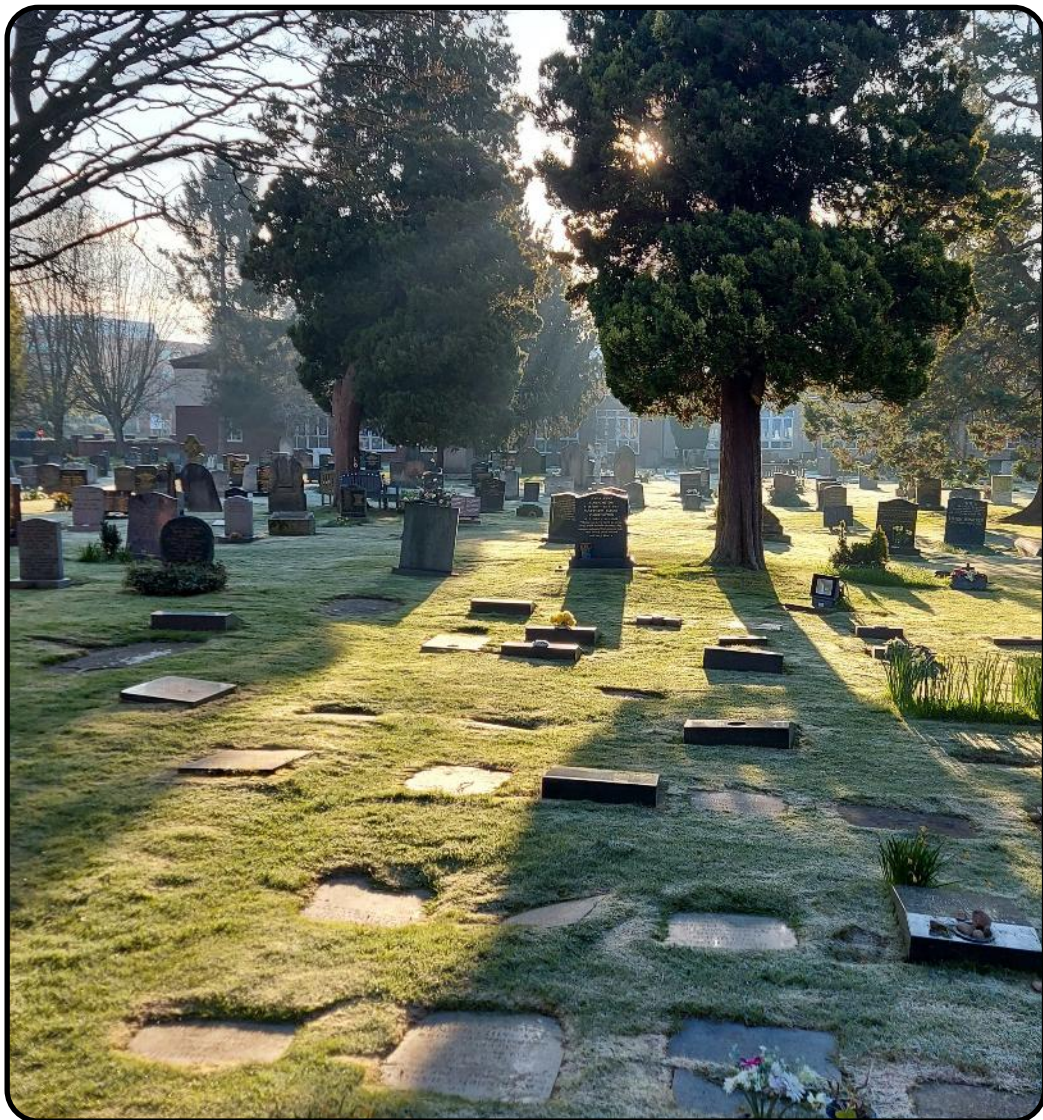


SOLIHULL PARISH

NEWS



TEAM CHURCHES

St ALPHEGE - The Square, Solihull B91 3RQ
St HELEN - St Helen's Road, Solihull B91 2DA
St MICHAEL - Bryanston Road, Solihull B91 1BS



St Alphege

8.00 a.m. Said Communion
10.30 a.m. Sung Eucharist except:
Second Sunday 8th May 9:15 a.m. All Age Eucharist
11 a.m. Sung Eucharist
5.00 p.m. Choral Evensong

The Junction

9.15 a.m. In person in the OBH on 1st, 15th and 29th May
By Zoom on 22nd May

St Helen

10.00 a.m. Eucharist
Third Sunday 10 a.m. Morning Prayer

St Michael at Sharmans Cross School

10.30 a.m. Eucharist

Wednesdays in St. Michael's Chapel, Bryanston Road

9.30 a.m. Morning Prayer 10 a.m. Holy Eucharist

Friday

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

For details of all Lent Holy Week and Easter Services and other April services see page 13 of this magazine and our parish website. <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 help.

The Revd. Simon Marshall
The Revd. Sue Chandler

WEDDING AND BAPTISM ENQUIRIES

Please contact the Parish Office:

office@solihullparish.org.uk

0121 705 5350

**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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THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

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www.solihullparish.org.uk

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parishnews@solihullparish.org.uk

Cover picture

"Sunrise in St. Alphege Churchyard"

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Editorial

Dear Friends

When I was a child, May Day was a very exciting occasion for us at school. A May Queen would be chosen, and she would parade around the playground at school, closely followed by her attendants. And everyone wore flowers. I remember vividly that, at that time, my grandmother used to grow Pinks in her garden. So my mother would pick some of these and wrap them in a little bit of tin foil for me to carry as a posy. Whenever I smell the fragrance of these beautiful little flowers, I am immediately taken back to those childhood days, when life seemed so much simpler!

Once the parade was over, dressed in our finest clothes, we would all dance around the maypole. I can still see the gaily coloured ribbons intertwining at the top of the pole as I write this many years later. It was, as I remember it, a joyous day, as we celebrated the return of Summer.

May Day has been celebrated in the UK for many years. It was originally known as Beltane by the Celts, who celebrated the first day of summer with bonfires to welcome the new season. The day would be marked with fun and celebration in villages throughout the land.

However, because of its pagan roots the celebration was not popular with the church or state and in the Sixteenth Century it was banned. And dancing around the maypole did not return until the restoration of Charles II, who had a 40-metre maypole erected in London.

Still celebrated today in villages in England Jack in the Green sometimes makes an appearance, otherwise known as The Green Man, he is known as a symbol of fertility and the natural world. And Morris dancers perform the dances which have been part of our tradition for many years.

In Oxford on May Day morning, a celebration is held at the top of Magdalen College Tower by the singing of a Latin hymn or carol of thanksgiving. After this the College bells signal the start of Morris Dancing in the streets below. An interesting mixture of the sacred and secular.

For us in the church May begins with the third Sunday of Easter, and during the month we remember the apostles Philip, James and Matthias. The 26th May is Ascension Day, when we remember the day that our Lord returned to be with God the Father: many Christians greet this day with a sunrise service.

Whether you intend to greet the merry month with dancing and celebration, or in a slightly less exuberant way, I hope that May will find you looking forward to warmer weather and blue skies. In the Church's calendar we look towards the day of Pentecost on 5th June and the 'birthday' of God's church, when the mission of the Church to preach the Gospel to the whole world was made clear. The disciples were gathered together when "suddenly from Heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability". (Acts 2: 2-4) Now the disciples could be heard and understood by all those to whom they preached.

**With love
Sue**

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A Tribute to the late Revd. John Bradford

Another aspect of Fr. John's ministry – a personal tribute

I knew John from Baddesley Church and the Rotary Club of Solihull, a lovely man indeed.

John became a Rotarian 30 years ago, on 10th January 1991, and became President in the Rotary year 2002 – 2003. During his year as President, he inducted the first woman member; since then thankfully many more have been inducted. He was given a small present, of a Bible, 1 inch cube size, possibly unique but totally unreadable, and interesting as it was printed long before computer aided printing existed.

Over many years in Solihull, Fr. John made very many friends. He also presided over a number of funerals not only of friends but also a large number of Solihull Residents.

John was a great friend to all within the community; there were times that he seemed to know everyone in Solihull.

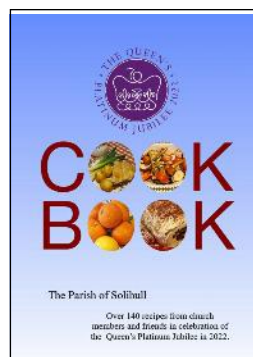
Phil Godfrey

Platinum Jubilee Cook Book

A new Cook Book has been published by the Parish to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, and is now on sale. The price is £10 and all proceeds will be donated to Solihull Churches Action on Homelessness.

You can buy your copy of the Cook Book at the back of St Alphege church after each 10:30 a.m. Sunday service, from the Parish Office, or by contacting Susan Leach (esleach@blueyonder.co.uk or 0121 270 6132). You can pay by cheque, bank transfer or in cash.

The Cook Book will make a really attractive memento of the Jubilee to give to your friends. More than 140 recipes have been collected from church members and friends across the Parish and there are over 60 full colour pictures of the dishes.



Major Works to the Windows and Stonework in St. Alphege Church

Following on from the drone survey in January (reported in the March edition of Parish News and referred to by the Parish Wardens and the Guardians), it is proposed to carry out major works to the windows and stonework in St Alphege Church.

In detail, the works will consist of:-

- Reroofing the North Porch
- Refurbishment of the Eighteenth Century North Porch Gates (they will be removed temporarily but, will be back!)
- Removal, refurbishment and reinstatement of the 10 leaded windows in the North and South elevations of the Bell Tower
- Removal, refurbishment and reinstatement of the Choir Vestry window, (not the tracery windows at the top)
- Removal, refurbishment and reinstatement of the 5 lower lancets (panels) at the base of the East window
- Removal and replacement of some eroded stone blocks on the south side of the church

The underlying reason for the works is due to deterioration over time by the weather and ageing of the materials, in a building, parts of which are over 800 years old. This deterioration has caused problems with the leading of the windows allowing movement, bowing to the glass and erosion of the stones and tiles.

On occasions, it may appear that no works are happening; this may be that the stoneworks have been completed, but that the refurbishment of the windows is continuing off site.

Pending approval of the project by the Diocese and various conservation organisations, it is anticipated the works will commence in May 2022 with completion by October 2022.

Phil Godfrey

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Roundabout

Churchyard Tidy-up Morning Saturday 26th March

It was the warmest spring churchyard tidy-up morning on record!

Eleven adults and four young people from across the parish, with a reduced suitably socially-distanced approach, accomplished some much needed work in St. Alphege churchyard to allow the first grass cut of the year to go ahead before Easter.



Thanks to the sterling efforts of David, Susan, Maryjoy, Nigel, Jaz, Paul, David, Ashley, Nigel and Jenny, Youth leader Joe with Nathan, Sky, Ed and Oscar we managed together to achieve the gathering up old flowers and Christmas grave goods, the tending the front flower beds, sweeping the paths and collecting up all the winter tree debris from the recent three winter storms.



Special thanks are due to Susan for the preparation of the refreshments including serving and clearing up afterwards. These were sponsored by Clive and Shirley in appreciation of the work volunteers carry out in the churchyard. (There were raspberry jam doughnuts straight out of the oven and I got one this time!)

Future tidy-up dates are 11th June, 10th September and 5th November.

Why not join us for the next tidy-up or even perhaps sponsor the refreshments?

**Details: Michael Rumball
0121 711 1726**

The Queen's Platinum Jubilee Celebrations

Strawberry Cream Tea : 2 - 6pm on Thursday 2nd June in the Oliver Bird Hall.

Cake & Plant Stalls - Tombola - Raffle - Activities for Children



Adults £5, Children £2, to include the cream tea and entertainment.

Join us for Prosecco (£2 extra) and sign a card to be sent to

Her Majesty, who is a Patron of Mothers' Union.



This year we were able to hold an actual pancake party, last year we could only do it virtually on Zoom. The Mothers' Union Pancake Party has been an annual event for well over 20 years, so we felt it was important to re-establish it as soon as we could after



The winning Team

Parish Pancake Party



*The Mothers' Union Team
Sarah, Elaine, Amanda & Niki*

Covid. Thanks go to everyone who supported us; it was a great evening and it was good to be back in the OBH again.

We had fun races for tiny tots and then the serious tossing pancake races for the final trophy. Mothers' Union put up a valiant fight once again, but they were defeated in the second round.

The overall winners were

MU Generation Z – children of Mothers' Union members.

There was a children's tombola, a cake stall, a bar and a pancake supper. Andy Hodkinson was our MC, thank you Andy – I hope we have booked you for next year!

Roundabout



St Alphege Platinum Jubilee Flower Festival Thursday 2nd – Sunday 5th June

St Alphege Church is hosting a Flower Festival to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee from Thursday 2nd June until Sunday 5th June. The theme for the Festival will be "Queen and Commonwealth".

The aims of the Festival are:

- To mark and celebrate the Platinum Jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.
- To welcome people from the wider community into the church building.
- To bring together our church and local organisations in a communal activity.
- To advertise our church organisations to the wider community.

If you are a member of a church group or local charitable organization you can take part by:

- Contributing a display for the Festival.
- Offering to run the refreshment table for one day – your group can keep all the profits.

If you would like to be involved as an individual you can:

- Contribute a display for the Festival.
- Offer to help as a steward on any day.

We will need lots of help from volunteers, so do please offer to help if you can. Thank you.

Further details from or offers of help to:

Pam Price colandpam@ic24.net 0121 704 3104.

Advertising in the Solihull Parish News

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07931 751 451



St Alphege Platinum Jubilee Flower Festival "Queen and Commonwealth"

St Alphege Church, Solihull, B91 3RQ

Thursday 2nd June 10.00am - 4.00pm

Friday 3rd June 10.00am - 4.00pm

Saturday 4th June 10.00am - 4.00pm

Sunday 5th June 11.30am - 12.30pm, 2.00pm - 4.00pm

Free Admission. Programmes for Sale. Refreshments available.

www.solihullparish.org.uk



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Everyone welcome



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND



SOLIHULL
PARISH

Let us Pray

Calendar and Prayer Intentions for May 2022

1	3rd Sunday of Easter	That we may share our faith openly	Ryefield Close
2	Philip & James, Apostles	Our Bishops David & Anne	Saddlers Mews
3	Feria	staff, patients and volunteers of the Marie Curie hospice	Saintbury Drive
4	English Saints & Martyrs of the Reformation	Those who suffer for their faith in Christ	Sandal Rise
5	Feria	Those who lead our parish study and fellowship groups	Sandhills Crescent
6	Feria	Those who are looking for work	School Lane
7	Feria	Those who work in the Touchwood Centre	Seven Star Road
8	4th Sunday of Easter	Writers and poets	Sevington Close
9	Julian of Norwich, Spiritual Writer	Our Parish Church Council	Sharmans Cross Road
10	Feria	Those preparing to be admitted to First Communion	Shelsey Way
11	Feria	Those who work at the Core in Solihull	Shustoke Road
12	Gregory Dix, Priest & Monk, 1952	Those who plan and prepare our worship	Silhill Hall Road
13	Ascension Day	Our part in God's mission to Solihull	Silverbirch Road
14	Matthias, Apostle	Suzette, our Pioneer Minister	Smiths Lane
15	5th Sunday of Easter	Those studying for exams	Solihull Bypass
16	Feria	The people and leaders of the Junction	Somerby Drive
17	Feria	Those preparing for Confirmation	Southey Close
18	Feria	The St Alphege bell ringers	Spilsbury Croft
19	Dunstan, Abp of Canterbury, 988	Justin, Archbishop of Canterbury	St Alphege Close
20	Alcuin of York, Deacon & Abbot	Stephen, Archbishop of York	St Bernard's Road
21	Helena, Protector of the Holy Places	The people of St Helen's Church	St Helen's Road
22	6th Sunday of Easter	The staff and pupils of the schools in our parish	Station Approach
23	Day of Pentecost	Christian people across the world	Station Road
24	John & Charles Wesley, Hymn Writers	Chris Thomas our Director of Music	Stonebow Avenue
25	The Venerable Bede, Monk & Scholar	Bible Translators	Stoneleigh Road
26	Ascension Day	The staff of our Diocesan offices	Stoneythorpe Close
27	Augustine, first Archbishop of Canterbury	Those who are in hospital	Stonor Park Road
28	Lanfranc, Prior, Archbishop of Canterbury	Our Archdeacon, Simon	Streetsbrook Road
29	7th Sunday of Easter	Those who work in finance in our town	Tanwood Close
30	Josephine Butler, Social Reformer 1906	The three churches in our parish	The Crescent
31	The Visit of the Blessed Virgin Mary to Elizabeth	Those awaiting the birth of a baby	The Green

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

From the St. Alphege Register

Baptisms

24th April Hugo Walter Jones, Jensen Martin Keye

Weddings

2nd April Christopher Bentley and Suzanna Elizabeth Cocks
Roy Irvin Campbell and Crystal Sylvania Estalin Taylor

30th April Liam Frank Hogan and Kay Lea Hickson

Funerals

17th March Martin Stuart Saunders

7th April Claire Louise Slater

8th April Ronald Lloyd

11th April Alan Arnison

Memorial Services

8th April Nigel Cameron

Interments

19th April Beryl Lawley

Names taken from the Chantry Book for Remembrance in May

Edith Feldman
Geoffrey Starbuck
Tony Davis
Marie Davey
Paul Bloodworth
Reginald Hobbs

Michael Shackleton
David Geoffrey Cox
Barbara Ferguson
Christine Jukes
Peter Walford
Leslie Hodges

Peter John Mitchell
David Chambers
Margaret Mawson
John Mark Taylor
Douglas Hale
Mark Metcalfe



**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 May 2022

This month continues the Easter season and includes many Festivals and other special occasions. The main liturgical colour is white apart from several important feast days where the colour is red.

Monday 2nd May

Today is the feast day of Saints Philip and James, Apostles.

Wednesday 4th May

The Feast Day of the English Saints & Martyrs of the Reformation Era. This day recalls those who witnessed to their Christian faith during the conflicts in church and state in England, which lasted from the 14th to the 17th centuries. We may also give thanks on this day that, in recent decades, ecumenical links have drawn churches of all denominations closer to each other in work and worship.

Sunday 8th May

The Feast of Mother Julian of Norwich who, when thirty years old and suffering from what was considered to be a terminal illness, experienced a series of sixteen visions, which revealed aspects of the love of God.

Saturday 14th May

The Feast Day of Matthias the Apostle. After the betrayal of Jesus by Judas Iscariot, the apostles brought their number back to twelve by choosing Matthias (by lot) to replace him.

Saturday 21st May

The Feast Day of Helena, Protector of the Holy Places, will be celebrated. Helena is the Patron Saint of St Helen's Church in our parish.

Thursday 26th May

Today is the Feast of the Ascension, forty days after Easter Day. Jesus commissions his disciples to continue his work, he promises the gift of the Holy Spirit, and then he is no longer among them in the flesh. The Ascension is therefore closely connected with the theme of mission. From this day, we look towards the arrival of the promised gift of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost later in the month.

Tuesday 31st May

The Church today recalls the visit of Mary to her cousin Elizabeth, when Mary sang her great hymn of praise (Luke 1:39 – 56)

May 2022 Services

Sunday 1st May – Easter 3

St. Alphege	8.00 a.m.	Eucharist
St. Alphege	10.30 a.m.	Sung Eucharist
St. Alphege	5.00 p.m.	Evensong
St. Helen	10.00 a.m.	Eucharist
St. Michael	10.30 a.m.	Eucharist

Sunday 8th May – Easter 4

St. Alphege	8.00 a.m.	Eucharist
St. Alphege	9.15 a.m.	All Age Eucharist
St. Alphege	11.00 a.m.	Sung Eucharist
St. Alphege	5.00 p.m.	Evensong
St. Helen	10.00 a.m.	Eucharist
St. Michael	10.30 a.m.	Eucharist

Sunday 15th May – Easter 5

St. Alphege	8.00 a.m.	Eucharist
St. Alphege	10.30 a.m.	Sung Eucharist
St. Alphege	5.00 p.m.	Evensong
St. Helen	10.00 a.m.	Morning Prayer (Christian Aid Week)
St. Michael	10.30 a.m.	Eucharist

Sunday 22nd May – Easter 6

St. Alphege	8.00 a.m.	Eucharist
St. Alphege	10.30 a.m.	Sung Eucharist
St. Alphege	5.00 p.m.	Evensong
St. Helen	10.00 a.m.	Eucharist
St. Michael	10.30 a.m.	Eucharist

Thursday 26th May – Ascension Day

St. Alphege	7.30 p.m.	Sung Eucharist
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Sunday 29th May – Easter 7

St Alphege	8.00 a.m.	Eucharist
St. Alphege	10.30 a.m.	Sung Eucharist
St. Alphege	5.00 p.m.	Sung Vespers
St. Helen's	10.00 a.m.	Eucharist
St. Michael's	10.30 a.m.	Morning Prayer



The Guardians of St Alphege Parish Church

All being well, by the time you read this we will have held our first social event, the Coffee Morning. Now we are looking ahead to the next one. This will be an Afternoon Tea on Sunday 3rd July; there will be more information in due course.

We are hoping to hold a Wine & Cheese event in the Autumn. If anyone has any ideas of different types of events, please let us know.

We are still hoping that the work on St. Alphege Church will start before too long but there are various official hoops to go through. There will be three phases to the work; Bell tower & North porch; Choir Vestry; and the East window. The total cost will be just short of £140,000. It will be good to see it starting.

We are still hoping for someone to come forward to oversee our website. So, please if any member, or non-member, would like to take this on, please contact a Trustee or Committee member. We should be most grateful.

The Trustees

May 2022



St Alphege Platinum Jubilee Concert

Saturday 11th June, 7pm - St Alphege Church

The programme will include coronation music such as Zadok the Priest by Handel and O Taste and See by Vaughan Williams, as well as a newly composed anthem 'In our Service' by Thomas Hewitt-Jones. Further detail will be shared over coming weeks.

This concert is generously supported by the Solihull Celebrating Communities Fund so admission will be free of charge. Please email jsabel@solihullparish.org.uk for booking information.



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 21 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: russellpayne110@aol.com

The Church was floodlit to remember the following in April 2022:

8th April In loving memory of Ron Soden on his birthday.

10th April In loving memory of Mary Friswell.

24th April In loving memory of Vivien Soden.

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). Tea, coffee and cake are now available from 12.30 p.m.

Isabel Baumber

4 th May	Tom Lilburn, countertenor
11 th May	Nova Wind Quintet
18 th May	Jeanie Zuo, violin
25 th May	Darren Hogg, organ

Music Matters

The choirs are currently working extremely hard in the run-up to Holy Week and Easter – we hope that the music we offer enhances your worship. We have a busy rehearsal schedule, and a combination of new and well-known music, all chosen specially for the season and to fit the mood of each of the services. On Easter Day, there will be a combined Eucharist this year, and music will be offered by our choirs, organ and worship band during the service.

In this edition of Parish News, I'd particularly like to share information about two exciting new ventures, *Minims* and a *Jubilee Concert*.

After Easter, we will relaunch our programme for younger children, *Minims*, See page 24. It will restart on Thursday 5th May in a slightly different format from previous years. Children aged five and six are invited to participate – they can attend any local school, or indeed be home-schooled. The format will be musical fun for 20 minutes, then they'll join the Junior Choristers for their warm-ups and one song or hymn, then it will be home time. Parents will be asked to stay with their child/children during the half-hour session. To make things more practical for parents, babes in arms will be welcome too – we know it's not always easy to make arrangements for younger siblings. Please do spread the word to any families you know who have children of this age who might be interested in attending or even just visiting us to see how they get on – they would be very welcome.

We have just received the amazing news that we have been successful in a bid for funding support for a *Platinum Jubilee* concert. The project will be supported by the Solihull Celebrating Communities Fund and one key aspect of our project is that we would like to give the opportunity to attend a concert to people who may not normally have access to this type of experience, or to those who are currently facing a difficult time. We will also be delighted to have our loyal supporters from across the parish in the audience. The concert will showcase music used at coronations, including specific music performed in Queen Elizabeth II's coronation, and the newly composed Queen's Platinum Jubilee Anthem, '*In our service*' by Thomas Hewitt-Jones.

Look out for further details including confirmation of the concert date on the parish website, in the pew slip and on our social media channels.

Stay safe and well everyone – and thank you in advance for supporting these two ventures.

Isabel Baumber



Lunchtime Harp Recital 6th April

It is always a pleasure to host a recital by students from the Harp Department at Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, and their April recital was no exception - we were treated to a programme entitled 'Voyage' featuring 19th and 20th century harp solos. The first item on the programme was the Hindemith Harp Sonata, which evokes in turn a cathedral visit in the first movement, children playing in the plaza in front of the cathedral in the second, and a funeral in the final movement. We then heard sounds of the rain in *Le Jardin Mouillé* by Jacques de la Presle – some wonderful musical symbolism. Four students performed in the recital, under the expert guidance of Rita Schindler. The programme ended with a lively Basque dance, *Viejo Zortzico*, by Spanish composer Guridi.



*Young Harpists from the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire with their Tutor
Rita Schindler.*

Future Recitals

Our May recital programme promises to be an interesting selection of music. The 4th May features Countertenor, Tom Lilburn. Tom was a chorister at St. Alphege, working his way through the choir as a treble, as Head Chorister, then singing with the men on the back row. After leaving school, he was a Choral Scholar at St. John's College, Cambridge, before going on to become a Lay Clerk at St. George's Chapel, Windsor. Tom was one of the four people who sang at Prince Philip's funeral last year and is tremendously talented. On the following Wednesdays we then have a wind quintet, a violin duo and an organ recital – so hopefully there is something to suit all musical tastes. You are very welcome to attend regularly, or to dip in and out according to your personal circumstances. Recitals begin at 1.10 p.m. and refreshments of tea, coffee and cake are available from 12.30 p.m. each week. Do spread the word about our recitals too – it's a lovely way to spend a Wednesday lunchtime.

St. Helen's has now held their Annual District Church Meeting and agreed the District Church Council for the next year.

June will be an exciting month, as St. Helen's will be marking its 60th Anniversary, a great milestone for the Church and for the Community. At the weekend will be a Bring & Share supper on Saturday 11th June, a ticketed event (Cost £10, to be donated to Charity, details to follow) due to the capacity of the Hall. Saturday evening will be a 60th themed evening, with a 60's quiz, 60's fashions (Optional !!!), 60's music and our fantastic Puppets who will perform two parody Beatles songs, that is songs with a Christian message which are parodies of Beatles songs, in their own inimitable style. We would love for you to be with us. Some of our previous Vicars will be there.

On Sunday there will be a Service taken by Bishop David, and everyone in the Parish is invited to come along to St. Helen's, for this momentous service.

We continue to pray for the Revd. Helen and her family, and also to pray for Jean Fewins, who, after her recent stay in hospital, is now recovering well, looked after by her children.

Thanks also to Les, for his Call to Prayer, appreciated by and invaluable to many people.

I am pleased to report that the new furnace serving the Main Hall will commence operating on 4th April, which will be great news for all.

Phil Godfrey

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St. Helen's – A Message from the Revd. Sue

As you can imagine excitement is in the air at St. Helen's as we continue to prepare for our 60th anniversary next month, June.

The Bishop is booked, the quiz is well on the way, the puppets are going to be singing a Beatles song or two, which is very exciting. I think we may even have some 60s music played at some point, and if we do there will definitely be a sing song. That may not be in anyone else's plan, but I don't know about you, I can never resist singing along to 60s music. There will be a display in the chapel, of photographs from days long ago, and we are even asking people to dig out of their attics the clothes which were fashionable back then. Although I am not sure anyone will be turning up in a button-down shirt, bell-bottoms or a mini skirt!

We have invited friends from the past, including two of our previous Vicars, to come and join the celebration, and we are already thinking about our Bring and Share feast. We have a master plan to ensure that we don't end up with 25 quiches!

On 12th June there will be a joyful service as Bishop David joins us to celebrate 60 years of worship, and dedicated work by so many people, who have shared the Gospel at St. Helen's. It will be a day of mixed emotions I suspect. Celebration of all that has been achieved, mixed with memories of those who were there at the beginning, and who now rest in the love of God and in the joy of heaven. And whilst we will be looking back, we will also be very much looking forward to what the next 60 years might bring. As I write this, the hope is that our friends from St. Michael's will be joining us for our service. We shall certainly be inviting our neighbours in the district, and we very much hope that some of our friends from St. Alphege will also be able to join us, as we welcome Bishop David and celebrate together.

Hope to see some of you there.

Revd. Sue

During March we in common with other churches held our Annual District Church Meeting which followed our Eucharist service. This is a good opportunity to hear about the work of our church over the last year. Unfortunately, of course, not much has happened, but of more significance is that vacancies were filled on the District Church Council and Deputy Wardens elected to serve for another year.

Keith Wilson and Merrill Flood had agreed to continue for a further year as Deputy Wardens, there being no other nominations. This is a good time to express our grateful thanks that Keith and Merrill have agreed to serve this year. The Deputy Wardens' job has been difficult over the last two years, but Keith and Merrill have carried us through with good humour and hard work. It isn't always realised the work Wardens do. It could be assumed that as we don't have a building the task is easy, but nothing could be further from the truth. There is a great deal to do behind the scenes, as with most organisations, to ensure everything runs smoothly. And then of course there are the meetings, which could be the problem in getting new people to serve in these positions. The church is obsessed with committees and meetings which take up a good deal of time.

Both Keith and Merrill have carried out these duties with dedication and cheerfulness and made sure St Michael's is represented at the various meetings, so from St Michael's folk a very big 'thank you' for all you have done and are doing.

Sadly, during March, we lost two long-standing members of St Michael's; Jane Yarnold and Gill Hudson now rest within God's loving arms and we shall miss them greatly. Our thoughts and prayers are with David and Jon at this sad time.

At the beginning of April, we started our Wednesday Holy Eucharist in the chapel, which has been missed during the last two years, let us hope this will be able to continue into the future.

When you read this, we shall have celebrated the joy of Easter and the resurrection of Our Lord and can look forward with confidence to see what God has in store for us with prayer and thanksgiving.

Paul Smith

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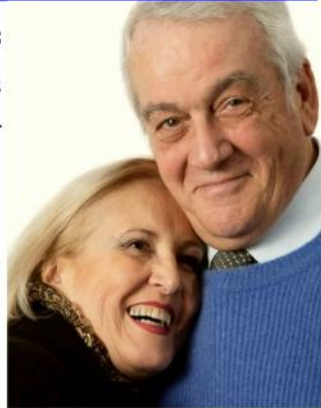
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"Trust in the Lord with all your heart..."

Proverbs 3:5 NIV

While pondering where to start, the verse that is the title of this article kept coming into mind. You see, my mind is currently full of questions. As I write we are still in Lent and I have facilitated four of the six planned sessions of *Wellbeing & Lent*, held at the Greville Arms. For those who measure success by figures, the course has been relatively well-attended – an average of eight people per week so far. And there has been a smattering of interest from non-Churchgoers. But I do wonder now if the venue choice was the best? That is to say, a couple of people in the last couple of weeks – one who comes along to *Wellbeing & Lent* and one who doesn't – have said things that have made me question the venue. However, at the same time, the staff and customers of the Greville Arms have made us very welcome; as well as commenting on the size of the group – "You must be doing something right" – and chatting with me about Lent. Plus, a member of the group told me only this week, "It's working, holding this here. If it wasn't, I wouldn't still be coming."

And yet still I am already thinking about venues, about next Lent, and about God's timing. Thus is the lot of the Pioneer. Let me expand:

While working as Pioneer ministers in the West of Bedford, my husband David and I set up *Tea & Talk* at the local community centre on the estate where we lived. (*This is in fact still running and we hope to visit them sometime this year.*) After *Tea & Talk* had been running for some time, Lent came around and we invited everyone from *Tea & Talk* and the local community to join us for a *Lent Lunch*. Each week we provided a simple lunch – bread, cheese, cold meats, cake – and there was a question to discuss over lunch, such as "How do you feel when you hear the word, Church?" or "What does the word 'mother' mean to you?" Two people from *Tea & Talk* joined us for the whole six weeks of Lent and some good discussion was had. (*Do not despise the day of small things. See Zechariah 4:10*).

By the next Lent *Tea & Talk* had moved rooms at the hall, to a room like the one in which we had run Lent Lunches the year before so, this time around, we ran *Lent Lunch* straight after *Tea & Talk*, in the same room. This time most of the group stayed and again, there was great discussion. In fact, most weeks, at some time during *Tea & Talk*, we would be asked "What question are we pondering today?" (*We would never tell! ☺*) At the time I found myself questioning why we hadn't done that the year before, the take-up response being so much better. But now I can see that it was all about timing – we were a year further into our relationships with those people who stayed, and there is no guarantee that the take-up would have been the same a whole year before.

"...and lean not on your own understanding."

To bring us up to the present day, we must also consider God's timing in our 'people-made' plans. For instance:

Pioneer Diary

As a Pioneer I know that to get the best results from my ministry I must be secure in being myself. It is me and my interests, my personality, my gifts and talents, that God has called to this particular place at this particular time. *(Just like he has called you to yours! Have a think about that. ☺)*

Those who know me know I love walking. Walking alongside someone is a good way to get to know them, and so I thought about planning some walks. Early in post here I led a number of walks around the local area over a couple of months but, although those who came along enjoyed the walks, the take-up was very low, and sometimes non-existent.

Fast-forward just over two years to today. *Wellbeing Wednesday* has been running for 46 weeks and, just recently, the people who come along have begun to talk about "going out for a walk". So, our first walk is planned for this coming Sunday (April 3rd). I already know that there are half-a-dozen people committed to this walk, and that is without the people who may just turn up on the day. *(It has been advertised more widely than the Wellbeing Wednesday group.)* Not only that, we have at least four people who cannot come this weekend but who are interested in when we might go out again, so today we have committed ourselves to, at the very least, a walk on the first Sunday of each month up until the first Sunday in October.

Same idea. Same me. Different time. God's timing.

All I can say is "*trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding*" – and watch this space! ☺

Keep safe and thanks for listening!

Suzette.

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CHURCH 4 FAMILIES

May

Sunday Worship

St Alphege

On **1st 15th and 29th May** the Junction will meet **IN PERSON** at 9.15am in the Oliver Bird Hall.

(An informal service for families of all ages. It's lively and laid back!)

On **22nd May** the Junction will meet **ON ZOOM**

(Contact Linda l.hicks@solihullparish.org.uk to register to receive the zoom link)

On **8th May** everyone will meet in the church building at 9.15am for a service for all ages with the worship band including admission of First communion.

St Helen

Every Sunday at 10.00 am there is worship in a modern space with a community feel with activities available for children.

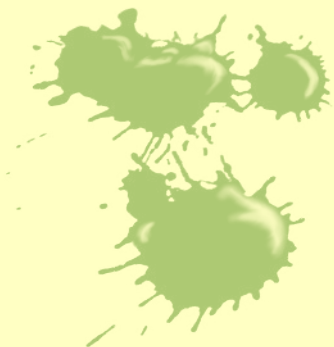
St Michael

Every Sunday in term time at 10.30am there is worship in the school hall where a warm and welcoming space is created for all ages to worship.

Other Activities

Friday 20th May **Messy Church** St Helen's Church 4pm

Praise and Play Every Friday 9.30-10.30am Oliver Bird Hall



Activities for families of all shapes and sizes
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a celebration including a story and a prayer



4.00pm 'til 6pm on Friday

20th May, 17th June and 15th July



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



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booking is essential. E mail
l.hicks@solihullparish.org.uk
to book your place.



Easter Journey 2022

It was such a joy to be able to welcome local school children back into St Alphege church in person to participate in the Easter Journey. Children attended from the following schools : Bishop Wilson, St Augustine's, St Alphege, Ruckleigh, Oak Cottage, Yew Tree and Greswold.

In order to be Covid compliant the sessions ran a little differently to previous years, but that didn't seem to detract at all from how the events of Holy week were brought to life for the children.



The children listened to the story of Holy Week. They experienced foot washing. learnt about the Last Supper, heard Simon Peter's story, took part in a meditation on the crucifixion, heard from a woman at the Empty tomb and had the opportunity to reflect on their own fears or worries. The children then fed back what they had enjoyed most about the Easter Journey and what was the most important part for them and why it was important.

First Communion

Please pray for the children in our parish who will be receiving their First Communion on 8th May.





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Praise and Play

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Youth Stuff

During May youth will continue to meet on a Wednesday evening in the Youth Room for a Bible based activity. Dates as follows:

May 4th Year 9+ 7.30 – 8.45p.m.

May 11th Years 6 – 8 7.00 – 8p.m.

May 18th Year 9+ 7.30 – 8.45p.m.

May 25th Years 6 - 8 7.00 – 8p.m.

On Saturday May 7th from 6.30 p.m. – 9.15 p.m. come along to Film Club. We will watch a film together in the Youth Room and talk about it afterwards. Bring your own snacks, we will provide the popcorn!



LIVING
IN LOVE
& FAITH

What is Living in Love & Faith?

Living in Love and Faith refers to a set of learning resources which have been produced by the Church of England to explore how issues of identity, sexuality, relationships relate to Christian teaching in the Gospel.

The learning resources set out to encourage people to think profoundly about what it means to be human and to live in love and faith with one another. It aims to discuss the difficult questions and the diversity of opinion amongst Christians about what it means to be faithful to Christ in a world in which the understanding and practices around gender, sexuality and marriage continue to evolve. These are controversial and difficult issues for many. The resources do not set out to necessarily change our minds but rather to encourage us to be open as to how we demonstrate love to those whose lived experience and opinions may be very different from our own. They are designed to help us consider how we as Christians may disagree well whilst functioning together in the Body of Christ.

This 5 week course with video presentations is planned to take place at St Helen's Church on Wednesday evenings at 7.30 p.m. starting on the 8th June and running until 6th July.

If you are interested in joining the group and would like further information please contact the Revd. Simon Marshall (0121 704 4730 simon@solihullparish.org.uk) or Chris Carrington (0121 705 0902 chrisandjennycarrington@gmail.com)

To book your place on the course please contact Ann Colloby at the Parish Office.

Fr. Andrew Hutchinson

Our Area Dean, the Revd. Nick Parker, writes:

"On Mothering Sunday, 27th March, Solihull School Chapel was full to bursting with pupils past and present, for a special service of Evensong as fond farewells were said to organist Mr. Peter Irving and Chaplain the Revd. Canon Andrew Hutchinson – who between them have served the school for well over half a century. Headmaster, Mr. David Lloyd, gave a fulsome vote of thanks to both on behalf of the school, and the Revd. Nick Parker also gave a vote of thanks to Fr. Andrew in recognition of a ministry which has extended beyond the school – particularly in support of Solihull Parish, as well as to the wider deanery. In doing so he mentioned Fr. Andrew taking Holy Communion to individuals at Marie Curie Hospice over many years, as well as to vacant parishes on Sundays. The Revd. Nick Parker said how we will particularly miss Fr. Andrew's bold preaching and prophetic voice, his keen wit and humour, and above all the colourful presence of a priest, with generous and humble spirit, who has served diligently and faithfully."

As the Revd. Nick has mentioned, Fr. Andrew has served us so well in the whole Parish and Deanery, but in particular at St. Alphege during the past two years of Covid and reduced clergy availability when he has taken services frequently, and with enthusiasm and encouragement to us to deepen our faith, and to practise our faith with courage. We would have been in great difficulty to run services during this time without him.

Fr. Andrew takes up his appointment as Vicar for Liturgy and Worship in the East Cardiff Ministry Area in the Diocese of Monmouth after Easter and we will greatly miss him. Our loss will be their gain. But he is threatening to come back to the area fairly often and so hopefully we can ask him to preside and preach for us in the future.

Let us pray for Fr. Andrew as he starts his new ministry.

Andrew Williams
April 2022

St Alphege Pre-school

Pre-school places are available for children who will turn 3 years of age in the academic year beginning in September each year. St. Alphege Pre-school offers highly experienced and qualified staff. The last two Ofsted Inspection results rated us 'Outstanding'. Please see web-site for further information www.stalphege-preschool.org.uk – or email Tammy Ellender, Manager: manager@stalphege-preschool.org.uk Application forms available from the Oliver Bird Hall or email the Admissions Secretary – admissions@stalphege-preschool.org.uk for a copy.

Wraparound

We also offer a wraparound service for nursery Children attending St Alphege Nursery. Email: Tammy Ellender: manager@stalphege-preschool.org.uk

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Letter to the Parish from Fr. Andrew Hutchinson

Dear All

For the past 25 years I have served as Chaplain to Solihull School together with a congregation who use the School Chapel as their parish church. We have offered a variety of Sunday worship to accommodate the needs and backgrounds of our community ranging from Choral Evensong to circus services with Roly the priest clown, from Sung Mass to the infamous Pet Services for the blessing of our beloved animals.

I have been supported by an ecumenical team who have sustained the work of the Chaplaincy through practical help and prayer. Through various initiatives we have discovered what it means to be a missionary church presenting a vision of how we have felt God calling us to be an inclusive community of hospitality. We have developed the use of music, symbol, art, movement, space, colour and the use of the senses enjoying a considerable impact upon worship and mission. Over the years I have received a number of chaplaincy assistants, ordinands and musicians who have generously shared their own particular expertise.



A significant aspect of my work has been with the Solihull team of Anglican churches where, as an assistant priest I have been fully integrated into the mission, worship, organisation and pastoral care of the parish. It has been a particular delight and enormous privilege to celebrate the liturgies and preach regularly at St. Alphege Church. Both in school and in the parish I have prepared and celebrated services for the community including memorial services for staff, parents and pupils; leavers' liturgies; weddings; marriage blessings and a host of Prep. School services.

I have taken a number of school/parish pilgrimages including our annual visit to the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham, Norfolk; Santiago de Compostella; Rome; Assisi; Venice; Verona; the Holy Land and the Passion Play at Oberammergau. All these expeditions have provided opportunity for fun, fraternity and spiritual growth.

Sixth Form students have joined me on visits to Kenya where we experienced the Christian church ministering in areas of deprivation celebrating the faith with vibrancy and joy. We have also received African Bishops who have enhanced the life of our Chaplaincy. My own connections with the Ghanaian church, where I spent time teaching prior to ordination, have sustained my own life and ministry.

I have demonstrated my musical skills at the organ console from time to time and led worship at Birmingham Cathedral. During my time in Solihull I have relished joining our chapel choirs singing Cathedral evensong at St. Paul's, Lichfield, St. Albans, Worcester, Gloucester, and Windsor Chapel.

Throughout my time here people have been prepared for the Sacraments, invited to participate in Alpha courses, and played a part in the open 'Going for Growth' missionary programme.

Pastoral ministry in the school and parish have included counselling, bereavement care, hospital and home visits and general support for those facing difficulties in life. Community Service with Sixth Form pupils has enhanced our relationship as a school with the wider population of Solihull and enabled the elderly to attend services at Christmas and Harvest.

Whilst here I have worked diligently in preaching, enabling the faith to become real and accessible. Through my own visits to Iona and the Church of St. Gregory, San Francisco, we have incorporated aspects of their participative, affirming and inclusive ministry into our own liturgical and pastoral life. Together we have inspired others to participate fully in the Eucharist where everyone has been welcome, without exception, to receive the Sacrament opening the door for people to experience God's love often for the first time.

Through the seasons of Easter and Christmas we have celebrated our stories of liberation; calling out familiar and unexpected saints, proclaiming again and again that Christ is Born, Christ is Alive and Christ is Risen indeed!

Year after year we have opened our hearts and minds to those of other world faiths and of none celebrating the manifold gifts, backgrounds and experiences which upbuild the school community. I have been delighted to serve in the school Wellbeing Department and their initiatives in celebrating Black Lives and the LGBTQIA+ community. As I look back to the inception of my ministry here I recognise just how far we have travelled in these areas, for which I thank God.

I am grateful for the opportunity to teach in the Religious Studies Department and wish to express my appreciation for supportive colleagues here and throughout the school.

One of my lasting memories of Solihull will be our recent school expedition to North Wales where we enjoyed the usual round of outdoor adventures bathed in sunshine alongside fantastic hardworking colleagues and brilliant pupils. The enthusiastic singing of 'Bread of Heaven' by colleagues and pupils as I descended the zip wire over the precipice of a slate quarry will forever be in my heart!

Before taking up parish ministry in Cardiff I would like to express my sincere gratitude to you all for the privilege of serving as Chaplain of Solihull School and assistant priest in the Parish of Solihull. I have been truly blessed and want to express my enormous gratitude for welcoming me as your servant, friend and priest.

With every good wish and blessing.

Fr. Andrew Hutchinson
March 2022



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Update from the Parish Wardens

When you read this, Lent and Easter will have passed and we give thanks for the opportunities to pray and study with the Lent Courses and Just Explore, and for the opportunities of many services and activities such as 'The Easter Journey'. Easter is such an uplifting time and especially so with continuing Covid and the horrors in Ukraine.

Most of you will be aware of the good news that we can now move forward with the recruitment of a Priest-in-Charge (Rector Designate). The Diocese wishes to propose an alteration to the structure of the Parish and there are legal technicalities with this which will take many more months. So, the Bishop is 'suspending the living' which allows us now to recruit a Priest-in-Charge (Rector Designate) who will become Rector when the new structure is in place. We hope to advertise for the post in late April or early May.

We are continuing to review work with young people and younger adults and will shortly be moving forward on an appointment here too.

As reported last time, we will be having an Action Morning where we can set some priorities for our Transforming Church Action Plan (TCAP). It will be held on Saturday 14th May at St. Swithin's House, Barston, and we will report back on these priorities.

It is very pleasing that the Solihull Welcome for Refugees and Asylum Seekers has now started in the Oliver Bird Hall and has welcomed a good number of people to the sessions.

The Platinum Jubilee Celebrations will soon be upon us – please do keep thinking of ways we can celebrate this unique occasion. Pam is heading up a Flower Festival for the whole Parish for which help would be much appreciated. Other events are also planned, such as the Mothers' Union Tea Party and a Grand Concert by our church choirs, so do look out for details of those and please do support them.

Many of the events listed above, especially all the wonderful services which took place from Palm Sunday to Easter Day, could not have taken place without an enormous amount of work by our Clergy and Staff, and a huge number of very willing volunteers. We thank you all most sincerely for all that you have done and continue to do for us. Thank you too, to all those who represent us on our Parochial Church Council, District Church Councils and Deanery and Diocesan Synods; we offer a warm welcome to those who have just joined these Councils at the recent A.G.M.s.

Let us pray for the appointments of the right persons for our Priest in Charge and Youth/Young Adults Worker, and for the activities and services in the Parish so that we can see our life together with God flourishing.

Pam Price
Andrew Williams
April 2022

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In Spirit and in Truth (a reflection on John 4: 1-26)

On Easter Day this year our main celebration will be a combined communion and eucharist at 10.30. The music will be led by both the band and the choirs, with both traditional and modern hymns and songs. Father Andrew will be presiding at what will be his 'farewell' service, so we will give him the opportunity to sing the special chants gloriously as he always does. The choir, band and organ will combine in leading the Glastonbury Gloria and the worship song 'Led like a Lamb', and the choir will sing their newly-discovered Sanctus and Agnus for double choir by Hassler. So: All Ages and All Styles, and a congregation of Christian pilgrims who are there both to worship and to exercise the greatest gift: Charity.

Part 2: In Spirit and in Truth: Transformational Worship

So much for what matters to me, discussed in last month's article. Now – what matters to God?

'Oh, but we couldn't possibly presume to know that! Only fundamentalists claim to know what God thinks – we're Anglicans!'

Well consider this: how fundamental are we being when we express our views about certain unscrupulous people who have been convicted for banking irregularities? Does God agree with us?

I think you'll find He does in this instance! – since every Sunday in the Eucharist we ask Him to help us to do what he commanded: 'do justly and love mercy'. Where does this commonly quoted phrase come from?

Take a look at Micah, Amos, John's Gospel and the letter of James – and you'll find that you can't divorce transforming action in the world – the political and economic day-to-day – from the way we worship on Sunday.

Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? (Micah 6 6-8)

... or is this what James is talking about when he talks about 'true religion'?

Pure religion and undefiled before God the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep [yourself] unspotted from the world. (James 1:26-27)

.... and what do we make of this?

I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell your solemn assemblies. Though ye offer me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, I will not accept them: neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts. Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols. But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream. (Amos 5: 21-24)

This might be the answer:

The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

(John 4: 19-23 – our Lord’s words to another Samaritan!)

Now something more recent:

‘ If worship is an engagement in divine mission, mission is an engagement in worship. Precisely because ‘going to church’ is not to be divorced from ‘going to work’ or ‘keeping a household’, as if these were separate and unrelated spheres of being and action, our Christian service outside the liturgy, our striving after justice, our performing acts of practical kindness, could all be called a ‘liturgy after the liturgy’, a way in which we worship. It then becomes an important function of the liturgy to make us more attentive and responsive to those around us, to help us to have what St Paul calls ‘the mind of Christ’, so that we can be sent out to express that mind of Christ in our attentive dealing with the needs of individuals and the pressing issues of our society. What unfolds in the drama of worship is lived out, and becomes the work of those called to be co-workers of Christ in actively promoting peace and human flourishing among the harsh and un-reconciled realities of the world.’ (Transforming Worship: Living the New Creation - A Report by the Liturgical Commission; 2007)

So, what is the chief purpose of worship?

I’m sure that by now we’ve struck off ‘to make us feel good’ as a purpose.

Being uplifted, having our spiritual batteries re-charged, and good feelings - these might be some of the results of an hour in church on a Sunday, or of time spent ‘alone with God’ in our private devotions. But the words of our Lord, and of Amos, Micah and John the Evangelist, all point to transformation in our day-to-day lives as the main point of worship.

This could be seen as both the purpose of entering into worship, and the end result.

Warning: it may not make us feel good – as we might have a part of our lives, our family, our neighbourhood, or a world situation - highlighted in our consciousness that we’d rather not look at – or even which we came to church to get away from.

Conversely, if we enter into a time of worship not expecting our lives to be changed, then can we really claim to be ‘worshipping in spirit and in truth’?

Christopher Martin Thomas
Director of Music

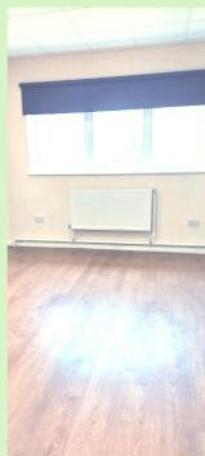
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Matters of Faith

Afterlife

Responding to a query concerning the Bible's teaching about life after death, the Revd. Martin Tunnicliffe assembled these thoughts for consideration.

AFTERLIFE (Eternal life, Everlasting life)

There are hints of belief in an afterlife in the Old Testament, but there is no consistent teaching there.

Here are some Old Testament references.

Job 19:25-27 I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!

Isaiah 26:19 But your dead will live; their bodies will rise. You, who dwell in the dust wake up and shout for joy. Your dew is like the dew of the morning; the earth will give birth to her dead.

Daniel 12:1-3: At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people—everyone whose name is found written in the book— will be delivered. Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt. Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.

Psalms 49: 13-15

This is the fate of those who trust in themselves,
and of their followers, who approve their sayings.

¹⁴ They are like sheep and are destined to die;
death will be their shepherd

...Their forms will decay in the grave,
far from their princely mansions.

¹⁵ But God will redeem me from the realm of the dead;
he will surely take me to himself.

Psalms 73.24

You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will take me into glory."

2 Kings 2.11

As they were walking along and talking together, suddenly a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared and separated the two of them, and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind.

SHEOL. A word used in the Old Testament for “grave” or “underworld”. The general feeling seems to be pessimistic and imprecise. *She’ol* in the Hebrew Bible is a place of darkness to which all the dead go, both the righteous and the unrighteous, regardless of the moral choices made in life, a place of stillness and darkness cut off from life and separated from God.

Jewish and Christian faith and tradition seem to agree that God is eternal, without beginning or ending, existing outside time. Time is part of God’s creation.

At the time of Jesus, some Jews believed in resurrection, for example the Pharisees, while others, like the Saducees did not: see **Matthew 22.23-32**. Jesus and First Century Christians tended to side with the Pharisees, which is hardly surprising considering the Easter event.

Setting aside the rather specialist kind of writing, Apocalyptic, in **Mark 13** and the **Book of Revelation**, early Christian faith and teaching seemed to prefer to remain imprecise about the afterlife. The words of the Creeds referring to the “resurrection of the body” are to be interpreted as following the teaching of Saint Paul in **1 Corinthians 15. 36-44** about “a spiritual body.” (see also Luke 23.43).

This contrasts with the Matthew version of the Easter story in **Matthew 27.50-53** which echoes what some first century Jews believed about resurrection being physical re-animation.

In the end, it is a matter of speculation for all of us. The Bible gives no clear blueprint about eternity, everlasting life, or afterlife. But it does give VERY clear teaching about the Love of God. We can therefore confidently have faith that, as Mother Julian put it so strongly, “all shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be well” not only in this life, but supremely in whatever is to come afterwards.

Any **CHRISTIAN** discussion about life after death must surely take account of the statement “God is Love”.

Martin Tunncliffe



Women's Theology Group

The Women's Theology Group meets in the evening on the second Wednesday of the month, on Zoom at present, to study and discuss passages from the Bible, to consider appropriate Christian responses to current issues, to pray and support each other in faith. The next meeting will be on Wednesday, 11th May.

If you are interested in joining this friendly group or just want to find out more, please e-mail Lizzie, Nic or Avril at :-

womenstheologysoliuhull@gmail.com



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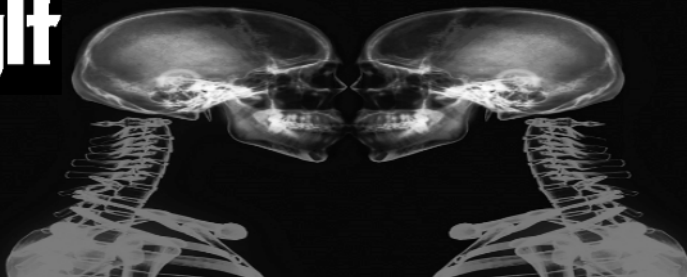
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Thursday 5th May : 1.30pm in St Alphege Church.

Please note the change of venue for this meeting.
The Heart Tomb at Hampton-in-Arden Church
- a talk by Roger Shinton.

Saturday 7th May : 11.00am at Birmingham Cathedral. *MU Diocesan Festival Service.*

Thursday 2nd June : 2.00pm - 6.00pm in the OBH.
Queen's Platinum Jubilee Celebration - Strawberry Cream Tea.

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 on the parish website Mothers' Union page.

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

WIVES' FELLOWSHIP

The popular Monthly Lunch Club will meet next on Friday, 6th May, 2022. Please contact Carol Caldicott on 0121 705 3168 for further details.

Carol Caldicott



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

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**CONTRIBUTIONS FOR THE JUNE EDITION OF THE PARISH NEWS
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