christian faith;
- Allow ourselves to be inspired by the Holy Spirit to communicate the good news of Jesus Christ to others, and,
- Discern the best ways to communicate that good news to those around us.

Amongst other things, this will require us to be involved in our community, to continue to learn about and to explore our faith and to engage with the social, economic and political issues of the day. And access to the internet and other sources of information means that we can find resources for learning about our faith and also keep up-to-date with current events and developments around the world.

Of course, we don't have to rely on access to modern technology to be aware of what's going on around us: Jesus himself engaged with the current issues of his time. In chapter 13 of St Luke's gospel, we read about two recent incidents:

*At that very time there were some present who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. He asked them, 'Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were worse sinners than all other Galileans? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish as they did. Or those eighteen who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them—do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others living in Jerusalem?' (Luke 13:1-4)*

Jesus responds here to those who came to tell him about a terrible event - he engages with their concerns in order to get his message to his hearers. Not only that, Jesus is also able to briefly interpret these two incidents to help his hearers to understand how they relate to faith in God.

In his article on what it means to be Anglican, the former Archbishop of York, John Sentamu, wrote:

*We regard it as our calling to engage both with the individual and the corporate, and with the material and the political... In fact our Anglican heritage demands of us a particular sense of responsibility, a critical, and at times prophetic solidarity, variously expressed in different contexts, with the political and constitutional life of the nation in which we live.*

(from: <https://www.churchofengland.org/about/anglican-communion>)

Therefore, part of what it means to be a member of the Church of England is to engage with the wider world, at a local and national (and international) level.

At the same time, one of the many valuable qualities of the Anglican Church is its sense of stability and endurance. The Church of England is present in every part of the country, existing

to serve every member of each community regardless of their affiliation to the Church. In this way, the Church of England offers individuals and communities a continuity and presence which enables people to trust it in good times and in bad. This 'long-term' approach acts as a balance to our desire to instantly engage with every new issue that comes along.

As St Paul said, we need to be rooted in Christ, becoming mature people:

*Then we will no longer be babies. We will not be tossed about like a ship that the waves carry one way and then another. We will not be influenced by every new teaching we hear from people who are trying to fool us. (Ephesians 4:14a)*

Although it is often tempting to react quickly to issues which affect us and those around us, a fast response isn't always the best response. It takes courage to dwell on a problem for a little longer, especially when we feel that by reacting quickly, we are at least doing something! However, the pause between awareness and response enables us to pray and reflect before deciding on a course of action.

And, of course, sometimes we might need to respond with our presence and our solidarity with others before we use any words at all. In his rule of 1221, St Francis stated that not all of the brothers should be preachers, adding, 'All the brothers, however, should preach by their actions.'

It seems, then, that we need to be engaged with the world so that we can proclaim the faith of Christ in a new way to each generation. And that, also, we need to be willing to take the long view. Above all, let us develop ways of being which will underpin all that we are, do and say: love, service, welcome, acceptance, humility – and also the wisdom to choose the right path for each occasion.

Simon

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# Stories for Bible Sunday

## Stories provided by the Bible Society

**T**he Bible Society believes that we live in a world where too many people don't engage with the Bible.

In some parts of the world, the Scriptures are difficult to access or are simply unavailable. In this country, the Bible is readily available but has lost its significance and its value is unrecognised by millions.

The Society is working hard here at home and in key areas across the world to change this. They take the Bible and find ways to translate and distribute it, create digital formats, advocate for its place in society and help people relate to and make sense of it in their everyday lives.

All of the Society's efforts are driven by one conviction: they believe that when people engage with the Bible, lives can change – for good.

### **China: 'Yes, Lord Jesus, I am willing to serve you!'**

Mu Weixu is a 33-year-old preacher who lives in a mountainous area of Yunnan province in China. He was facing many challenges even before the coronavirus outbreak. How easy do you think it would be to say, 'Yes, Lord Jesus, I am willing to serve you!' if you are a poor preacher living in a rural area? You'd have to give up all your farming income to go out and preach the gospel.

Mu also has a wife and newborn baby son to support too. When Covid-19 started spreading, the mountains preachers like Mu had to climb to continue their God-given mission suddenly got much bigger.

The suspension of all church meetings during the lockdown meant the income of preachers like Mu evaporated. These situations can lead to rural preachers abandoning much-needed ministries in order to survive. And in China there is already a huge shortage of trained pastors, with just one trained leader for every 6,700 Christians.

Mu admits he was tempted to quit to seek a better paid job in the city, especially after the birth of his baby. But he kept going, lifted up by the generosity, both in donations and in prayer, of Christians thousands of miles away in England and Wales.

Wu wanted to share his gratitude. He said, 'I am thankful for your support, for now I can visit more brothers and sisters, and travel far to preach God's word. What's more, the needs of our baby can be taken care of now. This has strengthened my faith to know that God will always provide for me as I serve him faithfully!'

*Prayer: Thank God that Bible mission was able to meet the needs of pastors like Wu and their families during 2020. Pray that more and more pastors in China will be able to receive quality Bible training.*

## **Middle-East: 'Mummy, will you read me a story about Jesus?'**

It was Easter, in the city of Aleppo in war-torn Syria. Bible Society staff member Miss Nour gave pre-schooler Bechara a Bible storybook and said to him, 'This is a story from the Bible about Jesus Christ who loves you. See how Jesus is sitting among the children loving them with all his heart?'

Bechara took the book and ran to his mum. 'Look what a beautiful book they gave me! Will you read me a story about Jesus?'. Bechara's mother asked him if he had thanked Miss Nour for the book. He turned and shouted at the top of his voice, 'Thank you, Bible Society!'

Also at the same event in Aleppo, a very excited Nadim demonstrated his own kindness. He said, 'I've already got a Bible. Now I can give this one to my friend who hasn't got one!'

In Syria, Bible mission focuses on the younger generations. Many of these children and young people have been exposed to the horrors of war. Many more have been displaced. More and more of them are finding hope in the Scriptures, hope to mend their broken lives.

In 2020, at Easter, 28,000 Bibles and Scripture storybooks were distributed to children at Big Bible Distribution Easter events in many towns and cities in Syria where it is safe to do so. Even more will be distributed at Christmas. It's estimated that Scriptures handed out in 2020 will be seen by at least 100,000 children by the end of the year. These gifts uplifted the youngsters who have suffered years of war and were also facing the added threat of coronavirus.

*Prayer: Thank you Lord that children in the Middle-East are finding hope in your word. I pray that tears of joy will replace those of despair as many more people discover hope promised in the Scriptures.*

## **Africa: One child loved the Bible so much he read 10 stories a night**

There are about one thousand children at Nsungwi Church in rural Malawi. For Sunday school they split into classes with about 100 kids in each class. This is church on a big scale ... until it comes to their resources. There may be a thousand children in the church, but there are just 40 children's Bibles.

In one class, five children each week are allowed to take a Bible home. They must read a story every night and learn one by heart. One child loved the Bible so much he read 10 stories a night. Bibles are brought back to church the following Sunday. Children's hands shoot up as they offer to retell stories they had read and knew inside out. Stories such as David and Goliath, Noah's Ark, Jacob and Joseph are told with pride, clarity and accuracy. The Bibles are passed to another child. Children can wait around six months for their turn to take one home.

One child said, 'The Bible tells me about God's love.' Another said, 'We love the pictures, and the stories teach us good behaviour. A very little boy added, 'We know these stories off by heart and they help us trust in God.'

Clapperton, who leads Bible Society work in Malawi, said, 'I remember one of the first churches we went to. We brought 120 Bibles, which we thought was quite a large number. When we got there, we found there were 750 children. Almost every week, churches ask us for Bibles and we can't say yes to them all. We are still just focusing on the cities because the need is so great. But we believe we are sowing seeds. We trust God the seeds will germinate and grow, and these children will know the foundation of God's word in their lives.'

*Prayer: Thank you Lord that thousands of children are receiving God's word. I pray that the stories in the Scriptures they read will touch their lives and encourage them to follow and rely upon Jesus Christ.*

## **UK: In a garage at the edge of the forest stands Dennis the Donkey**

In a garage at the edge of the Forest of Dean stands Dennis the Donkey. Bright-eyed and pink-tongued, he is the star in assemblies at a local primary school. Beside Dennis, who's actually made of cardboard, is a whale (to devour Jonah), a roll-out temple and other props used by Bible Society's 'Open the Book' volunteers who are invited to schools to dramatise Bible stories.

Cyril Twist, a retired chartered engineer who makes the props, said, 'When we did the story about Jesus healing the blind man, I made a chocolate paste as the mud to go over the blind man's eyes. The children loved that!'

He added that a group of boys came up to him after one assembly and said they wanted to be Christians. About 10 of them then started attending church.

Cyril also recounted a very special moment. He said, 'We also had a very dramatic story of a little girl who kept going home after assemblies and saying to her parents, "God loves us and God loves you too, Mummy and Daddy." And one day, the father gave his heart to Jesus.'

Cyril added, 'That was absolutely profound. You always wonder if they really get the story. But this shows that absolutely, they do.'

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank you for saving me by grace through faith in Jesus. Help me to pass down to the next generation a legacy of faith and the truth of the gospel.*

## **China: An elderly man approached with tears in his eyes**

At a church service in Beijing, Arleen, now China Mission Specialist at Bible Society, was telling the congregation about Bible mission in China.

After Arleen had finished speaking, an elderly man approached her with tears in his eyes. He said he had become a Christian more than 30 years ago, but it was the first time he had heard the story of how his copy of the Bible came to him.

He told Arleen: 'It's never been easy to be a Christian here in China. Your story really encourages me. Now I feel I am not alone, not forgotten. I now know there are brothers and sisters across the other side of the world who have been supporting us for so long.'

The old man then asked for the address of the Bible printing company. Arleen told him that Amity, the name of the printers that Bible Society helped establish, was in Nanjing. She asked him why he wanted to know this.

The old man said, 'I just want to simply go there and do whatever I can to serve them. I want to show my appreciation ... but I don't know much. I am old and unskilled. But at least I can clean their tables or make them tea to show them how thankful I am for my Bible.'

*Prayer: Thank you God that so many more people now have access to the Bible. I pray that the generous giving that has enabled this will continue, so that they will receive further resources to help them understand more of God's word.*

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## Calendar and Prayer Intentions for October

1	Anthony Ashley Cooper, Earl of Shaftesbury	The work of Solihull Churches' Action on Homelessness	The Crescent
2	Feria	The staff of Solihull Hospital	The Green
3	George Bell, Bp of Chichester	Our Bishops David & Anne	The Hermitage
4	17th Sunday after Trinity, St Francis of Assisi	Those living in poverty	The Square
5	Feria	The St Alphege Prayer Group	Thornby Avenue
6	William Tyndale, Bible Translator & Martyr	Bible study and home groups	Thorn Grove Avenue
7	Feria	Those who work in the shops and restaurants of our town	Thornhill Road
8	Feria	Those carrying out Covid-19 tests	Tibberton Close
9	Robert Grosseteste, Bp of Lincoln	Our Rector, Jane	Timmins Close
10	Thomas Traherne, Poet	Poets and spiritual writers	Touchwood Hall Close
11	18th Sunday after Trinity	The people of St Alphege Church	Union Road
12	Elizabeth Fry, Prison Reformer	Prison staff & prison chaplains	Upwey Avenue
13	Edward the Confessor	Our MP, Julian Knight	Vulcan Road
14	Feria	Those who maintain our church buildings	Wadleys Road
15	Teresa of Avila	Staff and pupils of St Alphege Schools	Walton Croft
16	Nicholas Ridley & Hugh Latimer, Bishops & Martyrs	Those imprisoned or tortured for their faith	Warmley Close
17	Ignatius Bp of Antioch	Diocesan office staff	Warwick Grange
18	19th Sunday after Trinity, St Luke the Evangelist	The people of St Helen's Church	Warwick Road
19	Henry Martyn, Bible translator & Missionary	Our Pioneer Minister, Suzette Maguire	Waverley Grove
20	Feria	Our Parish office staff, Prem Patel and Ann Colloby	Welcombe Grove
21	Feria	Our Parish Youth Worker, Joe Minall	Wellington Grove
22	Feria	Our Parish Children & Families workers, Linda Hicks & Sue Chandler	Westwood Grove
23	Feria	Staff, patients and volunteers of the Marie Curie hospice	Wharf Lane
24	Feria	St Alphege Director of Music, Joe Cooper	Wherretts Well Lane
25	Last Sunday after Trinity, Bible Sunday	The work of the Bible Society	White Falcon Court
26	Cedd, Abbot of Lastingham	The people of St Michael's Church	White House Close
27	Feria	The staff and children of St Alphege Pre-School	White House Green
28	Simon & Jude, Apostles	Clergy, staff and congregations of the Cathedral	White House Way
29	James Hannington, Bp & Martyr	Our part in God's mission to Solihull	Whitefields Crescent
30	Feria	Staff and residents of local care homes	Whitefields Gate
31	Martin Luther, Reformer	The mission and worship of our parish	Whitefields Road

The Church prays for the community daily: please include these topics in your personal daily prayers.

# Let us Pray

## October 25<sup>th</sup>: Bible Sunday

**(Prayers provided by the Bible Society; Bible passages from ESV)**

*'This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.'* (Joshua 1:8)

Our Lord God, thank you for your guidance through the Scriptures. Help us to regularly search your word to gain more insight as to who you are and more understanding of your will for each one of us. Give us an increasing desire to read, obey, and find nourishment through the Bible. Amen.

*'Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done.'* (Luke 22:42)

Heavenly Father, guide each one of us to follow the prayerful example of your Son, who gave everything so that we may possess eternal life. Help us follow in the steps of our Saviour and experience intimate prayer and fellowship with you. Amen.

*'But if you will not do so, behold, you have sinned against the LORD, and be sure your sin will find you out.'* (Numbers 32:23)

Thank you for being a God who sees all and who sees everything that we are. We praise you that though you see both good and bad, you sent your Son to save and set each of us free. Help us to walk in loving obedience. Amen.

*'... And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints ...'* (Ephesians 6:17-18)

God, thank you for always hearing our prayers. We trust that you love us and are working all things together for good for those of us who love you. Guide each one of us in our prayers Lord through the power of the Holy Spirit. Help us to pray often so that we may make a lasting difference in other people's lives through our intercession for them. Amen

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# Should Christians Care about Climate Change?

Ruth Valerio's Tearfund blog

I sometimes hear people ask, 'What does climate change have to do with the Christian faith?' In a nutshell: it's an issue of justice. When I watched Sir David Attenborough's new documentary 'Extinction: The Facts' a few weeks ago, I couldn't help but grieve and feel angry both over the damage that humanity continues to do to creation, and about the extreme and unfair impacts on those living in poverty, making life even harder.

As Tearfund continues to campaign to tackle the climate crisis, here are my reflections on why this is a disaster that the church cannot ignore.

## A beautiful yet broken world

Creation was made by Jesus, through Jesus and for Jesus (*Colossians 1:16*). That's a stunning declaration of our planet's worth. This is a world of awe-inspiring beauty, a world that God has created teeming with life – full of diversity and abundance and colour.

The Bible shows that God, people and the natural world are deeply interconnected. If one aspect of those relationships is broken then everything will be impacted (see, for example, *Amos 8*). We don't have to look very far to see evidence of this: racial injustice, gender inequality and environmental breakdown.

The climate crisis is wreaking havoc in our world, putting millions of lives at risk. It's intensifying global threats such as extreme weather events, sea-level rise and melting glaciers. The overwhelming scientific consensus is that this is a human-made problem, driven by the burning of fossil fuels, releasing heat-trapping gases such as carbon dioxide.

We are seeing the outworking of a global system built on greed and overconsumption – one that is fundamentally at odds with God's original intention for the world. We're reaping what we've sown.

## Climate change is a justice issue

In my work with Tearfund I see all too clearly the impact of climate breakdown on people in poverty as it affects their health, access to food and their security. As global temperatures rise, rains are becoming less reliable and droughts, floods and storms are becoming more frequent and extreme. For those who are already vulnerable, this is a life-threatening emergency that is pushing them further into poverty. The climate crisis is a justice issue.

This is even more evident when we reflect on what it means that we're made 'in the image of God' (*Genesis 1:26–28*):

- Firstly, it speaks of the absolute equality between people. Acting justly means not only responding to the needs of our immediate communities, but also looking to our global neighbours living in countries that do not have the financial protection or healthcare that we do.
- Secondly, being made in the image of God defines our relationship with the whole of creation. We are God's representatives, created to serve and look after the rest of what he has made.

As Christians and churches we have a crucial role in calling for, and working towards, a world that allows everyone to flourish – one that enables us to live in harmony with the rest of creation. To turn this into reality, and to prevent further harm to our global neighbours, we must urgently tackle the climate crisis together.

## **Leading the way forward**

As followers of Jesus, through whom all things were made, let's be at the forefront of protecting and restoring his creation. The climate crisis is a huge and urgent challenge that requires all of us to play our part.

*Proverbs 31:9* says: 'Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.' We are called as Christians to stand up for justice, calling on those in positions of power to make decisions that protect the most vulnerable people and the Earth we all rely on.

Let's keep standing together in prayer and action to see a breakthrough in the climate crisis.

**Ruth Valerio (author and theologian)**

## **The Earth Is the Lord's**

**"Bishop's Comment" from the Birmingham Diocese website**

**B**ack at the August Bank Holiday, David Attenborough was again on TV with his 'Planet Earth' film, with new music by Hans Zimmer performed by the BBC Concert Orchestra and rapper pianist Dave. This certainly raised my spirits during this long pandemic and as promised brought a message of hope for the future.

This season of Harvest, now widened in the Church calendar to Creation, gives humans an opportunity to appreciate all that we have been given in the natural world, the intricate Home we share, and time for a reappraisal of our daunting responsibilities as stewards.

Church of England Birmingham Environment policy is being rolled out for parishes, schools and other places of activity over the next few years with a focus on net zero carbon.

Parliament will see the progress of the Environment Bill this session with its priorities on air quality, waste and resource efficiency, water and nature. Lords Spiritual and others will need to ensure that government commitments are clear, timely and legally binding.

For the immediate activists there continue to be rallies and prayer vigils including 'Christian Climate Action' (the Christians of Extinction Rebellion).

Christians who have already absorbed the science and arguments about humanity's fatal resource destructiveness, maybe from Naomi Klein, but need another shove, might turn to David Rhodes' 'Climate Crisis' (pub Kevin Mayhew 2020) emphasising the inspiring, disturbing, radical Jesus.

Humanity's global interdependence has been re-emphasised by the pandemic. As we change and remake church and society in England it must be in appreciation of and in participation with our worse-off, world-wide neighbours.

'The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein' (*Psalms 24:1*) Meanwhile I pray that you and I will be joyful stewards of the gifts we have, starting say with the clean water flowing from our taps and the light and heat available at the flick of a switch.

'This is the day that the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it' (*Psalms 118:24*)

**Rt Revd David Urquhart (Bishop of Birmingham)**

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## **How I read the Bible**

by Martin Tunncliffe

**T**here is a truly remarkable story told by St Luke in The Acts of the Apostles about an Ethiopian slave. There is not enough space to print it out, so please read it in *Acts 8:26-39* before you continue with this article.

The first thing to note is the Bible passage that the Ethiopian is reading. It comes from *Isaiah 53:7-8*. Now, chapters 40-55 in the Book of Isaiah constitute a crucial part of our Scriptures. These chapters are a kind of fulcrum on which the whole of the Bible balances. I will enlarge on that in a moment.

A second point is that the Ethiopian cannot discover by himself the meaning of the Scripture. God provides the necessary companion in Philip the Evangelist.

A third important feature of this story is that it is universal, in the sense of global / environmental, in its scope, for the Ethiopian is an outsider: gentile, black and foreign. Yet he is converted and baptised, and instantly all sorts of boundaries are dismantled. Added to this, seemingly miraculously, there is water in the desert to allow this to happen, so the environment is given a key role in the drama. The structure of this wonderful story is very similar to the threefold way in which I read the Bible.

### **Principles**

I originally entitled this article *How to read the Bible*. I quickly realised that this sounded both arrogant and prescriptive, so I changed it to *How **I** read the Bible*. What follows is a brief summary of how I personally read the Bible, and I hope that you may take something from my system that will give you food for thought and possibly provide you with a new approach to the Scriptures to try for yourself.

I have three main principles in mind as I read the Bible. They are quite graphically illustrated by the story of the Ethiopian referred to above.

#### **1. Start in the middle**

Occasionally I come across someone who has read the Bible from beginning to end, like a book of fiction. I prefer to begin in the middle with *Isaiah 40-55*. These chapters are the key to our Scriptures. They were written by an anonymous prophet around 540 BC at the end of the Babylonian exile. Not long after they were written, some enlightened Jewish scribes preserved them for posterity by attaching them to the scroll of Isaiah which had already been written about 100 years before.

The unknown author of those fifteen chapters had heard the voice of God with amazing clarity and insight. Not only did he discern the purposes of God in the history of his people, he foresaw the destiny that God had in mind for the whole of creation, the work of salvation by means of sacrificial suffering to be undergone by a chosen Servant-Messiah. Our New Testament can only be properly understood by reference to *Isaiah 40-55*. Consequently, I open my Bible in the middle, and the rest of Scripture becomes easier to grasp the more I consider the message of this prophet of the Exile.

## 2. Daily Office

People who seriously follow a religion will usually pray every day, one way or another. As a Christian priest, I accept the discipline of reading a Daily Office, Morning Prayer or Evening Prayer or both. Each service will include one or two Bible readings. Some people say, "I read my Bible". That's as may be, but the reading of Scripture is not a private enterprise so much as a corporate one. Most of my Bible reading is necessarily solitary, but when I read the Lessons as they are set in the Church's calendar and lectionary, I know that I am not on my own. I become part of the "household of faith". I am just one instrument in an orchestra of Christian believers who are following the same symphonic score of prayer, praise and meditation centred on the Word of God. The regular use of Bible Reading Notes is a similar way of holding Scripture readers together in fellowship.

## 3. Global view

I have been reading and studying the Bible for more years than I care to remember. It has been an amazing experience, challenging, stimulating, sometimes uncomfortable, often a comfort and joy, and intellectually satisfying. On the other hand, I have often found myself wondering why I have to be so focused on the ups and downs, comings and goings, squabbles and alliances, of a small number of people 2000 to 3000 years ago located on a small bit of land surrounded on three sides by mostly unfriendly neighbours, and on the fourth by a sea which was feared as a symbol of chaos. There has always been the nagging question, "what has all this really got to do with me, now?"

An answer to that question is just beginning at last to emerge. It is prompted by the vastly important message which is starting seriously to be heard above the confusing clamour of the modern world. "Think global... Think environment". Today, whenever I read in the Bible the words "land" or "promised land", I am not thinking of Israel / Palestine: I am thinking of our planet. This earth on which we live is the land of promise which God has given, and gives, to and for his people. It is all we have, and all we need, and it will flow with milk and honey if we treat it, and each other, properly.

Whenever I read in the Bible about "Israelites" or "Egyptians" or "Philistines" and so on, I am no longer transported back 2000-plus years. I am thinking of our world's current populations, ethnic groups, colours, faiths, all under the hand of God. Whenever I read in the Bible, especially in the Psalms, about the cedars of Lebanon, plentiful harvests, the plagues of Egypt, the garden of Eden, rains or famines, I am thinking of tropical rainforests, arctic ice, the oceans, violent weather, and the fragile relationship between human beings and the environment.

More particularly, whenever I read in the Bible, again especially in the Psalms, about, Israel, Abraham, Jacob, Jerusalem, Zion, I don't have in mind dead patriarchs and ancient cities. I am thinking about God's Church today: that is to say, God's Universal Church, not just our particular bit of it. God's Church consists of all people of sincere faith, who feel called by the love of God to share that love, and who are prepared to face up to whatever sacrifices need to be made in order for God's loving will to prevail. Christians belong to that worldwide collective of faithful people. They come from widely differing ethnic backgrounds, faith systems, cultural inheritances and life experiences.

The Bible can be considered as a collection of old documents, fascinating to read and to study. However, as I read the Bible today, it seems to me that it is still being written now to convey God's Word globally and universally to the human race whom God both creates and loves within his fuller creation.

*Next month: "Why I read the Bible"*

# For Your Diary



Sadly, due to the Government rules which applied from 14<sup>th</sup> September restricting social gatherings, we shall not be able to meet for the foreseeable future. We'll keep you informed if things change.

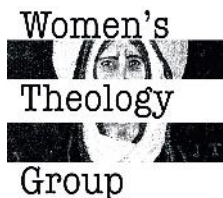
Pat Marshall and Susan Leach are making Christmas-themed face coverings for sale in aid of Mothers' Union charities. See separate article on Page 10.

We are keeping in touch with our members during this difficult time and are offering help to those of you who request it. If you need help now contact:

Elaine Diskin on 0121 705 3265

or Chris on 0121 243 4340 or Susan on 0121 270 6132.

*Keep safe - keep well - and please follow the Government guidance.*



The Women's Theology Group are meet over Zoom every two weeks on a Wednesday at 7.30pm.

If you would like to join us but are not on the mailing list, do e-mail [womenstheology@gmail.com](mailto:womenstheology@gmail.com) and we will send you an invitation!

## Second Saturday @ St Alphege

Due to Covid-19 restrictions our monthly Bible study sessions will now take place over Zoom and all are welcome. They will be led by Ali Welch, with the next one on 10<sup>th</sup> October.

Please don't hesitate to get in touch with Ali at [alistair.g.welch@gmail.com](mailto:alistair.g.welch@gmail.com) if you would like to join in.

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<i>St Helen Deputy Wardens</i>	<b>Phil Godfrey</b> <b>Jean Fewins</b>	0121 705 3923 07925 688 897
<i>St Helen Hall Bookings</i>	<b>Jeremy Eade</b> , <a href="mailto:solomere@aol.com">solomere@aol.com</a>	0121 706 3831
<i>St Michael Deputy Wardens</i>	<b>Keith Wilson</b> <b>Merrill Flood</b>	0121 778 2295 0121 705 3291

## SOLIHULL PARISH NEWS CONTACTS

<i>Editor</i>	<b>Mike Lampkin</b> , Swallow Barns, Widney Manor Rd	0121 711 7772
<i>Production</i>	<b>Roger Edwards</b> , 39 Westfield Close, Dorridge	01564 739 134
<i>Treasurer</i>	<b>Roger Giddings</b> , 70 Silhill Hall Road	0121 686 3422
<i>Postal Subscriptions</i>	<b>Helen Russell</b> , 30 De Moram Grove, B92 0PZ	0121 705 1780
<i>Advertising Manager</i>	<b>Tim Drakeford</b> , 42 Fowgay Drive	0121 705 4494
<i>Circulation Enquiries</i>	<b>Philip Tew</b> , 19 Parklands, Blossomfield Road, B91 1NG or the Parish Office	0121 537 1236
<i>Printers</i>	<b>Prontaprint</b> , 126 Station Road, Knowle, B93 0EP	0121 705 9988

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# SOLIHULL PARISH STAFF & CONTACTS

<b>Team Rector</b> (Not available Fridays)	<b>The Revd Canon Jane Kenchington</b> 45 Park Avenue, Solihull, B91 3EJ	<a href="mailto:rector@solihullparish.org.uk">rector@solihullparish.org.uk</a> 0121 705 0069 / 07743 402229
<b>Director of Operations</b>	<b>Nic Duncan</b> Room 5, Oliver Bird Hall, Church Hill Road, Solihull, B91 3RQ	<a href="mailto:n.duncan@solihullparish.org.uk">n.duncan@solihullparish.org.uk</a> via Parish Office 0121 705 5350
<b>Team Vicar for St Helen (Resp. for Pastoral Care)</b> (Not available Wednesdays)	<b>The Revd Helen Greenham</b> 6 St Helen's Road, Solihull, B91 2DA	<a href="mailto:helen@solihullparish.org.uk">helen@solihullparish.org.uk</a> 0121 704 2878
<b>Team Vicar for St Michael</b> (Not available Thursdays)	<b>The Revd Simon Marshall</b> St Michael's Church Centre, Oak Cottage, Bryanston Road, Solihull, B91 1BS	<a href="mailto:simon@solihullparish.org.uk">simon@solihullparish.org.uk</a> 0121 704 4730
<b>Pioneer Minister</b> (Not available Fridays)	<b>Suzette Maguire</b> 10 Middlewood Close, Solihull, B91 2TY	<a href="mailto:s.maguire@solihullparish.org.uk">s.maguire@solihullparish.org.uk</a> 0121 709 0884
<b>Associate Priest</b>	<b>The Revd Sue Chandler</b>	<a href="mailto:s.chandler@solihullparish.org.uk">s.chandler@solihullparish.org.uk</a> 07970 791288
<b>Readers</b>	<b>Linda Hicks</b> <b>Stephen Linstead</b> <b>Beryl Moppett</b> <b>Chris Carrington</b> <b>Paul Smith</b> <b>Nick Partridge</b>	01564 782557 0121 705 1376 0121 705 0337 0121 705 0902 0121 705 1377 07970 297377
<b>Assistance is also offered by</b>	<b>The Revd John Bradford</b> <b>The Revd Canon Andrew Hutchinson</b> (Chaplain, Solihull School - not available Mon, Wed)	0121 704 9895 0121 704 0171
<b>Director of Music &amp; Musical Outreach</b>	<b>Joe Cooper</b>	<a href="mailto:joecooper1@hotmail.co.uk">joecooper1@hotmail.co.uk</a>
<b>Music Department Administrator</b>	<b>Isabel Baumber</b>	<a href="mailto:isabel@solihullparish.org.uk">isabel@solihullparish.org.uk</a>
<b>Director of Children's &amp; Families' Ministry</b>	<b>Linda Hicks</b> Room 3, Oliver Bird Hall, Church Hill Road, Solihull, B91 3RQ	<a href="mailto:l.hicks@solihullparish.org.uk">l.hicks@solihullparish.org.uk</a> 07838 670772 0121 270 7390
<b>Youth Worker</b>	<b>Joe Minall</b>	<a href="mailto:j.minall@solihullparish.org.uk">j.minall@solihullparish.org.uk</a> 07746 708860
<b>Youth Assistants</b>	<b>Debbie Woodward &amp; Lynn Smart</b> Youth Office, Oliver Bird Hall, Church Hill Road, Solihull, B91 3RQ	<a href="mailto:d.woodward@solihullparish.org.uk">d.woodward@solihullparish.org.uk</a> <a href="mailto:l.smart@solihullparish.org.uk">l.smart@solihullparish.org.uk</a> 0121 661 6303
<b>St Alphege Verger</b>	<b>Paul Evans</b> Verger's Office at St Alphege Church	07483 318713
<b>St Alphege Tower Secretary</b>	<b>Cynthia Dodson</b> 64, Stoneleigh Road, Solihull B91 1DQ	0121 705 3744
<b>Parish Administrators PARISH OFFICE</b>	<b>Ann Colloby &amp; Prem Patel</b> Parish Office, Oliver Bird Hall, Church Hill Road, Solihull, B91 3RQ	<a href="mailto:office@solihullparish.org.uk">office@solihullparish.org.uk</a> 0121 705 5350 / 0121 270 9740 <b>Mon-Thu 9am to 1pm; Fri 9am to 12 noon</b>
<b>Oliver Bird Hall Bookings</b>	<a href="http://www.solihullparish.org.uk/church-hall-hire/">www.solihullparish.org.uk/church-hall-hire/</a>	



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