

# SOLIHULL PARISH NEWS



# TEAM CHVRCHES

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

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

**St MICHAEL - Bryanston Road, Solihull B91 1BS**



Sunday services are:-

## **St Alphege - for October**

8.00 am Said Holy Communion  
10.30 am Sung Eucharist  
5.00 pm Sung Evensong

## **St Alphege - from November**

8.00 am Said Holy Communion  
10.30 am Sung Eucharist except:  
Second Sunday - 9.15 am All Age Eucharist and 11.00 am Sung Eucharist \*  
5.00 pm Sung Evensong

\*November 11.00am may be the Civic Service

## **The Junction**

9.15 am - on zoom until Half Term and then hopefully in person

From November - Second Sunday - join All Age Eucharist in St Alphege

## **St Helen**

10.00 am Eucharist

## **St Michael at Sharmans Cross School from 3<sup>rd</sup> October**

10.30 am Eucharist

## **Friday**

9.30 a.m. **Praise and Play** – please e-mail: [l.hicks@solihullparish.org.uk](mailto:l.hicks@solihullparish.org.uk)

Full details available on the homepage of our parish website at: <https://www.solihullparish.org.uk>

Please don't hesitate to contact the Parish Office if you need any support or advice. It is always a pleasure to talk to you.

**The Revd Simon Marshall**  
**The Revd. Sue Chandler**

## **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.

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*Cover picture*  
**'Harvest Time'**

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# Editorial

## Harvest

October is the month that Solihull Parish traditionally celebrates a time of Harvest Thanksgiving. As the Church of England website reminds us:

*"Harvest Thanksgiving is a more modern addition to the church calendar. Its origins are usually traced to the adaptation in 1843 of Lammas Day by the Revd R. S. Hawker, a parish priest in Cornwall. He chose the first Sunday in October as a Christian response to coincide with the traditional but largely secular 'harvest home' celebration, but there is some evidence to suggest that a thanksgiving for the harvest was already a relatively widespread practice. An annual church celebration of the harvest certainly established itself rapidly with great popularity and was first recognized officially in the Church of England in 1862. Since then, many local traditions for the celebration have developed.... which may accompany the tradition of bringing to church gifts of fresh produce and other foodstuffs."*

The Agricultural Year | The Church of England

## Giving

So, 'giving' at Harvest is key: whether that be giving thanks to God for his provision for us, or our giving to others who may have far less than ourselves.

Giving is also one of the five ways to mental wellbeing and, as such, has been prominent in my mind since the beginning of Wellbeing Wednesdays in May 2021:

*"Research suggests that acts of giving and kindness can help improve your mental wellbeing by:*

- *creating positive feelings and a sense of reward*
- *giving you a feeling of purpose and self-worth*
- *helping you connect with other people*

*It could be small acts of kindness towards other people, or larger ones like volunteering in your local community."*

5 steps to mental wellbeing - NHS ([www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk))

## St. Francis & a 'spirituality of giving'

Another celebration for October is the Feast Day of St. Francis on October 4<sup>th</sup>.

I am acutely aware as I go about my Pioneer work that I am working in the 'St. Francis area' of the parish. I am also aware that there is a 'spirituality' in giving that is not outlined in NHS literature. St. Francis is reputed to have said, "For it is in giving that we receive", in clear recognition of that simple spirituality.

Generosity, giving, and kindness are key components of Franciscan simple spirituality: *"Franciscan poverty or simplicity encourages us to see with Christ-like eyes and focus on the needs of others. God created us to share, to love, to play, to laugh and to contribute; not to consume or to over-value belongings."*

The Assisi Spirit of Simplicity - Secular Franciscans ([franciscanseculars.com](http://franciscanseculars.com))



## The Word in action

So, with those words about Franciscan spirituality still in mind, why not keep the focus on *giving* for the whole of October? Beginning with Harvest Thanksgiving, let us this October seek to 'harvest' in ourselves those values of St. Francis - *to share, to love, to play, to laugh, to contribute* - to the advancement and wellbeing of our relationship with God and with those around us. Who knows, we may keep it up and eventually create a new habit or, at the very least, we'll feel better for it both mentally and spiritually as we go into the darker months of the year.

*Some examples of the things you could try include:*

- *saying thank you to someone for something they have done for you*
- *asking friends, family or colleagues how they are and really listening to their answer*
- *spending time with friends or relatives who need support or company*
- *offering to help someone you know with DIY or a work project*
- *volunteering in your community, such as helping at a school, hospital or care home.* "5 steps to mental wellbeing - NHS ([www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk))

Finally, I invite you join me in this, St. Francis' daily prayer and, at the end of the month, to look back and see where God has been at work in your life:

*Lord, help me to live this day, quietly, easily;  
to lean on your great strength, trustfully, respectfully;  
to wait for the unfolding of your will, patiently, serenely;  
to meet others, peacefully, joyfully;  
to face tomorrow, confidently, courageously. Amen.*

St Francis of Assisi Prayer | DAILY PRAYERS ([daily-prayers.org](http://daily-prayers.org))

**Suzette**

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## **Parish Update from the Wardens**

### **Dear Parishioners**

It is now looking as though we can move forward to some sort of normality as the pandemic recedes. We wanted to update you and so here are a few of the main aspects of the work in the Parish - but there is not enough room to cover everything, of course.

As the new academic year is upon us we need to focus on preparing the Parish for a new dawn and to welcome a new Rector in 2022.

As you know we asked for comments from a wide range of people as we prepare a *Profile of the Parish* to provide prospective applicants for the post of Rector with an understanding of what they will be coming to. Very many thanks to the 150 or so people who responded. This preparation is in the able hands of Andy Halstead, Paul Smith and Sand Cooper and they hope to have a draft to give to the PCC for October for us then to advertise in November, with a view to interviewing just after Christmas. It has to be said that the pool of people who can apply is quite limited in these times and so we need to show ourselves in the best possible light.

Archdeacon Simon has indicated that the Team Scheme (under which the three church centres in the Parish operate) should be reviewed and we await developments on that.

Services in the three centres have been disrupted during the past 18 months and we now have one morning service at St Alphege and one at St Helen; St Michael hope to return to Sharmans Cross School in October. This structure has now been reviewed for October onwards. However, we have a limited number of clergy available for the 3 church centres and so the number of services will be limited and we still need to be careful to keep people safe. We do thank all those who have contributed so well to making our churches safe and who have organized and presided at and taken part in the services, and indeed helped to run many other activities and works over these past months.

With regard to St Helen's, Revd. Helen Greenham is still unable to work and our prayers are with Helen and her family. After discussion with Bishop David, we are happy that she is receiving pastoral support.

You may be aware that the Solihull Deanery has joined with Yardley Deanery to form Yardley & Solihull Deanery and Revd Nick Parker has taken up the full-time appointment as Area Dean. We have been able to welcome him and his family to a number of services. They are living in the Parish.

During the past 18 months, lots of good things have been continuing. The Children and Families work has gone well such that the Junction has seen high attendance in the Sunday Zoom Sessions and Praise and Play is now back in the OBH on a weekly basis. Solihull Youth are all back meeting in the OBH - including in the New Room 6 (which is an excellent facility where the old stage used to be). Many other activities are up and running again. Ann and Prem are back in the newly refurbished Office now.

You will be aware that Joe Cooper is to be congratulated on being appointed as Director of Music at Bangor Cathedral. We thank him for his good work in the Parish and wish him well. We are underway with appointing a new Director of Music.

# Roundabout

The PCC has organised a number of committees to oversee aspects of the Parish and they are settling into this; we are now seeing some good work and initiatives emerging. Unfortunately, we have had to declare the position of Director of Operations redundant.

The plans for the Old Rectory Development are with Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council as we write and we await a decision on the Planning Permission for this. If it goes ahead it is hoped to start work in the autumn but the moving of the Forest School and the work on the new OBH Car Park are unlikely to be undertaken until well into 2022.

We are encouraged and indeed desire to make our main focus, the Worship of our Lord and his mandate to go out into our Parish with the good news of Jesus Christ in all aspects of life which are covered in the 5 Marks of Mission:

- To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
- To teach, baptise and nurture new believers
- To respond to human need by loving service
- To transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation
- To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth

Please let us pray for each other and our Parish as we seek to do this with the power and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

**Pam Price  
Andrew Williams  
Parish Wardens  
September 2021**

## Elaine Ran the Solihull Half Marathon for Mothers Union

In August I ran the Solihull Half Marathon, starting in Mell Square, running a scenic route taking in Knowle, Eastcote, Barston, past Knowle Locks and coming back into Mell Square with a final push up the very steep Widney Manor Road! Being cheered along the way by familiar faces from the Parish certainly helped me round the 13.1 mile route in a time of 02:08:57. It was the first time Solihull had hosted this very well-organised event and it was a definite success, showing Solihull to be a vibrant, buzzing centre of activity. It was so uplifting to be amongst it all.

At the last minute, while still preparing for the event, I was persuaded to run for sponsorship and so started to collect donations of money for **St Alphege Mothers' Union**, particularly for our AFIA (Away From It All) fund which enables us to provide short holidays and day trips for families and groups of individuals in the Birmingham Diocese. If you would like to donate, please drop a cheque (payable to St Alphege Mothers' Union) or cash to the Parish Office or to 8, Cransley Grove, Solihull B91 3ZA.

For more information about Mothers' Union <https://www.mothersunion.org/diocese/birmingham>



**Elaine Diskin**

## **Come Together**

**W**e know Suzette as our Pioneer Minister but, what we may not know, is that she is a trained and experienced Spiritual Director. Suzette says: "I understand that St. Alphege has hosted quiet mornings in the past, and I have a history of running them in previous parishes so, when the idea was suggested to me – and with all of the changes afoot in the parish – I thought what better time to 'come together' to focus on our relationship with God."

If the experience of a quiet morning is a new one to you, do come along and give it a try, and/or speak to Pam (Price) or me about it beforehand.

### **COME TOGETHER**

**A morning of reflection, prayer and activities**

facilitated by Suzette Maguire.

**Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> October**

**St Alphege Church**

**Tea and Coffee from 9.00am to start at 9.30am**

**Finishing at 12 noon or bring your own lunch and stay for a chat**

**Book online at:**

<https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/st-alphege-church-solihull/t-kjymdz>

**Or contact**

**Suzette Maguire 0121 709 0884 or Pam Price 0121 704 3104**

**Look out for more details on the Pew Slip.**

## **St Philip's Church Centre - Dorridge**

**T**his new modern replacement for the old worn out buildings at St Philip's was re-consecrated by the Bishop of Birmingham on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> September. The previous day an open day was held, with queues forming to examine this wonderful building which consists of a full height church worship area, foyer and sports hall plus single story crèche/youth room plus the parish office and facilities. A full report will appear in the next issue of this magazine.

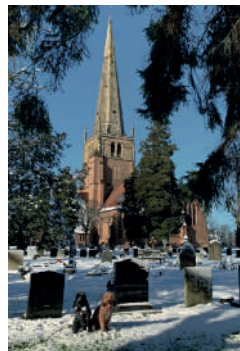


**Roger Edwards**

# Stop Press!

## The Bookstall and the Parish Christmas Card

The Bookstall is now up and running again! We have a wide range of attractive cards at very reasonable prices as well as votive candles, prayer cards and books. We will also be selling a Parish Christmas card again this year - a lovely photo of the church in the snow taken earlier this year. These will be £4 for 10 cards, available from the Bookstall, Parish Office or by contacting Fran Halstead (07710 329030, [fran.halstead@gmail.com](mailto:fran.halstead@gmail.com)) or Alison Vining (07971 265702, [alison@vining.eu](mailto:alison@vining.eu)).



## Help Needed - Churchyard Tidy Up

**Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> November** 2021 10:00 – 13:00hrs will be the last churchyard tidy up session of the year.

There are tasks to suit all ages and families with children are especially welcome to attend. The children generally have great fun playing with the leaves! We have lots of plastic rakes etc. Refreshments are provided for all ages. Details/further information.

**Can you help on this morning, if only for an hour?**

**Michael Rumball 711 1726**

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# Bells and Bell Ringers at St. Alphege

Here at St Alphege's Church we are blessed with one of the finest set of 12 bells in the country. (Well 13 bells actually). So, what makes them so good? Firstly, and probably most importantly the sound. Our bells are very tuneful, and it's not until you hear bells in other churches that you realise how tuneful ours are. Secondly, they are nice to ring. By that I mean, it's the difference between driving a prestige car and a transit van.

We do have many visiting ringers who want to ring on our bells due to their fine reputation. Just before the lock down in 2020, a band of 12 ringers whose average age was 77 (all over 75 years old) rang a peel lasting 3 and a half hours. They were the oldest recorded band to ring that particular tune (known as a method) on 12 bells. They chose St Alphege because the bells are nice to ring.



The most bells we ring at any one time is 12. The 13<sup>th</sup> bell (the flat 6<sup>th</sup> b) is used to make a musical scale when ringing on different combinations of bells, which gives us great flexibility with what we ring.

At times during the pandemic, we were unable to ring. To keep ringers practising, a group of Americans developed some software that allowed people to ring on a computer simulator with other ringers. This enabled many of us to carry on ringing and learn new methods.

When ringing did resume many of us were rusty and the guidance meant that we could only ring for a maximum of 15 minutes, six people at a time and for services with no practising. We also could not ring bells that were closer than one metre, which meant that we could only ring every other bell. To our usual audience, the good people of Solihull, it probably meant that things sounded a bit odd.



Things are starting to get back to normal which means that our ringing has a more familiar sound. Upstairs though, in the tower, we're still wearing masks, using hand sanitiser and taking lateral flow tests, and this will continue for the time being.

One of the major achievements in bell ringing is the ringing of a peal. For the mathematically minded, using the number 1 to 7, there are 5040 combinations of the seven numbers (7 factorial). In bell ringing, we give each bell a number and when ringing a peal, we aim to ring all 5040 combinations of the bells without repeating any. For all but the most dedicated ringers, these are rare events.

However, we do try and ring quarter peals, that is 1260 combinations. This takes about 45 minutes and we aim to ring at least one every month. There is a tradition to



have dedications for peals and quarter peals, and this can be anything from celebrating birthdays, weddings and christenings to commemorating deaths and historical events. If anyone would like to have a quarter peal dedication, then I would love to hear from you. If you would like a dedication, then please contact myself or the parish office and I will let you know when we will be making an attempt to ring the quarter peal and whether we were successful afterwards.

Inevitably after such a long layoff, some of our ringers have decided not to resume, which has left us short of ringers, especially during the Summer months when people have been away on holiday. As a result, there have been a few Sunday mornings when we have only been able to ring four bells.

If anyone would like to join us in ringing, I would love to hear from you. My email address is shown below. It doesn't take long to master the basics of ringing a bell (known as bell handling) and soon you can become an active member of a band. Ringing doesn't have any age restrictions, and of course, isn't just about the ringing. Sometime it seems as if we spend more time on a practice night chatting rather than ringing. We also do have social events throughout the year.

We're always keen to share ringing with others and show them what we do. Don't be put off; to get involved you don't need any musical or mathematical knowledge, and age is no barrier. In fact, most important is probably a sense of fun. So, if you fancy coming to explore, we'd love to arrange a trip up the tower to meet us.

Practice is on a Tuesday night from 7.30pm. But if you just want to see the bells in action, please feel free to come along on Tuesday or even pop up before Sunday service. Everyone is welcome.

**Malcolm Paulson, Tower Captain**  
[yasmalc@hotmail.com](mailto:yasmalc@hotmail.com)

## **Bring and Share Lunch**

### **10 October 2021**

### **from 12 noon**

It is planned to hold a Harvest Festival Bring and Share Lunch on the second Sunday in October. This will have a climate change theme. The proposed lunch is in place of a similar event originally planned for July, but which had to be postponed.

Further details will be announced in the pewslip and on the website, so please look out for announcements.

This will be the first major social event since restrictions were lifted and we look forward to welcoming everyone.

Please bring your own plates and cutlery.



# Let us Pray

## Calendar and Prayer Intentions for September 2021

1	Anthony Ashley Cooper, Earl of Shaftesbury, 1885	The work of Solihull Churches' Action on Homelessness	Asby Court
2	Feria	The staff of Solihull Hospital	Ashlawn Crescent
3	18th Sunday after Trinity & Final Sunday of Creationtide	Those living in poverty	Ashleigh Road
4	St Francis of Assisi, 1226	Preparations for November's COP26 Conference	Ashton Croft
5	Feria	The St Alphege Prayer Group	Austcliff Drive
6	William Tyndale, Bible Translator & Martyr, 1536	Those who study and translate the Bible	Avenbury Drive
7	Feria	Those who work in the shops and restaurants of our town	Baginton Close
8	Feria	Those carrying out and processing Covid-19 tests	Barbourne Close
9	Robert Grosseteste, Bp of Lincoln, 1253	Our Bishops David & Anne	Barnmoor Rise
10	19th Sunday after Trinity	The people of St Alphege Church	Barston Lane
11	Ethelburga, Abbess of Barking, 675	Andrew and Pam, our parish wardens	Baxterley Green
12	Elizabeth Fry, Prison Reformer, 1845	Those who work in prisons & prison chaplains	Beaminster Road
13	Edward the Confessor, King of England, 1066	Our MP, Julian Knight	Beauchamp Road
14	Feria	Those who maintain our church buildings	Baumont Grove
15	Teresa of Avila	Staff and pupils of St Alphege Infant & Junior Schools	Beechnut Close
16	Nicholas Ridley & Hugh Latimer, Bishops & Martyrs, 1555	Those imprisoned or tortured for their faith	Beechnut Lane
17	20th Sunday after Trinity	The people of St Helen's Church	Beechwood Park Road
18	St Luke the Evangelist	Our Pioneer Minister, Suzette Maguire	Berkswell Close
19	Henry Martyn, Bible translator & Missionary	Diocesan office staff	Berry Hall Lane
20	Feria	Our Parish office staff, Prem Patel and Ann Colloby	Billingham Close
21	Feria	Our Parish Youth Worker, Joe Minall	Billsmore Green
22	Feria	Our Parish Children & Families workers, Linda Hicks & Sue Chandler	Birch Tree Grove
23	Feria	Staff, patients and volunteers of the Marie Curie hospice	Bisbrook Croft
24	Last Sunday after Trinity & Bible Sunday	The work of the Bible Society	Blackthorne Close
25	Crispin & Crispinian, Martyrs at Rome, c. 287	The Christian churches in our town	Blossomfield Road
26	Cedd, Abbot of Lastingham, 664	The people of St Michael's Church	Blythe Way
27	Feria	The staff and children of St Alphege Pre-School	Blythewood Close
28	Simon & Jude, Apostles	Clergy, staff and congregations of the Cathedral	Boulton Road
29	James Hannington, Bp & Martyr, 1885	Our part in God's mission to Solihull	Bourne Close
30	Feria	Staff and residents of local care homes	Bowercourt Close
31	4th Sunday before Advent & All Saints' Sunday	The mission and worship of our parish	Bradmore Close

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

## Songs of Praise

A choir of over 20 and a congregation of about 40 attended a special *Songs of Praise* held on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> September instead of the usual Evensong. The service was arranged to welcome back the Choir at the beginning of a new academic year and also to celebrate the fact that congregations are at last permitted to sing in church after a long period of silence during the pandemic restrictions. We also welcomed Angela Sones, our Director of Music for September to October and David Rice as organist.

There were 14 hymns sung; nearly all of these had been nominated by members of the congregation. We started with *Phos Hilaron*, (Hail Gladdening Light), the earliest known hymn to have come down to us in its complete form, and this was accompanied by



the Blessing of Light. The remaining hymns spanned the centuries being sung largely in chronological order of the author's date of birth. Apart from hymns written by Anglicans, the selection included those written by members of other traditions, and whose original languages included Greek, Latin, French and German. The accompanying tunes displayed a similar variety of origins.

During a break in the middle of the service, while the Choir and congregation had an opportunity to rest their voices, Ann Taylor read a lesson, Psalm 96 (*Cantate Domino*), and I gave short talk on "What Makes a Great Hymn." Each hymn was also preceded by a short word of introduction about the author, the composer of the tune and the theme.

Following the service, we enjoyed refreshments kindly provided by FOSAM and the 11.00 a.m. Service Refreshments Fund.

Many thanks to all who helped to make this possible. All in all, we had a good sing, and the occasion proved both uplifting and enjoyable. Perhaps we shall be able to have another such service in the months to come?

**Stephen Linstead**

## **From the St Alphege Register**

### **Baptisms**

- 3<sup>rd</sup> Bertie Dudley Spencer  
10<sup>th</sup> Peyton Evelyn Beryl Haycock  
17<sup>th</sup> Autumn Bollard

### **Weddings**

- 16<sup>th</sup> Daniel Robert Handley & Cheryl Louise Hollands

### **Funerals**

- 4<sup>th</sup> John Oliver Sheldon  
15<sup>th</sup> Maureen Elizabeth Longthorn

### **Interment**

- 18<sup>th</sup> Dora Miriam Busby

### **Memorial Service**

- 11<sup>th</sup> Diana Mitchell MBE

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

Mabel Griffiths	Carl Hampson	Peter Brotherton
Frank & Muriel Leach	Ruth Humphrey	Ian Herd
Christopher Robin Collenette	Margaret Fenwick	Nicola Blakeman
Michael Simcock	John Roberts	



**Live and streamed services are being held at St Alphege's, St Michael's and St Helen's churches. Details are inside the front cover of this magazine and on the Parish Website.**

<https://www.solihullparish.org.uk>

## Worship Notes October 2021

This month sees the final Sunday in the season of Creationtide, and also the celebration of Harvest. The main liturgical colour is green, with the exception of several important feast days where the colour is red or white.

### **Monday 4<sup>th</sup> October**

Today is the feast day of Saint Francis of Assisi. Let us give thanks today for his life and ministry and remember and give thanks for the former church of St Francis in our parish.

### **Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> October**

Today we remember the life and work of William Tyndale who was born in about the year 1494. He became determined to translate the Scriptures from the Greek directly into contemporary English. His life's work proved good enough to be the basic working text for those who were to produce what became known as the Authorised Version of the Bible. He was executed for heresy in the Netherlands, then ruled by the Catholic Emperor Charles V, on this day in 1536.

### **Sunday 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.

### **Friday 15<sup>th</sup> October**

The Feast Day of Teresa of Avila. Teresa lived in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. She travelled throughout Spain founding many new religious houses for men as well as women. Her writings about her own spiritual life and progress in prayer towards union with God include *The Way of Perfection* and *The Interior Castle*, which are still acclaimed.

### **Monday 18<sup>th</sup> October**

Feast day of St Luke the Evangelist.

### **Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> October**

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

### **Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> October**

Today is the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday before Advent and also the day when All Saints' Day may be celebrated as All Saints' Sunday (in place of tomorrow, 1<sup>st</sup> November). From its earliest days, the Church has recognised that those lives have excited others to holiness and have assumed a communion with the Church on earth and the Church in heaven. Celebrating the feast of All Saints began in the fourth century. In the eighth century, a pope dedicated a chapel to All Saints in St Peter's at Rome on 1<sup>st</sup> November. Within a century, this day was observed in England and Ireland as All Saints' Day.

**Fr Simon**



## *The Guardians of St Alphege Parish Church*

We are delighted to let you know that we'll be holding our long-awaited AGM on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> October at 7:30 p.m. in the Oliver Bird Hall. The Agenda and papers will be sent to members by email (if we have your details) or by post. Please can you advise us of your attendance, as this will help with catering.

Susie and Ruth will be leaving the committee this year, so we are looking for new people to join us. If you would like to know more about joining the committee or becoming a Trustee, please have a chat with Margaret Oswald on 722 4092 or Judith Hetherington on 705 5332 or speak to us at the AGM.

We are very much looking forward to seeing you at the AGM and sharing a glass or two of bubbly!

**The Board of Trustees  
The Guardians of St Alphege Parish Church**

## **GUARDIANS FLOODLIGHTING**

The Guardians 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.**

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

- |                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| 25 <sup>th</sup> August    | In loving memory of George Mullis.  |
| 4 <sup>th</sup> September  | To celebrate the Golden Wedding of Jane and John Emmett.  |
| 4 <sup>th</sup> September  | To celebrate the Golden Wedding of Elizabeth and David Sturdee.                                     |
| 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.                               |
| 16 <sup>th</sup> September | In loving memory of Neil McDonough.   |
| 18 <sup>th</sup> September | The birthday of Margaret Oswald.  |
| 18 <sup>th</sup> September | Noreen Porter on the anniversary of her death.  |
|                            | 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 Susan Hewitt.   |
| 23 <sup>rd</sup> September | In loving memory of Rebecca Davies.   |
| 25 <sup>th</sup> September | The Golden Wedding anniversary of the marriage of Chrissie and the late dearly loved Robert Lamble. |
| 28 <sup>th</sup> September | To commemorate the birthday of the late Canon Harry Hartley.  |

FRIENDS OF ST ALPHEGE MUSIC

# WEDNESDAY LUNCHTIME RECITALS

RESTART ON WEDNESDAY 1ST SEPTEMBER, 1.10PM

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# Music Matters

The position of Director of Music is currently vacant as Joe Cooper has moved to the prestigious post of Director of Music at Bangor Cathedral. For September and October we are fortunate to have the assistance of Angela Sones as interim Director while the permanent post is advertised and interviews are held.

Angela Sones was born in Sutton Coldfield and educated at Highclare School and the Coventry Centre for Performing Arts. Angela began learning the organ at the age of 13 with Barry Draycott and went on to study with David Saint and Andrew Fletcher at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire. She won the BMI organ prize in 1995 and graduated Bachelor of Music in 1997. Angela has performed in masterclasses with Adrian Partington and in Paris with Jean Guillou, Daniel Roth, Sophie-Veronique Cauchefere-Choplin, Aude Heurtematte, Frederic Blanc Baptiste-Florian and Marle-Ouvrard. Previous recital venues have included St. Chad's and St. Philip's Cathedrals in Birmingham, Derby Cathedral, St. George's Edgbaston, St. Thomas' Stourbridge, St. Andrew's Rugby, All Saints' Four Oaks, two churches in the Isle of Man, Emmanuel, Wylde Green, St. Alphege, Solihull, and internationally in Christ Church, Amsterdam.



Angela held the position of Director of Music at All Saints' Parish Church, Four Oaks for 27 years where she directed the choir and ran a series of monthly organ recitals. Her forthcoming performances include recitals at Emmanuel, Wylde Green, as well as duet recitals with her duet partner, Richard Hartshorn.

Angela has a private teaching practice in piano, organ and theory. She and Andy have two children, Lewis, 15 and Emily, 12.

Angela is very excited to be given the opportunity to work with St. Alphege choirs and she is delighted with the warm welcome she has received.

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## **Wednesday Lunchtime Music Recitals, 1.10pm to 2pm**

In order to keep everyone safe, masks must be worn and social distancing and other Covid safety measures will be in place. Admission is free of charge and a retiring collection is held in aid of The Friends of St Alphege Music (registered charity 511237). Please could we ask that you book a place by visiting <https://www.trybooking.co.uk/BBOF>. Tea, coffee and cake are now available.

**Isabel Baumber**

6 <sup>th</sup> October	Tony Bridgewater - piano
13 <sup>th</sup> October	Pupils from Solihull School
20 <sup>th</sup> October	Saorsa String Quartet
27 <sup>th</sup> October	Choristers of St Alphege Church

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### Dear Friends,

As the Autumn Season commences, it feels like a new beginning in many ways and we feel it right to contact everyone on the St. Helen's congregational roll. Sadly, we do not have any news on any change in our current position or of the Greenham family whom we continue to remember in prayer.

However, we do want to encourage all who have not felt able to come back to church to reconsider and hope that some may feel able to join us in person again. Obviously for many there have been changes in health or personal situations which will mean this is not possible and we are very grateful that Andrew Williams continues to record our services most weeks and to email the link out to everyone. At present it seems likely that St Michael's will remain worshipping with us until at least the end of September, and whilst that is the case we are well provided for with Simon Marshall and Roger Chamberlain's help in taking services as well as Sue Chandler hopefully being with us twice a month.

As Ondrej has now returned to the Czech Republic and Medina is not able to help us at present, we shall be struggling to cover the need for a weekly pianist, though again while St Michael's are with us this is not too much of a problem as they have a good number of musicians. We are grateful to Geoff Biggs and Sarah Edwards for agreeing to start playing again for us and we shall continue to have some worship via videos on the AV system as we have been singing along to these on Sundays during recent weeks.

After 18 months of being disconnected from one another we need to gather together again now more than ever, to be the body of Christ and to spend time together as brothers and sisters, one family in Christ. When St Michael's is able to return to Sharmans Cross school we need to have a reasonable number of us meeting each week. St. Helen's has always been a friendly supportive church and we all feel very sad at the thought that we might not be able to continue as one. It is wonderful that we are still financially secure and we are very grateful for your regular support through the Parish Giving scheme.

We continue to wear masks and there is good spacing of the chairs, so now that when everyone is double vaccinated we very much hope that we can return to something much more like we had before Covid. We have restarted coffee after the services and again would like to encourage everyone to try to stay on for chat and fellowship after Sunday services, which now regularly finish within the hour. It has been hard keeping things going over past months and we should all very much appreciate your presence and support week by week during the months ahead. We hope to restart the rotas for sidesduties, reading and prayers and serving coffee very soon.

We are very grateful to Les, who has produced the 'Call to Prayer' fortnightly throughout this period. This has enabled us to have regular updates and communicate our prayer concerns and needs.

We are pleased to announce that the Cameo group have now resumed meeting At St Helen's on the first Wednesday of each month, at 2.30 p.m. All are welcome.

By the time you read this, St Michael's hopes for their Sunday worship to be at Sharmans Cross School, from Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> October. We wish them well, and look back on the times we spent together, with gratitude and fondness.

Please give all this your prayerful consideration and we look forward to welcoming everyone back very soon!

With our best wishes,

**Phil, Jean, Beryl and Chris**



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text 07730 981038 to find out more.



**A**t St Michael's we are still worshipping with St Helen's but look at the end of this item for good news. It may just be that we can celebrate our Harvest Service in our traditional home, Sharmans Cross School. But what about Harvest, here are come comments and a couple of celebrations elsewhere.

The harvest season falls at different times of the year depending upon region, climate, and crop, but festivals celebrating its arrival are held the world over. Some are first-fruits festivals that recognize the start of the season and the first crops, while other harvest festivals are celebrations to give thanks for the blessing of a bountiful harvest and to mark or ensure the recurrence of the process. In some parts of the world, harvest festivals have become largely secularized into a more general holiday. For example, the autumn festival of Thanksgiving, which is observed in Canada (second Monday in October) and in the United States (fourth Thursday in November), is largely a national day of rest. Some other festivals, such as the first-fruits festival Lammastide, also known by the Celtic name Lughnasadh and celebrated by Neo-Pagans and Wiccans, are no longer major popular celebrations but are observed by smaller groups. Still others remain major events in the culture in which they originated or are major religious holidays.

Here are just a couple of celebrations around the world.

The Ewe people of Ghana celebrate the end of the rainy season and the first appearance of yams, a staple crop. The duration and exact days of the celebration vary according to place, but, regardless of the manifestation, the festival is held in hopes of averting famine in the coming year. Huge feasts and activities such as dances and parades are held. Similar festivals are held in Papua New Guinea and Nigeria.

Sukkot, the "Feast of Booths," is held on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of Tishri in the Jewish lunisolar calendar. Following shortly after the High Holy Days of the New Year celebration, the eight-day festival gives thanks to God for the harvest. Special booths, or huts, are constructed to recall the period of the Exodus, recounted in the Hebrew Scriptures, when the Israelites lived in huts in the desert before entering the Promised Land.

Happy Harvest time wherever you are!

**GOOD NEWS:** We shall be back at the Sharmans Cross School on 3<sup>rd</sup> October at last! Look out for up-to-date information. We are enormously grateful to our friends at St Helen's for their friendship and hospitality over the past months.

Paul Smith

### OLIVER BIRD HALL BOOKINGS

**Enquiries are welcome for the use of the Hall and meeting rooms for social gatherings, christenings, anniversaries, meetings, etc.**

Visit the website on:

[www.solihullparish.org.uk/church-hall-hire](http://www.solihullparish.org.uk/church-hall-hire)

**or contact the Parish Office:**

**Tel: 0121 705 5350 / 0121 270 9740 Email: [office@solihullparish.org.uk](mailto:office@solihullparish.org.uk)**



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## “To whom can we go?”

We all make a lot of choices every day, many that we probably don't even notice. In fact, we only seem to notice a lot of our daily choices when they are taken away from us. We have experienced that in the last 17 months: our choices of where to go, what to do, who to see, and so on, have all been affected by something outside of ourselves. Even so, we should make the effort to notice our choices and the motivation behind them. The right motivation is highlighted for us in Peter's words to Jesus in John 6: *"Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life."*

Or, in a similar phrase from Abraham Lincoln, *"I have been driven many times to my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go."*

Time and again we read in the Bible about choices people have made, for good or bad: from Adam and Eve in Genesis to Joshua challenging the Israelites:

*"Now if you are unwilling to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served in the region beyond the river or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord."*

From Paul challenging the Church in Ephesus to act and to 'put on the armour of God' to the Gospels, where Jesus challenges those around him by his words and his actions: <sup>66</sup> *"Because of this many of his disciples turned back and no longer went about with him. <sup>67</sup> So Jesus asked the twelve, "Do you also wish to go away?" <sup>68</sup> Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life."*

So, we make the choice to follow Jesus. We choose the one who saves us from ourselves and from all the bad choices we have made throughout our life up to that point. But be aware: Joshua challenged the Israelites to decide whether they would obey the Lord, who had proved his trustworthiness, or obey the local gods, which were only man-made idols. They boldly claimed that they would never forsake the Lord, but they did not keep that promise. Very soon God would charge them with breaking their contract with Him. Talk is cheap: it is easy to say we will follow God, but it is much more important to live like it. For us, like them, it's easy to slip into a quiet rebellion – going about life in our own way, especially when life gets difficult. But, as Jesus points out, the time comes when we must choose who or what we put our trust in. The choice is ours: *Will it be God, our own limited personality, or another imperfect substitute?*

Covid has made this last year a very difficult time. And within that, our parish is now going through a time of change. Our 'new normal' may be a long time in the making: we may get frustrated and want to try and do things in our own strength; to wield our own power to 'get things done' quickly. But this is not a time for that.

This is a time to choose prayer. To pray as Abraham Lincoln did: *"I have been driven many times to my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go."*

This is a time to choose to trust God and to be led by the Spirit: All spiritual renewal begins and ends with God. He reveals the truth to us, lives within us, and then enables us to respond to that truth.

This is a time to choose Jesus, echoing the words of Simon Peter: *"Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life. <sup>69</sup> We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God."* For we don't only make this choice for ourselves:

In taking a definite stand for the Lord, Joshua displayed his spiritual leadership. Regardless of what others decided, because Joshua had made a commitment to God, he was determined to set an example of living by that decision. Likewise, the way we live shows others the strength of our commitment to serving God.

And when we pray always - quick, brief prayers as a response to everything – and we order our life around God's desires and teachings, making prayer our life and our life a prayer, this will be noticed by those around us, both within the Church and beyond.

So, choose to wait on God each day. Choose to turn to God each day. Choose to put on God each day. Choose to reaffirm your choice of God's ways each day, even when you don't feel like it: in fact, ***especially*** when you don't feel like it. And choose your own way to do this – we are all unique and the same method of daily prayer won't suit all of us – but we could do worse than to reaffirm daily the words of Simon Peter:

*"Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life. <sup>69</sup> We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God."*

Keep safe and thanks for listening!

**Suzette**

## Current Services in the Parish



8 a.m. Said Communion at St Alphege

9.15 a.m. The Junction on Zoom

10.00 a.m. St Helen's Eucharist Service

10.30 a.m. St Michael's Eucharist Service at Sharmans Cross School commencing on 3<sup>rd</sup> October

10.30 a.m. St Alphege Eucharist Service (also streamed live)

5 p.m. St. Alphege Choral Evensong

There are no Midday Prayers on Mondays, Wednesdays or Fridays.

9.30 a.m. Praise & Play on Fridays is back after the holidays.

Wednesday Evensong is discontinued.

Discussions are taking place about further changes





# Job Advice Club

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# CHURCH 4 FAMILIES

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The Junction is an informal service for young families currently worshipping as a community via Zoom with a mix of songs, bible stories, prayers and activities.

Here are the themes for October:

- 3 Oct **Jesus loves children** Can you find the story in your bible story book. What's your favourite part of the story?
- 10 Oct **Harvest Thanksgiving** Bring along something from the outdoors that makes you think of Autumn
- 17 Oct **Real life super heroes** Come along dressed as a real life super hero - What will you choose?
- 24 Oct **Bible Sunday** Bring along a Bible or Bible story book and tell us why it's special to you
- 31 Oct **All Saints Day** Take part in a Kahoot Quiz all about saints

If you would like to attend you need to register with Linda  
[l.hicks@solihullparish.org.uk](mailto:l.hicks@solihullparish.org.uk) to receive the Zoom link.



Activities for families of all shapes and sizes with lots of hands-on, crafty fun - followed by a celebration including a story and a prayer

**WHEN?**

4.00pm 'til 5.00pm on Friday  
15<sup>th</sup> October

**WHERE?**

St Helen's Church, St Helen's Road, B91 2DA (off Buryfield Road)

**WHO?**

EVERYONE! Children, bring your friends, but be sure to bring an adult to share the fun.



Cost: £2 per person, max £7 per family

Places are limited and booking is essential. E mail [l.hicks@solihullparish.org.uk](mailto:l.hicks@solihullparish.org.uk) to book your place.





# Solihull Parish Puppets

After nearly 15 months of not being able to rehearse and perform together, Solihull Parish Puppets finally met up in July in the Chapel at St Helen's Chapel to record a performance to a song about The Good Samaritan. They were concerned that they might be very out of practice and not be able to pull it off, but thanks to the brilliant efforts of Jacob McClenaghan, who was in charge of the recording, Paula and Grace McClenaghan, Grace Carter and Ruth Sabbagh they were able to rehearse and record in 2 hours flat! The recording was shown at the Junction via Zoom and everyone loved it and it made everyone think about helping others.

The puppet team really rose to the challenge and feel inspired to continue in their mission to spread the Gospel and share God's love using puppets. Now here's the thing - with a number of the team reaching a critical point in their education the puppet team won't be able to continue unless more people get involved!

If you think you could help out in any way from learning puppetry skills and performing, to directing, recording and filming, to making costumes, or even being an extra adult at rehearsals for safeguarding purposes, please get in touch. We would love to train up some new puppeteers (10 years +), especially as our current enthusiastic teens make plans to go off to university!

Interested? Contact either the Puppet team leader  
Ruth Sabbagh at [ruth\\_sabbagh@msn.com](mailto:ruth_sabbagh@msn.com) or  
Linda Hicks [l.hicks@solihullparish.org.uk](mailto:l.hicks@solihullparish.org.uk)

We would love to hear from you!



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Praise and Play

*is back!!*

Praise and Play is now meeting in person at 9.30 am every Friday morning for a mix of songs, a Bible story, craft and chat, but you'll need to bring your own refreshments for now!



Booking is ESSENTIAL and numbers are limited so please email Linda Hicks:

[l.hicks@solihullparish.org.uk](mailto:l.hicks@solihullparish.org.uk) to book your place.

# Youth Stuff

## October Events

During October we are hoping to welcome back one of our favourite and most anticipated events, our **'Lock in, Log out'**. This is an overnight youth event, in which we spend time together, eating, playing games, worshipping, praying, hopefully some sleep and having a great time, all without phones or other personal electrical devices, that's the log out. We physically lock them into a box. The young people find this much easier than we think. And this way we spend time with the people we are with. At the time of printing, we are finalising the details, but it will be towards the end of the half term.

We also have film clubs at the start of each month, which are great monthly events involving watching a film together and discussing the themes, issues and faith aspects of films of all genres. In October this will be on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> October in the Oliver Bird Hall.

All the dates and times can be found below of these events and the weekly sessions we have, and for more information or any questions please email me at [j.minall@solihullparish.org.uk](mailto:j.minall@solihullparish.org.uk).

Friday 1st Oct 6-7:30	This session is open to all youth ages, meeting in Room 6 of the Oliver Bird Hall when we play games, chat, and have fun.
Saturday 2nd Oct 6:30-9:15	Film club. Bring your own snacks and drinks and join us in the OBH to watch a film and discuss it afterwards.
Monday 4th Oct 7-9pm	Our games and fellowship session in Room 6 in the Oliver Bird Hall, for all youth aged Year 9 and upwards, in the Oliver Bird Hall.
Wednesday 6th Oct 7:30-8:30pm	Junior Refresh- Our Bible study session for Years 6-8, with a mix of discussion, prayer, worship, and activities in the Oliver Bird Hall
Friday 8th Oct 6-7:30	This session is open to all youth ages, meeting in Room 6 of the Oliver Bird Hall when we play games, chat, and have fun.
Monday 11 <sup>th</sup> Oct 7-9pm	Our games and fellowship session in Room 6 in the Oliver Bird Hall, for all youth aged Year 9 and up, in the Oliver Bird Hall.
Wednesday 13 <sup>th</sup> Oct 7:30-8:45pm	<b>Refresh</b> – Our Bible study session for Years 9 and upwards, with a mix of discussion, prayer, worship, and activities in the Oliver Bird Hall.
Friday 15 <sup>th</sup> Oct 6-7:30pm	This session is open to all youth ages, meeting in Room 6 of the Oliver Bird Hall when we play games, chat, and have fun.
Monday 18 <sup>th</sup> Oct 7-9pm	Our games and fellowship session in Room 6 in the Oliver Bird Hall, for all youth aged Year 9 and upwards, in the Oliver Bird Hall.
Wednesday 20 <sup>th</sup> Oct 7:30-8:30pm	<b>Junior Refresh</b> - Our Bible study session for Years 6-8, with a mix of discussion, prayer, worship, and activities in the Oliver Bird Hall
Friday 22 <sup>nd</sup> Oct 6-7:30pm	This session is open to all youth ages, meeting in Room 6 of the Oliver Bird Hall when we play games, chat, and have fun.  <b>This session could also be replaced with the Lock in Log out</b>
Half term week 25 <sup>th</sup> – 29 <sup>th</sup> Oct	No youth events during the Half Term



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# ***Letter to the Editor***

## **Why Come Back to Physical Church?**

**I**n the July/August issue of this magazine there was an interesting article by Ryan Diaz giving three reasons for coming back to physical church. They were valid points, but I feel that he has missed two other important reasons.

Firstly, we no longer live in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century when going to church was more or less mandatory. We live in a digital savvy secular society in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, where going to church is entirely optional. The church used to be at the centre of community life. That sadly is no longer always the case; the church is now run by a small number of clergy helped by a large number of lay volunteers; however, its congregations have been steadily decreasing over the years and drastically so recently due to the pandemic. Church now has competition for our time on a Sunday morning. Why come to church when so many other activities, such as sport, DIY or just keeping up with the Sunday newspapers, are calling for our time? I don't know the answer, but it is a question that our new Rector, whenever he/she is appointed, will have to address. He or she must ask the fundamental question of how do we make church relevant in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?

Secondly, why do we come to church in the first place? Obviously the prime reason is to worship God, but there are usually other reasons. Christianity has taught us a good way to lead our lives and we wish to socialise with like-minded people and meet our friends, both new and old. Our new Rector must ensure that there is time after the service so that we can do this.

The main service of the week is the Sunday morning communion. This service can take several forms and it is difficult to find a version that pleases everyone. For example, my late wife, Barbara, was an ex-infant school teacher and preferred a "clap-happy" children-orientated service, as at Knowle. When she died in 2001 my daughter, Gill, and I came back to St Alphege, as we preferred the formal service in a packed church with the emphasis on the music with the full choir. We found that peaceful and comforting at a difficult time. We were welcomed and have made a number of new friends since then.

It is essential that the worship is made relevant to the children and young people as they will be the volunteers needed to help the church when we have gone. How then to find an arrangement that suits everybody is difficult; however, I feel that we had it about right before the pandemic. Two concurrent services, the Junction in the OBH for the younger people and a more formal service in the church for others, with the WHOLE congregation coming into church for communion and the final hymn; all followed by a social gathering in the OBH for coffee afterwards. I was however a little disappointed that the full choir was not available for the main service of the week.

**Roger Edwards**

### ***Editor's Note***

*Many people in the Parish have said that getting congregations old and new back to physical church, and spreading the Gospel to them, is our primary task. Parish News would welcome comments and helpful suggestions on this topic of the return to physical church.*

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



## What does the Bible say?

*So then, whenever we have an opportunity, let us work for the good of all, and especially for those of the family of faith. Galatians 6:10*

The Parish of Solihull is in a period known as an Interregnum, a period when we don't have a leader. It is now the Parish Churchwardens, together with the Area Dean, who bear the responsibility of looking after church finances, ensuring services continue, attending to pastoral needs and maintaining buildings and property. The Parochial Church Council (PCC) helps them, of course, as do the clergy, but it is also a wonderful opportunity for each of us to volunteer our skills and time.

*For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life. Ephesians 2:10*

The apostle, Paul, is reminding us that God has prepared a rôle for each of us and has given us the abilities to fulfil it. We should each look for the rôle intended for us.

*Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received. 1 Peter 4:10*

Think about what skills you possess, what you are good at and, crucially, what you enjoy doing. Then look around in the church and ask others what needs doing and try to find something that suits you.

*Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action. 1 John 3:18*

John is encouraging us to get cracking – not talking about doing something to help, but offering and getting on with it. We are blessed in this parish with a skilled community capable of remarkable things, and now is a good time to show what we can do.

*Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few." Matthew 9:37*

There's a lot that needs doing, and people who help out are doing God's work and will share in the harvest.

If you don't know who to talk to about how to volunteer at any of our churches, speak to a member of clergy, or call the Parish Office who can put you in touch with the right person.

**Philip Leach**

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# Climate Sunday 2021

The **Climate Sunday Initiative** calls on all churches across Great Britain and Ireland to hold a climate-focused service before COP26, the international climate conference in Glasgow in November. The vision is to get thousands of churches more engaged with this critical issue as part of their ongoing discipleship and mission and to make a significant contribution to securing meaningful national and international action at COP26. This is the sermon preached at St Alphege on 4<sup>th</sup> July, when the Parish held Climate Sunday services. The sermon preached at St Helen's that day and other climate articles appeared in the September edition of Parish News.

Isaiah 24:4-8.

*The earth dries up and withers, the world languishes and withers;  
The heavens languish together with the earth.  
The earth lies polluted under its inhabitants;  
For they have transgressed laws, violated the statutes,  
Broken the everlasting covenant.  
Therefore a curse devours the earth,  
And its inhabitants suffer for their guilt;  
Therefore the inhabitants of the earth dwindled  
And few people are left.  
The wine dries up, the vine languishes,  
All the merry-hearted sigh.  
The mirth of the timbrels is stilled,  
The noise of the jubilant has ceased,  
The mirth of the lyre is stilled.*

2 Tim 1:7

*God did not give us a spirit of fear, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.*

Mark 4: 30-32

*Jesus said, 'With what can we compare the Kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it? It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade.'*

Let me tell you a story. Just after Easter in 2019 I was staying with a friend in rural Yorkshire. My friend is a profoundly thoughtful, joyful person involved in her church and her community, full of generosity towards others.

One evening we were watching TV. Now I must admit that in those few days of holiday I'd taken my eye off the ball and to my surprise it was all over the news that Parliament was going to be debating the next day whether to declare a climate emergency. I opened my laptop and she asked me what I was doing. I said I was writing to my MP to urge him to support the motion. She said wasn't it a bit late and I said I didn't know but anyway it was my only chance. She asked me how to write to her MP. She'd never done this before. I explained that it's dead easy. You just Google 'Write to them' and a minute later you're doing it.

My friend wrote there and then to her MP. Then she emailed her daughter who also promised to write there and then.

The next day we watched the news. Parliament had declared a climate emergency. 'It worked!' she shrieked with delight! If only things were that easy!

So, what is Climate Sunday about? Three things.

First – worship. Did you see the results of a recent survey of young Christians in which over 90% said their church never, or hardly ever, mentioned the climate crisis or the environment in worship? I find this deeply puzzling, and shameful. I recall how, Sunday by Sunday many churches will praise God for Creation, but aren't these the songs of praise from the perspective of unjust stewards? Isn't the climate crisis, amongst other things, an example of profound intergenerational injustice? For myself, a sixty- something baby-boomer, born into a country flush with optimism, well-educated, effortlessly employed and housed – I won't go on.....I look back over my life and think about how I and many others thought we were working pretty hard towards a better world, and some things did get better, but then I think about what the future looks like for my grandchildren and I feel terribly afraid. So I am not prepared to praise the God of creation without also lamenting the damage, and taking action in the face of such loss.

The words of Isaiah which we listened to a few minutes ago once sounded like a beautiful poem. But now these same words are not just metaphorically, but literally true. This is prophetic reality, which can't be just brushed aside as doom and gloom! On the news we have heard of unprecedented heatwaves throughout Western Canada and the U.S. Pacific Coast. In the richest economies of the world people are unable to function, and the most vulnerable are dying as in the poorest parts of the world, where those who are least responsible for causing planetary warming are already being forced from their homelands, unable to farm and live any longer in areas affected by changing weather patterns. I know that in this church you have an active relationship with our diocesan partners in Malawi. So I don't need to remind you of the unpredictable and frequent droughts, the villages, schools and clinics swept away two years ago by Cyclone Idai. To appreciate the urgency of our human situation and the injustice in it for the millions who are already affected, and who did nothing to cause it, you only need to listen to David Attenborough. Watch his 'Climate Change, the Facts' on BBC IPlayer with his account of the collapse of biodiversity which is now recognised as putting us within the sixth mass extinction in the history of the planet.

Christian worship gives us the language of lamentation, as here in Isaiah, the gateway to emotional connection with human pain. The theologian Tim Gorringer writes of the climate emergency as a confessional issue for Christians. That means that it is one of those issues of belief or action that define the boundaries of Christian faith, which prompts us to turn to the second of the Climate Sunday challenges – that we commit, which is why we turn to the letter to Timothy:

*'God did not give us a spirit of fear, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline'.*

This wonderful verse sustains me. Even in recognising that I and the rest of my species have been very bad stewards, what if, I wonder, we weren't ever really stewards – that control was always an illusion? What if fear is truly swallowed up in love so in God's Spirit we can discover what it might be like to live much more as part of the earth, with fellow creatures, alive more gently in this world? We're losing the control we thought we had, we're in trouble and we need to make changes – and change is hard - but maybe it also opens possibilities for imaginative, creative discovery. Because as we understand from this verse, in faith fear is swallowed up in love.

Two common themes emerge from conversations with fellow Christians. First, connect. Don't try to do everything alone. The easiest way to organise action on climate and environment as a church is probably to join Eco Church which I think St Alphege has already done. Great. It gives a marvellous structure for working on all aspects of the church's life and witness, from where you buy your coffee and biscuits to how you keep warm in the middle of January! There's lots of help in the diocese and beyond with all aspects of this and we all just need to

keep talking to and encouraging one another and keeping creation care at the forefront of worship.

Harder for individuals, I think, is what often appears as the problem of hypocrisy. Ironically fear of hypocrisy is a big brake on Christian witness. As individuals we all find it hard - or almost impossible - to change so we withdraw from a problem all together. We start to make excuses – nothing I can do will make a difference, or it's all hopeless anyway, or maybe technology will sort it out. Don't expect to be a saint – very few people behave like St Francis; but we can all bend the arc of justice gradually and firmly. If you're afraid of being challenged when you order your favourite steak, reply, "I know, but now I only eat meat every other day!" If you take holidays abroad, take the train or fly once not twice. It's not easy to replace gas heating but most of us can turn it down and wear extra jumpers. We need to talk about these things – it's no use shutting up and feeling guilty. That's the fear of being judged as hypocrites because we haven't gone the whole way. Our calling is not to be perfect, but to be faithful.

We need enough faith to get on with the little things. Thinking about Jesus' wonderful parable, we need to think about our actions as mustard seeds. As someone said, the crisis won't be solved by a few people doing everything but by millions doing something. If you're appalled, as my parents would have been, by the statistics on food waste, start there – with a little local campaign in your church. If your grandchildren ask you questions- engage, don't hide! If you're a gardener, find somewhere to scatter seeds or plant trees! If you can afford it, swap to green energy or buy an electric car. We need to begin where God always calls us to begin, just where we are. The more we all do, the more we all speak up about the changes we're trying to make, the more we encourage others and the more we ourselves grow in creativity and hope.

The third challenge of Climate Sunday is to speak up. As my friend found who wrote to her MP, it is incredibly easy to use our voices in the UK. There may be threats to democracy, but we are not in general living in a repressive regime! We need the Government to do a brilliant job of hosting the vitally important climate talks later this year in Glasgow at COP26. We Christians need to overcome a strange reluctance to act politically because in the end huge problems need big politics and big economics to tackle them. So then, why had it not occurred to my friend ever to have contacted her MP before? Because her voice seemed too small? The problems too big? The solutions too distant? In the end, as she said herself, taking action was ludicrously easy, and made her feel good – empowered even.

I'd urge you to go home and, if you haven't already, please Google Climate Sunday, go to the third 'speak up' section of the site and if you agree with the following, sign! After all, the WI, the National Trust, Christian Aid, and numerous other organisations in the Climate Coalition have already signed 'The Time Is Now' declaration to the Prime Minister,

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There comes a moment which is ours to grasp, not in a spirit of fear, but a spirit of power, of love, and of self-discipline.

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## **Slow Me down Lord**

**I** was driving through town many years ago and had to stop at some traffic lights. Looking idly round, I caught sight of a poster which was advertising in large banner headlines PEACE OF MIND. "At last!" I thought, as I waited with eager anticipation for the car which was blocking the rest of the message from view to pull away. When it did, I was able to read the words in smaller letters underneath . . . "for only 38 pence a week!" I think it was an advert for some sort of alarm system: and I drove on, wondering how much real peace of mind would actually cost.

After a little thought, I came to the conclusion that it costs *all or nothing* – or, more correctly, *all and nothing*. Real peace of mind depends entirely and exclusively on our relationship with God. This peace in its fullness is experienced by very few people in this life, although many have caught a glimpse of it. The saints know it and sometimes speak of it: but we so often deviate from loving obedience to God and into the paths of our own concerns without a thought of what God requires of us. We try to impose our own little wills contrary to what God in his loving wisdom wills for our good. As a consequence, we find ourselves constantly butting up against the wills of others in conflict and become less inclined to return to God in penitence and faith.

It actually costs nothing at all to turn to the true Source of real peace. Those who spend money on expensive holidays, drugs, or even courses in meditation, looking for peace, are doomed to disappointment if they think that peace can be bought for cash.

On the other hand, it will cost you everything to acquire real peace: For our relationship with God is, and must be, total. He does not want and love us in bits: he wants and loves us completely: so all that we possess and all that we are and do must be made over to Him in prayer, not just once, but habitually, as a matter of course.

### **Activity**

For many people, not least in the Church, life is characterised by frenetic activity. We often feel guilty if we are not busy about something. It is as if we need constantly to justify our existence by doing things. But if we do not take time to consider at some depth our relationship with God, then our activities and busy-ness will be of little value, and may possibly do more harm than good.

A useful rule-of-thumb is: never take on more activities than you have time to pray about.

Here is a relevant prayer from a collection of daily readings by W E Sangster:

*Slow me down, Lord!*

*Ease the pounding of my heart by the quieting of my mind.*

*Steady my hurried pace with a vision of the eternal reach of time.*

*Give me, amidst the confusion of my day, the calmness of the everlasting hills.*

*Break the tensions of my nerves and muscles with the soothing music of the singing streams that live in my memory.*

*Help me to know the magical restoring power of sleep.*

*Teach me the art of taking minute vacations . . . of slowing down to look at a flower, to chat with a friend, to pat a dog, to read a few lines from a good book.*

*Remind me each day of the fable of the hare and the tortoise that I may know that the race is not always to the swift; that there is more to life than measuring its speed.*

*Let me look upward into the branches of the towering oak, and know that it grew great and strong because it grew slowly and well.*

*Slow me down, Lord, and inspire me to send my roots deep into the soil of life's enduring values that I may grow toward the stars of my enduring destiny.*

*Amen.*

**Martin Tunncliffe**

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**All *Befrienders* are 25+ and DBS checked.** Initially you would receive six sessions lasting between 40-60 minutes each and tailored around your needs. There's no pressure if it doesn't work out.

**For more information please contact us:**

☎ 0121 788 1143  
✉ [centre@solihullcarers.org](mailto:centre@solihullcarers.org)  
🌐 [www.solihullcarers.org](http://www.solihullcarers.org)

# For Your Diary

We shall continue to meet in person as long as Government regulations allow.

**Mothers' UNION**  
Christian care for families  
Diocese of Birmingham

**Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> October** : 1.30pm in the OBH.

**The Origin of Surnames** with Ken Hewitt.

**Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> November** : 1.30pm in the OBH.

A talk by Carol Caldicott - **My Road to St Alphege**.

We can arrange lifts to these meetings.

Contact Elaine (0121 705 3265), Pat (0121 705 8761) or Julia (0121 744 3540).

The latest information is now on the parish website Mothers' Union page.

You can access this on [www.solihullparish.org.uk/mothers-union](http://www.solihullparish.org.uk/mothers-union) and also from the website homepage top menu by clicking on **Connect** and then on **Mothers' Union**.

We are keeping in touch with our members 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.

## WIVES' FELLOWSHIP

The monthly Lunch Club will continue on Friday 5<sup>th</sup> November. For further details please phone Carol Caldicott on 0121 705 3168.

**Carol Caldicott**



**S t A l p h e g e**  
**See inside front cover for**  
**current services.**

## Solihull Parish News - Copy Deadlines

**T**o improve the appearance of this magazine for our readers and advertisers it has been decided that the magazine will be printed in full colour from January next year, with a sample colour version in December this year.

Printing in colour takes a little longer than printing monochrome, so we have to let our printers have the magazine earlier, in order to ensure that it is always in church on the first Sunday of the month. This means that there is little leeway on the copy deadline and contributors **must** let the editor have their copy by then or else it is unlikely to be published.

**Carol Southworth**  
**Roger Edwards**

# *P* STEPHEN & PHILIP PAINTER

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# SOLIHULL PARISH SAFEGUARDING

Safeguarding Coordinator

**Viv Dobson**, [vhdobson@gmail.com](mailto:vhdobson@gmail.com)

07960 783636

## SOLIHULL PARISH PCC & DCC CONTACTS

<i>Parish Wardens</i>	<b>Andrew Williams</b> , <a href="mailto:arwilliams399@gmail.com">arwilliams399@gmail.com</a> <b>Pam Price</b> , <a href="mailto:colandpam@ic24.net">colandpam@ic24.net</a>	0121 705 3268 0121 704 3104
<i>PCC Minutes Secretary</i>	<b>Meryl Homer</b>	
<i>PCC Treasurer</i>	<b>Ron Crowdy</b> , 18 Wellington Grove	0121 705 3253
<i>Parish Electoral Roll Officer</i>	<b>Stephen Linstead</b> , 20 Silhill Hall Road	0121 705 1376
<i>St Alphege Deputy Wardens</i>	<b>Susan Gomm</b> , 10 Silverbirch Road <b>Sheila Sayers</b> , 636 Streetsbrook Road	0121 705 0015 0121 705 5331
<i>St Alphege Stewardship Recorder</i>	<b>Frank Upton</b> , 1 Rectory Road	0121 705 2963
<i>St Helen Deputy Wardens</i>	<b>Phil Godfrey</b> <b>Jean Fewins</b>	0121 705 3923 07925 688897
<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

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<i>Printers</i>	<b>Prontaprint</b> , 126 Station Road, Knowle, B93 0EP	0121 705 9988

The views expressed in this magazine are not necessarily the views  
of *Solihull Parish News* or of *Solihull Parish*.

### NOTE FOR ADVERTISERS AND POTENTIAL ADVERTISERS

Would all advertisers please ensure that any changes they might require to their advert, or notice of cancellation, are routed through the Advertising Manager (Tim Drakeford, 42 Fowgay Drive, Solihull B91 3PH, Tel 705 4494) in sufficient time to meet the copy date for the issue in which they wish the changes to take effect. The copy date is usually the first Friday of the preceding month, but the exact date of the next copy date is shown below. Similarly, would new advertisers please ensure that their requirements for advertising space are also routed through the Advertising Manager in plenty of time to meet the required copy date.

### CONTRIBUTIONS FOR THE NOVEMBER EDITION OF THE PARISH NEWS

**MUST BE IN BY FRIDAY, 1<sup>st</sup> OCTOBER PLEASE.**

Email to [parishnews@solihullparish.org.uk](mailto:parishnews@solihullparish.org.uk) or leave in the Parish Office



# SOLIHULL PARISH STAFF & CONTACTS

<b>Team Rector</b>	The position is currently vacant	
<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>Team Vicar for St Helen</b> (Not currently available)	<b>The Revd Helen Greenham</b>	
<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>Ministry and Leadership Support</b>	<b>The Venerable Paul Taylor</b>	<a href="mailto:pstaylor53@gmail.com">pstaylor53@gmail.com</a> 07796 691203
<b>Readers</b>	<b>Linda Hicks</b> <b>Stephen Linstead</b> <b>Beryl Moppett</b> <b>Chris Carrington</b> <b>Paul Smith</b>	01564 782557 0121 705 1376 0121 705 0337 0121 705 0902 0121 705 1377
<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>	The position is currently vacant	
<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</b> <b>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;</b> <b>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>	



